Media Release

Law Council
OF AUSTRALIA

23 October 2026

Law Council supports ACIC reform recommendations

The Law Council welcomes the findings of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security's (PJCIS) review of the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC) reform package.

These bills will significantly reform the legislation that establishes the powers, safeguards and oversight of the ACIC. The reforms would replace the existing legislative framework, under which the ACIC combines law enforcement and intelligence functions, reestablishing the ACIC as a criminal intelligence agency focused on serious and organised crime.

"Serious and organised crime represents a significant threat to the safety and wellbeing of the Australian community and costs our economy billions," Law Council of Australia President Tania Wolff said.

"The ACIC possesses exceptional powers such as the ability to compel people, including children, to answer questions, even if the answers may incriminate them, and to run undercover operations during which laws can be broken with immunity. These are powers designed to be used in secret.

"We believe the extraordinary powers provided to ACIC under the new framework must be consistent with the rule of law, appropriately constrained, and demonstrably necessary and proportionate to the gravity of possible harms that may befall the Australian community.

"Australians need to be confident that this balance is appropriately struck. Where exceptional powers are misused, there can be significant consequences for the administration of justice," Ms Wolff said.

"Therefore, the Law Council was pleased the PJCIS recommendations are, in line with our own submission, aimed at ensuring ACIC's powers are more appropriately limited to the extent necessary to achieve the public policy aim of collecting intelligence about serious criminal offending by sophisticated actors.

"We support the focus of the PJCIS on more appropriate safeguards, greater transparency, and improved scrutiny of ACIC's exercise of its powers.

"The Law Council thanks the PJCIS for its thorough consideration of the ACIC reform package, and the Department of Home Affairs for its early and continued engagement with us throughout the policy development phase of these measures.

"We look forward to the Government's response to this report and will follow passage of the reforms closely as they progress through the Parliament."

Contact: Kristen Connell | 0400 054 227 | kristen.connell@lawcouncil.au