



**WAIKATO BAY OF PLENTY DISTRICT  
LAW SOCIETY**

**A GUIDE FOR NEW PRACTITIONERS**

**2<sup>nd</sup> EDITION**

# A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR ALL NEW PRACTITIONERS 2<sup>nd</sup> EDITION

## WAIKATO BAY OF PLENTY DISTRICT LAW SOCIETY

### Foreword

Welcome to the Waikato Bay of Plenty District Law Society.

This Guide has been published by the 2006 New Members Committee of the Waikato Bay of Plenty District Law Society. The New Members Committee was established with the purpose of meeting the varying needs of new members to the Society. This includes both newly admitted practitioners and new members to the Waikato Bay of Plenty District. The objective is to strengthen the networks and support for practitioners in their first few years of practice in the Waikato/Bay of Plenty and for those who have moved to the Waikato Bay of Plenty District.

Legal practice can be somewhat daunting for the new lawyer coming to terms with both "office related" and legal issues.

The purpose of this Guide is to address some of the problems which commonly face new lawyers in their first years of practice. It is by no means intended to be exhaustive as each individual's experience is likely to differ as a result of varying workplaces and clientele.

Many new lawyers are fortunate enough to be employed in workplaces where they are subject to structured training and support by their peers and employers. Others are not. This Guide provides an introduction to the Law Society and avenues of support within the profession. We encourage all members to become active within the Society.

New Members Committee 2006<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> WBOPDLS New Members Committee (2006) – Andrea Twaddle (convenor), Sue Barnett, Leanna Barr, Damian Botherway, Genevieve Denize, Vinay Deobhakta, Yolanda du Plessis, Renee Harden, Charlotte Isaac, Romy Lewitzki, Elaine Tan, Amy Watson, Dineen Wells, Aimee Whitley.

The New Members Committee acknowledges the New Practitioners Guides of other Districts of the New Zealand Law Society.

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## Terms of employment

When seeking employment, graduates and transferring solicitors often make very few enquiries about a potential employer's firm and still fewer about the terms of employment. Problems and disenchantment may arise if you do not understand what is expected of you.

A useful resource is the Department of Labour website which provides comprehensive details regarding employment rights, duties and obligations. You can find this website at [www.ers.govt.nz](http://www.ers.govt.nz)

Most firms now have their own website which provide a useful indicator of the culture of the firm and the type of work it undertakes. These websites can also include a snapshot of the different people who work at the firm which can be useful when deciding if it is the right place for you.

When negotiating an employment agreement, you should investigate the following terms and conditions:

- Hours of work.
- Salary and basis for salary review, including any bonus structured payment which is often linked to exceeding budget.
- Job description – are you expected to work in a particular or specialised field?
- Restraint of trade provisions.
- Practising fees/Practising certificates. These run annually from February – January. Ordinarily your firm will pay for your practising certificate. Ensure your agreement addresses whether you are required to reimburse the firm if you leave. Traditionally a new firm will reimburse the previous employer for the practising certificate. However, unless negotiated at the outset, this may become an issue if a firm considers they "own" the certificate and require reimbursement of any remaining period of time before it will release a practicing certificate to you. Alternatively, some firms will surrender the certificate to the Law Society for reimbursement of months in credit. It is important that you clarify this firm's position in your employment agreement.
- Supervision, training and advancement within the firm.

## Firm Culture

Each firm will have a distinct culture to which policies and procedures will be linked. Make the most of opportunities to familiarise yourself with the firm and its culture. This may be through any induction process the firm provides, or taking up opportunities socially within the firm that provide an opportunity to interact with others. These informal situations often provide an opportunity for you to learn firm expectations, systems and work practices.

## Dress Codes

A firm's culture will usually dictate the appropriate standard of dress.

If it is not obvious to you what to wear to an interview or on your first day – ask. Remember many firms' standards are based on their clients' expectations. Law is inherently a conservative profession and a general rule is when unsure, dress more formally/conservatively.

Expected Court attire:

- Family Court – dark coloured business suits are preferred.
- District Court – dark coloured business suits are preferred.
- High Court – a gown is required over a black/dark coloured business suit with white shirt.
- Court of Appeal and Supreme Court – gowns are required.

