



The Hon Robert McClelland MHR
Commonwealth Attorney-General



The Hon John Hatzistergos MLC
NSW Attorney General

Embargoed until Monday 17 May 2010

LEGAL EAGLES WALK FOR JUSTICE TO MARK LAW WEEK 2010

Key members of the legal profession will unite in Sydney today to raise awareness of the importance of providing free legal representation to disadvantaged members in the community.

The five-kilometre *Walk for Justice* aims to highlight the importance of pro bono assistance, and is the first of a series of events to mark Law Week 2010, in line with this year's theme, "Law and Justice in Your Community."

Federal Attorney-General, Robert McClelland, and NSW Attorney General, John Hatzistergos, will launch Law Week 2010 by taking part in the walk.

"The legal profession has a long tradition of working for free for those in need, and today reminds us how important that work is, and shows our appreciation for all the lawyers who give up their time to do engage in pro bono work," Mr McClelland said.

"The Federal and NSW Governments have identified early intervention as a priority for legal assistance. Through pro bono work, community legal centres, and Legal Aid, we can intervene early and prevent people getting into unnecessarily costly legal disputes," he said.

Mr Hatzistergos said that research by the Australian Bureau of Statistics shows the value to the community of pro bono work is well over \$200 million dollars a year.

"This involves nearly a million hours of work by lawyers and legal services firms. A lot of the pro bono work that is done is innovative and assists those people who might otherwise not get assistance," Mr Hatzistergos said.

"A great example is the project involving the Women's Legal Service, the DPP, and law firms Clayton Utz, Freehills and Blake Dawson, where lawyers help victims of sexual assault protect the confidentiality of their counselling records from the accused," he said.

The walk will raise funds for the Public Interest Clearing House (PILCH) and will coincide with other walks in Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth.

The Sydney walk will start at 7.00am from the Archibald Fountain in Hyde Park and end at Martin Place.

Joining the Attorneys for the walk will be President of the Law Society, Mary Macken, Executive Director of the Bar Association, Philip Selth, and hundreds of legal professionals from around Sydney.

Mr Hatzistergos said that a number of events, seminars and workshops will be held across NSW that will highlight legal options and support services available to people as part of Law Week festivities.

“For many people understanding how to obtain legal advice or what is required of them in certain legal circumstances can be quite daunting,” he said.

“Law Week is all about bringing that information directly to the public and helping people find answers to questions they have about the law.”

In addition to the *Walk for Justice*, major events around the state will include:

- An open air Legal Expo at Martin Place, Sydney enabling members of the community to obtain face-to-face legal advice and information from a range of legal service providers including the NSW Trustee and Guardian, Legal Aid NSW, Local and District Courts, JP’s and other organisations including the Motor Accidents Authority and the ACCC
- Mock-trial exercises and debates for school students
- A Law Week Legal Services Roadshow organised by the NSW Department of Justice and Attorney General in partnership with Legal Aid NSW and other local service providers, that will visit Albury, Wagga Wagga, Narrandera, Leeton and Griffith to help people access legal information.
- Open Days at local courthouses, as well as seminars and forums covering support for victims of domestic violence, drink-driving, making a Will, the roles of the courts and of the Coroner.

Law Week events will be taking place across NSW and Australia from 17-22 May.

For more information about the *Walk for Justice* or to register please contact John Pinnock at PILCH on 0414 591 208

For more information about Law Week 2010 please visit www.lawweek.com.au

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