

Deputy Premier John Rau

Attorney-General

Wednesday, 24 February, 2016

Legal Services Commission management reforms

The State Government has introduced legislation to reform the corporate structure of the Legal Services Commission.

Currently, the Board of the Commission is a representative board comprising of 10 members.

Attorney-General John Rau said the Bill will seek to reduce the Board to a skills based, five member board.

“The Bill reduces the number of Commissioners that comprise the Commission from ten to five people, and makes skills, knowledge and expertise the relevant factors when appointing a Commissioner,” he said.

“The catalyst for this Bill can be traced back to February 2011 when a review of the provision of legal aid in State criminal cases by the Commission was announced.

“The review was conducted by a committee of senior legal practitioners.

“As part of their review, the Committee recommended a change to the governance structure of the Commission.”

The Bill also provides for a Legal Profession Reference Committee, so that the views of the legal profession can be appropriately considered by the Board.

Mr Rau said the legislation modernises the management of the Legal Services Commission.

“The Commission provides vital support and legal services to vulnerable members of our community,” he said.

“A modern corporate structure will assist the Commission in effectively assisting such members of the South Australian community.”

The Bill was developed in consultation with the Legal Services Commission.

Director of the Legal Services Commission, Gabrielle Canny said that the changes will bring the Commission’s Board into line with public and private sector best practice.

“We strive for best practice in all areas of our organisation and that must also include our Board of Commissioners,” Mrs Canny said.