

Foreword

The Rt Hon Patricia Scotland QC Secretary-General of the Commonwealth

In 2015, the global Sustainable Development Goals included the principle that the development aspirations of all people everywhere are intimately linked with the promotion of the rule of law. While this depends on many factors, at a fundamental level the rule of law depends on the quality of the laws that are made and upheld. That is, the rule of law requires good law. Law reform is the process that makes law good, and good law better. Institutions and systems that provide fair, modern and cost-effective law reform underpin the rule of law, and therefore serve an important role in delivering sustainable development.

It is for these reasons that the Commonwealth Secretariat has for many years supported national law reform efforts. Our recently launched Commonwealth Office of Civil and Criminal Justice Reform will carry forward this work by making available for use by all Commonwealth member countries legal tools, knowledge and good practice manuals – such as this guide. Our objective in doing so is to strengthen the rule of law, and to facilitate swift and equitable access to justice for all.

In matters of law and law reform, as in everything else, there is considerable diversity within the Commonwealth. There are, however, many common threads that run through this diversity and connect most, if not all, Commonwealth jurisdictions. Regardless of similarities and differences, all Commonwealth countries stand to benefit from the accumulated practical wisdom generously shared in these pages.

The Commonwealth Secretariat is indebted to our principal partner in this venture, the Commonwealth Association of Law Reform Agencies, and to the many others who have contributed. The outcome of our collaboration, this guide to law reform, will help us all to meet our Commonwealth Charter commitment to upholding the rule of law as an essential protection for all the people of the Commonwealth.