

Media Release

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GRANTS PROGRAM REWARDS INNOVATIVE LEGAL PROJECTS

Grants of up to \$50,000 will be available for projects aimed at improving Victoria's legal system under the 2008-09 Legal Services Board Grants Program.

Colin Neave, Chairperson of the Legal Services Board, today opened the grants program, which provides funding to projects aimed at improving laws and legal services, enhancing access to justice, and better informing consumers of legal services.

"With the assistance of these grants, we aim to encourage innovative projects across Victoria which enhance the Victorian legal system," Mr Neave said.

"Projects may involve improving public access to justice or building a better understanding of the legal system within a particular sector of the community."

Individuals or organisations can apply for the grants which can be made for law reform, legal education, legal research or other legal purposes.

The grants program is funded by the Public Purpose Fund, which is administered by the Legal Services Board and comes from sources including interest on solicitors' trust accounts, fines imposed by tribunal orders, and fees paid by lawyers for their practising certificates.

This is the second year the Legal Services Board has provided funding for legal projects. In April this year \$1.1 million worth of grants were announced for 26 organisations.

Projects previously funded include the production of a DVD to encourage Indigenous people to pursue a career in the legal profession, a project aimed at helping homeless women access legal services, and improving legal education and assistance for refugees and people from non-English speaking backgrounds.

The grants program operates in two stages, with the first phase funding projects up to \$50,000. The second phase, to be launched later this year, is for major projects of more than \$50,000.

Applications for project grants in the first phase open today and close on Friday 12 September 2008. Successful grants for the first phase will be announced in early 2009.

"This is a wonderful opportunity for organisations to receive support for their projects while contributing to the Victorian legal system," Mr Neave said.

For further information, guidelines and an application form, see the Legal Services Board website on www.lsb.vic.gov.au or call the Grants Administrator on (03) 9679 8000 or email grants@lsb.vic.gov.au

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