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| ****LAW FIRMS INVEST IN PRO BONO**** |

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| There is a growing dedication to, and maturity in, pro bono legal practice among the largest firms in Australia, according to the Report on the Sixth National Law Firm Pro Bono Survey — Australian firms with fifty or more lawyers released today.An increasing number of firms are continuing to invest in their pro bono practices, with the 2018 Survey results indicating a significant overall rise in dedicated pro bono staff, the appointment of more full-time pro bono managers/coordinators, and an increasing number of firms setting operational budgets for pro bono programs and taking measures to evaluate their programs.Performance on pro bono matters is now a key component of lawyer appraisals and recognition of pro bono work through internal awards, events and communication is also on the rise, but there is concurrently a concerning declining trend in firms providing full billable hour credit for pro bono work.“Whilst pro bono stems from an individual ethical responsibility, it is vital that law firm leaders indicate strongly to their lawyers that the firm genuinely supports them in doing this work.  The clearest way to do that is by providing billable credits for their pro bono work”, said Centre CEO John Corker. The top three pro bono client groups nominated by firms (by amount of work done) were asylum seekers, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (with 15 firms indicating they now had Reconciliation Action Plans) and homeless persons (particularly among the largest firms). But there was also great diversity among top client groups, which included women, young people and children in need, people with a disability, LGBTIQ community members, victims of discrimination, victims of crime, cancer sufferers, abused seniors, self-represented litigants, environmental NGOs and other not-for-profits, charities and social enterprises.“The message is that lawyers can be good guys and many of them do what they can to help the disadvantaged and marginalised”, said Corker. “Whilst the primary responsibility for providing legal assistance to those who can’t afford it rests with government, Australian lawyers are doing remarkable pro bono legal work to increase access to justice for some of the most disadvantaged and to support the rule of law in this region of the world.  We all benefit from this through a fairer and more robust society”, he said.Total reported pro bono hours amongst these firms rose by 0.53% to 390,931 hours despite four fewer firms reporting in 2018 (37 firms) than in 2016 (41 firms).  However, there was an overall 7% rise in the number of lawyers working for these respondent firms in 2018. Firm capacity was again identified as the top challenge to their pro bono programs.Management and partnership support and leadership continues to be the single most crucial factor to the success of a firm’s pro bono program. It is also evident through the 2018 Survey results that pro bono conditions in government tender arrangements continue to have an important influence on the growth of legal pro bono among firms of 50 or more lawyers.  In particular, government schemes are introducing firms to the Centre who become new signatories to the National Pro Bono Target.“The Centre welcomes these firms and aims to work with them to develop their pro bono programs in the coming year”, said Corker.Available downloads:[**Survey Highlights**](https://probonocentre.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=0ef73c7faee3c6921750870e4&id=d48f1b40ad&e=bbccc7539a)[**Full Report**](https://probonocentre.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=0ef73c7faee3c6921750870e4&id=e484ccbba7&e=bbccc7539a)[**Appendix 1: Survey Questions & Answers**](https://probonocentre.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=0ef73c7faee3c6921750870e4&id=527a794c73&e=bbccc7539a) For further information or comment please contact: John Corker Tel: 0402474628   |

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| **Australian Pro Bono Centre**The Law Building, UNSW NSW 2052 Australia**T** +61 2 9385 7385[**probonocentre.org.au**](https://probonocentre.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=0ef73c7faee3c6921750870e4&id=89e6f83db8&e=bbccc7539a)  https://gallery.mailchimp.com/0ef73c7faee3c6921750870e4/images/f6d45dfc-b834-4725-b606-124588a23366.png[**@AusPBC**](https://probonocentre.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=0ef73c7faee3c6921750870e4&id=c703d558de&e=bbccc7539a)   https://gallery.mailchimp.com/0ef73c7faee3c6921750870e4/images/cd44f032-37be-440f-983b-d4c77775b0da.jpg [**Australian Pro Bono Centre**](https://probonocentre.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=0ef73c7faee3c6921750870e4&id=8b0870e36f&e=bbccc7539a)    https://gallery.mailchimp.com/0ef73c7faee3c6921750870e4/images/62358922-8a58-46bc-bb55-5034d0c5348e.jpg  |

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