## Work practices

Being competent with basic processes is essential when starting out in a firm. Familiarise yourself with systems used by the firm including:

- Time recording systems;
- Document layout;
- Preferred time management systems, such as utilising Outlook calendar and tasks;
- Research databases and library resources;
- Dictation systems (electronic or manual).

A firm's support staff are extremely valuable in helping you become more competent and confident with such systems.

Support staff are also able to share with you preferred "best practice" techniques to ensure the efficiency of workflow. This includes learning how to dictate. Dictation is a learned skill and secretaries are usually able to provide instructions to you regarding the information they require from you, in what order and technique regarding the clarity of your dictation.

Professional work practices will enable you to keep on top of your ever growing files. Such practices include:

- Always making a record or file note of telephone conversations, messages and instructions. Notes should include the relevant date and time.
- Don't be afraid to tell clients you will clarify a matter and get back to them.
- Ensure decisions are made by the client, not you. Provide your client with options including the benefits and difficulties with each.
- Learn the Company policies regarding the Trust account. Follow them always.
- Do not put off working on files.
- Concentrate exclusively on one task at a time, interruptions/distractions often lead to inaccurate billing and lack of attention to detail.
- Always proof read documents before they are sent. This includes emails.
- Check all enclosures attached to documents and correspondence.
- Keep a diary and record due dates for work/important dates such as dates for filing/settlements.
- Regularly record and review time/billing.
- Keep in touch with clients and realistically manage their expectations.

To succeed both in terms of progression and personal satisfaction, a solicitor must adopt a disciplined approach to practice. Suggestions to developing your own approach include:

- Setting daily and weekly objectives;
- Listing goals and setting priorities for each;
- Doing the most important and pressing tasks first;
- Doing the more difficult tasks while you are fresh and at the time of the day when you feel you work the best;
- Ensure that files and/or court appearances are attended to by another practitioner if you are unable to do so;
- Ensure that clients are billed promptly for work completed.

Appropriate email etiquette is essential in presenting a professional image to your client. Most firms will have a policy to address internet, computer and email use, which you should become familiar with. General guidelines for email use are similar to those for writing letters:

- Be careful about sending confidential or privileged information through email as there is no guarantee that only the client will receive or read the message, which may breach your obligations of confidentiality.
- Keep personal emails to a minimum. Emails sent through your firm's computer may be seen by your employer.

## Delegation of work

Each practitioner has an individual method of delegation and each delegated task has peculiar characteristics. However in all the instances it is critical that you examine the file immediately and determine in your own mind the purpose and basis of the delegation.

- Seek a clear identification of the problems or particular questions both legal and factual which you have to consider – by way of a written memo if possible.
- Clarify that you have all relevant facts required to complete the work.
- Ascertain the purpose for such research or work.
- Be aware of any time limits for completion of the work.
- Ask if the work is to be prioritised before or after other work delegated to you.
- Obtain an indication of the time and effort that should be expended by you given the context of the fees to be charged to the client, for example is an initial position required or a full opinion?
- Identify the terms of your responsibility and the nature or form of the work that is sought.

Frequently the practitioner delegating work does not pass on all relevant background information related to a piece of work. If you are concerned that you do not have enough information to complete the work requested:

- Ask for a time to discuss the file/client with the delegating practitioner
- If your request is not met, arrange an appropriate time through his/her secretary.
- If time is not then made available, dictating a file note recording your request for assistance and the lack of response to your request. A degree of subtlety is obviously required. Keeping a file of such incidents is useful if the lack of assistance continues, in which case requesting a meeting with your supervising partner or firm's practice manager and raising the file notes is advisable.
- If all of these fail contact a member of the Panel of Friends or a senior practitioner on a confidential basis.

## Beginning a new file

Your work will usually consist of a variety of instructions, either from more senior practitioners in your firm, or from the client directly. It is important that you know where to start when you have little experience regarding the instructions requested.

