



MEDIA RELEASE

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National Pro Bono Target opens to in-house legal teams

The **National Pro Bono Target** is opening to in-house corporate and government legal team signatories from 1 July 2020. “The Target has been a huge contributor to the growth of pro bono in Australia by law firm solicitors and barristers,” said Gabriela Christian-Hare, CEO of the Australian Pro Bono Centre, the centre of leadership for pro bono legal services that manages the Target.

“There are now over 190 signatories to the Target which have collectively reported almost 3.75 million hours of pro bono legal work since the Target was launched by the Centre in April 2007. The Centre aspires to achieve similar success with other legal professionals. The Target aims to raise the profile of every lawyer’s professional responsibility to improve access to justice, to work for the public good, and to highlight the shared nature of that responsibility across the legal profession,” Gabriela commented.

The Centre laid the foundation for growth in pro bono participation by in-house legal practitioners by establishing the [National Pro Bono Professional Indemnity Insurance Scheme](#), which affords liability cover to in-house lawyers doing approved pro bono work, and by producing practical resources such as [Pro Bono Legal Work: A guide for in-house corporate lawyers](#) and [Pro Bono Legal Work – A guide for government lawyers](#). Most recently the Centre formed an [In-House Counsel Pro Bono Steering Committee](#). The Committee consists of corporate and government lawyers who champion pro bono, and representatives of the Association of Corporate Counsel, the In-House Corporate Lawyers and Government Solicitors Committees of the Law Society of NSW, and the Centre.

The Centre is opening the Target from 1 July 2020 to in-house legal signatories who will commit to using their **best endeavours** to achieve at least 20 hours of pro bono legal services per in-house lawyer per year. Gabriela explained, “The Centre, in consultation with the In-house Pro Bono Steering Committee, has decided to take a staged approach and will review whether this hourly target should be raised to be aligned with other legal professionals in the future. The 20-hour benchmark will provide an incentive for the growth of in-house pro bono legal services and takes into consideration the unique context for in-house legal professionals.”

The Centre is encouraging as many in-house legal teams as possible to join as signatories. In-house legal teams that lead by signing up to the Target within the first 12 months (between 1 July 2020 and 30 June 2021) will be listed on the Target register as *foundation in-house legal signatories*. On 11 August 2020, the In-House Corporate Lawyers Committee of the Law Society of NSW and the Australian Pro Bono Centre will be co-hosting a virtual event for in-house corporate and government lawyers to discuss and celebrate the opening of the Target.

“For corporations, pro bono work is an important component of responsible business practice. Signing up to the Target presents them with a unique opportunity to differentiate themselves not just on commercial function but on values, and be truly active in their support for the “S” in ‘Environmental Social Governance (ESG),’” said Gabriela.

The Centre's Chair, Phillip Cornwell, said: "The Target provides a strong framework for any pro bono program. Although corporates and government entities may have an allowance for volunteering days, these are often limited and do not allow for meaningful engagement or, frankly, substantive progress. In-house legal departments which adopt the Target can then enter into structured arrangements with community legal centres and the like, or alliances with law firm pro bono programs, which can make a real difference to the achievement of social justice objectives."

Background

The National Pro Bono Target is a voluntary target that in-house (corporate and government) legal teams, individual in-house lawyers, law firms, incorporated legal practices, solicitors and barristers can adopt by signing a [Statement of Principles](#). The Centre's resources for in-house legal practitioners can be found [here](#).

To read more about the National Pro Bono Target, please click [here](#).

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