



In Profile:

The Hon. Robert McClelland MP

Bringing a diverse range of experience to his new role as Federal Attorney-General.

The Hon. Robert McClelland MP was born on Australia Day in 1958. He graduated from the University of New South Wales with degrees in Arts and Law. Subsequently, he was awarded a Master of Law from the University of Sydney. After graduating, he worked as an associate to Justice Philip Evatt of the Federal Court of Australia and as a solicitor with Turner Freeman solicitors, becoming a partner in 1988. He specialised in litigation including industrial and sporting law, which led him to represent his beloved St George Dragons during the turbulent years of the Super League conflict.

After being elected to Federal Parliament in 1996, Mr McClelland held numerous Shadow Ministerial positions including Attorney-General, Justice and Community Security, Homeland Security, Defence and Foreign Affairs.

“Throughout my career I’ve had a strong interest and involvement in issues of law and justice, and national security,” Mr McClelland said.

Mr McClelland is particularly excited about the opportunity to pursue his interests in emergency management.

“For some time, I have wanted to be involved in making sure Australia is doing all it can to prepare for potential disasters. The Boxing Day Tsunami in 2004 has highlighted the need to be ready for significant emergencies on our own doorstep.

“Risks posed by terrorism, avian influenza and the increasingly volatile effects of global warming, could expose Australia to a situation where we are required to provide significant and large-scale assistance, both domestically and internationally. It’s a priority of mine to ensure that procedures and capabilities are in place to meet any demand that might arise.”

In order to address these threats, The Attorney-General will be working with his colleagues to implement a key Government election commitment of establishing an Asia Pacific Centre for Civil-Military Cooperation.

“The APC-CIMIC is a policy I have been closely involved with developing. Research and experience have shown that there is ample room for a body to enhance interagency training, cooperation and strategic interaction across a range of areas. Disaster management is a

prime example. The new Centre will enhance the coherence of the Government’s internal arrangements, as well as providing an opportunity to engage Australia’s neighbours in joint preparation.”

Disaster mitigation is another area that Mr McClelland would like to address.

“After the recent flooding in Queensland and New South Wales, everyone understands the need to ensure that our community anticipates risks and properly prepares for them. The Rudd Government has an important role to play and I am examining options to improve our capabilities in this area.”

The new Attorney-General has been highly impressed by the professionalism and cooperation that have characterised the response to natural disasters in his first weeks of office.

“It is refreshing to see state and federal emergency agencies working closely and seamlessly in such difficult circumstances. We can truly be proud of the thousands of volunteers, state emergency agencies and the staff at Emergency Management Australia. I look forward to working closely with them all in the future.”