

UNDER

THE INQUIRIES ACT 2013

IN THE MATTER OF The Royal Commission of Inquiry into Historical Abuse in State Care and in the Care of Faithbased Institutions

PRACTICE NOTE 1 – LEGAL ASSISTANCE FUNDING FOR ACTIVITIES SET OUT IN SCHEDULE 1

Dated: 4 December 2019 Re-issued 2 September 2020

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SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION

- 1. People can participate in the Royal Commission's work in a number of ways and in most cases, a lawyer is not required to participate. For example, survivors can participate in a private session with a Commissioner where lawyers are not involved at all. Participants can also write a statement or make a written submission to the Royal Commission without a lawyer.
- 2. Some participants may be asked by the Royal Commission to be a witness and give evidence at a public hearing and in that situation, one of the Inquiry's Counsel Assisting team can help the witness to prepare for that. Counsel Assisting are a team of independent lawyers who are appointed to advise the Inquiry.
- 3. In some cases, participants will need their own lawyer. This is likely to be where a participant has been asked by the Royal Commission to be a witness in a public hearing or where evidence may be given in a hearing that directly affects them. In other cases, participants may want help from a lawyer to complete a statement or submission to the Royal Commission.
- 4. If a participant is unable to afford to pay a lawyer privately, and if the Counsel Assisting team are unable to help, participants can apply to the Inquiry for legal assistance.
- 5. Legal assistance is where an independent lawyer from an approved panel is funded by the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) to provide legal services. This is similar to legal aid although, unlike legal aid, legal assistance is not a loan and does not need to be repaid.
- 6. Section 18 of the Inquiries Act 2013 (the Act) provides that funding may be made available for lawyers to provide legal assistance to persons who wish to participate or appear before the Inquiry, or who have an interest in the Inquiry (participants).
- 7. Legal assistance means legal representation, or legal advice and help, or both.
- 8. On the recommendation of the Royal Commission, an initial grant of funding has been made under section 18 for the purpose of providing specified legal assistance activities to participants in the Inquiry who meet certain criteria.
- 9. The Royal Commission is responsible for administering this funding via grants made to eligible applicants.
- 10. This practice note sets out the type of legal assistance available under the grant, who is eligible to receive that assistance, how a participant can apply for legal assistance, and information for lawyers who provide legal assistance services.
- 11. The Royal Commission may also make other recommendations in the future that further funding be made available for other types of legal assistance, or to other specified persons or groups of people.

SECTION 2 - BACKGROUND TO FUNDING GRANT

12. Section 18 of the Act states:

- (1) An inquiry may, at any time, make a recommendation to the chief executive of the relevant department that funding be granted for the purpose of providing legal assistance to 1 or more specified persons—
 - (a) who wish, or who are required, to appear before the inquiry; or
 - (b) who have an interest in the inquiry.
- (2) In determining whether to make a recommendation under subsection (1), the inquiry must consider—
 - (a) the likelihood of hardship to a person if legal assistance is declined; and
 - (b) the nature and significance of the contribution that the person will, or is likely to, make to the inquiry; and
 - (c) the extent to which legal assistance is, or is likely to be, required to enable the inquiry to fulfil its purpose; and
 - (d) any other matters relating to the public interest.
- (3) If a recommendation is made under subsection (1), the chief executive may—
 - (a) grant funding for the legal assistance recommended under that subsection; and
 - (b) impose any conditions that he or she considers appropriate.
- (4) In this section, legal assistance means—
 - (a) legal representation; or
 - (b) legal advice or help (for example, help with drafting submissions to an inquiry); or
 - (c) both.
- 13. The Royal Commission recommended to the Chief Executive of DIA that funding should be made available to participants who meet the criteria outlined in section 3, for the range of legal assistance activities set out in Schedule 1 of this practice note. This recommendation took into account the considerations in s 18(2) of the Act.
- 14. The Chief Executive of DIA has accepted that recommendation and under s 18(3) has granted funding for the legal assistance activities in Schedule 1, on the conditions outlined in Schedule 2.
- 15. The Royal Commission may make further recommendations or publish additional practice notes about availability of other types of legal assistance, or legal assistance for any person who is not eligible for assistance under the grant already made.

