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Thursday, 28 February 2019

WESTERN AUSTRALIA TO ADOPT UNIFORM LAW

Australia is a step closer to having a national legal market, with Western Australia signing a landmark agreement to join the Legal Profession Uniform Law Scheme, NSW, Victorian and Western Australian Attorneys General Mark Speakman, Jill Hennessy and John Quigley announced today.

The Uniform Law has been operating in NSW and Victoria since 2015, creating a simpler and more efficient system of regulating legal practice and cutting red tape for lawyers and their clients.

“Around 68 per cent of Australia’s practising lawyers are regulated by uniform law, and that will increase to around 75 per cent when Western Australia comes on board. Importantly, the Uniform Law provides strengthened protections for consumers including through applying consistent regulations in different states,” Mr Speakman said.

Ms Hennessy said a seamless legal market between the three states would deliver time and cost savings to consumers and the legal profession.

“In the 21st century, people work across borders and it makes sense for lawyers to operate under the same rule book, which is why we are urging our counterparts in Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, the ACT and the Northern Territory to adopt the Uniform Law.” Ms Hennessy said.

Legislation will be introduced into the Victorian and Western Australian Parliaments later this year to apply the Uniform Law in Western Australia, with that state to formally join the scheme on 1 July 2020. From that date the Legal Services Council, which oversees the implementation and operation of the Uniform Law, will be expanded to seven and include at least one member from Western Australia.

“Our resource-based industries and the law firms that represent them will be among the big winners when the Uniform Law commences in Western Australia. We want to send a message across Australia and internationally that WA is a great place to do business and the introduction of the Uniform Law will help to do this,” Mr Quigley said.

Australia has almost 85,200 registered lawyers, including almost 36,000 in NSW, close to 22,500 in Victoria and nearly 6,100 in Western Australia. For more information about uniform law, visit: www.legalservicescouncil.org.au

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