



Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission

Membership on the Independent Children Lawyers Panel

A practitioner who applies for inclusion on the NT Legal Aid Commission ('the Commission') Independent Children Lawyers Panel (the ICL Panel) must agree to and continue to abide by these terms for the duration of panel membership:

1. The term of appointment will be three (3) years unless otherwise agreed.
2. Practitioners seeking to continue as a member of the ICL Panel at the expiration of the term will be required to re-apply.
3. To be included on the ICL Panel each practitioner who will undertake Independent Children Lawyer work must submit an expression of interest addressing each of the following criteria:
 - a. Have completed an approved Independent Children's Lawyer Training course;
 - b. Demonstrate expertise as an Independent Children's lawyer in cases arising under the *Family Law Act*.
 - c. Have practiced for at least 5 years in Family Law and held a Practising Certificate during that period.
 - d. Have an extensive knowledge of Family Law, practice and procedures in children's applications including relevant case law.
 - e. Have a sound knowledge and understanding of the role of the Independent Children's Lawyer.
 - f. Have well-developed communications skills.
 - g. Demonstrate experience in advocacy skills and mediation skills.
 - h. Execute and abide by a Statement and Undertaking pursuant to Section 30 of the *Legal Aid Act* (noting non-compliance may constitute grounds for removal from the Panel).
 - i. Hold a valid Working with Children Ochre Card.
 - j. Provide references from appropriate referees if sought by the Commission.
4. To remain on the ICL Panel a practitioner must:
 - a. Continue to hold a practising certificate;
 - b. Have regard to and adhere to National Legal Aid's Best Practice Guidelines for Independent Children's Lawyers.

- c. Maintain a place of business contactable by telephone during office hours;
 - d. If requested, make legally aided ICL files available to the Commission's Assignments Manager or Deputy Director;
 - e. Respond to all requests for information from the Commission in relation to complaints in a timely fashion;
 - f. Participate in training and provide information as reasonably requested by the Commission;
 - g. Hold a valid Working with Children Ochre Card
 - h. Know and comply with the Commission's complaints policy and procedures; and
 - i. Immediately advise the Commission if the practitioner is the subject of any investigation or complaint in relation to their conduct as an ICL/ legal practitioner or which may affect their ability to hold a practising certificate (e.g. a professional conduct or criminal investigation).
5. In any consideration of a practitioner's application to be re-appointed to panel, the practitioner's conduct during the duration of panel membership will be a relevant matter taken into account by the Commission.
6. Previous membership on the existing panel will not entitle an applicant practitioner to automatic inclusion on the new panel.
7. The Commission may remove a practitioner from the ICL Panel in accordance with the provisions of section 30 of the *Legal Aid Act* (NT)