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INSURANCE COUNCIL ANNOUNCES A NEW DIRECTION

The Insurance Council of Australia today announced that it will be pursuing a greater strategic focus on public policy in the interests of all Australians.

"In August 2005, the Board announced its intention to adopt a new approach to setting priorities for the Insurance Council. It decided that the overarching strategic focus of the organisation's lobbying activities would be demonstrating the economic and social value of the insurance industry to individuals and their communities", Insurance Council Chief Executive Kerrie Kelly said today.

"Since that time, significant work has been undertaken with our members to identify specific areas in which insurance industry knowledge and expertise could contribute to public policy debate and formulation.

"Areas identified included insurance affordability, managing societal risk, personal injury management and compensation, and the health and effectiveness of the insurance industry.

"As a further step toward engaging more effectively with those in the public policy arena, the Insurance Council has adopted a new structure, with the creation of four policy directorates focusing on insurance customers, insurance regulation, economics and taxation, and risk and disaster planning. A new position of Manager Government Relations also has been created. In addition, several existing functional areas have been restructured.

"The new structure also involves the closure of our regional offices in Melbourne and Perth. In future, the Insurance Council's Regional Committees, supported by senior Insurance Council employees and, where appropriate, specialist external advisers, will play an important part in our public policy work in the States and Territories

"The Insurance Council now has a greater focus on further developing our relationships with Governments, regulators and other stakeholders in order to play a more active role in public policy debate and formulation. We look forward to working with them to assist in the achievement of beneficial policy outcomes for the Australian community", Ms Kelly added.

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