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media release

Arnold Bloch Leibler – Winner of the 2004 Law Firm of the Year (for practices with 25 to 100 solicitors) 5 March 2004

Australian Law Awards 2004
Winner: Law Firm of the Year
Nominee: Community Service Award

Arnold Bloch Leibler has won the title of Australian Law Firm of the Year for a practice with 25 to 100 practising solicitors at the Australian Law Awards held in Sydney on 4 March 2004. We were also nominated for the Community Support Award.

The Australian Law Awards recognise excellence in the legal profession throughout Australia. Employing a peer review nomination process, supplemented by an extensive research programme, nominees are short-listed for each category. A panel of judges comprising senior figures from the legal community then selects the final winners.

This success reinforces the firm's excellence in providing commercial and client-focused advice.

Hitting above our weight

Once described by the *Bulletin* magazine as "the only firm of its size with 'mega' firm status", Arnold Bloch Leibler has a client list that is the envy of many of the largest law firms in the country.

We act for more high-net-worth individuals and family businesses identified in *Business Review Weekly's* "Rich Lists" than any other firm. Many of these are Australia's most successful entrepreneurs commanding corporation-scale enterprises, who have come to the firm for legal and commercial advice since their humble beginnings decades ago. This is powerful evidence of outstanding quality.

Other clients are publicly-listed corporations with the motivation and mindset of an entrepreneur. When it comes to "betting the farm", some of Australia's largest blue-chip companies choose Arnold Bloch Leibler for their most important or difficult legal matters.

In other words, sophisticated clients who are in a position to distinguish between great advice and the best advice consistently choose Arnold Bloch Leibler.

These clients choose to come to us because they recognise that we offer a unique service. There are any number of lawyers who adopt a purely legal approach, follow old patterns and end up costing time and money for no special result. At Arnold Bloch Leibler, we do things differently – developing innovative solutions to clients' legal and business issues. We truly understand that a deep knowledge of our clients' personal and commercial objectives is vital to formalising the right business structures and helping them to manage their goals.

Whether dealing at corporate board level, building major property developments, defending major class actions or allegations of white-collar crime, restructuring distressed companies or commercialising innovative technologies, the firm has made a major impact on Australia's corporate and social landscape. The importance and complexity of matters in which we are involved is disproportionate to our size.

By way of example, Arnold Bloch Leibler was appointed the legal adviser assisting in the administration of Ansett airlines, the largest recovery in Australian corporate insolvency law to date. Our advice has created new insolvency law in Australia.

And, in a significant rationalisation of Telstra Corporation's legal panel, only one non-national law firm was included to provide external dispute resolution services. That firm was Arnold Bloch Leibler.

Building a better community

At the other end of the spectrum, Arnold Bloch Leibler represents a wide variety of charitable and not-for-profit organisations, generally without expectation of a fee. They are clients of our Public Interest Law practice.

Giving back to the community has been a core value at Arnold Bloch Leibler for half a century. Our goal is to make a real and valuable impact in the wider community through strategic legal advice, defending or asserting rights, developing the law or improving the administration of justice.

In the 2002/03 financial year, the firm worked on nearly 100 public interest matters of varying sizes, the equivalent of \$1.2 million, or in excess of 3,500 hours of public interest work. On average, 39 hours were spent by each legal professional over the year.

Our public interest law practice is treated as an important strategic programme and is professionally managed. The public interest law practice is approached like any successful business unit. It has a formal business plan and is committed to continuous improvement. We have a dedicated full-time public interest law partner, who co-ordinates the firm's pro bono efforts to deliver cutting-edge advice to charitable and not-for-profit entities.

Among those clients with whom we have established a long term relationship are medical research, environmental, Indigenous and cultural bodies, including the Australian Conservation Foundation, Make-a-Wish Foundation, Seeing Eye Dogs Australia, Australian Reconciliation Foundation and the Lighthouse Foundation.

Of particular note is the firm's dedication to Indigenous issues. We have partnered with the Yorta Yorta peoples for more than 10 years in their native title determination application and subsequent High Court appeal and are presently assisting them with an application to the United Nations.

We have also been at the forefront of establishing many charitable and community organisations with tax exempt and deductible gift recipient status.

And Arnold Bloch Leibler has applied its legal research, analytical and writing skills to assist in public policy formulation. Our involvement has ranged from insolvency law, privacy issues, charities and anti-discrimination legislation to taxation reform.

Beyond the direct application of legal skills, we contribute in several other ways. Partners apply their expertise in serving as board members on numerous philanthropic and community organisations. And in many cases, charitable and not-for-profit organisations need cold, hard cash. The firm is very generous in this respect, supporting hundreds of causes through donations.

Arnold Bloch Leibler was previously awarded:

Australian Law Awards 2002 – Best Boutique Law Firm and Best Tax & Trusts Practice

Australian Law Awards 2001 – Best Boutique Law Firm

Arnold Bloch Leibler's previous nominations include:

Australian Law Awards 2003 – Best specialist practice

Australian Law Awards 2003 – Best community service 2003

About Arnold Bloch Leibler

Arnold Bloch Leibler is a leading commercial law firm with offices in Melbourne and Sydney. A multiple winner at the Australian Law Awards, including winner of the 2002 Best Boutique Law Firm and Best Tax & Trusts Practice, the firm represents a wide range of individuals and corporate clients, including high-net-worth individuals and entrepreneurs, large family businesses and blue-chip corporations. Arnold Bloch Leibler also has a dedicated pro bono practice providing advice on social and environmental issues.

Arnold Bloch Leibler is particularly known for its expertise in commercial law, litigation and dispute resolution, taxation and property. In these areas, the firm has been involved in many landmark matters and transactions.

For further information, please telephone David Pleydell, Director of Marketing & Business Development, on 03 9229 9620 or Stephanie Green, Communications Coordinator, on 03 9229 9715. Visit: www.abl.com.au.