

## INFORMATION FOR CLIENTS

Set out below is the information required by the *Rules of Conduct and Client Care for Lawyers* of the New Zealand Law Society ("Law Society").

### 1. Fees

- 1.1 The basis on which fees will be charged will be set out in our letter of engagement which will be forwarded to you at the start of any matter we are instructed to undertake for you.
- 1.2 We may deduct from any funds held on your behalf in our trust account any fees, expenses or disbursements for which we have provided an invoice.

### 2. Professional Indemnity Insurance

- 2.1 We hold professional indemnity insurance that meets or exceeds the minimum standards specified by the Law Society. We will provide you with particulars of the minimum standards upon request.

### 3. Lawyers Fidelity Fund

- 3.1 The Law Society maintains the Lawyers Fidelity Fund for the purposes of providing clients of lawyers with protection against pecuniary loss arising from theft by lawyers. The maximum amount payable by the Fidelity Fund by way of compensation to an individual claimant is limited to \$100,000.00. Except in certain circumstances specified in the Lawyers & Conveyancers Act 2006 the Fidelity Fund does not cover a client for any loss relating to money that a Lawyer is instructed to invest on behalf of the client.

### 4. Client Care and Service

- 4.1 The Law Society Client Care and Service information is set out below.

Whatever legal services your Lawyer is providing he or she must:

- Act competently, in a timely way, and in accordance with instructions received and arrangements made.
- Protect and promote your interests and act for you free from compromising influences or loyalties.
- Discuss with you your objectives and how they should best be achieved.
- Provide you with information about the work to be done, who will do it and the way their services provided.
- Charge you a fee that is fair and reasonable and let you know how and when you will be billed.
- Give you clear information and advice.
- Protect your privacy and ensure appropriate confidentiality.
- Treat you fairly, respectfully and without discrimination.
- Keep you informed about the work being done and advise you when it is completed.
- Let you know how to make a complaint and deal with any complaint promptly and fairly

- 4.2 The obligations lawyers owe to clients are described in the *Rules of Conduct and Client Care for Lawyers*. Those obligations are subject to other overriding duties, including duties to the Courts and the justice system.

If you would like to know more, please visit [www.lawyers.org.nz](http://www.lawyers.org.nz)

### 5. Complaints

- 5.1 We maintain a procedure for handling any complaints by clients, designed to ensure that a complaint is dealt with promptly and fairly.
- 5.2 If you have a complaint about our services or charges, you may refer your complaint to the person in our firm who has the overall responsibility for your work as set out in the letter of engagement.
- 5.3 If you do not wish to refer your complaint to that person, or you are not satisfied with that person's response to your complaint, you may refer your complaint to Neil Brown, Office Manager:

- By letter;
- By email at [neilb@mwis.co.nz](mailto:neilb@mwis.co.nz)
- By telephoning him on 09 438 4239

The Law Society maintains a complaints service. Its details are:

Auckland District Law Society  
 Chancery Chambers  
 2-8 Chancery Street, Auckland  
 PO Box 58 DX CP24001 Phone: (09) 303 5270

## **6. Limitations on extent of our obligations or liability**

- 6.1 Any limitations on the extent of our obligations to you or any limitation or exclusion of liability are set out in our letter of engagement.

## **7. Confidentiality**

- 7.1 We will hold in confidence all information concerning you or your affairs that we acquire during the course of acting for you. We will not disclose any of this information to any other person except:
- a. to the extent necessary or desirable to enable us to carry out your instructions; or
  - b. to the extent required by law or by the Law Society's *Rules of Conduct and Client Care for Lawyers*.
- 7.2 Confidential information concerning you will as far as practicable be made available to only those within our firm who are providing legal services for you.
- 7.3 We will of course, not disclose to you confidential information which we have in relating to any other client.

## **8. Termination**

- 8.1 You may terminate our retainer at any time
- 8.2 We may terminate our retainer in any of the circumstances set out in the Law Society's *Rules of Conduct and Client Care for Lawyers*
- 8.3 If our retainer is terminated you must pay us all fees up to the date of termination and all expenses incurred up to that date before we release any files to you.

## **9. Retention of Files and Documents**

- 9.1 You authorise us (without further reference to you) to destroy all files and documents for this matter (other than any documents that we hold in safe custody for you) 10 years after our engagement ends, or earlier if we have converted those files and documents to an electronic format.

