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## Firms form new professional alliance

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CLAYTON Utz, DLA Phillips Fox, Mallesons Stephen Jaques, Norton Rose Australia and Swaab Attorneys have joined forces with other major law firms in a rare professional alliance.

Eight of Australia's top law firms have formed the new alliance, which seeks to promote sustainable practices across the legal sector.

The Australian Legal Sector Alliance (AusLSA) will use benchmarking and knowledge sharing to develop best practice sustainability guidelines specifically for the Australian legal industry, a statement from the new alliance said over the weekend.

The aim is to reduce the sector's environmental impact and enhance its corporate social responsibility, it said.

The Foundation Members of the AusLSA include Clayton Utz, DLA Phillips Fox, Henry Davis York, McCullough Robertson, Maddocks, Mallesons Stephen Jaques, Norton Rose Australia and Swaab Attorneys.

Modelled on the Legal Sector Alliance (LSA) founded in the United Kingdom in 2007, which now has nearly 200 legal firms as members, the alliance will be opened sector wide in 2011.

AusLSA Foundation Members are collaborating to create of a suite of tools, resources and guidelines to record, report and improve the sustainability performance of the sector.

Kelvin O'Connor, chief operating officer from Henry Davis York, said: "HDY has been developing and demonstrating its commitment to sustainability and CSR principles over the past few years through its public participation in the Corporate Responsibility Index and integrated Sustainability Reporting.

"Following from the UK model, we see AusLSA as a perfect vehicle to encourage our peers and external stakeholders to adopt the same principles and help develop industry benchmarks that others can adopt".

Brendan Bateman, partner at Clayton Utz, said the firm joined the alliance with the view to work with other firms to develop a "cohesive, strategic best practice approach to sustainability".

"Applying these practices will enable Clayton Utz to reach targets and minimise the firm's overall footprint, while at the same time contributing to an industry wide sustainability improvement process."

The AusLSA idea was developed by a group of enthusiastic lawyers in collaboration with Net Balance Foundation, a provider of sustainability advice, assurance and research in Australia.