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Dear Commissioner,

### **Review of Lawyers' Practicing Certificate Fees**

As you are no doubt aware poor wellbeing is a professional hazard for lawyers. The high rates of mental ill health among lawyers as compared to the general population, or other professions, is now well-documented.

The [Queensland Legal Services Commissioner](#) has also observed that poor mental health is the 'elephant in the room' in many of the disciplinary complaints received by his office. Your office may well share this experience.

It would seem to be in the mutual interest of the legal profession and the regulator that good well-being be promoted in the profession and that lawyers, who become unwell, receive the support that they need. But, obviously, this support requires funding.

The medical profession supports its doctors' through a subsidiary company [Doctor Health Services Pty Ltd \(DrHS\)](#). DrHS is funded by the Medical Board of Australia from registration fees paid by doctors.

Now that a review of lawyers' practicing certificate fees is underway it would seem to be an opportune time to consider including a small 'surcharge' of say \$5 or \$10 on every practicing certificate to fund programs that promote and support lawyer well-being.

Every lawyer has either, at one time or another, suffered from poor mental health or knows of a colleague who has. I think such a surcharge is likely to receive widespread support and I urge you to give the idea some consideration.

Kind regards,  
Michelle

Dr Michelle Sharpe  
Barrister

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