



## ATTORNEY-GENERAL HON ROBERT McCLELLAND MP

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### MEDIA RELEASE

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#### FEDERAL CIVIL JUSTICE SYSTEM ROUNDTABLE

Attorney General, Robert McClelland, has today convened a Federal Civil Justice System Roundtable to explore options to further improve access to justice.

The Roundtable was proposed in the 2009 Access to Justice Report, *A Strategic Framework for Access to Justice in the Federal Civil Justice System*.

Roundtable participants include the Chief Justices of the Federal Court of Australia and the Family Court of Australia, the Chief Federal Magistrate and representatives from the Law Council, National Legal Aid, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services, LEADR – Association of Dispute Resolvers, the Institute of Arbitrators and Mediators Australia, and those who use the civil justice system.

“The Roundtable is an opportunity to bring together and consult with a broad cross-section of relevant stakeholders to find new ways to improve access to the civil justice system,” Mr McClelland said.

“The Roundtable will provide an opportunity for an exchange of views, the development of a broader understanding of challenges and opportunities and the generation of new and innovative ideas that will inform consideration of the Government’s future reforms.”

The *Strategic Framework for Access to Justice* has already provided significant direction to improve access to justice. Key achievements include:

- \$154 million over four years for legal assistance - the single biggest funding injection in the history of legal assistance programs.
- a new national partnership with States and Territories on legal assistance services;
- the Access to Justice website to help Australians find legal information and services in their local area: [www.accesstojustice.gov.au](http://www.accesstojustice.gov.au);
- enhanced case management powers, so that Federal Court matters are resolved as quickly, inexpensively and efficiently as possible;
- the introduction of legislation requiring parties to take genuine steps to resolve disputes before going to court;
- \$1.6 million to encourage the recruitment and retention of lawyers in rural, regional and remote areas; and
- an action plan to ensure Federal laws are clearer and easier to understand.

The Framework will continue to guide consideration of future priorities.

**Media Contact: Daniel Gleeson 0417 886 111**