Fair Work Commission releases *Future Directions* update

Fair Work Commission President, Justice Iain Ross, today released a progress report on the implementation of the Commission’s change program, *Future Directions*.

Launched last October, *Future Directions* sets out 25 initiatives which the Commission intends to implement by the end of October 2013.

The *Future Directions* initiatives are based around four themes:

- Promoting Fairness and Improving Access;
- Efficiency and Innovation;
- Increasing Accountability; and
- Productivity and Engaging with Industry.

In the past six months the Commission has successfully implemented 14 of the 25 initiatives and is on track to complete the remaining 11 initiatives by the end of October.

Some of the initiatives which have been implemented include:

- The introduction of a pilot program to provide pro bono legal advice for unrepresented parties in unfair dismissal jurisdictional matters, which will launch in May 2013.
- A pilot program in WA to provide legal advice for self-represented parties in general protection matters.
- The introduction of *Member Code of Conduct*.
- The introduction of timeliness benchmarks for determining agreement applications and reserved decisions.
- The introduction of stakeholder user groups.
- The introduction of new information materials for parties in unfair dismissal matters, including an online eligibility questionnaire for potential applicants.
- The establishment of a broad-based community engagement strategy.

In addition to the initiatives in *Future Directions*, Justice Ross said several other initiatives had been introduced in the past six months including:

- A feedback form for parties following the unfair dismissal telephone conciliation process.
- A pilot three-day cooling off period for unrepresented parties following the unfair dismissal conciliation process.
- The launch of decision summaries for matters which deal with important issues of principle or have generated significant public interest.

Justice Ross said the Commission had worked hard to introduce the new initiatives, which had already produced promising results. In launching the *progress report*, Justice Ross thanked everyone involved for their hard work, commitment, feedback and advice during the first six months of this project.

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