

## Public sector references – some key themes

Here are some themes, values, and issues to which referees may be guided in formulating their statement of support for the legal services which you provide.

### Knowledge

- Circumstances under which the referee has come to know your services
- Background to referee's personal involvement in dealings with you and your firm

### Knowledge and similar experience

- Circumstances under which the referee has come to know your services
- Background to referee's personal involvement in dealings with you and your firm
- Description of the nature of legal services you provide to the referee

### Expertise

- Authoritativeness of your advice
- Your expertise in dealing with the issues which arise in their matters
- Standing of your "experts" in the agency, public sector, and community generally

### Timeliness and accessibility

- Working to deadlines and approach to urgent matters
- Meeting service standards
- Dependability and consistency
- Availability of your lawyers and support staff at times and locations which are convenient to the agency

### Resources

- Depth of team
- Correct allocation of legal resources

### Appropriateness for public sector agencies

- Right type/style of legal advice
- Appreciation of public sector drivers
- Awareness of operating challenges

### Response to public sector concerns and drivers

- Probity and transparency
- Contestability
- Accountability
- Appropriateness, effectiveness, efficiency
- Equity
- Cost consciousness
- Stakeholder recognition, balance of interests, and fair dealings with all parties
- Policy outcomes
- Firm's alignment of interests with agency
- Procedural fairness
- Community concerns and community outcomes
- overall costs and budget constraints
- Quality consciousness
- Links with other experts
- Market testing
- Industrial democracy
- Multi skilling
- Recognition of superordinate goals

[www.julianmidwinter.com.au](http://www.julianmidwinter.com.au)

Tel +61 2 9968 4168

Fax +61 2 9960 4480

Suite 16 357 Military Road  
Mosman NSW 2088  
Australia

Email [julianmidwinter@julianmidwinter.com.au](mailto:julianmidwinter@julianmidwinter.com.au)

### Communication and feedback

- Appropriateness and timeliness
- Reporting and updating on progress of matters
- Seeking feedback on satisfaction with services
- Feedback to client agency on internal processes
- Use of technology to improve communication

### Teamwork and cooperation

- With officers of agencies
- With other experts or advisers
- Ease of dealings with your firm

### Cost-effectiveness and value for money

- Cost-effectiveness of overall approaches to matters and value for money
- Strategic fit
- Comparisons with other law firms

### Billing

- Accuracy, timeliness, frequency, level of detail, suitability of formats

### Early resolution focus

- Referee's assessment of your proactivity in resolving matters quickly and at minimum expense
- Active use of ADR options

### Conflict of interest

- Recognition of areas of potential conflict
- Conflict avoidance
- Resolution of conflict situations

### Quality

- Effects of your quality programme in action
- Assurance resulting from your quality initiatives

### Work quality reviews and surveys

- Positive effects from your processes to assess referee's satisfaction

### Value added services

- Areas where you have added value to the relationship with special/extra services
- Value of the education, training, and coaching you have provided
- Effectiveness of technology links with the agency
- Availability for free ad hoc telephone advice

### Differentiation

- Key differences in the experience of working with your firm with others
- Contrasts with competitor firms
- "Client-friendliness"
- Why you're favoured by the agency/senior officer
- Recommendation