



Mark Speakman
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MEDIA RELEASE

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DEFAMATION REFORMS TO BECOME LAW

The NSW Government is heralding a new era in national defamation law beginning tomorrow in jurisdictions covering over 85% of Australia's population.

NSW last year became the first state or territory [to pass](#) nationally agreed [defamation reforms](#) designed to unclog courts from trivial claims and support public interest journalism.

Attorney General Mark Speakman praised Victoria, Queensland and South Australia for also commencing the reforms on 1 July 2021. The Australian Capital Territory is expected to bring the reforms into force tomorrow as well.

"Tomorrow will mark a turning point for defamation law that will strike a better balance between protecting reputations and freedom of expression," Mr Speakman said.

"I urge remaining jurisdictions to implement the agreed legislation so Australia can have consistent and modern defamation laws."

In July 2020, the then Council of Attorneys-General agreed that each jurisdiction would act as quickly as possible to introduce the Model Defamation Amendment Provisions in their respective parliaments. Mr Speakman introduced the NSW legislation the following day.

At the March 2021 Meeting of Attorneys-General (MAG) it was agreed that all remaining jurisdictions would act to have the provisions commence as soon as possible after 1 July.

The MAG also decided to release a [discussion paper](#) for the second stage of the project focused on reviewing online defamation.

NSW is leading an examination of how liable platforms such as search engines and social media sites should be for reputation-damaging material published by third parties online.

The discussion paper also asked whether defamation law discourages reporting alleged crimes and unlawful conduct to police, disciplinary bodies and employers. Work on this issue will be led by Victoria.

Submissions made in response to the Stage 2 Discussion Paper of the reforms are now being reviewed.