## **10. Conflicts of Interest**

- 10.1 We have procedures in place to identify and respond to conflicts of interest. If a conflict of interest arises we will advise you of this and follow the requirements and procedures set out in the Law Society's *Rules of Conduct and Client Care for Lawyers*.

## **11. Duty of Care**

- 11.1 Our duty of care is to you and not to any other person. Before any other person may rely on our advice, we must expressly agree to this.

## **12. General**

- 12.1 These Terms apply to any current engagement and also to any future engagements whether or not we send you another copy of these Terms.
- 12.2 We are entitled to change these Terms from time to time, in which case we will send you the amended terms.

## BILLING POLICY

This Billing Policy applies in respect of all work carried out by us for you, except to the extent that we otherwise agree with you in writing. We do encourage certainty where possible as to any fees being charged.

### 1. Fees

#### 1.1 Fees:

- a. If your engagement letter specifies a fixed fee, we will charge this for the agreed scope of our services. Work which falls outside that scope will be charged on an hourly rate basis. We will advise you as soon as reasonably practicable if it becomes necessary for us to provide services outside the agreed scope and if requested, give you an estimate of the likely amount of the further costs.
- b. When our fees are calculated on an hourly basis, the hourly rates are set out in our engagement letter. The differences in those rates reflect the experience and specialisation of our professional staff. Time spent is recorded in 6 minute units, with time rounded up to the next unit of 6 minutes.
- c. Other factors to be taken into account in determining our fee include:
  - The time and labour expended;
  - The skill, specialised knowledge, and responsibility required to perform the services properly
  - The importance of the matter to the client and the results achieved;
  - The urgency and circumstances in which the matter is undertaken and any time limitations imposed, including those imposed by the client;
  - The degree of risk assumed by the lawyer in undertaking the services, including the amount or value of any property involved;
  - The complexity of the matter and the difficulty or novelty of the questions involved;
  - The experience, reputation, and ability of the lawyer;
  - The possibility that the acceptance of the particular retainer will preclude engagement of the lawyer by other clients;
  - Whether the fee is fixed or conditional;
  - Any quote or estimate of fees given by us;
  - Any fee agreement (including a condition of the agreement) entered into between us;
  - The reasonable costs of running a practice;
  - The fee customarily charged in the market and locally for similar legal services.

1.2 Disbursements and expenses: In providing services we may incur disbursements or have to make payments to third parties on your behalf. These will be included in our invoice to you when the expense is incurred. We may require an advance payment for the disbursements or expenses which we will be incurring on your behalf

1.3 GST (if any): Is payable by you on our fees and charges.

1.4 Invoices: We will send interim invoices to you, usually monthly and on completion of the matter, or termination of our engagement. We may also send you an invoice when we incur a significant expense.

1.5 Payment: Invoices are payable within 14 days of the date of the invoice unless alternative arrangements have been made with us. Accounts remaining unpaid after a period of 1 month from the date of the account will be liable for interest at the rate of 1.5% per month, calculated on a daily basis.

1.6 Security: We may ask you to pre-pay amounts to us, or to provide security for our fees and expenses. You authorise us:

- a. To debit against amounts prepaid by you; and

- b. To deduct from any funds held on your behalf in our trust account any fees, expenses or disbursements for which we have provided any invoice.
- 1.7 Cost Recovery: If we are required to take any steps, whether in Court or otherwise, to recover overdue accounts, then you will be liable to pay to us in addition to the amount of the overdue account all reasonable costs incurred by us in seeking recovery.
- 1.8 Third Parties: Although you may expect to be reimbursed by a third party for our fees and expenses, and although our invoices may at your request or with your approval be directed to a third party, nevertheless you remain responsible for payment to us if the third party fails to pay us.

**2. Guarantee**

- 2.1 If you provide instructions for us to act on behalf of a Company or Trust in which you have any interest, then you personally guarantee the liability of that client to us.

**3. Trust Account**

- 3.1 We maintain a trust account for all funds which we receive from clients (except monies received for payment of our invoices). If we are holding significant funds on your behalf we will normally lodge those funds on interest bearing deposit with our Bank. In that case we will charge an administration fee of 5% of the interest derived.

**4. Future Work**

- 4.1 These Terms will apply to our current engagement and to all your future dealings with us (unless modified by us in writing) for each new file opened at your request.