

# Working together - roles and obligations

## What we will do when we act for you

- Be courteous and polite at all times.
- Act in your best interests only.
- Keep your information confidential unless you give us permission to disclose it or we are required by law to disclose it.
- To enable us to handle your matter as quickly and economically as possible, we may have more than one legal practitioner working on your file with assistance from other staff members.
- Give you a written agreement setting out what we have agreed to do, who will work on your matter, how we will charge for our services and the likely final cost.
- Ask you how you want to receive communications from us: by email or by post.
- Return your phone calls promptly during the normal business week. Our office hours are 8.30am to 5.30pm Monday to Friday.
- Read and respond to your emails promptly during the normal business week as we will not always be able to read or respond to your emails as soon as you send them.
- Keep you informed of the progress of your matter by your preferred means when issues arise.
- Discuss with you the risks involved, any alternative courses of action and your prospects of success to enable you to make a fully informed decision about how you want to proceed.

## When we will stop acting for you

- In most cases we will continue to act for you until your matter is finalised.
- In some cases we may stop acting before the matter is finalised where:
  - a conflict arises where we cannot act in your best interests only
  - you do not provide us with instructions when we require them
  - you do not accept our advice
  - you ask us to act in a way that would be unethical or illegal
  - you do not pay our accounts within the time specified.
- We will notify you immediately if we cease to act for you.

## What we expect from you

- Be courteous and polite at all times.
- Tell us before our first appointment if you think you need an interpreter.

## At the first appointment

- Provide us with a photo ID such as a current passport or driver's license.
- Provide us with evidence of your authority to act if you are acting on behalf of another person, for example if you are acting as an attorney you must provide the original power of attorney or a certified copy.
- Tell us how you would like to receive written communication from us, email or by post, and the correct address.
- Tell us promptly if your current address, email and telephone number changes.

## At follow up appointments

- Make an appointment ahead of time if you would like to have a face to face meeting with us. We may not be available to see you or be able to prepare properly for the meeting if you arrive at our office unannounced.
- Write down any questions or comments you have and bring them to meetings with us rather than emailing or contacting us by telephone when you think of them. This will save you money as each phone call and email takes time for us to respond to which we will charge you for.
- Give us reasonable prior notice if you are unable to attend any appointment. Failing to attend an appointment may cause delays in the running of your matter and cost you money or prejudice your rights.
- Make arrangements for alternative care for your child(ren) when you come to appointments with us.
- Tell us before recording our conversations with you and give us a copy of the recording if we ask for it.

## During the course of the matter

- Read any material we send you, including emails, letters and reports, and retain it in an organised format.
- Give us your instructions within a reasonable time when we request them. For urgent matters please contact us by telephone, otherwise your instructions should be in writing by email or post.

- Give us all information we request within a reasonable time. Any delay in providing all relevant material may cost you more money as we will have to spend time making further requests for the material and may prejudice your rights.
- Tell us promptly if your current address, email and telephone number changes.
- Tell us straight away if you are unhappy with the service you have received from us so we can improve it. You are welcome to contact our managing partner if you do not feel comfortable speaking directly with the person handling your matter.
- You can give us written notice to stop all work on your behalf at any time.
- Pay our accounts within the time specified. You should tell us immediately if you are experiencing financial difficulties and/or are unable to pay our accounts in a timely manner.

## Personal safety

- If you have any concerns about your safety please notify us before you attend our office or any other appointments such as a court hearing so we can discuss options for your safety.

## Further information

- The Victorian Legal Services Board and Commissioner has produced the following three factsheets that may also assist you which are available on their website at

<http://www.lsb.vic.gov.au/>

- [Working with your lawyer](#)
- [Meeting a lawyer – Your first appointment](#)
- [Legal costs: what rights does a consumer have?](#)