Your work processes will often depend on the size and structure of your firm and how your firm supervises work. The following are general guidelines to help you get started:

- Requesting from the practitioner delegating the work whether there are similar files you can view;
- Discussing the request with practitioners in your firm specialising in that area of law;
- Using precedents and resources (library, database and internet) for explanations;
- Either:
  - complete the task and return it to the delegating practitioner with comment regarding areas you consider may be relevant and have not addressed, or areas of concern arising from your research; or
  - request feedback from the delegating practitioner once you have completed initial work on the file thereby enabling them to provide comment regarding additional areas to consider or other resources to consider. Most practitioners will advise you of their preference. If you discover during your research the matter may turn on specific facts it is worth checking with the practitioner that you have all the necessary information to provide an opinion.
- Request a copy of the completed advice from the practitioner once it is finalised for the client. Valuable information can be learnt from reviewing amended work, including preferences regarding style of presentation.
- Develop your own documents/precedents to enable you to prepare simple documents efficiently. Such documents are likely to include basic letters, forms or pleadings.
- If you find yourself at a complete dead end, friends outside the firm who work in the area may point you in the right direction. However;
  - Be cautious discussing matters outside the firm as there may be a potential conflict of interest if they are involved in the file.
  - Remember that if you seek advice from friends, they do not have all the information that you have such as the background file information and access to relevant documents.
  - As a new practitioner it is important that you are able to apply your research skills and understand the issues to back up your reasoning. This will only be accomplished through a solid understanding of an issue following extensive research. Asking your friends may be a starting point, but is unlikely to help you learn or develop your legal researching skills.
  - Seek advice from friends purely as a guidance tool, or to discuss issues you have, remembering always your obligations of confidentiality.

## Learning your capacity

When you begin working, it is common that new practitioners want to take on all work offered to them. However, the reality is that you have a capacity as to the amount of work that can realistically be accomplished in any day and it is important that you learn to manage expectations of those delegating work to you, so that they are not disappointed if work cannot be done immediately. We recommend:

- Consider the situation carefully before saying “no” to work. Many practitioners prefer to know that you have a priority job for another solicitor to complete first, but you are able to address their matter after that time. Consider which practitioners you say “no” to. Some are less forgiving and more demanding than others.
- If your workload consistently is too much for you to handle:
  - Consider whether your file management skills are efficient.
  - Ask for pointers on managing workflow from another solicitor.
  - Assess whether you are utilising your support staff effectively.

Consider discussing the matter with human resources, your practice manager or a partner regarding what options are available to address the situation. This may be modifying the number of practitioners delegating work to you, considering a different type of work or under-taking time management training.

## File Management

Every firm will have a preferred file management system. This ensures all relevant work is on hand when required. Effective file management suggestions are:

- Keep files tidy and intact.
- Only remove documents from files when necessary, and if this occurs, mark the file as a reminder that information is missing. An alternative is to photocopy the document being used so the file retains all material.
- Ensure correspondence is kept up to date by printing emails, keeping correspondence and making file notes of telephone conversations and discussions with supervising partner or other fee-authors about the file.
- If removing files from a colleague’s office, ensure that you obtain his/her permission to do so.

## Problem Files

Where a problem arises, face it immediately. “A problem shared is a problem halved”.

- Raise the issue with your supervising partner or a senior practitioner. Clarify instructions and the area of research to focus on.

- Acknowledge your inability of lack of experience in difficult matters and seek guidance where appropriate.
- Communicate with your client. Keep the client informed as to what you are doing. Remember that many issues require a client's decision, not yours. An unauthorised decision puts you and your employer at risk.
- Disclose "skeleton" files promptly to your employer and ensure that the problems are resolved smartly. A skeleton file is one which has been left unattended for some reason and may require urgent action.
- Difficult clients need special management. Ongoing problems should be referred back to a partner or principal without delay.
- Keep up with your professional reading and continuing education.

## Time Recording

When working in a law firm that operates using time recording it will be important to come to grips with the system of time recording used by the firm as quickly as possible. In most firms time recording is an essential part of the day to day running of the business because a client will be charged by the time spent on their file/matter.

Additional factors apart from time which may be considered when determining the appropriateness of a fee for a completed job include skill, urgency, and complexity. Some of these factors are set out in Rule 3.01 of the Rules of Professional conduct.

Most firms now use electronic time recording and so it will be important that in the first few days of you starting work with the firm you understand fully how the time recording system works.

Many lawyers fall into the trap of not routinely recording their time and as a consequence may inadvertently over-charge or under-charge a client when they attempt to record their time retrospectively. You will save yourself a lot of time and possible negative comment from your supervising partner if you get into the habit of regular and accurate time recording.

