

# **ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF ILSAC AND AILEC (1993-96)**

## **ILSAC/AILEC SECRETARIAT PAPER**

### ***International Legal Services Advisory Council (ILSAC) Australian International Legal Cooperation (AILEC) Committee and Program***

The International Legal Services Advisory Council (ILSAC) was first established as an advisory Committee in 1990 for a three year term (1990-93) by the Australian Government. In 1993 the Attorney-General, with the agreement of the Prime Minister, re-established the committee as an advisory Council for a further three years (1993-96). In the same year, the AILEC Program was announced by the Australian Government and the Attorney-General appointed the AILEC Committee to advise him on the implementation of the program. The AILEC program's three year term and funding ended on 31 August 1996. AILEC's focus involved legal cooperation activities with a focus on Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

In 1996, ILSAC was re-constituted for a further three year term and the Council absorbed the AILEC Committee. ILSAC is chaired by the Hon Sir Laurence Street, AC KCMG, and comprises private and public sector members and nominees. Members of the advisory body contribute their services on a voluntary basis (no sitting fees are paid). ILSAC has no program funds; AILEC was a funded program.

### ***International Legal Services Advisory Council (ILSAC)***

ILSAC focuses on obtaining improved market access overseas for Australian legal services, encouraging Australian providers of legal services to export, identifying opportunities for strategic positioning of Australia in new international markets for legal services, facilitating coordination and communication on public and private sector issues and improving the information base through research and publications. ILSAC also actively promotes and participates in international legal cooperation activities.

ILSAC's second term work program involved the following :

- advice to the Attorney-General and other Ministers on international legal and related services issues;
- ongoing collaborative work with the Attorney-General's Department, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, other government departments and agencies and the Law Council of Australia to achieve improved market access overseas for Australian lawyers;
- a strong support role in the introduction of uniform foreign lawyer legislation in Australia to further the concept of a national Australian market for local and international legal services which has attraction for regional commerce;
- publication of research, including an expanded and revised range of 17 Legal Services Country Profiles (total sales approaching \$14,000);
- development of Australia-Indonesia legal cooperation links in the field of economic law (seminar, visits, and a contract management project initiative);
- two international commercial dispute resolution (ICDR) initiatives designed to lift Australia's profile in the Asia-Pacific region (an ICDR Handbook and an Awareness Kit);

- initiatives to help develop Australian international legal education and training, including research, a substantial report and annual editions of *Studying Law in Australia* (print run currently 1500 copies); and
- involvement in a range of other international law-related activities (policy issues, speech preparation, overseas visit programs, conferences, student and other research support services, etc).

ILSAC has acquired a good reputation in the field of international legal services. It is well-regarded in Indonesia where it has fostered closer Australia-Indonesia links in the field of law. ILSAC's success to date has derived from strong private and public sector support for its work, much of it contributed by senior members of the legal profession.

### ***Australian International Legal Cooperation (AILEC) Committee and Program***

The AILEC Committee and Program's objective was to bring about, through selective legal cooperation activities, Australian participation in the legal modernisation process and development of legal infrastructure appropriate to a market-based economy in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia and, through this, to obtain international recognition of Australia's expertise in the field of law and legal services as well as other medium and longer term benefits.

AILEC's main achievements over the last three years comprised :

- helping to establish Australia's credentials in law and legal services in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia at the bilateral and wider international level;
- identifying and promoting on-going links in commercial and economic law, legal education and training and dispute resolution;
- commissioning and undertaking joint research on law and legal topics of interest to local and Australian lawyers and Australian business firms;
- initiating, developing and co-funding seminars, skills workshops, research projects, legal education and training activities, legal resource and information collections and providing advice concerning a number of AusAID legal assistance projects to the sub-region;
- disseminating and publishing information and research about the legal system of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia to interested groups and organisations in Australia;
- facilitating some legal consultancy export opportunities for Australia;
- stimulating significant private and public sector financial support and sponsorship for Australian legal cooperation projects beyond a total of approximately \$300,000 of AILEC program funding; and
- creating wider awareness in Australia of the legal sector of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia and the challenges and opportunities these countries face.

The AILEC Committee and program has significantly raised the profile of Australia in economic law and legal training against a background of intense competition for international influence in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia (Sweden and Canada provide substantial legal development assistance to Vietnam, and France and the United States of America are doing so for Cambodia). There is now a wider recognition, locally and internationally, of Australia's research, educational and legal practice expertise in the three countries. This has already resulted in some direct export opportunities. Further direct and indirect commercial and other benefits are expected.