SECTION 3 - ELIGIBILITY FOR LEGAL ASSISTANCE

- 16. Legal assistance is available under this grant to a person or group of persons who:
 - (a) Is a survivor of abuse in care, or has an interest in the matters before the Royal Commission (including a core participant), or is a person who has been requested by the Royal Commission to participate; and
 - (b) Is seeking legal assistance for one or more of the activities listed in **Schedule 1**; and
 - (c) Is likely to suffer hardship if legal assistance funding is not granted; and

(d) Applies for legal assistance before the final date for applications, discussed at section 6 below.

SECTION 4 - TYPE OF LEGAL ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE TO PARTICIPANTS

- 17. The Royal Commission's approach to legal assistance has been informed by:
 - (a) the need to ensure the activity is conducted in a cost effective and efficient matter, without duplication;
 - (b) that the distribution of public funding for legal assistance is necessary, fair, reasonable and proportionate in all the circumstances; and,
 - (c) the activity is within the Royal Commission's Terms of Reference.
- 18. In that context, this practice note includes a schedule of legal assistance activities that can be provided by a lawyer to participants. The legal assistance activities that can be provided under Schedule 1 include:
 - (a) assisting participants to complete the right application form for legal assistance and to provide the information the Royal Commission needs to consider the application for funding;
 - (b) meeting with the participant, taking instructions and reviewing any relevant documents;
 - (c) giving advice to a participant about the ways they can participate in the Royal Commission's work, including for example making a witness statement, making a written submission, participating in a private session, applying to be a core participant etc;
 - (d) helping them to participate in those ways¹;
 - (e) representing a participant on any procedural applications and at public hearings where the participant has been granted leave to appear;
 - (f) advising participants who may face adverse findings under s 14(3) of the Act.
- 19. There may be situations where there are large groups of participants with similar interests who require legal assistance, for example, survivors of a particular care provider/place that is being investigated in the course of the Inquiry. In that situation, the Royal Commission will consider making a separate recommendation for legal assistance funding to the Chief Executive of DIA. If funding is granted, the Royal Commission will appoint a suitably experienced lawyer or lawyers from the Legal Assistance Panel at its discretion to act for that group.

SECTION 5 – LEGAL ASSISTANCE PANEL OF APPROVED LAWYERS

20. Legal assistance under this scheme will be provided by a lawyer assigned to the participant from the Inquiry's approved Legal Assistance Panel.

¹ Although lawyers may not represent participants at private sessions.

- 21. Lawyers on the Legal Assistance Panel are selected on the basis of demonstrated experience in the specialist areas of the work of the Inquiry and their commitment to the work of the Royal Commission. The Panel has lawyers from around New Zealand and details of the Panel members are available on the Royal Commission's website.
- 22. A participant can nominate a lawyer from the Legal Assistance Panel when they apply for legal assistance. In deciding which lawyer is assigned to a participant, the Royal Commission will take into account:
 - (a) The preference of the participant;
 - (b) The proximity of the lawyer to the participant's place of residence;
 - (c) The efficient conduct of the Inquiry;
 - (d) The best use of public funds; and
 - (e) Fairness to all participants.
- 23. However, where for example the Royal Commission considers that two or more participants who have similar interests in the Inquiry (which fall within Schedule 1), should be jointly represented in the interests of efficient conduct of the Inquiry and best use of public funds, they may assign the same lawyer to those participants provided there is no conflict of interest. If multiple applicants from the same family group, whānau, hapū, iwi, or organisation wish to apply for legal assistance, but there are good reasons why joint legal representation is not appropriate, those reasons should be recorded in the application.
- 24. Appointment of lawyers not on the Legal Assistance Panel can only be made with the prior consent of DIA. If an applicant for legal assistance wishes to nominate a lawyer who is not on the approved Legal Assistance Panel, they need to provide reasons why that lawyer should be appointed under this grant. A lawyer who is not on the approved panel will only be approved in exceptional circumstances.

