



THE LAW SOCIETY
OF NEW SOUTH WALES

MEDIA RELEASE

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Lawyers say new legal review service is policy on the run

The Law Society of NSW says that a Government announcement today of new legal review service lacks detail and on the face of it will not do enough to fix a badly broken workers compensation system.

President of the Law Society of NSW, Justin Dowd, said that the NSW Government has once again failed to consult on the changes as it continues to make policy on the run.

“The machinery for reviewing claims for entitlements is critical to the just operation of the workers compensation system,” Mr Dowd said.

“It is therefore incomprehensible that the Government has again chosen not to consult before announcing these new changes.

Based on what has been announced, the Law Society said it has concerns about the proposal on a number of fronts.

“The proposal appears to restrict access to funded legal representation in the Workers Compensation Commission to those claimants who have had their case reviewed as ‘legitimate’ by the new service. However, there is no detail at all about how this will operate.

“The system as outlined also omits any detail about the process by which legal representation will be provided to claimants. This is likely to be subject to strict controls and we are concerned about the erosion of claimants’ current ability to choose their lawyer,” he said.

Mr Dowd said the Law Society also has particular concerns for claimants in rural and regional areas of NSW trying to access the new program.

“Many vulnerable workers who live in rural and regional areas of NSW will now be forced to access legal services which are dictated by city bureaucrats and therefore potentially less appropriate to their needs and requirements,” Mr Dowd said.

Mr Dowd said that as there is very little detail available, it would be inappropriate for the Law Society to comment further at this stage.

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