





CommonLII as a joint resource with only modest funding in comparison with the likely benefits.

Benefits

The benefits to countries participating in CommonLII will include greater transparency of their legal systems, both to those within the country and those outside it, with benefits for foreign investment, the rule of law and for the country's reputation. Familiarity with the CommonLII system will improve research capacity within each country and its level of expertise concerning the common law and law of other Commonwealth countries. CommonLII will be a significant element of the Commonwealth's research infrastructure.

 Antigua & Barbuda	 Australia	 The Bahamas
 Bangladesh	 Barbados	 Belize
 Botswana	 Brunei	 Cameroon
 Canada	 Cyprus	 Dominica
 Fiji Islands	 The Gambia	 Ghana
 Grenada	 Guyana	 India
 Jamaica	 Kenya	 Kiribati
 Lesotho	 Malawi	 Malaysia
 Maldives	 Malta	 Mauritius
 Mozambique	 Namibia	 Nauru
 New Zealand	 Nigeria	 Pakistan
 Papua New Guinea	 Samoa	 Seychelles
 Sierra Leone	 Singapore	 Solomon Islands
 South Africa	 Sri Lanka	 St Kitts & Nevis
 St Lucia	 St Vincent & Grenadines	 Swaziland
 Tanzania	 Tonga	 Trinidad & Tobago
 Tuvalu	 Uganda	 United Kingdom
 Vanuatu	 Zambia	

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www.commonlii.org



An initiative to support free access
to Commonwealth and Common Law

www.commonlii.org

The ideas behind CommonLII

The Commonwealth Legal Information Institute (CommonLII) aims to provide one central Internet location from which it is possible to search – for free – core legal information from all Commonwealth countries.

CommonLII will provide a common technical platform through which all Commonwealth countries can cooperatively provide access to their laws. CommonLII will assist the development of a genuinely international common law. It will support the rule of law throughout the Commonwealth, by making each country's legal system more transparent. This transparency will also support international trade and investment.

Through the development of CommonLII and the assistance of the **Free Access to Law Movement** developing countries in the Commonwealth will obtain assistance to create national sustainable free access to law. The Australasian Legal Information Institute (AustLII) is leading the CommonLII initiative.



CommonLII's content

From its launch at the Commonwealth Law Conference in London, September 2005, CommonLII is open for free access at www.commonlii.org.

It includes a wealth of case law, legislation, treaties, law journals and law reform reports from many countries:

- More than 400 Databases from over 25 Commonwealth countries including Australia, Belize, Brunei, Barbados, Cameroon, Canada, Cyprus, Fiji, India, Kiribati, Malaysia, Nauru, New Zealand, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Tonga, Tuvalu, the United Kingdom and Vanuatu.
- A Catalog of thousands of links to legal websites in all 53 Commonwealth countries, plus a Websearch engine to search those sites, and 'Law on Google' for each country. All the Commonwealth will be included from the start.
- A powerful search engine, with full Boolean and proximity searching, relevance ranking of results, and alternative results displays by date order and by database.

Over time it will become a comprehensive legal research system for the Commonwealth and the common law.

Including all Commonwealth countries

Legal data from additional Commonwealth countries or sources can be included in CommonLII in three ways:

- Where legal data is already available for free access on the Internet, we only need permission to republish it as a CommonLII database. We will then download and put it into standard CommonLII format, and make it searchable.
- Legal data not yet available via the Internet can be provided to us by email or CD-ROM for inclusion on CommonLII or a more appropriate local LII. We will provide information on the most useful data formats.
- Where technically possible, AustLII will assist existing independent local free access law providers to include their data in CommonLII results without the need to republish the data.

Where feasible, CommonLII will work with local partners in Commonwealth countries to develop their country's databases on CommonLII into separate and independent Legal Information Institutes, while preserving central access to their data via CommonLII. AustLII has a track record of success in so doing, but local and other funding is needed for training and local infrastructure. This will give CommonLII long-term viability.

Support

Initial financial support to help establish CommonLII comes from the Australian Attorney-General's Department and the Australian Research Council (ARC). The Commonwealth Lawyers Association and the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation are lending support through their membership. Support from other Commonwealth organizations, and from funding bodies, is welcome.

Essential to CommonLII's operation is the support, participation and databases of other free access Legal Information Institutes (LIIs) in Commonwealth countries, currently AustLII (Australia), BAILII (United Kingdom), CanLII (Canada), CyLaw (Cyprus), NZLII (New Zealand), PacLII (13 Pacific Island countries), and SAFLII (South Africa), and in common law jurisdictions, HKLII (Hong Kong). All of the LIIs are participants in the Free Access to Law Movement.



We hope that CommonLII will encourage and assist development of new LIIs in Commonwealth countries.

Background and operations

CommonLII is coordinated and operated by the Australasian Legal Information Institute (AustLII), the largest free-access provider of legal information in Australia, and one of the largest in the world. AustLII is a non-profit joint facility of the Faculties of Law at the University of New South Wales (UNSW) and the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS).

AustLII has already assisted the creation of similar legal information institutes: BAILII, PacLII, HKLII, SAFLII, CyLaw and NZLII. AustLII also operates the World Legal Information Institute (WorldLII), the Internet's largest free access law service, for all LIIs. AustLII's experience, efficiency and software means it is well placed to create