Most firms with time recording systems set budgets for each team or solicitor which relate to the generation of fees expected from that team or solicitor per year. Budgets are ordinarily based on your charge-out rate and the number of chargeable hours you are expected to recover per day on average.

When assessing your performance, most firms will take into account your budget performance. Your productivity is often assessed on both chargeable and non-chargeable time recorded, therefore your accuracy in recording is important.

Thorough time recording is useful to a firm to establish estimates on similar future matters, where a firm can review the actual cost of your time on a matter and any time written-off. It is also useful where a client questions an invoice that is higher than expected to justify the actual time spent, compared to the amount charged.

Hints for time recording include:

- Recording at the time work is done, not at the end of the day as these estimates are usually inaccurate.
- Concentrating on one matter at a time, not working across several matters at once which often leads to distractions, inefficient work practices and inaccurate time recording.
- Recording billable time when completing a task relating to a client matter prevents you from doing another billable task.

# Affidavits and Statutory Declarations

## Affidavits

Often new practitioners are asked to swear affidavits for clients of other law firms. A party's own solicitor is prohibited from swearing an affidavit as is a solicitor in the same law firm.

The process to be followed is set out in the Oaths and Declarations Act 1957:

- Establish if the deponent is a client of your firm or whether your firm is acting for another party to the litigation to which the affidavit relates. In either circumstance, the affidavit must be sworn at another firm.
- Ask whether the deponent is swearing or affirming the affidavit. If the deponent swears the affidavit, they must do so on the Bible or Koran.
- Ask the deponent to sign the affidavit in the space provided on the last page of the affidavit. Ask the deponent to initial each proceeding page.

Where the deponent elects to swear the affidavit:

- Ask "Do you swear by Almighty God that ...":
  - (Pointing to the name on the front of the affidavit) "That is your full name?"
  - (Pointing to their signature) "That is your true usual signature?"
  - "That you have read and understood the contents of the document?"
  - "That the contents of the document are true and correct to the best of your knowledge and belief?"
  - "And that the exhibits attached are those referred to?"
- The deponent should answer "yes" to all questions.
- You then need to:
  - Sign the affidavit below the deponent's signature on the last page of the affidavit and initial proceeding pages.
  - Print or stamp your name and position as Solicitor of the High Court of New Zealand.
  - Date the affidavit.

If the deponent elects to affirm the affidavit :

- Check the affidavit starts with "I [name] of [town/city] solemnly and sincerely affirm..."
- Ask "Do you solemnly and sincerely affirm...":
  - (Pointing to the name on the front of the affidavit) "That is your full name?"
  - (Pointing to their signature) "That is your true usual signature?"
  - "That you have read and understood the contents of the document?"
  - "That the contents of the document are true and correct to the best of your knowledge and belief?"
  - "And that the exhibits attached are those referred to?"
- The deponent should answer "yes" to all questions.
- You then need to:
  - Sign the affidavit below the deponent's signature on the last page of the affidavit and initial proceeding pages.

- Print or stamp your name and position as Solicitor of the High Court of New Zealand.
  - Write "Affirmed at [place] this [day] of [month] 200 [year] before me".
- If any amendments are made by hand to the document, the deponent and you need to initial each change.
  - Any exhibits to the affidavit should be signed and dated. An exhibit note should be used for this purpose on the front first page of the exhibit which you need to complete.
  - An exhibit note should state:

"This is a true copy of the exhibit marked with the letter  
 "[A]" referred to in the affidavit of  
 [name] sworn at  
 [place] this [date] day of [month] 200 [year] before me:  
 A Solicitor of the High Court of New Zealand"

- You also need to initial each subsequent page of each exhibit. This is not required from the deponent.

### **Statutory Declarations**

- Section 9 of the Oaths and Declarations Act 1957 specifies who may witness a declaration. As a barrister and solicitor of the High Court, you are authorised to do so.
- Declarations simply require signature by a solicitor or authorised person.
- The "declaration" is the document itself, rather than any words accompanying it.

### **Notarised Documents**

- Some documents need to be witnessed by a Notary Public rather than a solicitor. Lists of Notary Publics are available from the Waikato Bay of Plenty District Law Society.

## Court Etiquette

Your overriding and paramount duty is to the Court. You are first and foremost an officer of the Court. Accordingly, you must **never mislead the Court**.

