

Wednesday, 24 June 2020

**JOINT STATEMENT: THE LAW SOCIETY AND LAW ACCESS WELCOME
LEGAL FUNDING BOOST TO HELP WA'S MOST VULNERABLE AND
DISADVANTAGED**

The Law Society of Western Australia and Law Access welcome the announcement today by the Attorney General, the Hon John Quigley MLA, that the State Government has allocated \$150,000 (plus GST) a year over three years to Law Access Limited, which is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Law Society of Western Australia, to coordinate pro bono referrals and increase access to pro bono legal support for disadvantaged and vulnerable people in Western Australia.

Under the Western Australian Pro Bono Model, which was announced earlier in March this year, law firms who undertake legal services for Government must subscribe to the National Pro Bono Target, and provide pro bono legal services in WA for 'approved causes' to the value of at least 10 per cent of the value of their State Government legal work. The Pro Bono Model comes into effect on 1 July 2020.

Law Society President Nicholas van Hattem welcomed the boost in funding and said, "The Law Society of Western Australia is pleased to have contributed to the development of the WA Pro Bono Model and supports pro bono by members of the legal profession and firms where they have the capacity to provide it."

"Legal assistance for those experiencing financial difficulties are continually in high demand, and even more so during the COVID-19 pandemic. Long-term and substantive funding increases are important to ensure access to justice for the vulnerable and disadvantaged members of our community."

Law Access Limited CEO, Dominique Hansen welcomed the new pro bono requirements introduced by the WA Government from 1 July 2020 saying, "Law Access is excited to collaborate with Community Legal WA to help deliver the new WA Pro Bono Model from 1 July 2020. This unique model is designed to increase provision of pro bono legal assistance for the most vulnerable in our community. Other Australian jurisdictions will be closely following the model's impact."

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For comment please contact:

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About us: The Law Society of Western Australia is the peak professional association for lawyers in the State. The Society is a not-for-profit association dedicated to the representation of its more than 4,000 members. The Society enhances the legal profession through its position as a respected leader and contributor on law reform, access to justice

and the rule of law. The Society is widely acknowledged by the legal profession, government and the community as the **voice** of the **legal profession** in Western Australia.