

17 May 2010

Thousands will walk for justice across England, in Luxembourg and throughout Australia

Lawyers, judges, law students and many others will today take part in sponsored walks in 6 English cities and towns, 4 Australian state capitals, and the capital city of Luxembourg.

The walks are an opportunity for the legal profession to show their commitment to “access to justice for all”. Moreover, to raise much needed funds to support legal and advice charities that provide free of charge (“pro bono”) assistance to those in need.

This year the event is truly international with the 6th annual London legal walk being joined not just by walks in Birmingham, Guildford, Newbury, Newcastle and Nottingham, but also Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney, together with Luxembourg.

Last year the London walk raised nearly £400,000, and starting today at 5.30pm in Lincoln’s Inn, it hopes to raise similar funds with the support of over 4,000 sponsored walkers. They will be led by the most senior legal figures including the Lord Chief Justice, Master of the Rolls, Attorney General and Director of Public Prosecutions. The President of the Law Society, Chairman of the Bar and President of ILEX will similarly lead the walk, and they together commented:

“We are delighted to be joining colleagues from all parts of the legal profession to take part in the 6th Annual London Legal Walk on Monday May 17th. As lawyers we all know the great benefits that can derive from expert legal advice to disadvantaged people who are in difficulty. Where Legal Aid does not cover costs, the only recourse that poorer people have to such advice is through the advice agencies or pro bono services. Those services are a credit to our profession. Let us all try very hard to raise as much as we can to support their work.” (Robert Heslett, Nicholas Green QC & Judith Gordon-Nichols)

The various walks across England are being organised by the London Legal Support Trust, the Midland Legal Support Trust and the North East Legal Support Trust. These charities are “Regional Legal Support Trusts” that exist to provide additional financial support to pro bono and advice organisations, together with the national charity chaired by Lord Goldsmith QC, the Access to Justice Foundation.

The walks in Australia will start their National Pro Bono Day, and will similarly be led by their respective Chief Justices and leaders of the Australian legal profession, and will raise significant sums for pro bono agencies.

Notes

1. The London, Guildford, Newbury and Luxembourg walks are organised by the London Legal Support Trust, the Birmingham and Nottingham walks by the Midland Legal Support Trust, and the Newcastle walk by the North East Legal Support Trust. For more information on Regional Legal Support Trusts and the walks visit www.accesstojusticefoundation.org.uk/regional-trusts
2. The walks are supported by the Law Society, Bar Council, Institute of Legal Executives, and the Judiciary.
3. Information about the Australian walks can be found at www.nationalprobono.org.au/news_detail.asp?id=73
4. The Access to Justice Foundation is a cross-legal profession charity, working with the Regional Legal Support Trusts, to bring additional financial resources to support organisations providing free legal assistance to those in need. The Foundation is the statutory recipient of “pro bono costs orders” under section 194 of the Legal Services Act 2007. Visit www.accesstojusticefoundation.org.uk for more information.
5. Press and media enquiries may telephone 020 7320 5902.