As an advocate, the respect of Judges is one of the most important things you can attain. If you mislead the Court and this is discovered, that respect is lost and your judgment and submissions from that point will always be questioned.

As an advocate, general rules apply. You must:

- Honestly represent the facts.
- Provide a full and accurate representation of the law.
- Not seek to distort the truth when dealing with a witness.
- Not abuse Court process.
- Fearlessly and honestly represent your client.
- Not act as counsel and witness in the same matter.

When in Court, good practice includes considerations of how the Court room operates, presentation skills, how you interact with the Judge, opposing counsel and witnesses.

When entering and leaving the Court:

- Bow.
- In the High Court and District Court it is custom that the right hand seat in the front row is left vacant for QCs. This is not always possible if a Court is overcrowded. However if a QC comes into the room and you are sitting in the right hand seat in the front row, vacate the seat.
- When you have finished your case, let the next case be called before you leave. If counsel behind you is speaking either wait for that person to finish or leave the Court without crossing between that counsel and the Judge.
- Do not leave the Court if you are the last solicitor left in the Court. You may only leave if another solicitor comes in. However, if you are the second to last solicitor in the Court, you must ask the Court's permission to leave.

Sound presentation skills are important to establish a professional appearance:

- Be punctual.
- Do not state that you appear "on instructions". Irrespective of who gave you instructions, you are the counsel appearing and responsible for the file.
- When appearing on any matter announce yourself, explain who you appear for and if there is an appearance on the other side sit down and allow other counsel to announce themselves.
- When referring to a judgment, provide the name of the case, citation, and Court. If it is a higher Court (Court of Appeal or Supreme Court) mention who delivered the judgment.
- Speak clearly, concisely, loudly and in a measured way. Use the microphones available.
- Do not read submissions word for word, but address the Court and persuade it of your client's position.
- Know your topic and have enough information at your fingertips to be able to respond to a query to be made by a Judge.
- Do not use colloquial language.

Good Court etiquette requires that you to address the Judge and members of the Court appropriately:

- When a Judge first enters the Court allow the Judge to be seated before you take a seat.
- Address the Judge as "Your Honour" or "Sir/Madam".
- If you have an application to make, make it after all counsel have announced themselves and allow the Judge to make a note and explain what you are there for.
- Stand when being spoken to by a Judge.
- Never interrupting a Judge.
- Do not start speaking until the Judge has invited you to speak.
- If you wish to make an objection, rise and obtain the Judge's attention by saying "If your Honour pleases..."
- If you are granted an indulgence, thank the Judge for the courtesy shown.

Interaction with Opposing Counsel:

- Refer to opposing counsel as your "learned friend".
- Do not interrupt opposing counsel.
- Sit when another counsel gets to his or her feet.
- If you are on the receiving end of an objection, and hear your opponent catch the Judge's attention, sit down and wait for the submission to be made.

Witnesses:

- Educate your witness. When a witness proceeds to the witness box, advise them to approach and walk behind you, not between yourself and the Judge.
- Do not approach a witness in the witness box without leave of the Court.

## Personal Problems

Often problems which seem to you purely personal become a major factor in your ability to work effectively. Many solicitors put these difficulties aside as unrelated to practice but unless dealt with they may become worse and affect professional performance, sometimes with unpleasant consequences. These problems include your own health, lack of confidence in sometimes difficult Court appearances, financial and employment difficulties.

If you are experiencing personal problems:

- Consult a partner in the firm if appropriate.
- Contact a personal friend who is a senior practitioner.
- Contact a member of the Panel of Friends.
- Contact a mentor, independent of the profession, such as a professional counsellor or advisor.

No matter how difficult the issue, seek help and take on board the advice offered. You may feel more comfortable with someone nearer your own age, or someone senior, perhaps otherwise unknown to you. The advice is available and will always willingly be given. Your consultation can be clothed with professional privilege if from the outset you establish a solicitor-client relationship.

## Financial Problems and Financial Planning

Money worries (real or imagined) can have a great impact on professional as well as personal relationships. A prudent lawyer will ensure that his or her finances are well organised so as never to be tempted to act illegally or unethically because of financial pressure. Relationships with bankers and creditors should therefore be conducted on a sound footing at all times. Speculative ventures by lawyers should be entered into only with care after independent advice. Joint undertakings with clients are subject to the strict rules of the Code of Ethics.

