

Client Care and Terms and Conditions

Introduction

We set out below our standard terms and conditions which apply if we act for you. We also provide you with information relating to the Rules of Conduct and Client Care for Lawyers of the New Zealand Law Society.

Our Standard Terms and Conditions

These terms ("the **Terms**"), together with any engagement letter and fee estimate, apply unless varied by written agreement and form the initial Contract between Brandons and the client.

Unless otherwise agreed in writing, any subsequent services performed by Brandons will be provided by Brandons on the basis of the Terms. In such cases, references to the Contract and the Services below will be to the Terms and any orally specified services.

- 1 **Services.** Brandons will provide the services specified in any initial engagement letter or, as subsequently agreed and set out, in any replacement or supplementary engagement letter ("the **Services**"). The Services may include advice and recommendations, but it is understood and agreed that all decisions in connection with the implementation of such advice and recommendations shall be the responsibility of, and made by the client. Unless implementation is specified in the engagement letter, Brandons shall not be liable in any way in this regard. Either Brandons or the client may request changes to the Services. Each agrees to work together to enable each party to assess the impact of any requested changes on the cost, timing or any other aspect of the Services.
- 2 **Information.** The client will provide in a candid, full and timely fashion all information and documents reasonably required to enable Brandons to provide the Services. Unless otherwise required pursuant to the engagement, Brandons will have no responsibility to independently verify the accuracy of such information and documents. Brandons will not be liable for any loss or damage arising from any inaccuracy, incompleteness or other defect in any information or documents supplied by the client.
- 3 **Workpapers.** The workpapers produced by Brandons in the course of its work in providing the Services are the property of Brandons. Brandons shall be entitled to retain its work papers and copies of any documents provided to it in the course of performing its Services. Work papers will also include documents or deeds relevant to your affairs although not necessarily relevant to the Services.

On providing the Services Brandons will open a file. The file retained by Brandons will be stored and kept for at least six years. After that period of time the file may at Brandons sole discretion be destroyed. If the client sends to Brandons any papers which ultimately form part of that file which are to be returned to the client, please be sure to advise Brandons accordingly at the time these are supplied.

In respect of Deeds or documents Brandons reserves the right to retain those Deeds and documents until all monies due for costs, office services or

disbursements are paid. Brandons requires this right to retain any such Deeds and documents even if the monies are due for services unrelated to those documents. Brandons' position in this regard is contrary to the usual common law position which would otherwise exist.

4 **Reporting.** Brandons will report to the client in accordance with the terms set out in the engagement letter.

5 **Fees and Payment.**

- a) Either before or after the commencement of the Services, or on any change in the Services, Brandons may, at its discretion, or will, if so required by the client, provide an estimate and/or agree with the client the total fees for the Services.
- b) All fees charged will be based on the New Zealand Law Society requirement that all professional fees shall be fair and reasonable having regard to the interests of both the client and Brandons.
- c) The client acknowledges that in determining what constitutes fair and reasonable fees having regard to the interests of both the client and Brandons, a number of factors will be taken into account including not only the amount of time devoted by partners and staff to the Services, but any urgency involved, the amount or value of the money or property involved, the degree of complexity and resulting skill required, the results achieved and any other criteria that are relevant.
- d) The client will pay all out of pocket expenses reasonably incurred by Brandons in performing the Services. In addition to our fees, incidental office expenses (including photocopying, telephone calls, forms, faxes, bank transaction fees and postage) will be charged through an office services fee.
- e) In the case of most property, loan, commercial or other transactions where there is a specific settlement date, all fees and expenses shall be paid not later than the settlement date. The client authorises the deduction of all fees and expenses from the proceeds of any loan advance or sale proceeds or other monies which may be received or held to the client's credit within Brandons' Trust Account.
- f) Regardless of the nature or type of Services being provided to the client, Brandons reserves the right to render interim accounts in respect of which, the provisions of paragraph 5(g) shall apply.
- g) In all other cases, fees and expenses will be billed monthly unless otherwise agreed, and will be payable by the 20th of the month following the billing date.
- h) In default of payment when required, the client undertakes to pay late payment fees of 2% per month on any amount outstanding and to indemnify Brandons and pay all costs and expenses if legal action is necessary to recover from you any overdue amount. Brandons may at its discretion require funds to be paid on account before it incurs out of pocket expenses.
- i) Failure to pay fees on time may, at Brandons' discretion, lead to suspension of the Services (including Brandons' right to refuse to settle a property, loan, commercial or other transaction), or termination of the engagement. All reasonable fees up to suspension or termination shall be and remain payable, notwithstanding the suspension or termination.

