

## Law Council welcomes appointment of inaugural Chair of the Legal Services Council

***The following statement can be attributed to Mr Michael Colbran QC, President, Law Council of Australia:***

- The Law Council of Australia welcomes the appointment of former Federal Court Chief Justice Michael Black AC, QC as the inaugural chair of the Legal Services Council.
- The Legal Services Council will play a key role in the new uniform legal services scheme and will oversee the implementation of the Legal Profession Uniform Law to ensure its consistent application across participating jurisdictions, which at this stage include New South Wales and Victoria.
- Mr Black was appointed Chief Justice of the Federal Court of Australia in 1991 and held the position for almost 20 years. Prior to his appointment as Chief Justice he practised at the Victorian Bar.
- During his time as Chief Justice, the Court consolidated its position as the national intermediate appellate court and had, as well as his judicial duties, statutory responsibility for the administration of the Court.
- Under his guidance and control, the Federal Court introduced many innovations in procedural change, including the specialist panel system, the introduction of the Docket System and the 'Rocket-Docket' System.
- Mr Black is recognised for his responsive and innovative approach to procedural change and for his outstanding administrative skills.
- Mr Black was also responsible for leading and directing the creation of the Victorian Bar Readers' Course and in doing so has influenced the legal education of barristers for over 30 years.
- His consultative nature combined with his broad background and extensive experience at the Bar and the Federal Court bench, will prove invaluable in his role with the Council.
- Mr Black has a strong reputation in the legal profession and I am certain he will fulfil this new role with great effectiveness.

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- The Law Council also welcomes the announcement of the appointment of the four members of the Legal Services Council: Mr Steven Stevens, Mr Brett Walker SC, Ms Fiona Bennett and Ms Kim Boettcher.
  - Under the uniform scheme the Law Council is responsible for recommending a person from a participating jurisdiction to be a member of the Council and we congratulate the Law Council's nominee, Mr Steve Stevens, on his appointment.
  - Mr Stevens is the former President of the Law Institute of Victoria, former Director of the Law Council of Australia, Chair of the Law Council's Professional Ethics Committee and is the elected legal practitioner representative on the Victorian Legal Services Board.
  - The Law Council also congratulates Mr Brett Walker SC, former President of the Law Council of Australia, former President of the New South Wales Bar Association, former Chair of the Law Council's National Criminal Law Liaison Committee and current Chair of the Law Council's Constitutional Law Committee on his appointment.
  - Mr Stevens and Mr Walker will bring to the Legal Services Council a wealth of experience and knowledge which I am sure will provide detailed insight and direction for the Council.
  - The Law Council also congratulates Ms Bennett and Ms Boettcher on their appointment to the Council.
  - Ms Bennett's experience as a member and Chair of the Victorian Legal Services Board will be vital to the work of the Council.
  - Ms Boettcher's contribution and experience in corporate governance, consumer advocacy and practice in both the UK and Australia will also provide exceptional guidance to the Legal Services Council.
  - The Law Council is expected to be a key body involved in providing suggestions and comments on Uniform Rules and Guidelines to the Legal Services Council and to the Commissioner for Uniform Legal Services Regulation, Mr Dale Boucher.
  - The Law Council supports the development of a consistent approach to regulation of the legal profession across Australia and looks forward to working with the Legal Services Council as the Australian legal profession moves towards a consistent and integrated system of regulation.

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