SECTION 6 - MAKING AN APPLICATION

- 25. There are five different application forms for legal assistance funding depending upon the type of participant, and they are located on the Royal Commission's website at www.abuseincare.org.nz/legalassistance.
- 26. Forms can also be provided in hard copy by contacting the Royal Commission on 0800 222 727.
- 27. Wherever possible, applications for legal assistance should be submitted by email to legalassistance@abuseincare.org.nz. If email is not possible, applications should be posted to the Abuse in Care Royal Commission, PO Box 10071, The Terrace, Wellington, 6143.
- 28. Applications for legal assistance to prepare submissions (Activity 9) must be made before 1 July 2022, so that the Royal Commission can consider all submissions in their final report. Any other application may be made at any time before the Inquiry's final public hearing.

SECTION 7 - PROCESS AFTER RECEIPT OF APPLICATION

- 29. Applications will be assessed by the Royal Commission to determine eligibility under section 3 of this practice note, and the type of legal assistance available under Schedule 1.
- 30. If legal assistance is not available under this scheme, the Royal Commission in consultation with the applicant will consider whether a separate recommendation should be made to the Chief Executive of DIA under s 18.
- 31. All applications will be assessed in the first instance by a Legal Assistance officer.
- 32. The Royal Commission may request further information before making any decision to approve or decline an application.
- 33. If the Legal Assistance officer believes the application should be refused, it must first be reviewed by the Solicitor Assisting.
- 34. If the Solicitor Assisting disagrees with the recommendation to refuse, then the application will be granted.
- 35. If the Solicitor Assisting agrees with the recommendation to refuse an application, this must be approved by the Chair, or delegated Commissioner, before the final decision is confirmed.
- 36. In the event the Royal Commission declines an application for legal assistance, the Royal Commission will provide written reasons for its decision.
- 37. Once a final decision to decline an application for legal assistance has been made, there is no right of appeal.
- 38. The process at [31] [37] applies to applications for an extension of funding as well as to a new application for legal assistance.

SECTION 8 – INFORMATION FOR LEGAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDERS

- 39. Lawyers on the Legal Assistance Panel will be paid for the legal assistance activities in Schedule 1 that are approved by the Royal Commission, on set hourly rates for junior, intermediate and senior levels of experience:
 - (a) junior lawyer at least two and up to four complete years of litigation experience \$150 per hour plus GST;
 - (b) intermediate lawyer at least four and up to nine complete years of litigation experience - \$175 per hour plus GST
 - (c) senior lawyer at least nine complete years of litigation experience \$200 per hour plus GST
- 40. Lawyers who are not on the Legal Assistance Panel but who are approved to provide legal assistance to a particular applicant will be paid on the same basis.

- 41. Legal assistance funding under this grant will be paid to lawyers at these specified rates to ensure consistency, equity of access to funding at public expense, and prudent use of scarce resources. Lawyers must only invoice for hours actually spent on each approved activity, within each activity's maximum hours and in accordance with their time records.
- 42. The Royal Commission recognises that individual applicants' circumstances will vary and that the maximum hours and payments per activity in Schedule 1 may not be sufficient in some cases. In exceptional cases, applications can be made under Activity 12 for an extension of funding. In such cases, the lawyer must apply to the Royal Commission in writing for an extension of funding prior to further work being undertaken. If approval is not received prior to the work being undertaken, additional fees will not be chargeable or recoverable.
- 43. Applications for extension under Activity 12 must set out detailed reasons why the hours in Schedule 1 are insufficient, the number of extra hours being sought, a breakdown of how they will be used, and why they are necessary to fairly and properly assist/represent the client. The Royal Commission can consider these applications for additional funding in exceptional cases provided the additional funding sought is no more than 200% higher than the maximum hours set out for the relevant activity in Schedule 1. Applications in excess of that may either be declined or may be subject to a separate recommendation by the Royal Commission to the Chief Executive of DIA.
- 44. No extensions will be granted for Activities 1 or 2 under Schedule 1. These are fixed fee activities and can only be claimed once for each applicant.
- 45. The Royal Commission may provide information from time to time to legal assistance providers on required processes for invoicing and payment.
- 46. If legal assistance is approved for any of the activities in Schedule 1, the conditions imposed on that grant of funding will be those set out at Schedule 2.
- 47. Lawyers providing legal assistance must provide written acceptance of the terms and conditions in Schedule 2 as part of the application process, before the funding for legal assistance at public expense can be drawn on.
- 48. Lawyers providing legal assistance must have received formal notification from the Royal Commission that an application has been approved before any legal assistance work is carried out or expenses are incurred. Any costs or expenses incurred prior to obtaining formal written approval will not be paid.
- 49. Any failure to adhere to and comply with any of the terms and conditions of any grant of legal assistance at public expense could result in payment being delayed or refused, or existing legal assistance grants being terminated.

