



## SUBMISSION 39

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Hon Bruce Baird MP  
Chair  
Standing Committee on Economic, Finance and Public Administration  
House of Representatives  
PO Box 6021  
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Canberra ACT 2600  
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### **By post and email**

Dear Mr Baird

### **Inquiry into the current and future directions of Australia's service industries**

The Law Institute of Victoria (LIV) has had the opportunity to review the submission prepared by the Victorian Government (Victorian Government submission) to the Standing Committee on Economic, Finance and Public Administration's Inquiry into the current and future directions of Australia's service industries (Inquiry).

The LIV supports and reiterates its comments on the legal professional services industry as referred to in the Victorian Government submission at 5.8.

In particular, the LIV notes that Australia has provided opportunities for foreign lawyers to access the Australian legal services market by creating a uniform regulatory path for foreign lawyers to practise in Australia and by making a binding, non-reciprocal offer under the General Agreement on Trade in Services. In this context, the LIV considers that Australian regulations should continue to promote professionalism and consumer protections rather than operate as barriers to entry for foreign legal services.

However, the LIV suggests that access for Australian lawyers to overseas legal markets has not necessarily been reciprocated. Barriers to entry for legal services still exist in a number of markets such as Malaysia, Japan and Mexico. Accordingly, the LIV recommends that Australia work towards reducing these barriers and also continuing to expand opportunities for the export of Australian legal services.


As set out in the Victorian Government submission, these objectives could be achieved through:

- improvements in mutual recognition of professional standards, including admission;
- mutual recognition of education qualifications; and
- movement of business people such as easing of the restrictions on Australian lawyers who wish to work overseas.

On this basis, the LIV endorses the recommendation of the Victorian Government submission – that the Inquiry considers ways to maintain flexibility in the movement of business people and improve recognition of qualifications and standards for professional and technical services industries, including the legal profession.

Should you have any questions or wish to discuss this matter further please contact Elissa Campbell, International Law Section on 03 9607 9386.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized initial 'C' followed by a long horizontal line.

**Catherine Gale**  
President  
Law Institute of Victoria