



Law Council
OF AUSTRALIA

Address to the Inaugural Legal G20 hosted by the Brazilian Bar Association

**Pre-recorded Speech delivered by Law Council of Australia
President, Mr Greg McIntyre SC to the inaugural meeting of the
Legal G20 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.**

19 April 2024

Colleagues,

As President of the Law Council of Australia, it is a great pleasure to address you today at the inaugural Legal G20.

I thank the Brazilian Bar Association for its leadership in bringing this forum together.

For over twenty years the G20 has enhanced global economic cooperation and financial stability.

Lawyers play a fundamental role in the global economy – as advisers, advocates, innovators, and problem solvers, by shaping institutions and legislation, and as defenders of the rule of law.

As we navigate the digital transformation and global challenges including climate change, it is timely that legal professional associations come together in such a forum.

The Law Council of Australia is the representative body for the legal profession in Australia, representing over 100,000 legal practitioners both nationally and internationally.

It seeks to further the betterment of the law in the public interest, promote the effective administration of justice and support the design and operation of effective and accountable institutions.

The Law Council is a source of independent, expert legal comment, and provides advice to the Australian Government on proposed legislation relating to federal courts and tribunals, domestic protection of human rights, the negotiation and implementation of free trade agreements, national security, corporations law and environmental law to name a few.

The digital transformation has changed how businesses operate, how we advise clients and how justice is administered.

Our laws and institutions must respond to the needs of the digital age.

The Law Council has advocated strongly for a commitment to fairness, ethics, accountability, and transparency in the regulation of digital technologies such as Artificial Intelligence.

We continue to engage with the Australian Government on the development of privacy protections for the use and storage of personal information and data, and on the design of misinformation laws that balance efforts to combat misinformation and disinformation

while preserving the fundamental rights to freedom of opinion and expression that are essential for any free and democratic society.

As the digital transformation changes how we do business and provide legal services, the Law Council – informed by detailed consultation with the legal profession – has advised government on issues including the phasing out of cheques, payments system modernisation, and financial market infrastructure regulatory reforms.

With the introduction of virtual court hearings – accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic – the Law Council has welcomed the potential of technology to enhance access to justice for persons in regional, rural and remote locations, while simultaneously emphasising the need to mitigate the digital exclusion of people who have limited access to technology, unreliable internet connections, or who lack the skills to utilise technology and online services.

Around the world the legal profession is at the forefront of efforts to grapple with the legal implications of human-induced climate change, to support those most vulnerable to its effects, and to facilitate a just transition to net-zero.

The Law Council commends the work of the Brazilian Bar Association in this area, together with counterparts including the International Bar Association, the Law Society of England and Wales and others, to facilitate information-sharing among bar associations and law societies.

In 2021, the Law Council adopted a Climate Change Policy, which sets out principles that must inform the development of law and policy responses to climate change, including that responses give effect to rule of law principles, are fair, equitable and promote public confidence, and adhere to international obligations.

This Policy informed our submissions on climate change legislation, as well as specific consultations on green-washing and climate-related financial disclosure laws.

These are global challenges that require international cooperation to develop legal standards and best practices. The Law Council looks forward to future collaboration with its counterparts in this forum.

Thank you.

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