

Access to Justice Committee – Terms of Reference

The Access to Justice Committee is a law reform committee established by the New Zealand Law Society Board.

The purpose of the Committee is to:

1. Monitor and comment on proposals for legislative, regulatory, or other change that affect access to justice, including in the following key areas:
 - a. The legal aid scheme (across all jurisdictions, including the Waitangi Tribunal).
 - b. Access to courts.
 - c. Pro bono services.
 - d. Self-represented litigants.
 - e. Community law centres.
2. Contribute to advocacy for legislative and operational changes which would improve the legal aid scheme and access to justice for both the profession and the public.
3. Provide advice to the President and Board of the New Zealand Law Society on all issues relating to the legal aid scheme and that affect access to justice.
4. Work collaboratively with other law reform committees where there are areas of mutual interest and expertise.
5. Provide advice to the Board of the New Zealand Law Society on potential public interest interventions which raise legal aid and/or access to justice issues, and contribute to intervenor submissions.
6. Alongside the in-house Law Reform & Advocacy Team, maintain good working relationships with key stakeholders. This may include attending meetings with Government departments, participating on working groups, and working with other representative organisations.
7. Engage with lawyers who undertake legal aid work across Aotearoa to better understand issues which impact access to justice, and issues affecting them, including:
 - a. Issues with remuneration;
 - b. Provider coverage;
 - c. The duty lawyer service;
 - d. The police detention legal assistance scheme; and
 - e. The administration of legal aid services.
8. Liaise with NZLS CLE Ltd to identify and deliver education programmes, and to encourage on-going learning by practitioners on access to justice and legal aid issues.

Membership

1. The Committee will comprise of:

- a. One convenor;
 - b. Ideally 8-9 ordinary members; and
 - c. One member from Community Law Centres o Aotearoa.
2. Collectively, the Committee should have a broad mix of experience and expertise working in the New Zealand courts and across all key areas of legal aid including criminal, civil, and family.