

Wednesday, 1 August 2018

Asian legal leaders descend upon Canberra to discuss regional rule of law

The independence of the judiciary and the legal profession will be a major area of focus at the [29th Presidents of Law Associations in Asia \(POLA\) Conference](#) to be held in Canberra this Thursday and Friday (2-3 August).

The conference will feature leaders of the legal profession from more than 15 countries in Asia including: Malaysia, Cambodia, China, India, Singapore and the Philippines.

Observers include the [President of LAWASIA](#), Christopher Leong and [Vice President of the International Bar Association](#), Horacio Bernardes Neto.

Law Council of Australia President, Morry Bailes, said the conference's focus on threats to the judiciary and legal profession in the region indicates a heightened level of awareness and concern among senior representatives of the legal profession in Asia.

"This major international conference is an important opportunity for the leaders of bars and law societies in the region to discuss significant rule of law issues," Mr Bailes said.

"Asia continues its inexorable rise as a global center of economic influence, and Asia's impact on geo-politics, the international rules-based order and the rule of law are increasingly significant.

"In this context, the views expressed by this grouping of legal profession leaders has a level of significance that should not be underestimated.

"This year's conference will also consider the central role of the legal profession in promoting fair and ethical treatment of all people, whether through our influential position of trust in business circles or by championing inclusion and diversity in our own workplaces."

Other issues to be discussed include:

- anti-corruption and transparency;
- business and human rights; and
- inclusion and diversity in the legal profession.

POLA is a non-political organisation that provides a forum for the leaders of bar associations from across the Asia region to exchange ideas and information, collaborate on issues of mutual interest and promote friendships.

The Law Council of Australia is hosting POLA, which has not been held in Australia since 2005.

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