

## MEDIA RELEASE

8 December 2022

### CENTRE RELEASES NEW STUDENT PRO BONO GUIDE

The Australian Pro Bono Centre (Centre) has released new guidance for students and early career lawyers interested in volunteering while at university and participating in pro bono work as they embark on legal careers.

The Centre recommends that students use the [Student Pro Bono Guide](#) to inform their own pathways to pro bono work, providing a proposed timeline to assist with this process.

The [Student Pro Bono Guide](#) focuses on:

- **defining pro bono** and the broader legal assistance landscape for law students;
- **mapping available options** to students, including providing links to key opportunities boards and resources;
- proposing a **timeline** for these opportunities;
- providing tips on **self-care** while working in social justice; and
- the Centre's '**Recommended pro bono questions for students to ask prospective employers.**'

According to Gabriela Christian-Hare, CEO of the Centre, "Many law students commence their legal degrees with a strong commitment to social justice and human rights and hope to one day use their legal degrees for the betterment of society. This guide aims to support students to be involved in volunteering, gain real-world skills, and to develop a strong sense of responsibility to ensure equitable access to justice and recognise the vital role of pro bono which they will carry through their professional lives."

The [Student Pro Bono Guide](#) aims to inform and encourage the next generation of lawyers to take up pro bono work. Equipped with the 'pro bono questions to ask prospective employers', students and young lawyers can signal their desire to participate in pro bono work and to put pressure on firms to provide opportunities. According to Gabriela Christian-Hare, "We strongly encourage students to pose these questions to law firms in their clerkship and graduate interviews, putting firms on notice that their commitment to pro bono is important to students – even to those who embark on commercial legal careers."

Austin Irwin, recent UNSW law graduate, commented:

*"When I was in the early stages of studying law, I knew pro bono work was something 'good' but didn't have any real idea about what it was or who could contribute to it. I recommend this Student Guide to anyone who shares my questions, particularly the five recommended questions to ask employers - they are a great way to distinguish between firms for law students, and their use will help foster a pro bono-oriented mindset in the profession."*

Phillip Cornwell, Chair of the Australian Pro Bono Centre, commented, “Legal pro bono is primarily about seeking to bridge the access to justice gap, but there are many collateral benefits. For students and young lawyers it can be a personal development and horizon broadening experience. And the mental health benefits from helping others cannot be overstated. Not to mention honing skills and building networks. The Centre's Guide is directed to building good habits early!”

*For further information or comment, please contact the Australian Pro Bono Centre CEO, Gabriela Christian-*