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years



**Law
Institute
Victoria**

31 July 2009

Mr Michael Dean
PACER Plus FTA Section
Pacific Regional and New Zealand Branch
Pacific Division
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

By email to: PACERPlus@dfat.gov.au

Cc: clause.dirnberger@dfat.gov.au

Dear Mr Dean

Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER) Plus

Thank you for meeting with representatives of the Law Institute of Victoria (LIV) on 22 July to discuss the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER) Plus negotiations.

By way of background, the LIV represents over 15,000 Victorian members and has an extensive history of involvement with Australia's trade policy agenda. This involvement includes:

- (a) provision of submissions in respect of Australia's completed and prospective FTAs with Singapore, the United States, Thailand, China, Mexico, South Korea, Indonesia, Chile, the ASEAN Nations, the UAE, the GCC and India;
- (b) engagement in meetings with representatives of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), regarding negotiations on various FTAs and other trade developments;
- (c) engagement with DFAT, Austrade and other Federal and State Government agencies to inform LIV members and their clients as to trade initiatives and the opportunities for members and their clients; and
- (d) participation in the "China Working Group" conducted by the International Legal Services Advisory Council, regarding negotiations for the proposed Australia - China FTA.

The LIV is a constituent body of the Law Council of Australia. We understand that you have also met with representatives of the Law Council in Canberra and we support their comments and submissions.

The LIV supports the PACER Plus initiative, which will include trade capacity building and trade development assistance to strengthen Pacific island countries' ability to trade. As discussed at the meeting on 22 July, the LIV is interested to assist in the provision of "capacity building" initiatives and has particular expertise relating to professional standards, including regulation of the legal profession, continuing legal education and complaint-handling.

The Law Institute of Victoria
is a member of



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The LIV also supports any initiatives that address issues relating to transparency and rule of law in the Pacific region as well as initiatives which assist the ability of Australian legal practitioners to provide legal services in the Pacific region and we hope to provide more detailed comments as negotiations for PACER Plus progress.

Please contact Laura Helm, Policy Adviser, International Law Section on (03) 9607 9380 or lhelm@liv.asn.au in connection with this matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Danny Barlow
President
Law Institute of Victoria