Produced by:

The Royal Commission of Inquiry into Historical Abuse in State Care and in the Care of Faith-based Institutions PO Box 10071 The Terrace WELLINGTON 6143

Corel Rhaw

Signed: Judge Coral Shaw Chair Dated: 4 December 2019 R-issued 2 September 2020

SCHEDULE 1

CATEGORIES OF LEGAL ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES, MAXIMUM HOURS AND HOURLY RATES RELATING TO APPLICATIONS FOR LEGAL ASSISTANCE AT PUBLIC EXPENSE

Legal Assistance Activity	Maximum Hours Permitted for Activity	Hourly Rate Approved for Activity	Maximum Fixed Payment Allocated for Activity
 Activity 1 - Application for legal assistance: Where a lawyer assists in completing and filing a successful application to the Royal Commission for legal assistance 	n/a	n/a	\$150
 Activity 2 - Preliminary steps: Lawyer meeting with client to consider and obtain initial instructions, and provide advice (not advising about criminal or civil liability except as relevant to Royal Commission – e.g. issues of self-incrimination) Lawyer reviewing any client documents Lawyer reviewing the Inquiry's Terms of Reference, minutes and practice notes, scoping documents etc. Lawyer communicating with Royal Commission staff including Counsel Assisting 	n/a	n/a	\$1250
 Activity 3 - Legal assistance for representation at procedural hearing(s) prior to related public hearing:² Lawyer meeting with applicant to obtain instructions and provide advice (not advising about criminal or civil liability except as relevant to Royal Commission – e.g. issues of self-incrimination) Lawyer communicating with Royal Commission staff including Counsel Assisting Lawyer drafting and filing memoranda for procedural hearing, including application/s for core participant status and/or leave to appear at public hearing where applicable, or other orders or directions directly related to the client 	Prep: up to 4 hours Plus hearing time - actual Inquiry sitting time	Senior - \$200 plus GST per hour Intermediate - \$175 plus GST per hour Junior – \$150 plus GST per hour	n/a

² Legal assistance may be available, for example, where a person wishes to apply for core participant status and/or leave to appear in relation to a substantive hearing of the Royal Commission, and requires a lawyer to assist them in making those procedural applications and appearing at any related procedural hearing.

 Lawyer attendance at procedural hearing where matters directly affect the client are being heard and determined Activity 4 – Legal assistance for representation at interview of possible witness: Where the Inquiry requests to interview the applicant as a potential witness for a public hearing (not applicable to private sessions): Lawyer meeting with applicant to obtain instructions and provide advice before the interview (not advising about criminal or civil liability except as relevant to the Royal Commission – e.g. issues of self-incrimination) Lawyer communicating with Royal Commission staff including Counsel Assisting Lawyer attending the witness interview to give legal advice 	Prep: up to 4 hours Actual time at interview	Senior - \$200 plus GST per hour Intermediate - \$175 plus GST per hour Junior – \$150 plus GST per hour	n/a
 Activity 5 – Legal assistance for person requested by Inquiry to provide witness statement or submission: Lawyer meeting with witness to obtain instructions and provide advice (not advising about criminal or civil liability except as relevant to the Royal Commission – e.g. issues of self-incrimination) Lawyer reviewing relevant documents Lawyer preparing witness statement or submission for the Inquiry Lawyer communicating with Royal Commission staff including Counsel Assisting 	Up to 10 hours	Senior - \$200 plus GST per hour Intermediate - \$175 plus GST per hour Junior – \$150 plus GST per hour	n/a
 Activity 6 – Legal assistance for witness requested to attend Inquiry's public hearing and give evidence in person (not applicable to core participants- see Activity 7 below): Lawyer meeting with applicant to obtain instructions Lawyer review of documents Inquiry provides to witness in advance of attendance at public hearing Lawyer providing advice in advance of hearing (not advising about criminal or civil liability except as relevant to the Royal Commission – e.g. issues of self-incrimination) Lawyer communicating with Royal Commission staff including Counsel Assisting Lawyer drafting and filing memorandum with Inquiry including applications (e.g. for leave to appear, anonymity) 	Up to 10 hours Plus hearing time - actual Inquiry sitting time	Senior - \$200 plus GST per hour Intermediate - \$175 plus GST per hour Junior – \$150 plus GST per hour	n/a

