

# LEGAL AID NEWS

August 2017

*Legal Aid News* is your official regular communication from Legal Aid Services on all matters related to legal aid. *Legal Aid News* is generally published in the last week of every month.

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## **Changes to Legal Aid News**

We are making changes to the way legal aid provider news will be delivered in the future. As of next month, news and updates for legal aid providers will be published on our [website](#) under the “What’s new for legal aid lawyers” section.

Each week we’ll send you a short legal aid news email – much like the weekly newsletter that NZLS sends to all legal professionals. Our email will include links to articles published on “What’s new for legal aid lawyers”.

This new way of communicating with you is intended to be more direct and user-friendly.

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## **Mileage rate changing to \$0.73 per km and \$0.81 per km (electric car) for invoices received from 1 September 2017**

We are updating our mileage rate to align with the IRD rate. The new rate is \$0.73 per kilometre, unless it is an electric car, which has a rate of \$0.81 per kilometre. This is the first time IRD have set different rates for different types of vehicles.

To allow the new rates to be claimed as soon as possible, the new rates will apply to all legal aid invoices *received* from 1 September 2017. However, to mitigate unnecessary administrative work, claims received after 1 September at the old rate can still be processed as claimed.

The Word template forms have been updated and the new installer (version 12) is available to download from our [website](#). You will now be able to record the applicable mileage rate for your vehicle type. After the rate has been recorded once, it will remember the last rate you recorded for the next form you record on.

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## **Criminal application forms – AVL option added in signature section**

The criminal legal aid application forms have been updated to include an audio visual link (AVL) option in the signature section. This is to support the process of lawyers completing application forms for prisoners via AVL, which reduces the time it takes to complete applications.

The forms were updated at the same time as the changes for the criminal fixed fee review which went live at the beginning of July.

We apologise for the oversight in not communicating these changes earlier.

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## **Parole applications**

We are now accepting applications for parole hearings, where the week of the hearing if the exact date of hearing is known but not the actual hearing date.

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## **Couple of reminders**

### **URGENT APPLICATIONS**

Please remember to include Urgent, Opposed Bail or Reassignment in the subject line heading when scanning applications. This will ensure that the service you receive from us continues to meet agreed service levels and urgent applications are dealt with as soon as possible.

### **LEGIBLE WRITING**

Please help us process applications and invoices by writing legibly. Our grants officers spend time trying to decipher what has been written which slows processing down and in some cases we either have to seek more information or return the item to get clarification. Thank you for your assistance on this.

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## **Queries?**

If you have any queries about any article in this newsletter, please contact [legalaidnews@justice.govt.nz](mailto:legalaidnews@justice.govt.nz).