



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **New Law Society Co-Chairpersons – Horn and Boqwana – to focus on finalisation of Legal Practice Bill and other key challenges for the attorneys' profession**

Kimberley attorney Peter Horn and Port Elizabeth attorney Max Boqwana have been elected Co-Chairpersons of the Law Society of South Africa (LSSA).

Both Co-Chairpersons have the finalisation of the Legal Practice Bill at the top of the agenda for their term in office. The Department of Justice and Constitutional Development has indicated that Minister Jeff Radebe plans to take the Bill to Cabinet this year, and Mr Horn and Mr Boqwana will be tasked with leading the attorneys' professions in the public discussions on the Bill for the rest of the year before the Department closes discussions by year end.

The Legal Practice Bill will change the governance structure of the legal profession. The LSSA has placed the independence of the profession at the forefront of its requirements in discussions on the Bill. Mr Horn is of the view that the attorneys' profession must work in harmony and speak with a united voice in the Bill process. 'Understandably there have been divisions in the profession in the past, but huge progress has been made. However, there remain issues which need to be resolved. While it is right for voluntary associations to exist to promote the interests of their members, it is equally right for all attorneys to speak with one voice on matters of principle, not the least of which is the independence of the profession. Hopefully this can be achieved,' he says.

Mr Boqwana adds: 'This Bill has been in the pipeline for a decade or so. It is vital to expedite its finalisation and implementation, as the Bill will promote both the transformation of the legal profession and better access to justice for the public.'

Besides the above, Mr Horn and Mr Boqwana have highlighted the following focus areas for the year ahead:

- To build on the existing relationships with Government, and the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development in particular, while at the same time retaining the independence of the legal profession. 'The relations between the profession and the Government are factitious, and with this approach very little can be achieved. We are tied to the Justice Department in transforming and ensuring the independence of the legal profession and the judiciary, finalising the Legal Practice Bill, producing

- To promote the advocacy role of the LSSA, especially as regards taking public interest matters to court. 'The attorneys' profession is committed to *pro bono* work and we have a duty to take on issues that affect the public, particularly indigent communities which cannot afford to take matters to court. In this regard, Mr Horn highlights the interdependence of the interests of the public with the interests of the attorneys' profession. He notes: 'Somehow in dealing with the interests of the public – which are of paramount importance – the interests of the profession, in the eyes of some practitioners, have become unimportant. The interests of the public and of the profession are indivisible and interdependent, and both have a role in the future of the profession.'
- To encourage greater interaction between the LSSA and the large law firms in South Africa.
- To promote greater cohesion and a uniform approach by the LSSA's six constituent members – the Cape Law Society, the KwaZulu-Natal Law Society, the Law Society of the Free State, the Law Society of the Northern Provinces, the Black Lawyers Association and the National Association of Democratic Lawyers. 'Critical issues such as *pro bono*; the roll-out of the professions' empowerment initiative, the Attorneys Development Fund; the monitoring of the transformation initiatives in the profession through the Legal Services Sector Charter scorecards, legal education and advocacy projects require a joint approach by the organised attorneys' profession,' say Mr Horn and Mr Boqwana.

### **Background on the Co-Chairpersons:**

#### **Peter Horn**

Born, raised and educated in Kimberley, Mr Horn has lived and worked in Kimberley for his entire life. He was admitted as an attorney in 1954 and as a notary in 1967. He is currently a full-time consultant at Haarrhoffs Inc, the same firm at which he has practised for his full professional career. He became a partner at the firm in 1960 and a consultant in 1998.

Although he focused on criminal law in his early career, like most small city practitioners he had to undertake work in most legal fields. He specialised in family work and, in addition, did general commercial work and High Court litigation – fields in which he still practises.

He has been a council member of the LSSA since its inception in 1998. As a Cape Law Society councillor – which he became in 1995 – he represented the Northern Cape as part of the process in which the National Association of Democratic Lawyers and the Black Lawyers Association reached agreement on the way forward by signing a historic agreement with the four statutory provincial law societies in 1998 to create the LSSA.

He is currently a member of the LSSA's Council and Management Committee, the Standing Committee on Legal Education, the High Court Committee and the *De Rebus* Editorial Committee.

At provincial level, Mr Horn became vice-president of the Cape Law Society (CLS) in 2000 and was elected President in 2006, serving two terms. He has served on the CLS's Disciplinary Committee for many years, and has served and continues to serve on several CLS and LSSA committees.

He was on the panel of drafters for the Attorneys Admission Examination for many years, and served as an examiner for both the Attorneys Admission and Notaries examinations.

Mr Horn was a member of the Magistrates Commission for the Northern Cape for the appointment of magistrates and has served terms as an acting Judge in the Northern Cape Division of the High Court.

### **Max Boqwana**

Mr Boqwana is a Council member of the LSSA; a member of the LSSA's Management Committee; General Secretary of the National Association of Democratic Lawyers, a Council Member of the SADC Lawyers Association and an executive member of the International Association of Democratic Lawyers.

He has the BA LLB degrees from Rhodes University. He is the Senior Partner of Boqwana Loon & Connellan Inc in Port Elizabeth, where he focuses on commercial and administrative law.

He recently served as an acting Judge in the Eastern Cape.

Mr Boqwana was Chairperson of the Board of Control of the Attorneys Fidelity Fund from 2005 to 2007 and was a director of the Attorney Insurance Indemnity Fund. He served as a Council member of the Cape Law Society for several years.

Besides holding other commercial leadership positions, Mr Boqwana is a director of the Eastern Cape Cricket Board and a former director of the United Cricket Board of South Africa/Cricket South Africa.

This is his second term as Co-Chairperson, as he served as Co-Chairperson of the LSSA in August 2008 until April 2009, taking over from Vincent Saldanha who was appointed as a judge in the Western Cape High Court: Cape Town.

### ***ISSUED ON BEHALF OF THE CO-CHAIRPERSONS OF THE LAW SOCIETY OF SOUTH AFRICA, PETER HORN AND MAX BOQWANA***

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#### **Editor's note:**

The Law Society of South Africa brings together its six constituent members – the Cape Law Society, the KwaZulu-Natal Law Society, the Law Society of the Free State, the Law Society of the Northern Provinces, the Black Lawyers Association and the National Association of Democratic Lawyers – in representing South Africa's 19 000 attorneys and 4 900 candidate attorneys.

In Afrikaans items, please refer to the 'Prokureursorde van Suid-Afrika'.