

Standing Committee for Attorneys-General Strategic Plan/Website homepage

our vision

SCAG's vision is to foster a society

- which is just and safe
- where rights and freedoms are respected
- with equitable access to efficient and fair justice services

who we are

The Standing Committee of Attorneys General (SCAG) consists of all the Attorneys General of the Commonwealth and States and Territories and the Attorney General of New Zealand.¹

SCAG is a forum for Attorneys General to discuss matters of mutual interest concerning justice policy, justice services and programs.

SCAG meets three times a year. The secretary of SCAG is Mr Laurie Glanfield, Director General, NSW Attorney General's Department. The Secretariat of SCAG is funded by all jurisdictions and is currently in NSW. The SCAG Officers' Group has representatives from each participating jurisdiction.

The National Justice CEOs Group (NJCEOs) works closely with SCAG. The NJCEOs consists of the Chief Executive Officers of Attorney-General's and Justice Departments from all nine Australian jurisdictions. The Group considers national and cross-jurisdictional approaches to administering justice.

what we do

The Standing Committee of Attorneys-General

- **Works** cooperatively to secure outcomes in the national interest through harmonised, uniform action, or minimum or best practice standards
- **Promotes** a consistent and coordinated national and when relevant, international approach, to justice policy development and implementation which focuses on reducing disadvantage, improving the responsiveness and efficiency of the justice system, and reducing barriers to cross border activity
- **Considers** issues identified through consultation with key stakeholders and by the National Justice CEOs Group
- **Reviews** its strategic policy directions not less than every three years

The SCAG Officers' Group

- **Supports** the work of SCAG by providing Ministers with well researched, thoroughly prepared and high quality advice

¹ The Attorney General of Norfolk Island has observer status at the meetings.

- **Conducts** through consultation as requested
- **Develops** recommendations in relation to SCAG Ministers' priority projects that are evidence based and support best practice outcomes and national uniformity, harmonisation or consistency
- **Contributes** to the development of the SCAG agenda in line with Ministers' identified strategic directions

The SCAG Secretariat

- **Supports** the work of SCAG by providing secretariat support to SCAG Ministers and the SCAG officers' group
- **Monitors** the progress of SCAG's key themes, SCAG projects and the implementation of SCAG decisions

The National Justice Chief Executive Officers' Group

- **Improves** justice outcomes for the community in all states and territories and for the Australian community as a whole.
- **Promotes** co-operation, efficiency and innovation in service delivery and administration.
- **Identifies** evidence-based and best practice approaches on key justice issues
- **Contributes** to the development of the SCAG agenda in line with Ministers' identified strategic directions
- **Provides** support to SCAG by considering matters referred to it by SCAG

what we seek to achieve

There are six strategic themes for 2008-2011

1. **Plan** for the future
2. **Address** justice related social problems and disadvantage
3. **Create** an accountable and responsive justice system
4. **Develop** court excellence
5. **Harmonise** legislation on key cross jurisdictional justice issues that are critical to business or communities
6. **Improve** Indigenous Justice outcomes

High priority items under the six themes currently being pursued include:

- Planning a harmonisation conference for later in 2008 to consult key stakeholders on future priorities (theme 1)
- Identifying best practice models for responding to victims of crime (theme 2)
- Developing proposals for harmonising complaint handling in anti-discrimination matters (theme 2)
- Reviewing work on the Model Criminal Code (theme 3)
- Developing a consistent approach to witnessing statutory declarations (theme 3)
- Developing proposals for consistent legislation on the circumstances in which suppression orders may be granted and for better national access by the media to information on what orders are in place (theme 4)
- Developing a national system for registering personal property securities (theme 5)
- Reforming and harmonising proportionate liability legislation (theme 5)
- Developing a national Indigenous Justice Framework (theme 6)

In identifying future items for the agenda, particular attention will be given to:

- Developing capacity to identify emerging justice issues (theme 1)
- Improving the response to people who come into contact with the criminal justice system who have mental health problems (theme 2)
- Improving public trust, confidence and understanding of the justice system (theme 3)
- Addressing the excessive cost of litigation and reviewing legal aid funding and service provision (theme 4)
- Progressing harmonisation in areas that have a substantial impact on business or communities (theme 5)
- Reducing Indigenous overrepresentation in the criminal justice system (theme 6)