

15 August 2022

## MAG prioritises key issues of concern

The Law Council of Australia is pleased the Meeting of Attorneys-General agreed work priorities for 2022 and beyond include improving Indigenous justice outcomes, addressing coercive control, sexual assault and harassment, raising the age of minimum criminal responsibility, and model defamation reform.

“Each of these issues must be addressed without undue delay and we welcome the commitments stemming from Friday’s MAG,” Law Council of Australia President, Mr Tass Liveris said.

“We reiterate our position that the minimum age of criminal responsibility should be 14 and there should be no carve outs.

“The Law Council has advocated for national harmonisation regarding a definition of family violence and to recognise that it includes coercive control. We look forward to contributing to the planned consultation on National Principles to Address Coercive Control.

“It was also encouraging to see the Attorneys throw their support behind the Stage 2 Review of the Model Defamation Provisions. The Law Council has previously called for governments to see this review through to completion.

“The Model Defamation Provisions review into the liability of internet intermediaries has been a substantial and in-depth process and it has the potential to ensure that reforms to the law of defamation in Australia are developed in a way which is comprehensive, complementary, certain and clear.

“Particularly welcome from the MAG is the decision to make improving Indigenous justice outcomes a standing agenda item.

“First Nations people fare worse at every stage of the criminal justice process. They are much more likely to be questioned by police; charged by police with a criminal offence; arrested than proceeded against by summons; held on remand in prison than given bail; convicted at trial; and sentenced to imprisonment.

“We hope to see the nation’s Attorneys-General make substantive progress towards addressing these important issues when they meet again in three months under the banner of the Standing Council of Attorneys-General.”

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