Legal profession commits to diversity and equality

Legal profession leaders gathered in Sydney on 8 May 2015 to implement initiatives that promote diversity and equality in the profession.

Building on the National Attrition and Re-engagement Study, the Workshop unanimously adopted a Diversity and Equality Charter that promotes the respect and inclusion of all legal professionals, regardless of sex, sexuality, disability, age, race, ethnicity, religion and culture.

Law Council President Mr Duncan McConnel said the Charter and the Workshop outcomes are a significant step for the legal profession in progressing the critical issue of diversity and equality.

"The Charter is based on the principles of justice, integrity, equity and the pursuit of excellence upon which this profession is founded," Mr McConnel added.

Workshop co-chair Ms Fiona McLeod SC, Law Council Treasurer, welcomed the Charter and said participants also discussed practical initiatives that would build positive and supportive workplace cultures.

"The outcomes of the Workshop include support for a 'train-the-trainer' program to address unconscious bias, guidelines for those with family responsibilities who wish to take flexible work arrangements, and a commitment to promoting equitable briefing policies," Ms McLeod SC said.

Workshop attendees, who represented those on the front line of developing and delivering equality and diversity programs, also pledged a renewed focus on harassment and bullying guidelines.

"Working together on these important issues is key to building and supporting a diverse legal profession, and I thank all the Workshop participants for their valued contributions.

"Diversity and equality only strengthens the legal profession and ultimately enhances the delivery of and access to justice in the community," Mr McConnel concluded.

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