

Received by email 3/11/2017

Dear [REDACTED],

I refer to the Victorian Legal Services Board + Commissioner RPA News Bulletin #36, October 2017 and respond to the points raised.

I agree with the approach of a stratified fee structure.

What is quite wrong in my view is that the issue of cost control in your office is not mentioned. All organisations have pressures on them to reduce the cost of operation. What appears to be happening here is that the only question being considered is how the additional cost should be borne.

My experience with your office is that an enormous amount of time can be spent in the name of maintaining standards without any real contribution to that end.

If you wish to contact me, I will provide a number of examples of this. My bet is you won't contact me because my experience of regulators is that, like many of us, they are good at criticism but not so good self examination.

However if you don't want to engage with me on a personal level, you might wish to look at a complaint file COM-[REDACTED]-[REDACTED] that is currently still ongoing within your office. I'd be surprised if there hasn't been forty or fifty hours spent by your staff members on this matter - possibly a lot more than this. You should do a cost / benefit analysis on the staff time on this file and see if you think solicitors money has been well spent.

An independent regulator for legal practitioners is an important part of the overall legal system. But the independent regulator can only work effectively if it feels the same pressures as those it is regulating.

James Woods