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LAWYERS ASPIRING TO DO MORE

An average of 41.9 hours of pro bono work was done in the last financial year by lawyers who have signed up to the National Pro Bono Aspirational Target (“Target”).

This finding comes from the Second Performance Report on the Target released by the National Pro Bono Resource Centre today. The average number of hours per lawyer is up from 39.8 hours per lawyer, reported last year.

The Aspirational Target is a voluntary one of at least 35 hours of pro bono work per lawyer per year. “Many signatories exceed this, and some even double it. The seven law firm signatories with more than 100 lawyers who met the Target averaged 45.2 hours per lawyer per annum and jointly provided almost 180,000 hours of pro bono work last year – an impressive contribution to improving access to justice for many who are unable to obtain legal assistance elsewhere,” said John Corker, Director of the National Pro Bono Resource Centre.

“The Target seems to be working, and it is notable that overall the amount of pro bono work is on the rise. The Target has seen a growth in the number of signatories from 58 to 66 at the end of the last financial year. The numbers keep rising, and currently we have 71 signatories. The Target now covers approximately 5,700 lawyers across Australia, up from 2,900 last year”

“The Target continues to confirm the shared responsibility of lawyers to provide pro bono assistance. More lawyers should sign up to the Target and use it to benchmark their contribution each year.” said Corker.

The fact that the Target has been successful in raising the profile of the professional commitment of lawyers to provide pro bono legal work has been supported by the Commonwealth Government who in July 2008 required all government agencies, when procuring legal services, to take into consideration whether a law firm is a signatory to the Target.

“The Commonwealth is using its purchasing power to encourage pro bono legal services, whilst still embracing the voluntaristic ethic of pro bono. The Victorian Government tender scheme has also been successful in encouraging firms to provide pro bono. It’s time for other governments to introduce similar schemes” said Corker.

Solicitors, Barristers and Law Firms can easily sign up to the Target on the [Centre’s website](#).

For further information please contact: John Corker 0420 474 628 or 02 9385 7381