Billing Practices Ethics Check
E-Newsletter Issue 5
Dear Colleague

Some years ago now the Commission trialled the first of what has since become a suite of on-line surveys or ethics checks which allow individual lawyers and law firms as a whole to reflect upon and to review or audit aspects of their ‘ethical infrastructure’ – the policies, procedures, values, customs and practices both spoken and unspoken that shape how they go about providing legal services to their clients.

The ethics checks take less than 30 minutes to complete and are designed to preserve the anonymity both of the individuals who complete them and their law firm. For more details on ethics checks (including some very favourable reviews both by prominent local lawyers and by legal ethicists internationally), see the Commission's web site.

Survey for medium to large law practices
I wrote in 2010 to the managing partners/directors of every law firm in Queensland which employs 7 or more practising certificate holders to invite them to participate in a billing practices check for medium to large law firms. A total of 517 people from 40 law firms completed the survey. We published the results and they make interesting reading.

I am now reissuing that invitation, both to firms that opted not to participate in 2010 and to those that did participate and may want to review their results now against the benchmarks they set then.

To go to the survey for medium to large practices click here.

Survey for small law practices
We have complemented that survey now with one we have developed specifically for small law firms – firms which employ 6 or fewer practising certificate holders. We are confident that it will generate the same positive response we received from medium sized and larger law firms in 2010.

To go to the survey for small law practices click here.

Participating as individuals or as a firm
You can complete either survey as individuals or as a firm. Experience tells us you will get best value from the survey by participating as a firm, which means that your managing partner/director will need to appoint a survey manager to oversee the process within your firm. You will find instructions in the survey documents. Please follow the instructions carefully.

Closing date
We have set a closing date for the surveys of 8 June 2012. The closing date tells us when to collate the results and publish them on our website (anonymously of course: we do not collect any identifying information). If you have any queries or require assistance, please contact our Policy & Research Coordinator Dr Lyn Aitken at lyn.aitken@lsc.qld.gov.au.

Regards,

John Briton
Legal Services Commissioner