


MEDIA RELEASE

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A Fair Go For Injured People



A traffic accident that wasn't her fault has changed Sydney mother of three, Susan's life forever.

Like thousands of other people in NSW, Susan cannot access proper compensation for her pain and suffering due to drastic changes introduced by the State Government to personal injury laws in 1999-2005.

Susan's case is being highlighted as part of a new campaign - "**A Fair Go For Injured People**" launched today by four peak legal bodies – the Law Society of NSW, NSW Bar Association, Law Council of Australia and Australian Lawyers' Alliance.

"We want to educate the public about the impact of the laws in the lead up to the March State election," said the President of the NSW Bar Association Mr Michael Slattery QC.

"Both the Government and Opposition continue to turn a blind eye to the devastating impact these changes have had on the lives of many residents, like Susan, who were injured through no fault of their own," Mr Slattery said.

He said enough evidence had surfaced to reveal that sweeping changes to personal injury laws have created gross inequalities and inconsistencies.

"Susan's tragic case is only one among many. Sadly, there are thousands of others who have been seriously injured through someone else's carelessness and left with little or no right to access fair compensation.

"The pendulum has swung too far in favour of the defendants in personal injury cases and must be brought back to balance to restore any sense of fairness to the system," said Mr Slattery QC.

Along with the case of Susan, other cases will be highlighted throughout the course of the campaign.

In Susan's case, she was standing in front of her car, which had broken down on the side of the road when it was struck from behind by another vehicle. She was trapped beneath the car, her left hip was severely crushed and she sustained other debilitating injuries which left her permanently impaired.

Law Society Junior Vice President Hugh Macken said the four peak legal bodies were united in their efforts to raise public awareness about the devastating effects the changes to personal injuries law have had on individuals in NSW.

“The aim is to convince Government and the Opposition about the critical need to restore the rights of injured NSW citizens and redress the unfair anomalies which exist between the different compensation schemes,” Mr Macken said.

“Our compensation system should not discriminate between people because of where they were injured. It should apply consistently, and adequately account for the impact of injuries on a person’s life.

“The Government and Opposition need to take responsibility and go back to the drawing board to strike the right balance between personal responsibility and proper access to compensation for the injured,” said Mr Macken.

Law Council President Tim Bugg said it was vital for the nation's peak legal representative body to be involved in the NSW campaign.

"Changes to personal injury laws have had a negative impact on injured people across the country. Having access to fair compensation is a national issue. We hope that lobbying for the rights of citizens in NSW reinforces the need for a fair go for all injured Australians," Mr Bugg said.

President of Australian Lawyers’ Alliance NSW Branch President Mr Richard Royle said that today injured people had been given a voice that’s shouting for justice.

“As the campaign spreads across NSW, the Government must hear these voices and amend laws to bring fairness back to the system,” said Mr Royle.

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Notes to Editors:

- The Campaign ‘**A Fair Go For Injured People**’ will be launched today, Tuesday 19 September -10.30am at the Courtyard Café, Macquarie Street, Sydney (At the rear of Sydney Hospital).

