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## **LEGAL PRO BONO CONTRIBUTION STEADY**

An average of 39.8 hours of pro bono legal work per lawyer was done in the last financial year by signatories to the National Pro Bono Aspirational Target (“Target”) compared to the 39.5 hours per lawyer reported in 2009/2010. Collectively, the reporting signatories provided more than 220,000 hours of pro bono legal work in the 2010/2011 financial year.

These findings come from the [Fourth Performance Report on the Target](#) released by the National Pro Bono Resource Centre today.

The Aspirational Target is a voluntary one of at least 35 hours of pro bono legal work per lawyer per year. “Many signatories exceed this, and some even double it”, said John Corker, Director of the National Pro Bono Resource Centre.

“The eight law firm signatories with more than 50 lawyers that met the Target averaged 48.6 hours per lawyer per annum and jointly provided almost 180,000 hours of pro bono work last year. However there is still a lot of variation in performance amongst the thirteen large firms who reported” said Corker.

The Target provides a useful benchmark for firms and has seen a growth in the number of signatories from 58 to 66 during the year. The Target now covers approximately 5,900 lawyers or 11 percent of the Australian legal profession.

Target signatory firms generally perform better than others. The results of the Centre’s National Law Firm Pro Bono Survey (that includes non-signatory firms), published in December 2010, indicated an average of 29 hours of pro bono legal work per lawyer per year.

“The Target continues to confirm the shared responsibility of lawyers to provide pro bono assistance. Whilst the legal profession weathered the economic downturn quite well, the effects of it are still being felt by some. Whilst many signatories reported reductions in the numbers of FTE lawyers the overall contributions of some firms increased. It is testament to their ongoing commitment to access to justice” said Corker.

Corker continued “Smaller firms and sole practitioners also do more than their fair share of pro bono work each year. This year, the top performing firm based on hours per lawyer was a firm with three lawyers each of whom did an average of 240 hours of pro bono legal work last year.”

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

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