

MEDIA RELEASE

Women's Access to Legal Services

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The Law Commission announces the publication of a study *Women's Access to Legal Services* prepared by Joanne Morris, OBE, during her term as a Law Commissioner. This important work challenges all New Zealanders, especially those with responsibility for the operation and reform of our current law and institutions, to re-examine values and priorities.

The study was prepared in response to terms of reference by the Minister of Justice in September 1995.

The study is based upon the experience of some 3,000 women interviewed at over 100 meetings and the results of Commissioner Morris' research which included an extensive process of receiving and considering submissions. It focuses on the problems that women have in simply getting access to legal services, and so getting any access at all to the justice system and why the system does not accommodate them as it should. It suggests some possible solutions to improve women's access to justice.

The study establishes pressing need for further work to investigate specific and effective options to improve access to legal advice and the optimum dispatch of court business.

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