

Friday, 16 June 2017

## Legal profession sets out core principles and commitments on human rights, as international spotlight shines on nation

The Law Council today launched its [Policy Statement on Human Rights and the Legal Profession](#), laying out core principles and commitments of behalf of the Australian legal profession.

The Policy Statement sets out a framework for evaluating the merits of legislation, policy, and practice by reference to international human rights law.

The Statement includes a commitment to advocate for a federal charter or bill of rights, as well as for more State and Territory charters of rights to join those of Victoria and the ACT. It also commits the Law Council to promote respect for human rights by Australian corporations and other incorporated and non-incorporated entities, including through implementation of the UN's Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

The Law Council of Australia's President, Fiona McLeod SC, said with Australia bidding for a seat on the UN Human Rights Council this year the policy was particularly timely.

"Australia has a proud history in the human rights sphere. We played a prominent role in drafting the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and have since been an active participant in the development of an international system for the protection and promotion of human rights," Ms McLeod said.

"The Law Council endorses a central and constructive role for Australia in the international human rights system. This year, as Australia seeks a seat on the UN Human Rights Council, it is important to assert and articulate the legal profession's principles and commitments on human rights.

"The Law Council supports an approach, consistent with international law and practice, which confirms that all human rights are universal, indivisible, and interdependent and interrelated.

"We believe this makes it vital to consider legislation and government action through a human rights lens. The principles in this framework guide myriad aspects of the Law Council's work in the policy space – from asylum seekers to marriage equality to metadata," Ms McLeod said.

The Policy Statement on Human Rights and the Legal Profession was prepared by the Law Council's National Human Rights Committee and approved by its Directors.

The Statement is available at <https://lawcouncil.asn.au/>

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