

## **Sidney H. Troister remarks at Convocation (October 2022)**

In the LSO's 2023 Budget Proposal, there were three areas ("baskets") that contributed to the increase in dues and LiRN was one of them.

When introducing the Budget proposal, Audit & Finance Chair, Sidney Troister, offered the following remarks about LiRN which are worth reading.

### **COMMENTS:**

Basket number 2: Basket number 2 is a \$17 increase for LIRN taking it from \$183 to \$200 per lawyer.

As part of the motions today, we are asked to approve the LiRN Inc. budget for 2023. It is found at page 112 of Diligent.

So what is LIRN?- LIRN is a subsidiary of the Law Society with us holding all common shares and being the sole funder of LIRN. The Toronto Lawyers Association and the Federation of Ontario Law Associations hold special shares. LiRN develops policies, guidelines and standards for the delivery of law library and legal information services which includes funding and coordinating with the 48 different law association libraries across the province.

The budget asks that our annual fees earmark \$9.57 million for the County Libraries Fund. This is essentially \$200 per lawyer, a \$17 increase over last year. This library fund is the restricted fund that holds funding intended for grants to LiRN which administers the legal information network including funding the county law libraries across the Province. LIRN has its own board, did its own budgeting and its board approved its budget on September 1. It is up to us to approve the LIRN budget which includes funding of \$9.57 million from the Law Society.

Let me explain LIRN's budget briefly.

\$7.7 million is a flow through. We get it and we pay it to LiRN and they make grants to the county libraries. 48 county libraries depend on this allocation.

Of the balance of about \$2,000,000, 1.5 million dollars funds centralized library services. What does that even mean? Over \$900,000 pays for electronic legal software like LexisNexis and other software that solos and smalls and even bigger firms could not and would not be able to afford if they bought them on their own. You will see the list of electronic products now available to lawyers around the province – the electronic resources available to the county libraries went from 3 to 9 products sourced from LexisNexis, Westlaw and vLex in addition to the existing 3 resources. Centralized buying power lets every lawyer have access to these important resources that would cost them individually thousands of dollars to buy, regardless of where they practice. This programme is critical to ensuring access for all lawyers to electronic information and legal research regardless of where they practise or the size of their practice. It is the great leveller of access to legal resources.

As a result of the work of LIRN, lawyers everywhere now have access to the same legal resources. It does not matter if you practice in Kenora, Kincardine, Kanata, Picton, Woodstock,

Toronto or Eganville, if you are a lawyer, you have access to this software like never before. It is the best deal in town.

The other \$600,000 covers other centralized services as noted in their budget including block insurance for all of the libraries' collections, benefit plans for library staff, etc.

The last less than \$500,000 covers LIRN's small staff, and board expenses.

In the short while that LIRN has been in existence, their report shows tremendous work that warrants the allocation in the budget of \$200 per lawyer and a \$17 increase from last year's allocation. LIRN benefits all lawyers at the grass roots of practice and I know that all benchers care about sustaining our libraries and library services across the province.