



MEDIA RELEASE
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New report reveals a significant increase in pro bono partners

A new report, *'The Nature and Prevalence of Pro Bono Partner Roles Globally'*, produced by law firm DLA Piper alongside the Australian Pro Bono Centre, the Pro Bono Institute in Washington DC and the Thomson Reuters Foundation, reveals a significant increase in the appointment of pro bono partners over the last 20 years.

From 1990 -1999, there were only six dedicated pro bono partners globally. However, as of 2019, the report identified 66 examples of dedicated pro bono partners in more than 55 law firms. This illustrates the importance of this role in demonstrating a firm's commitment to providing pro bono work and access to justice, its desire to show leadership and best practice in this area and a growing recognition of the value such roles bring to the broader partnership.

A key factor increasing pressure on law firms to provide pro bono has been cuts to legal aid, resulting in increased unmet legal need. Prior to these cuts, the majority of pro bono work was carried out by charities or non-profit organisations. The fact that law firms are picking up this shortfall and the importance that they place on this is clearly shown by the increasing numbers of pro bono partner being appointed.

The report revealed that senior and experienced pro bono lawyers within the world's largest law firms provide assistance on a wide range of issues from supporting vulnerable or low income individuals on housing and immigration issues – either directly or through the non-profit organisations that support those in need – to advising UN agencies, Chief Justices and Prime Ministers in developing countries.

Nicolas Patrick, Pro Bono Partner at DLA Piper, commented: "The nature of pro bono work has evolved enormously over the last decade. Pro bono practices are much larger and often operate across multiple jurisdictions. The work is increasingly complex, frequently connected to humanitarian emergencies and almost always requires strategic engagement with a range of stakeholders. The growth in pro bono partner roles directly reflects these trends."

Gabriela Christian-Hare, CEO of the Australian Pro Bono Centre, commented: "The Australian Pro Bono Centre is proud to co-present this global report on the nature and prevalence of pro bono partner roles in firms. Strong coordination and senior leadership support are critical to the success of any pro bono practice. The appointment of a dedicated pro bono partner sends a strong message from senior management that pro bono legal work is highly valued, respected and prioritised. This report signals a growing recognition among firms that such an investment also supports the sustainability of a practice and helps to deeply enmesh pro bono practice in the culture and strategic direction of a firm."

To read the full report, please click [here](#).

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