

16 August 2019

The Hon. Jill Hennessy MP
Attorney-General
Level 26
121 Exhibition Street
Melbourne
VIC 3000

Dear Attorney-General,

Re: Victorian Legal Admissions Board Statement of Expectations 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2021

In response to the 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2021 Statement of Expectations (the SOE), the Victorian Legal Admissions Board (VLAB) outlines below the activities that it plans to undertake to achieve the performance improvements as defined in the SOE.

1. Timeliness

Improvement

Improve systems for applicants seeking to become Australian lawyers to navigate online information and securely provide data for admission application.

Planned Activities

- Technology enhancements will provide systems in which applicants can readily navigate information on VLAB's website and social media outlets to streamline information delivery. Increased improvements to the online admission portal for applicants seeking to become Australian lawyers will improve the capabilities of the portal enabling applicants to securely provide data with increased reliability, timeliness, security and usability.

2. Risk Based Regulation

Improvements

Expand the delivery of presentations to applicants for admission to the Australian legal profession on key disclosure requirements.

Review assurance, identification and monitoring of any and all risks associated with the conditions of admissions of foreign lawyers.

Planned Activities

- Expansion of VLAB's existing educational program on key disclosure requirements will involve the utilisation of a number of curricula including in person and electronic activities. Improved teaching practices will capture comprehensive audiences in broader regions and will address any shortfall in the availability of accessible information to the wider community.
- The admittance of foreign lawyers in Victoria and NSW will be reviewed by the Foreign Lawyers Steering Committee as provided for in Part 2.2 of the Uniform Law. Continuous engagement surrounding the regulatory framework by which admitting authorities determine admission applications from foreign qualified lawyers will monitor risk and maintain high standards within the profession.

3. Compliance Related Assistance and Advice

Improvements

Revise – update the agreed procedure for dealing with applicants for admissions who present with stale academic credentials.

Adopt targeted testing and access options to implement the current Law Admissions Consultative Committee (LACC) English Language Proficiency (ELP) Guidelines.

Planned Activities

- Formulation of policies between VLAB and NSW Legal Profession Admission Board (LPAB) with respect to stale qualifications strategies will be achieved with continual developments towards an effective and workable criterion. The adoption of a shared approach between regulators will include information sharing to formulate mutual solutions.
- Implementation of the LACC ELP Guidelines will see the introduction of a new testing standard option "Test of English as a Foreign Language iBT" (TOEFL iBT) as a pathway for admission. All legal admission applicant's English language knowledge will be verified through a newly configured online portal to capture and accurately reflect language ability.

VLAB looks forward to continually working towards achieving best practice in the administration and enforcement of regulation.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bernard Teague". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'B' and 'T'.

**The Hon Bernard Teague AO
Chairman**