



News Release – May 19, 2010

General Consumer Survey to Support Ongoing Work of the Law Society

Benchmark measures and indicators gathered through a general consumer survey on legal services will support the ongoing work of the Law Society of Alberta.

As a regulator of the legal profession, the Law Society of Alberta is currently engaged in research on the delivery of legal services by lawyers in Alberta.

“There is a relationship between the delivery of legal services,” notes Law Society of Alberta President Rod Jerke, QC, “and the regulation and governance of the profession by the Law Society of Alberta.”

The Law Society of Alberta serves the public interest by promoting a high standard of legal services and professional conduct through the governance and regulation of an independent legal profession.

Mr. Jerke notes the survey findings provide valuable insight on the reputation of the legal profession, and the high levels of satisfaction experienced by consumers of legal services.

“The results show that the public recognizes that lawyers play an important role in providing high quality legal services. The findings show that the public is generally satisfied with the services and value they receive.”

The Law Society of Alberta recognizes that there are concerns among consumers about the availability of legal services to low income Albertans, and the perception of the cost of legal services.

The independent public opinion research firm Ipsos Reid has been retained by the Law Society to conduct a general consumer survey and the survey of the legal profession. The general consumer survey included specific research questions around consumer use and attitudes towards delivery of legal services.

Highlights from Ipsos Reid:

Most (78%) Albertans appear to be satisfied with the services provided by their lawyer, according to a new Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of the Law Society of Alberta. Just over one half (53%) say they are ‘Very Satisfied’ with the services provided by their lawyer with another quarter (25%) describing themselves as being ‘Somewhat Satisfied’. Just one in ten

(6% Somewhat Dissatisfied, 3% Very Dissatisfied) say they were not 'satisfied' overall with the service provided by their lawyer.

A large majority of Albertans who worked with a lawyer in the past three years also provide a positive assessment of the value they received for the fees paid. More than seven-in-ten Albertans (71%) said they received either 'Very Good Value' (34%) or 'Good Value' (37%) from their lawyers. Another two-in-ten (20%) believe they received 'Somewhat Good Value' while just under one-in-ten (9%) feel they received 'Not Very Good Value' (6%) or 'Poor Value' (3%) from the fees paid for their lawyer's services.

Albertans report using the services of lawyers for a wide range of matters during the past three years. Among those who experienced these situations, lawyers were most frequently used for real estate transactions (84%), wills and estates (78%), family relationship problems (59%), small business issues (54%), personal injury problems (46%) and crime related matters (40%). The services of lawyers were also used by Albertans to address immigration problems (35% of those who experienced such situations), property damage (27%) and discrimination issues (25%).

Reputation (43%) and referral from another person (41%) were the factors most often considered important by Albertans in their selection of a lawyer. Professional credentials (Legal training 30%) and standing (Subject to Code of Ethics and Professional 26%) followed behind as important selection criteria. Knowing the lawyer personally (25%), the cost of services (23%) and proximity/ accessibility (23%) were also notable factors used by Albertans in selecting a lawyer.

For More Information:

The Ipsos Reid survey results are available at www.ipsos.ca or on the Law Society of Alberta's website at www.lawsociety.ab.ca

- 30 -

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