 Lawyer attending hearing to represent client if granted leave to appear Lawyer preparing questions for witnesses (if permitted) Lawyer submitting questions to Counsel Assisting to be asked of witnesses relevant to client, if not permitted to question witnesses on behalf of client Activity 7 – Legal assistance for core participant if 	Up to 25 hours	Senior - \$200	n/a
 granted leave to appear at a public hearing, or requested to do so by the Inquiry, including if giving evidence in person or where evidence directly related to the core participant is being given:³ Lawyer meeting with core participant to obtain instructions and provide advice in advance of hearing (not advising about criminal or civil liability except as relevant to the Royal Commission – e.g. issues of self-incrimination) Lawyer review of documents Lawyer communicating with Royal Commission staff including Counsel Assisting Lawyer drafting and filing memoranda with Inquiry including procedural applications at hearing (e.g. applications for anonymity and to cross-examine)⁴ Lawyer submitting questions to Counsel Assisting to be asked of witnesses relevant to client, if not permitted to question witnesses on behalf of client Lawyer making opening and closing statements at the hearing (if permitted) Lawyer making opening and closing statements at the hearing (if permitted) 	Plus hearing time - actual Inquiry sitting time	plus GST per hour Intermediate - \$175 plus GST per hour Junior – \$150 plus GST per hour	
 Activity 8 – Legal assistance for person to be represented at a public hearing where the Royal Commission believes evidence will be given that directly affects that person and the person has been granted leave to appear: Lawyer meeting with applicant to obtain instructions 	Up to 10 hours Plus hearing time - actual Inquiry sitting time	Senior - \$200 plus GST per hour Intermediate - \$175 plus GST per hour	n/a

³ It is assumed the core participant has obtained leave to appear and other procedural directions previously under Activity 3

⁴ Procedural applications prior to a public hearing are dealt with under Activity 3, so this can be claimed only for additional applications heard and determined at a public hearing

			r	
 in advance of the p Lawyer providing a (not advising abou except as relevant e.g. issues of self-in Lawyer communication staff including Cou Lawyer drafting an Inquiry including a public hearing Lawyer attending h granted leave to ap Lawyer preparing of permitted to quest Lawyer submitting Assisting to be asked 	idvice in advance of hearing t criminal or civil liability to the Royal Commission – ncrimination) ating with Royal Commission nsel Assisting d filing memoranda with pplications relevant to that nearing to represent client if opear questions for witnesses (if		Junior – \$150 plus GST per hour	
 make a statement or s Commission including prior to attending a pr applicable to core part Lawyer meeting winter instructions and pr about criminal or correlevant to the Roy of self-incrimination Lawyer review of correlevant communication staff including Courrelevant 	o provide a written on, but who wishes to submission to the Royal to prepare a statement ivate session ⁵ (not icipants): ith applicant to obtain rovide advice (not advising civil liability except as yal Commission – e.g. issues on) lient documents ating with Royal Commission nsel Assisting ient to prepare written	Up to 10 hours	Senior - \$200 plus GST per hour Intermediate - \$175 plus GST per hour Junior – \$150 plus GST per hour	n/a
represented at a publi required or wish (and permission) to give ev remotely (e.g. by AVL - Lawyer meeting wi instructions - Lawyer review of c	idence to the Inquiry from prison): ith applicant to obtain lient's documents and/or ed by the Inquiry in advance	Up to 10 hours Plus hearing time – actual Inquiry sitting time	Senior - \$200 plus GST per hour Intermediate - \$175 plus GST per hour Junior – \$150 plus GST per hour	n/a

⁵ But note no legal assistance will be provided for a lawyer to attend the private session with the client.

