



**LEGAL PRACTICE
COUNCIL**

+27 (0) 10 001 8500

info@lpc.org.za

lpc.org.za



**LEGAL PRACTICE
COUNCIL**



**LEGAL PRACTICE
COUNCIL**

Presentation
The Legal Practice Council Chairperson
Ms Kathleen Matolo-Dlepu

Introduction



The Legal Practice Council is a national, statutory body that was established in terms of section 4 of the Legal Practice Act, No 28 of 2014. The council replaced the four former statutory law societies and is mandated to regulate legal practitioners (attorneys and advocates) and juristic entities.



Impact of the Legal Practice Council

The Legal Practice Council opened its offices in November of 2018 and since then we have done the following:

Established five more offices in Mpumalanga, Northern Cape, Eastern Cape, North West, and Limpopo to join the already existing offices that were under the erstwhile law societies in Gauteng, Free State, KwaZulu Natal and Western Cape. As we speak, we have nine Provincial Councils that are all fully functional.

This means that both members of the public and members of the profession have improved access to the regulator and all the services we provide:

Our services are:

- Enrolling legal practitioners
- Coordinating and administering the attorney's admission, conveyancing, and notarial exams.
- Registering of Practice Vocational Training contracts for candidate attorneys and pupils
- Receiving and handling of public complaints about legal practitioners and the subsequent disciplinary processes that follows.



Impact of the Legal Practice Council

- We have registered over 6000 new legal practitioners and over 8000 Practical Vocational Training (PVT) contracts (formerly known as articles) in all our nine provincial offices.
- Coordinated 5 Attorney Admission, Conveyancing, and Notarial exams that covered over 29000 candidates in September this year will administer the Advocates Admissions Exams. Candidates now register online for their exams this has helped in streamlining the application process.
- Developed and published the Criteria for the Conferment of Silk which we have submitted to the Department of Justice for their inputs and approval
- Published the Criteria for accreditation of institutions that offer legal education. Accreditation can be seen as a means of ensuring and protecting the integrity of our legal system.
- Published the norms and standards for a compulsory training of post qualification and Professional Development for the admission of legal Practitioners, this includes Attorneys and Advocates (PVT). To ensure that training of Legal Practitioners is standardized and every legal practitioner who wants to be admitted has to attend the training in line with the Legal Practice Act.



Impact of the Legal Practice Council

- Facilitated the development of the Legal Sector Code. The code is now with the Department of Justice and we are looking forward to it being gazetted within this year by the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition. All users of the legal services will be measured in terms of the Legal Sector Code and be monitored by the Legal Sector Code Council which will be established by the Minister of Justice. This is an important milestone that will ensure that the skewed briefing patterns are done away with and monitored.
- We engaged with SASSETA to re-look at its programmes and include funding and training of legal Practitioners including pupils, for the first time in the history of the profession the LPC has secured funding for pupils will receive stipends whilst undergoing pupillage.
- The LPC has submitted its recommendations to the Minister in terms of Section 34 of Act 28 of 2014 on the Recognition of Paralegal and Community based organisation, multidisciplinary practices and vocational training including pro bono services by Legal Practitioners.



Impact of COVID-19 on the profession

- COVID-19 has had a severe impact in the legal profession. The financial losses suffered are immeasurable and the profession has not yet recovered.
- The profession lost a lot of legal practitioners
- We have legal firms that have closed down the provincial offices are collating that information as we speak.
- We saw a huge backlog in our court systems and other avenues where we work in and also slowed down some of our DC processes.
- As the LPC we established a Benevolent Scheme of R15 Million to support mainly small firms and candidate legal practitioners
- Through our provincial offices we negotiated with legal practitioners on how they can pay for their annual fees in instalments



Challenges facing legal practitioners

- Equal Access to work opportunities
- Response to COVID-19
- Gender disproportions within the profession. The profession is still male dominated
- Barriers to the entry of the profession especially for women and black graduates (Drivers Licence/ Language)
- Lack of funds is currently one of the major challenges that is faced by law graduates who want to do pupillage.
- The profession's reputation (We have received more than 21000 complaints and we have suspended 119 legal practitioners and struck-off 129) Much as our role as a regulator is to deal with misconduct of errant practitioners the increasing number of complaints is a concern



Support for young black attorneys

- We engaged with SASSETA to re-look at its programmes and include funding and training of legal Practitioners including pupils, for the first time in the history of the profession the LPC has secured funding for pupils will receive stipends whilst undergoing pupillage we currently have 76 pupils nationally.
- The Council has made sure that we continue to fund some accredited legal education institutions which assist in increasing access to the profession by providing legal education and we have additionally approved the funding for the 19 law clinics taking into account the important role they play, not only in assisting ordinary members of the public but also training law graduates and thereby affording them an opportunity to access work in the profession.



Conclusion

- The Council play a dual role that of regulating the affairs of legal practitioners and working in collaboration with legal practitioners' voluntary bodies who are primarily formed by the practitioners.
- The Council will continue to engage with all stakeholders on all the matter that have to do with the legal profession in all forums available



**LEGAL PRACTICE
COUNCIL**

Thank You