- 6 **Terms and Termination.** The Contract will continue until all the Services have been provided unless sooner terminated by agreement as set out below. Either party may terminate the Contract by written notice or if the other party fails to remedy a material breach of the Contract. Termination will not affect the client's obligations to pay Brandons' fees for all Services performed up to termination. Any of the terms and conditions of the engagement letter or the Terms that are intended to apply after completion of the Services will continue to apply following termination.
- 7 **Confidentiality.** Brandons will not disclose to third parties any confidential information relating to the Services unless either authorised by the client or compelled by law, or as is necessary to provide the Services.
- 8 **Indemnity.** In the event Brandons becomes involved in any claim (including actual or threatened litigation of whatever form) in relation to the Services, Brandons will immediately notify the client. The client agrees, to the extent permitted by law, to indemnify Brandons, its Partners and employees in all respects including its reasonable costs and expenses involved in defending any such actual or threatened litigation. Where legal counsel is retained for these purposes, those costs, will be met by the client. Brandons will use its best endeavours to agree the quantum of any such costs recognising the need to respond to such litigation on a prompt and reasonable basis. The client agrees to meet the costs of Brandons for reasonable time incurred by its Partners and staff and any other reasonable costs and expenses in relation to any inquiry or proceeding initiated by any person.
- 9 **Restrictions.** Unless Brandons has agreed in writing, no advice or information provided to the client is to be made available, directly or indirectly to any third party, or shall be used or relied upon by any third party. Brandons will have no liability to any such third party. The client indemnifies Brandons against any third party claim arising from its release of any such Brandons' advice or information.
- 10 **E-mail.** While we use standard virus checking software, we accept no responsibility for viruses or anything similar in any emails or any attachments which come from Brandons. We also do not accept any responsibility for any changes to, or interception of, any email or any attachment after it leaves our information systems.
- 11 **No Assignment or Benefit.** The client may not assign the benefit of the Services to any third party without the written consent of Brandons. For the avoidance of doubt the sole beneficiary of the Services under this Contract is the client. No other party is intended to take a benefit under the Contracts (Privity) Act 1982.
- 12 **Guarantee.** Instructions from time to time may be taken from companies or other corporate bodies and/or family trusts and/or third party individuals at the client's request. In such instances these Terms will apply to the receipt of such instructions and the client unconditionally guarantees to Brandons the performance of all obligations expressed or implied in these terms.
- 13 **Investment.** From time to time Brandons may receive on behalf of the client various funds and unless otherwise instructed, or the quantum of the funds retained is so minimal as to not warrant investment, all funds will be deposited to the client's credit in an interest bearing deposit account within Brandons Trust Account. All interest accrued less usual Resident Withholding Tax and Accounts Department handling commission, at a rate of 5% of net interest accrued, will be for the credit of the client. Brandons will at such time as all funds are released to the client provide a statement identifying the sum of all interest received and any deductions made.

- 14 **Flax Agencies Limited.** The partners have an interest in Flax Agencies Limited, which provides search and registration services.
- 15 **Entire Agreement.** The Contract described in these Terms, subject to any qualification, conditions, assumptions and reservations set out in any report, forms the entire agreement between Brandons and the client. No previous discussions, proposals, correspondence, understandings or other communications, whether written or oral, shall have contractual effect subsequent to the engagement letter. Only written variations signed on behalf of Brandons shall have effect to vary the Contract.
- 16 **Governing Law.** Brandons and the client agree that the Contract and their relationship will be governed by the applicable laws of New Zealand and submit to the exclusive jurisdiction of the New Zealand Courts.

Rules of Conduct and Client Care for Lawyers

Set out below is additional information in respect of the Rules of Conduct and Client Care for Lawyers of the New Zealand Law Society ("Law Society").

1 Fees:

The basis on which fees will be charged is set out in our letter of engagement. When payment of fees is to be made is set out in our Terms.

We may deduct from any funds held on your behalf in our trust account any fees, expenses or disbursements for which we have provided an invoice.

2 Professional Indemnity Insurance:

We hold professional indemnity insurance that exceeds the minimum standards specified by the Law Society. We will provide you with particulars of the minimum standards upon request.

3 Lawyers' Fidelity Fund:

The Law Society maintains the Lawyers' Fidelity Fund for the purpose of providing clients of lawyers with protection against pecuniary loss arising from theft by lawyers. The maximum amount payable by the Fidelity Fund by way of compensation to an individual claimant is limited to \$100,000. Except in certain circumstances specified in the Lawyers and Conveyancers Act 2006, the Fidelity Fund does not cover a client for any loss relating to money that a lawyer is instructed to invest on behalf of the client.

4 Complaints:

We maintain a procedure for handling any complaints by clients, designed to ensure that a complaint is dealt with promptly and fairly.

If you have a complaint about our services or charges, you may refer your complaint to the person in our firm who has overall responsibility for your work.

If you do not wish to refer your complaint to that person, or you are not satisfied with that person's response to your complaint, you may refer your complaint to Sam Perry.

He may be contacted as follows:

- by letter;
- by email at sam.perry@brandons.co.nz
- by telephoning him on **04 472 6904**.

The Law Society operates the Lawyers Complaints Service and you are able to make a complaint to that service. To do so, phone **0800 261 801** and you will be connected to the nearest Complaints Service Office, which can provide information and advice about making a complaint.

5 **Persons Responsible for the Work:**

The names and status of the person or persons who will have the general carriage of or overall responsibility for the services we provide for you are set out in our letter of engagement.

6 **Client Care and Service:**

The Law Society client care and service information is set out below.

Whatever legal services your lawyer is providing, he or she must:

- *Act competently, in a timely way, and in accordance with instructions received and arrangements made.*
- *Protect and promote your interests and act for you free from compromising influences or loyalties.*
- *Discuss with you your objectives and how they should best be achieved.*
- *Provide you with information about the work to be done, who will do it and the way the services will be provided.*
- *Charge you a fee that is fair and reasonable and let you know how and when you will be billed.*
- *Give you clear information and advice.*
- *Protect your privacy and ensure appropriate confidentiality.*
- *Treat you fairly, respectfully and without discrimination.*

- *Keep you informed about the work being done and advise you when it is completed.*
- *Let you know how to make a complaint and deal with any complaint promptly and fairly.*

The obligations lawyers owe to clients are described in the Rules of Conduct and Client Care for Lawyers. Those obligations are subject to other overriding duties, including duties to the courts and to the justice system.

If you have any questions, please visit **www.lawsociety.org.nz** or call **0800 261 801**.

7 **Limitations on extent of our Obligations or Liability**

Any limitations on the extent of our obligations to you or any limitation or exclusion of liability are set out in our letter of engagement and Terms.