



National Pro Bono Resource Centre

MEDIA RELEASE (LEGAL)

10 February 2004

National Pro Bono Resource Centre – New Director, New Directions

John Corker has just been appointed as the Centre's new Director. He has been judge's associate, barrister, Aboriginal Legal Aid lawyer, General Counsel at the Australian Broadcasting Authority and most recently, senior associate with Clayton Utz. He brings 'old' experience and 'new' energy to the Centre's program.

Advocacy and coordination are the new key directions for the Centre. The new Director wants the Centre to be a champion for pro bono and those who provide it. As well as fostering awards for those who excel in providing pro bono, the Centre will lead discussion and debate on the contentious issue of aspirational targets—proposing that state and federal professional conduct rules should set a minimum target of 50 hours a year, or an hour a week.

“There is some extraordinary pro bono legal work being done by some lawyers in Australia but more lawyers can and should be involved. Our job is to make this happen,” said Corker.

“Pro bono is a good story for lawyers. There is a business case for it. The entire legal profession can gain a lot from embracing pro bono more fully into its culture.”

On coordination, the Centre will expand its focus to include government lawyers and in-house corporate legal teams. The Centre will work actively to facilitate meetings and matchmaking between pro bono providers and those in need. It will arrange and lead discussions on 'barrier to pro bono' issues.

Committed to providing helpful and relevant resources, the Centre intends to enhance its website www.nationalprobono.org.au by adding new services and new resources such as the Guide to Volunteering in Community Legal Centres, to be released next month. Other resources such as a rural regional and remote pilot study and a 'mapping pro bono' project will be added to the Centre's publications list, which already boasts Australia's first practice guide and resource kit for law firms, *The Australian Pro Bono Manual*.

The National Pro Bono Resource Centre (NPBRC) was set up in 2002 by the federal Attorney-General's Department to promote a strong pro bono culture in Australia and to remove barriers to pro bono legal work.

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