

31 May 2023

Law Council welcomes entry into force of the Australia-UK Free Trade Agreement

The Law Council of Australia welcomes today's entry into force of the Free Trade Agreement between Australia and the United Kingdom.

"Having engaged with DFAT throughout the negotiation of the Agreement on provisions relating to trade in professional services and professional mobility, the Law Council is very pleased to see the Agreement finally enter into force," Law Council of Australia President, Mr Luke Murphy, said.

"The skills and expertise of experienced Australian and UK legal practitioners will be essential to realising the economic opportunities of the Agreement for both Australian and UK businesses and professional services providers."

The FTA is particularly significant for the Australian and UK legal professions as it establishes a Legal Services Regulatory Dialogue composed of legal profession representatives from each country, including professional associations and regulatory bodies.

The Law Council is pleased to be named in the Agreement as a member of the Dialogue, together with the Legal Services Council and Admissions Committee established under the Legal Profession Uniform Law, and the Law Admissions Consultative Committee.

"The Dialogue will provide an important opportunity to consider contemporary approaches to enhance legal services trade and professional mobility of lawyers, which is presently hindered by limited recognition of professional qualifications, and complex and time-consuming requirements for requalification," President Murphy said.

In addition to requalification, the Dialogue will also consider the availability of legal practice business vehicles in Australia and the UK, as well as wider matters affecting trade in legal services between jurisdictions.

In recent days, President Murphy and Acting Chief Executive Officer Margery Nicoll have met with the UK Ministry of Justice, and built upon preliminary discussions over recent months with counterpart bar leaders from England and Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland.

They will meet with Australia's High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, the Hon. Stephen Smith, at Australia House in London later today.

Contact: Kristen Connell, P. 0400 054 227, E. kristen@talkforcemedia.com.au

The Law Council of Australia is the national voice of the legal profession, promoting justice and the rule of law.