

Clients better able to negotiate reduced legal costs

A sample of 100 costs disputes settled by the Legal Services Commissioner in 2007-08 has revealed that the Legal Services Commissioner has a high success rate in assisting the lawyer and client to resolve the dispute.

In six of the cases, the costs were waived in whole while a further 86 cases were resolved with a reduction in the costs for the client.

A costs dispute involves a dispute about legal costs up to \$25,000. The Legal Services Commissioner assists both the lawyer and client to resolve the costs dispute. Generally, the Legal Services Commissioner does this by communicating with the parties over the phone or in writing and conveying offers of settlement. This is done at no costs to the parties.

Overall, the Legal Services Commissioner settled over 70% of civil disputes received by her office in 2007-08.

The above figures demonstrate the effectiveness of lodging a costs dispute with the Legal Services Commissioner. The complaint handling regime may save the parties the time and expenses of litigation.