



National Pro Bono Resource Centre

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MEDIA RELEASE

'Pro bono survey coming to town'

The National Pro Bono Resource Centre (NPBRC) is conducting a national survey of the pro bono work being undertaken by individual solicitors, barristers and law firms in each State and Territory. The initial stage of the project was trialled with individual solicitors in Queensland and surveys are about to commence in South Australia, Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory. The Victorian and New South Wales legal profession will be surveyed later in the year.

The Queensland survey was done in conjunction with the School of Law at the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) and with financial assistance and cooperation from the Law Society of Queensland (QLS). A preliminary report of the survey has been published and is available on the Centre's website.

Key findings from Queensland included:

- 79% of respondents had done pro bono work in the previous 12 months but 67% reported they had not done legal aid work during this time;
- The majority of pro bono work undertaken was in the areas of family law, crime and wills and probate;
- 58% of respondents had done more than 30 hours pro bono legal work in the previous 12 months;
- 86% of lawyers believed lawyers should do pro bono work with 'helping the disadvantaged' and 'professional responsibility' emerging as the most common reasons. Individuals identified 'personal satisfaction' as their main motivator;
- Aspirational pro bono targets and a statement from the Queensland Law Society regarding lawyers' commitment to pro bono work were supported by 58% of respondents.

Lawyers are encouraged to do the survey online to facilitate completion and data analysis. However there is capacity for any lawyer to complete the survey in hard copy and mail it to NPBRC. A link to a webpage, where the survey can be done online or downloaded for posting, will be sent out by law societies to their members. The survey takes about 10 minutes to complete.

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Backgrounder

The National Pro Bono Resource Centre is an independent, non-profit organisation established to support and promote pro bono in Australia. It was set up following the report and recommendations of the National Pro Bono Task Force (2001) and commenced operation in August 2002. It is funded by the Commonwealth, State and Territory Departments of the Attorney-General and is based at the Faculty of Law at the University of New South Wales.

Survey questions cover:

- Details of the law firm (location, number of partners and lawyers);
- Types of pro bono assistance provided (in-house advice, secondments to CLCs, law reform work etc);
- The amount of pro bono work carried out in the last year including a breakdown by type of pro bono assistance;
- Details of the firm's pro bono policy (if any);
- Details of the firm's pro bono program (if any); and
- Perceived and actual barriers to pro bono;
- Motivation for undertaking pro bono work;
- Attitudes towards pro bono aspirational targets.

Media Contact

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