

Media Release



The Hon Martin Pakula MP
Attorney-General
Minister for Racing

Thursday, 28 May, 2015

UNIFORM LAW TO CUT RED TAPE AND PROTECT CONSUMERS

New uniform laws for the legal profession across Victoria and New South Wales will commence on 1 July 2015, cutting red tape for law firms and better protecting consumers in both states.

The Legal Profession Uniform Law will create a common legal services market across both states, an important first step towards a national scheme.

The Uniform Law was passed in Victoria and NSW last year, with a new Legal Services Council established to implement and monitor the scheme.

After obtaining the joint approval of Victorian Attorney-General Martin Pakula and NSW Attorney-General Gabrielle Upton, the Council developed Uniform Rules on legal costs disclosure, trust accounting, admission to the profession and professional conduct.

The Uniform Rules were developed through an extensive consultation process involving a range of industry stakeholders, as well as the views of legal services consumers through a specially designed survey.

The Uniform Rules are now available online at: <http://www.legalservicescouncil.org.au/legislation.html>

All lawyers in Victoria and NSW are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the Uniform Rules before the commencement of the scheme on 1 July.

Quotes attributable to Attorney-General Martin Pakula

“This is about providing real benefits for lawyers and their clients – reducing red tape, strengthening consumer protection measures and ensuring consistency across the border.”

“Victoria and NSW will continue pushing for a common legal services market across the country, and we hope to see more states and territories join us in this important reform.”

Quotes attributable to Victorian Bar Council President Jim Peters

“The Victorian Bar welcomes this important development. The move to a national profession will benefit Victorian lawyers competing for domestic and international work with a more streamlined and uniform approach to practice.”

Quotes attributable to Law Institute of Victoria President Katie Miller

“The Uniform Law is an important first step in the journey to a national profession.”

Quotes attributable to Legal Services Commissioner Michael McGarvie

“The Victorian Board and Commissioner welcome the opportunity that Victoria and NSW now have to harmonise and simplify regulation for over 70 per cent of Australia’s lawyers.”

“These reforms offer the prospect of reduced interstate barriers to legal practice, while significantly improving consumer protections and safeguarding an independent legal profession.”