Few law firms have superannuation schemes or health insurance schemes. It is therefore necessary for most practising lawyers to make arrangements for disability and retirement. Neither fellow partners nor employers can be expected to carry an ill staff member or partner for long.

You should check out a suitable insurance to cover you in the event of untimely illness or death. There are various types of insurance which can cover against illness or injury of both a temporary or permanent nature, for example Income Protection insurance. Although ACC will cover some types of injury, many other illnesses such as cancer and multiple sclerosis will not be. Income protection insurance premiums are generally lower if you take up cover before you turn 30 so there is a benefit in having a back up plan of this type in place sooner rather than later. This is particularly important for practitioners with young families and those with mortgage commitments, but applies to all.

While you may be just out of law school it is surprising how quickly the years go by. A superannuation scheme started early will be easier to maintain than one started late. There are reputable financial advisers and retirement planners in most of the main centres.

Do not be too proud to seek advice on personal, legal or financial matters.

## Professional Problems

If you have any concerns over:

- Possibility of a professional error or omission on your part or that of another practitioner;
- Suspicion that the rules of professional and ethical conduct have been broken by you or another practitioner;
- Uncertainty about your obligations under the Rules of Professional Conduct; or
- Concern that there has been a breakdown in the relationship between you and your client such as where the client has expressed his/her dissatisfaction with the work you have done (or rather have not done), or you are at odds over factual issues in question or the client accuses you of having said or done something which you have not, or you are unable to obtain proper instructions etc.

You must take immediate steps.

Discuss your concerns with a partner in the firm or consult a member of the Panel of Friends. It is important that you act immediately so that the firm's insurance can be notified if necessary. Problems are only further compounded if help is not sought and positive and direct action is not taken. If the problem is one that troubles you because of its potential impact on your relationship with your employer firm then consultation with a member of the Panel may assist in the first instance.

In discussion with that Friend you should ensure that you are protected by privilege.

That Friend will probably not be able to act on your behalf but may refer you to someone who can so act in your subsequent dealings with the firm in resolving the problem and/or securing your employment position.

## Dealing with Clients and other Practitioners

The way you operate in practice will form your professional reputation, therefore keeping in mind your professional obligations at all times is important when dealing both with clients and other practitioners. The **Rules of Professional Conduct** set out the basis of ethical rules underpinning the profession. Make sure you read and are familiar with this document.

Relationships with clients can be developed and enhanced by you acting in a professional manner.

**Guidelines to dealing with clients** include:

- Obtaining clear instructions at all times.
- Confirming the nature and extent of instructions in writing, usually by sending letters of engagement to confirm new or varied instructions.
- Manage client expectations by providing estimated time frames when work is expected to be completed by.
- Provide your firm's billing policy/information to clients.
- Resolve any conflicts of interest that arise as soon as possible. Seek advice from your supervising partner or a senior practitioner if potential conflicts arise.
- Always obtain your client's agreement before dealing with a third party on behalf of your client.
- Confirm how your client prefers to receive information to ensure there are no issues with confidentiality, especially if work phone numbers, fax numbers or email addresses are provided.
- Be courteous with your client by providing clear advice and keeping your client informed of progress or any delays in work being undertaken for them.
- Act as your client's advocate and advise but do not make decisions for your client.
- Inform your client if you disagree with their decision on any matter and make full written notes of the concerns you have raised with them. If you are unsure of the instructions they wish you to follow, check with your supervising partner or a senior practitioner before proceeding.

When **dealing with other practitioners**, keep in mind:

- Undertakings must be strictly honoured. Do not give them without partner approval because they are enforceable by a Court and involve the liability of all partners in a firm. (Professional Conduct Rule 6.07).
- Return messages or respond to letters and emails promptly. (Professional Conduct Rule 6.01(6)).
- Other solicitors are a useful referral source and influential in how your reputation develops. Always deal with other practitioners with professional courtesy.

## Waikato Bay of Plenty District Law Society

The Waikato Bay of Plenty District Law Society administers the legal profession for the district.

Every person who is a holder of a current practising certificate issued by the Society is a member of the Society.

The New Members Committee is one of many Society committees which focus on those practitioners in the region who have held a practising certificate in the District for seven years or less.

