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BARRISTER

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Attention: Kristin Percy, Legal Standards Solicitor, Complaints Service

7 April 2011

File 3862 Complaint by Ms Grace Haden

At a meeting of AWINZ Board on 10 May 2006, I was appointed a Trustee of the AWINZ Board and elected as its Chair. I had been approached several years prior to this by Mr Neil Wells regarding my possible involvement with AWINZ. At that time I was Chair of the National Animal Ethics National Advisory Committee (NAEAC), appointed under the Animal Welfare Act 1999, and was also a member of the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (NAWAC), positions which I held for six years. Mr Wells believed that, because of my involvement and knowledge of animal welfare issues, I would be interested in joining the Trustees of AWINZ. Therefore, after my statutory involvement with NAEAC and NAWAC ceased in 2005, I was happy to become a Trustee and was duly appointed as its Chair.

However, several weeks later in June 2006, AWINZ had cause to seek legal advice regarding actions by a Grace Haden in respect of her improper use of the AWINZ website and related matters, and false and demeaning allegations regarding one of AWINZ Trustees, namely Neil Wells. AWINZ Trustees resolved to seek legal advice and assistance from Brookfields Barristers and Solicitors. At the time it was the Trustees' understanding that this matter would be resolved quickly. Unfortunately this was not the case and the legal proceedings have carried on for almost five years. I understand that an outline of these proceedings has been made available to you by our legal advisor, Mr Nick Wright, and I have not duplicated these here.

Regarding the complaint by Ms Haden and your letter of 28 February 2011, I respond as follows.

At no stage whatsoever have I acted or purported to have acted in a professional legal capacity in my position as a Trustee of AWINZ.

My involvement with AWINZ has been as a result of my prior involvement with NAEAC and NAWAC, my 26 years of experience in local government governance, both local and regional as an elected member and a former Mayor, and my general interest in animal welfare issues.

Neither Mr Wells nor I have ever given or been requested to give legal advice or assistance to AWINZ.

There is nothing in Ms Haden's complaint that I have alleged to have done in my professional capacity as a barrister.

All my dealings with AWINZ have been as a Trustee, not as a barrister and member of the NZ Law Society.

When AWINZ resolved to seek professional legal advice in connection with Ms Haden's improper use of the AWINZ website and related matters, and false and demeaning allegations regarding one of AWINZ Trustees, we sought independent legal advice from an Auckland Law firm, namely Brookfields.

My role in the matters traversed by Ms Haden is as litigant. None relate to my role as barrister and solicitor.

Therefore I believe the allegations set out by Ms Haden in your letter to me dated 28 February 2011 have no relevance whatsoever in respect of my membership of the NZ Law Society as a barrister.

For the reasons set out above, I respectfully request that the Standards Committee use its discretion, under section 138 Lawyers and Conveyancers Act 2006, to take no action regarding this complaint.

Yours sincerely

W N Hoadley QSO
Barrister