



Law Council
OF AUSTRALIA

*From the Office of
the President*

TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE AUSTRALIAN LEGAL PROFESSION

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SPONSORSHIP OF AUSTLII

I am writing to encourage members of the Australian legal profession to provide sponsorship of AustLII.

AustLII provides free centralised access to Commonwealth, State and Territory databases of legislation, case law and related legal materials. It also provides access to a wide range of international legal materials.

AustLII is an essential tool for many legal practitioners. If it was not freely available, many legal practitioners would have to use highly priced commercial services and pass these costs on to clients.

In addition, some of AustLII's databases are not available through commercial services at all, so it supplements those services which are used by some legal practitioners.

AustLII also provides access to free legal information for any member of the public. Such access supports the rule of law and should be upheld by the profession.

AustLII approached the Law Council in April 2007 for assistance from the legal profession to address an unexpected shortfall in its research funding.

In June 2007, the then President, Tim Bugg, wrote to all members of the legal profession to encourage tax deductible donations to AustLII. The legal profession responded admirably with contributions to AustLII of almost \$400,000 for the 2007 year.

Last year, the then President, Ross Ray QC also wrote to members of the profession and a further \$245,000 was contributed by individual members of the profession and approximately \$80,000 from Constituent Bodies and the Law Council.

Since 2007, the Law Council has been engaged in discussions with AustLII in relation to appropriate business models for its long term financial viability.

AustLII initially asked the Law Council to recommend that a levy be placed on practicing certificates to provide financial support from the legal profession as a whole. Following extensive discussion of this proposal, the Law Council asked that AustLII provide an alternative proposal.

AustLII advised that it is pursuing a business model based on sponsorship by Government, the legal profession and the educational sector. It asked the Law Council to consider sponsorship by its Constituent Bodies and individual members of the legal profession, as well as to consider partnerships between AustLII and Constituent Bodies for funding applications to Public Purpose Trusts or equivalent funds in particular jurisdictions.

The Law Council Board recently considered this proposal and decided that it would promote sponsorship by members of the profession but would leave the issue of sponsorship by Constituent Bodies to those bodies and the issue of funding partnerships to AustLII.

Sponsorship is by way of tax deductible donation.

I ask you to consider making a donation to AustLII, particularly if you use its service. You can do so by going to www.austlii.edu.au or www.lawcouncil.asn.au

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Corcoran', written in a cursive style.

John Corcoran

29 April 2009