

Media Release: 11 June 2021

GenPro's Complaint Accepted

Parliament's Regulations Review Committee (the Committee) has accepted the legal rationale for GenPro's complaint in respect of the Coroners Act 2006 and the lack of payment to General Practitioners for the completion of statutory written reports requested by the Coroner following the death of a patient.

GenPro (the General Practice Owners Association), is the national representative body for general practice and urgent care centres across New Zealand, and whose objectives include advocating for and supporting the sustainability and viability of members businesses and the services they provide in order to ultimately ensure the continuity of locally accessible and high-quality, patient-centric care.



In April 2021, GenPro lodged a formal complaint which asked the Committee to review the Coroner (Pathologist Fees) Regulations 2007 issued under the Coroners Act 2006. GenPro's chair, Dr Tim Malloy (pictured), said, "The basis of our case is that the Regulations ensure that the statutory work of the Coroner is supported by relevant professionals following the death of an individual. Unfortunately, the Regulations have been supporting payment, in respect of those services, to many of the professionals involved, but not to GPs for writing of the Coroners Reports – we are challenging that position because we do not believe it was the intention of the Regulations".

In its reply to GenPro, the Committee accepted that on the face of it, the complaint is valid and has agreed to proceed with its review. The Committee will be asking the Ministry of Justice to respond and inviting them to present oral evidence to the Committee at its hearing. The hearing will be held during August 2021 and will include additional oral evidence from GenPro.

Dr Greg Beacham, a Hastings GP, general practice co-owner and member of GenPro said, "At last we may have some acknowledgement of this totally unsatisfactory situation. As a GP I am regularly asked to provide written reports for the Coroner and each one can take two or more hours - yet I am not paid for this time. It means I am personally subsidising the Government for this statutory service and my patients are missing out on essential healthcare while I am otherwise unavailable for their appointments. There is no other professional in the country that would be required to do such work for the Justice Department and not be paid for it".

ENDS

Further information can be obtained from:

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Information for Editors:

The Committee's jurisdiction in relation to regulations is set out in the Standing Orders of the House of Representatives. Under Standing Order 326(5), the Committee may investigate complaints about the operation of regulations, and may report on complaints to the House of Representatives.

Where a complaint relates to one of the grounds set out in Standing Order 327(2), the Committee can draw the regulations to the special attention of the House and take the step of recommending that a regulation be disallowed under the Legislation Act 2012. However, any decision to disallow a regulation is made by the House and the Committee can make only a recommendation.

GenPro's written complaint will be treated as evidence and has been made publicly available on the Parliament website. It can also be accessed on the GenPro website:
www.genpro.org.nz/docs/rrcommittee16-april-2021.pdf