

LAWYERS TARGET THE COMMUNITY

Signatories to the National Pro Bono Target have collectively reported more than 4.3 million hours of pro bono legal work since 2007.

The Australian Pro Bono Centre (centre) is inviting Victorian solicitors to become signatories to the National Pro Bono Target (Target).

What is the Target?

The Target is a voluntary and aspirational target of at least 35 hours of pro bono legal services per lawyer per year that can be signed up to by law firms, incorporated legal practices, individual law firm solicitors, individual barristers and barristers' chambers.

The Target for in-house corporate and government lawyers is a voluntary and aspirational target of at least 20 hours of pro bono legal services per lawyer per year that can be signed up to by in-house legal teams and individual in-house lawyers.

There are more than 250 current signatories to the Target. You can view a list of current signatories here (www.probonocentre.org.au/provide-pro-bono/target/signatories/).

Signatories to the Target have collectively reported more than 4.3 million hours of pro bono legal work since it started in 2007.

Why should you sign up to the Target?

Through involvement in pro bono work, lawyers can use their unique skills to support a wide range of vulnerable individuals in the community and provide vital legal assistance to community organisations. Undertaking pro bono work can also enhance solicitors' professional and personal development. Many solicitors are already helping others in this way. Others are keen to participate and many feel an ethical professional responsibility to do so. Although the Target is entirely voluntary and unenforceable, becoming a signatory prompts involvement in pro bono work and helps each solicitor to set a goal for the amount of pro bono work they will undertake every year.

Moreover, by signing up to the Target, the centre can formally recognise and record that work and in doing so, inspire other solicitors to become involved. The centre publishes a de-identified report on pro bono hours performed by Target signatories each year. Additionally, through a variety of publications and events, the centre showcases a range of pro bono work and lawyers involved to recognise this dedication of time and skills and its impact.

Professional and personal benefits ensue from using your skills to help those in need.

How to sign up to the Target

Click here (www.probonocentre.org.au/provide-pro-bono/target/) to learn more about the Target and to become a signatory.

If you have questions, contact the centre at info@probonocentre.org.au.

Helpful resources to get started

The centre has produced a range of helpful resources to get lawyers started on their pro bono journey. Two flagship publications, the *Australian Pro Bono Manual* and *Pro bono partnerships and models: a practical guide to what works* are practical guides for establishing and developing law firm pro bono programs.

The Centre has also recently published two guides that are helpful for new individual Target signatories. The first, *Pro Bono Guide for Individual Lawyers*, is a guide for lawyers interested in undertaking pro bono volunteer work in a personal capacity, outside of a formal employment program. The second, *Pro Bono Guide to the Climate Crisis*, describes the many ways in which lawyers can get involved in pro bono work to help combat the climate crisis. It features a range of case studies from around the world.

What is the Australian Pro Bono Centre?

The Australian Pro Bono Centre is the centre of leadership for pro bono legal services that aims to grow participation and excellence in pro bono. It activates new and existing pro bono legal professionals by promoting awareness of pro bono legal services and advocating for policy reform. It equips pro bono legal professionals by providing practical tools and resources for pro bono participation. And the centre also connects members of the pro bono ecosystem through collaborations and best practice sharing. ■

This column was provided by the **Australian Pro Bono Centre**.

SNAPSHOT

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- Go to (<https://www.probonocentre.org.au/provide-pro-bono/target/>) to learn more about the Target, and to become a Target signatory.

