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MEDIA STATEMENT

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DEFAMATION REFORM TO BE 'PARLIAMENT READY' IN 2020

Attorneys-General from all Australian jurisdictions have agreed to a timetable for defamation reform that seeks to enable all Australian Parliaments to begin enacting changes from the middle of 2020.

The NSW-led Defamation Working Party (DWP), consisting of representatives from the Commonwealth and each Australian state and territory government, will formulate new Model Defamation Provisions fit for purpose in this digital age.

The timetable is designed to allow the reform process to be as expeditious as possible, while providing opportunity for extensive engagement by community and stakeholder groups to help determine how our new defamation law should function.

This exciting reform process schedules two substantial rounds of public consultation to allow considered contributions on nationally consistent defamation law.

To assist those consultations, the DWP will now turn to settling a Discussion Paper for the consideration of the Council of Attorney's General consideration and subsequent public release in coming weeks.

Reforming national defamation law will be complex and demanding. The agreed timetable now provides the community, stakeholders and the DWP with the framework to deliver reforms to ensure the right balance between protecting reputations and freedom of speech.

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