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IMPORTANT CHANGES TO THE WAY LEGAL PRACTICES VERIFY THE IDENTITY OF THEIR CLIENTS AS FROM 1 JULY 2026

Australia is expanding its Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing (AML/CTF) framework to include provision of designated legal services. As a result, legal firms will be required to undertake identity verification (VOI) and, where necessary, collect additional information from our clients before acting in certain matters.

These requirements are being introduced to help protect the Australian community and financial system from money laundering, fraud, identity crime and the financing of terrorism. Similar obligations have applied to banks and other financial institutions for many years, and they are now being extended to parts of the legal profession.

What does this mean for clients?

If a legal firm is acting for you in matters such as:

- Conveyancing and property transactions
- Commercial and business transactions
- Estate planning and certain estate administration matters
- Other legal services covered by the AML/CTF legislation

you will be required to verify your identity and provide additional information before work can proceed.

Depending on the nature of your matter, a legal firm may ask you to:

- Complete a Verification of Identity (VOI) process.
- Provide current identification documents.
- Confirm your residential address and contact details.
- Provide information about the purpose and nature of the transaction or legal matter.
- Identify the source of funds or source of wealth where required by law.
- Confirm whether you are acting on behalf of another person or entity.

Even if you are an existing client and a legal firm has acted for you previously, you may still need to complete these verification steps. The legislation requires a legal firm to maintain current client identification and conduct ongoing due diligence in certain circumstances.

Providing additional information may feel like an extra step, particularly if you have been a client of a legal firm for many years. However, these are legal obligations, they are not discretionary.

If you have any questions about these changes or how they may affect you, please call or email the Integra Legal Team on 92188588 or admin@integralegal.com.au