

Wednesday 18 August 2021

Statement on Afghanistan by the Law Council of Australia and the Australian Bar Association

The Law Council of Australia and the Australian Bar Association join members of the international legal community in expressing grave concern regarding the fall of Afghanistan's Government to the Taliban.

Dr Jacoba Brasch QC, President of the LCA, and Mr Matt Howard SC, President of the ABA, said that among the pressing issues arising for the Australian Government's urgent attention and action are:

- (1) assisting Australians who are at risk and need to leave, along with Afghans who supported Australia's defence and humanitarian work in the country, and
- (2) attending to the grave risk to those who have worked to defend and uphold the rule of law, and to support and establish democratic and justice institutions over the past twenty years, including in particular women participating in the legal profession.

"Among Afghans at terrible risk are judges and lawyers – many of whom have courageously worked to defend and uphold the rule of law, and to support and establish democratic and justice institutions over the past twenty years. We are particularly concerned for the safety of all Afghan judges, but in particular, the women judges who previously heard trials against members of the Taliban, and lawyers who worked for the fallen Government.

"We urge the Australian Government to continue to work with its international allies to protect and assist vulnerable Afghans, including by offering asylum and working to ensure safe passage of Afghans seeking to leave Afghanistan."