

Media Release



Law Council
OF AUSTRALIA

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The Justice Project to uncover systemic flaws

The Law Council has announced that it is conducting a comprehensive national review into the impediments to justice in Australia, focusing on those facing significant social and economic disadvantage in our community.

[The Justice Project](#) will uncover systemic flaws and ensure the path towards equal access to justice is clearly mapped-out. It will report its findings by the end of November this year.

A Steering Committee of eminent Australians, chaired by The Hon Robert French AC, former Chief Justice of the High Court, will oversee the Project.

The President of the Law Council of Australia, Fiona McLeod SC, said that “access to justice is a bedrock principle for our society and a means of protecting, promoting and defending the rule of law and human rights of all people. It is a core tenet of our modern democracy, yet unfortunately there are many who are missing out.

“A person’s formal right to justice and equal treatment before the law is of no value if he or she cannot effectively access the legal system or secure protection of basic rights,” Ms McLeod said.

“Whether it is the pressures upon court resourcing and long backlogs, lack of access to legal advice or representation, or laws and practices that compound unfairness, the inequity experienced by many can have a devastating impact upon their lives.”

The Justice Project will inform its work with a review of the existing research on access to justice issues and explore what is working and why, with constructive, informed recommendations for future action. The Project will seek submissions and involve consultation with individuals and organisations with on the ground experience and focus on case studies that illuminate the key impediments and solutions.

“I am delighted that former High Court Chief Justice Robert French AC, has agreed to chair the Steering Committee, and very grateful for the contribution of our expert Committee members,” Ms McLeod said.

“The review will investigate how these issues affect key groups such as: the elderly, young people, those living in remote areas, the homeless and marginalised and the many in our community who have experienced crisis in their lives, are exploited or face significant discrimination.

“This is a significant undertaking to examine critical issues that need to be urgently addressed.

“We need to ask ourselves whether our idea of Australia as a free and open society, committed to the fair-go, stands up to scrutiny when it comes to access to justice. At the moment this is a very difficult question to answer,” Ms McLeod said.

Further information on *The Justice Project*, including Terms of Reference, is [available here](#).

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