The New Members Committee aims to meet the varying needs of new members to the Society, both newly admitted practitioners and practitioners new to the Waikato Bay of Plenty District. The Committee aims to strengthen the networks and support for practitioners in their first few years of practice in the Waikato Bay of Plenty.

Information about the Society and its committees is available on the Waikato Bay of Plenty District Law Society website: [www.wbopdls.co.nz](http://www.wbopdls.co.nz)

## The Panel of Friends

The Panel of Friends consists of practitioners whose function is to assist other practitioners with both legal and personal problems. A list of the practitioners on the Panel is kept by the Secretary of the Society and changes from time to time. Biographical information is available about those on the list which will enable you to choose a suitable practitioner to approach. A wide range of age and experience is available. Be aware that it is not yet clear whether all communications with a member of the Panel are protected by privilege.

There is no limitation on the type of the problem which can be referred to a member of the Panel. Experience shows a full range of reference from difficulties between partners, difficulties between employers and employees, concern about ethical issues, concern about negligence, and a wide range of purely personal problems including financial, emotional and health issues. The Panel can offer not only a sympathetic ear but advice.

### Contacting a member of the Panel

Contact the Waikato Bay of Plenty District Law Society for current details of members of the Panel of Friends: Phone: (07) 838 0264

## Social

From time to time, social occasions can be organised by the Law Society or sub committee's of the Law Society. These are normally advertised in the Law Society newsletter and are a good way of meeting your contemporaries.

If you don't know others in your firm able to attend such functions, contact the Waikato Bay of Plenty District Law Society for the contact details of the New Members Committee who are able to attend with you.

The Waikato Bay of Plenty District Law Society may be contacted by phone: (07) 838 0264

## Marketing and Networking

There are many opportunities to market both the firm and your own profile as a solicitor. These marketing opportunities include attending firm and industry functions, writing articles for publications, bringing in new clients and assisting in in-house presentations.

As you progress in your career, the ability to introduce clients to the firm is an increasingly important asset. The process of bringing in clients to the firm will be made easier when you develop marketing and networking skills early in your career. Gaining confidence through attending various functions also makes such occasions a lot more enjoyable!

Networking and marketing provide an opportunity for referrals as well as the opportunity to get to know others in the profession, which can make cases/transactions progress more smoothly. Industry contacts are also valuable as an additional resource you can recommend to clients.

Always carry your business cards and don't be afraid to use them!

## Publications of Interest

### **Law News**

Weekly Auckland District Law Society publication including articles, upcoming seminars and employment vacancies.

### **Law Talk**

Fortnightly New Zealand Law Society publication including articles, upcoming seminars and employment vacancies.

### **NZ Lawyer**

Fortnightly Publication including articles, upcoming seminars and employment vacancies.

### **Capital Letter**

Weekly publication summarising recent cases of note, changes to legislation and parliamentary events.

[www.austlii.edu.au](http://www.austlii.edu.au)

Australasian Legal Institute website including legislation and case law throughout Australasia, including New Zealand Court of Appeal decisions.

[www.govt.nz](http://www.govt.nz)

Government website containing both government resources and government agency websites.

[www.companies.govt.nz](http://www.companies.govt.nz)

Information on New Zealand Companies, including director searches, registered offices and addresses for service. PDSR searches can be requested from this website.

[www.courts.govt.nz](http://www.courts.govt.nz)

Contact information for all Courts throughout New Zealand.

[www.nz-lawsoc.org.nz](http://www.nz-lawsoc.org.nz)

New Zealand Law Society website, containing contact details for lawyers, information about District Law Societies, seminars, publications of the New Zealand Law Society.

[www.insidesauce.co.nz](http://www.insidesauce.co.nz)

Independent website containing salary tables and hosts a discussion forum on various legal and social topics.

## Final Word

We welcome suggested additions, improvements or comments to this Guide. Please contact any member of the New Members Committee direct or through the Society's office.

The Waikato Bay of Plenty District Law Society is now your Society and we warmly welcome you. We encourage you to give your own time and talents to help the Society help you and your colleagues. It will also be of great benefit to you to develop your skills and contacts within the profession.

You are now part of a wider community which often looks to lawyers for leadership and advice. Those who have gone before you in the profession have cultivated standards and reputations of excellence and have served the community and profession with distinction. You are now a member of this prestigious fellowship.

Congratulations and welcome.