



Hon Simon Power
Minister of Justice



Hon Robert McClelland
Australian Attorney-General

25 November 2009

Media Statement

Trans-Tasman legal ties strengthened

Attorney-General, Robert McClelland and the New Zealand Minister for Justice, Simon Power met today to discuss a new era of co-operation in dealing with trans-Tasman legal disputes.

The Attorney-General has introduced the *Trans-Tasman Proceedings Bill 2009* into the Australian Parliament today. The *Trans-Tasman Proceedings Bill 2009* was introduced into the New Zealand Parliament yesterday.

Mr Power was in Canberra today and was present for the Australian Bill's introduction.

The legislation implements a Treaty between Australia and New Zealand signed in 2008. Together the Bills will improve access to justice by establishing a cooperative scheme to make trans-Tasman litigation simpler, cheaper and more efficient.

The Bills will allow:

- a broader range of judgments to be registered and enforced between Australia and New Zealand;
- court appearances by video-link from one country to the other; and
- the enforcement of regulatory regimes supporting trans-Tasman markets.

"These Bills will significantly improve the processes for resolving trans-Tasman legal disputes and marks a new level of legal cooperation between our two countries," Mr Power said.

The reforms will benefit businesses and individuals operating in the trans-Tasman environment and support work being undertaken under the umbrella of the Australia New Zealand Closer Economic Relations Trade Agreement.

"Enhanced international legal cooperation is a vital part of the Government's broader economic reform agenda, reducing the costs of doing business in the international marketplace," Mr McClelland said.

Prior to the introduction of the Bill the Attorney-General and the New Zealand Justice Minister met to discuss a range of other initiatives to support the development of a Single Economic Market.

The Ministers agreed that working together had yielded greater benefits for Australian and New Zealand businesses than could have been achieved through a domestic policy response.

“By working in partnership with New Zealand we have improved the environment for doing business on both sides of the Tasman,” Mr McClelland said.

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