

Submitted by: Terry Allen, President
Agency: Australian Institute of Conveyancers

Re: National Licensing Scheme

Following the Information Session held in Melbourne on 29th July, 2008, and on behalf of the Australia Institute of Conveyancers (AIC), I wish to advise you of this Institute's concerns in relation to the introduction of a National Licensing system.

Whilst the profession of Licensed Conveyancers do not strictly fit into the "trades" category, I understand that that term is generic and is being used because Conveyancers are licensed or registered under the respective Fair Trading Departments in most States and the Northern Territory that we have been included under that heading. The significant point, however, is that Licensed Conveyancers are authorized to do "legal work", a most contentious issue necessitating a high standard of education and experience. It is therefore imperative that no "watering down" of standards and benchmarks is contemplated. Best Practice is the minimal aspiration which should be maintained.

At the recent session referred to, Dr. David Cousins explained that a National Licensing system did not mean an extension of "licensing" into an "unlicensed" jurisdiction, but an ability for a person licensed in one jurisdiction to operate in a non-licensed jurisdiction. However, what happens when a Licensed Conveyancer in, say, Victoria or New South Wales, tries to operate over the border in Queensland, where independent owner/operator Conveyancers are **prohibited from operating?** The Taskforce must address this issue at the outset, as without an ability to cross all borders, Licensed Conveyancers will not be able to participate in a National Licensing system.

The AIC has spent many years and resources trying to convince the Queensland Government to fall into line with the rest of Australia and provide true competition to the Queensland consumer. However, our requests have fallen on deaf ears. In fact, the idea has been the subject of a couple of Productivity Commission Reviews, the latest of which was in July 2008, and I enclose a copy of the AIC's submission for your information.

I look forward to your response on these issues.