**LAW REFORM & ADVOCACY ADVISOR ROLE: FACTSHEET**

*NZLS law reform and advocacy:*

* The New Zealand Law Society is a well-established commentator on law reform issues, on behalf of the legal profession and in the public interest. It has a statutory mandate to assist in law reform and the administration of justice and to uphold the rule of law (s65(e), Lawyers & Conveyancers Act).
* The Law Reform and Advocacy in-house legal team co-ordinate input from legal experts on 16 NZLS specialist committees, the Family Law & Property Law Sections, and Law Reform Committee – to make submissions on reform proposals across all areas of the law and legal practice, on behalf of the legal profession and in the public interest. The work involves engagement with officials, Ministers, select committees, the judiciary and the Law Commission on reform initiatives, as well as advocacy on significant issues such as constitutional protections, the rule of law, access to justice and the administration of the justice system.
* The Law Society’s law reform and advocacy work is done *pro bono* by expert volunteers, from the following committees:
  + Law Reform Committee (which oversees the work of the contributors listed below)
  + NZLS specialist committees:
    - ACC
    - Civil Litigation & Tribunals
    - Commercial & Business Law
    - Courthouse
    - Criminal Law
    - Employment Law
    - Environmental Law
    - Health Law
    - Human Rights & Privacy
    - Immigration & Refugee Law
    - Intellectual Property Law
    - Legal Services
    - Public & Administrative Law
    - Rule of Law
    - Tax Law
    - Youth Justice
  + NZLS Family Law Section advisory panel
  + NZLS Property Law Section law reform panel
* These volunteers are supported by a small in-house legal team:
  + **The core team**: Law Reform & Advocacy Manager, plus 3 Law Reform & Advocacy Advisors who support and guide the specialist committees, and
  + The Family Law Section Manager and Property Law Section Manager.

*The Law Reform & Advocacy Advisor’s role, and day-to-day work:*

* Each of the Law Reform & Advocacy Advisors is allocated to, and responsible for running, 5 – 6 of the specialist committees.
* The work can be very diverse: it ranges from government consultations (on reform proposals from a range of departments, and Bills at select committee) through to all aspects of the ‘administration of justice’ (the operation of the justice system, the civil and criminal courts, public interest issues such as access to justice, etc), media enquiries for NZLS statements, and requests from the profession or other representative bodies for NZLS support for ‘proactive’ law or practice reforms.
* The Advisors work closely with their specialist committees to ensure a good collaborative process, aiming for concise, accurate and persuasive NZLS submissions. The Advisor role is to support/facilitate/guide the committees, and to help draft/edit/finalise the committees’ written comments. The committees work via email/teleconferences, usually to tight deadlines. It can be challenging getting volunteers with very busy day jobs to engage in what is usually complex material, and to maintain the high quality of NZLS submissions.
* The overriding objective is to maintain and enhance the Law Society’s reputation as a credible, impartial and authoritative contributor to the development of New Zealand law, on behalf of the profession and in the public interest.

*More information about NZLS submissions:*

* There is a great deal of information on the NZLS website about our law reform work, the committees and recent submissions – see:
  + NZLS law reform and the specialist committees <https://www.lawsociety.org.nz/branches-sections-and-groups/law-reform-committees/>
  + The Law Reform Committee <https://www.lawsociety.org.nz/branches-sections-and-groups/law-reform-committees/law-reform-committee/>
  + Information on NZLS submissions (overview): <https://www.lawsociety.org.nz/news/law-reform-submissions/>
  + Submissions on bills: <https://www.lawsociety.org.nz/news/law-reform-submissions/bills/>
  + Submissions on discussion documents: <https://www.lawsociety.org.nz/news/law-reform-submissions/discussion-papers/>

*And some background information on the New Zealand Law Society – what does NZLS do?*

As well as acting as the regulator for lawyers and issuing and renewing practising certificates, NZLS provides a range of services to its members including: law reform and advocacy, sections for in-house, family, and property lawyers, 13 branches which hold social, sporting and educational events, continuing legal education and library services, and a range of publications including *LawTalk* (monthly magazine), and *LawPoints* (weekly e-bulletin). The NZLS' 'practising well' initiative aims to enhance the health and well-being of the legal community, including a National Friends Panel and a Legal Community Counselling service available to all legal workers. (For more, go to <https://www.lawsociety.org.nz/>).