



WHAT ARE COST ESTIMATES?

We charge fees based on the time spent on a matter. We are required by law to give you, at the start of the matter, an estimate of the likely total legal costs.

What is an estimate?

An estimate of total legal costs is a reasonable approximation of the total costs that you are likely to have to pay based on:

- what you have told us about the matter
- what we have agreed will be done by us
- our experience of the type of matter and what is likely to be required.

An estimate is not a fixed quote. It is provided to give you an understanding of what costs you may have to pay for the whole matter. Your final legal costs may be more or less than the initial estimate and will depend on how the matter progresses. It can also be affected by things such as whether new facts come to light which change what work we are required to do and how cooperative other parties are. Some ways in which you can help ensure costs do not increase is by doing all the things we ask you to do in a timely manner and being clear with the information you provide to us.

What are 'total legal costs'?

Total legal costs are all the costs you are likely to incur to the end of the matter. They include our professional fees and amounts we have to pay others such as court filing fees or barrister's fees and GST.

Complex matters

In more complex matters like litigation, we will need to make some predictions about the course of the matter in order to give that estimate.

We will break down the estimate into stages, give you estimates of the cost of each stage and provide details of what assumptions are made about what could happen at each stage. This will provide you with the maximum likely amount.

At each stage of a complex matter, we will review the cost estimate in light of any new facts and what has happened in the previous stage, and advise you of any changes to the estimate of total legal costs and why these changes have occurred.

The law requires us to estimate all the costs you are likely to incur to the end of the matter, and in litigation this means assuming that your case goes to trial and judgment. However, in our experience, most cases settle well before trial. Therefore, in litigation your costs may be much less than the estimate of total legal costs, as the matter may settle at an earlier stage.

Updating estimates

We are required to tell you if the legal costs incurred are getting close to the total legal cost estimate and where necessary, give you a revised estimate of total legal costs.

What should I do?

You should give us as much information about the matter as possible at the start and discuss with us what outcome you would like to achieve in the matter.

You need to have an open discussion with us about the likely costs of the matter depending on the various outcomes possible.

You are entitled to, and should ask, about how the costs are mounting at any stage during the matter if we have not told you.