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MEDIA RELEASE

New in-house lawyer pro bono insurance scheme and guide launched in Victoria

At an event held yesterday in Melbourne, attended by about 70 lawyers from law firms and corporate and government in-house legal teams, the National Pro Bono Professional Indemnity Insurance Scheme (“**the Scheme**”) was officially launched in Victoria together with a new guide to in-house pro bono prepared by law firm DLA Piper.

The Scheme’s terms and conditions were approved by the Victorian Legal Services Board on 14 May 2012 as an appropriate PI insurance policy for corporate legal practitioners under the new amendments to the Victorian Legal Profession Act.

The event was addressed by Victorian Attorney-General the Hon. Robert Clark, John Corker, Executive Director for the National Pro Bono Resource Centre, Gregor Husper, Director of Referral Services, the Public Interest Law Clearing House in Victoria (PILCH (Vic)) and Michael Coleman, General Counsel for Telstra.

Mr Corker said, “Now is a very good time for in-house legal teams to develop pro bono legal programs. The practising certificate and PI insurance issues have been resolved. It’s time to develop the in-house legal pro bono culture. Corker paid tribute to the work of the Australian Corporate Lawyers Association, DLA Piper, PILCH (VIC), and the Centre for lobbying for the changes to law and policy that have led to this result.

Corker said that in the context of the rise of Corporate Social Responsibility, the time has come for the approximately 25% of Australian lawyers who are working in-house to join their private firm colleagues and embrace the pro bono movement.

Key tips included

- Support from the General Counsel and or the CEO of the corporation is essential
- Partnering with a law firm with a strong pro bono practice, a strong pro bono clearing house and/or a community legal centre that has well managed project will provide invaluable support.
- Programs needed to offer variety to ensure participation

The Scheme provides free PI insurance cover for lawyers undertaking pro bono legal work on pro bono projects approved by the Centre and is underwritten by insurer LawCover. The Scheme was first launched in NSW in July 2009 and already provides insurance cover for lawyers working on pro bono projects in NSW and Queensland.

The Centre has created a new [dedicated web page](#) with resources and links to assist in-house lawyers to create and develop pro bono programs.

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