

Foreword

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To sustain the rule of law, law reform needs to be principled, based on sound methods, and to take full account of the views of civil society and of experts. It should be respected, reliable, rigorous and responsive.

Experience and specialist knowledge are needed when seeking to deliver law reform that is successful by these measures. This guide provides practical guidance on the day-to-day process of carrying out law reform in any jurisdiction. Much has been written about law reform, but this guide is the first to have a practical and multi-jurisdictional focus. The need for such a guide has been widely acknowledged.

The guide takes the reader in a very practical way through a typical law reform project. It aims to be accessible and engaging, whether read as a whole or referred to when questions arise. The guide sets out the stages of a project, providing ideas and discussing practical options. It suggests the advantages of different approaches, explaining the reasons and providing examples.

The guide is intended for all those involved in law reform in any capacity, including within dedicated law reform agencies, as well as within government ministries and agencies. There will also be particular benefits if this guide serves to stimulate interest in and support for high-quality law reform in jurisdictions where reform is currently given low priority.

The Commonwealth Association of Law Reform Agencies and its members have long hoped and planned for the production of such a guide. Together with the Commonwealth Secretariat, we are proud to present this guide to law reform. As a significant undertaking, it has been written with assistance from a wide variety of contributors, including many experienced law reformers from across the Commonwealth and beyond. The experience from this range of jurisdictions will enable countries to learn from each other. Our association is grateful to the Secretariat for working with us to produce this guide. It has been an effective and valuable partnership – with, we hope, significant benefits to law reform.