-	Lawyer providing advice in advance of hearing (not advising about criminal or civil liability except as relevant to the Royal Commission – e.g. issues of self-incrimination) Lawyer communicating with Royal Commission staff including Counsel Assisting Lawyer drafting and filing memoranda with the Inquiry including applications relevant to that public hearing Other reasonable preparation required by lawyer to represent client if granted leave to appear (e.g. preparing questions for witnesses, if permitted) Lawyer submitting questions to Counsel Assisting to be asked of witnesses relevant to client, if not permitted to question witnesses on behalf of client Lawyer attending remote location to assist client to give evidence and assist with documents to be produced to the Inquiry			
Act	ivity 11 – Legal assistance for person seeking	Up to 20 hours	Senior - \$200	n/a
	espond to potential adverse finding/s under		plus GST per	
s14	(3) Inquiries Act:		hour	
-	Lawyer meeting with applicant to obtain instructions and provide advice including		Intermediate	
	review of client documents, and other relevant		- \$175 plus	
	material (e.g. transcript of relevant hearings)		GST per hour	
-	Lawyer providing advice on potential			
	consequences of adverse finding		Junior – \$150	
-	Lawyer communicating with Royal Commission staff including Counsel Assisting		plus GST per hour	
-	Lawyer drafts client response to potential		noui	
	adverse finding			
	ivity 12 – Legal assistance to apply for	Up to 2 hours for	Senior - \$200	n/a
	ension of funding for any activity outlined ove, or to apply for funding for other activities	application for additional hours	plus GST per	
	included above; additional actions under any	sought, and	hour	
	he above activities.	liaison with Royal	Intermediate	
		Commission staff	- \$175 plus	
		including Counsel	GST per hour	
		Assisting,		
		required in	Junior – \$150	
		advance of any	plus GST per	
		work being undertaken, or	hour	
		not recoverable		
		notrecoverable		

NOTES TO SCHEDULE 1:

- Lawyers may claim only for hours actually and reasonably spent up to the maximum hours permitted for the activity.
- A lawyer's travel time is payable at \$63.00 per hour plus GST under activities 3, 4, 6, 7 and 8, with prior written approval, if the interview or hearing occurs away from the lawyer's usual work location.
- Where a lawyer is required to travel outside their usual work location for any activity, they will be reimbursed for reasonable costs and disbursements (e.g. airfares, parking (including airport parking), taxis) on production of an invoice.
 - Mileage will be paid at the prevailing Inland Revenue Department rate, as amended from time to time. At the date of this practice note the rate is 0.79 cents per kilometre.
 - If an overnight stay is required, accommodation payments are capped at \$250 plus GST per night for regions other than metropolitan centres (Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch) where the rate will be capped at \$300 plus GST per night.
 - Meals will be paid on production of an invoice, capped at \$90 (including GST) for every completed 24-hour period, or \$50 (including GST) per day where two meals are required to be purchased. Costs for alcohol will not be paid.

SCHEDULE 2

CONDITIONS IMPOSED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS ON LEGAL ASSISTANCE APPROVED UNDER THIS PRACTICE NOTE

- 1. The legal assistance services approved and funded under this practice note must be provided by the lawyer/s assigned to act for the applicant by the Royal Commission, unless prior written consent has been obtained from the Royal Commission.
- 2. Timesheets must be kept by lawyers in respect of all work for which legal assistance funding is to be claimed, and be available for inspection, as required.
- 3. There are limitations on administrative disbursements (recognising that it is intended that material will be dealt with electronically, avoiding need for postage, telephone calls, or photocopying, except in particular circumstances such as where the applicant is a prison inmate without access to a computer or the internet).
- 4. Invoices must:
 - a. Be submitted electronically;
 - b. Be submitted at the end of the month the services are completed, subject to:
 - i. Not more than one invoice for a single client can by submitted in any single month
 - ii. If services for a single client take longer than 6 months to complete, an invoice for costs incurred to-date for the partially completed work must be provided at least once every 6 months
 - iii. Invoices will not be paid if they are submitted more than 6 months after the services were provided or completed;
 - c. Separately itemise hours for each member of the legal team, if applicable;
 - d. Detail what legal activity the work related to and when it was undertaken; and
 - e. Separately itemise disbursements and the dates they were incurred.