

MEDIA RELEASE

EMBARGOED UNTIL 12.01am (one minute past midnight, Monday 20 August)

20 August 2018

Homicides could be missed if forensic pathology service collapses, warns senior doctors

The national forensic pathology service in this country is on the brink of collapse – and Justice Minister Andrew Little is refusing to intervene despite the advice of clinical experts, says the Association of Salaried Medical Specialists (ASMS).

“The seriousness of the current situation cannot be over-stated,” says ASMS Executive Director Ian Powell.

“If these services fall over, we will be left with a gaping hole in our ability to determine the cause of death in situations that are unclear or complex, or where we think a crime might have occurred. Forensic pathologists are deeply concerned that homicides could be missed as a result or miscarriages of justice occur.

“This situation has been entirely caused by the Ministry of Justice’s cack-handed fumbling of the contractual arrangements for the national forensic pathology service, and lack of any real attempt to understand what forensic pathologists do.

“Their decision is driven by a deadly combination of bureaucratic incompetence and an ideological belief that a commercial ‘free market’ approach will sort things out.

“What’s even more shocking, however, is that forensic pathologists, with ASMS’ support, have gone directly to the Minister of Justice to ask for his intervention, and he’s refused. This is a very small workforce of highly trained and specialised senior doctors who know the requirements of their work better than any official in the Ministry of Justice, yet they are not being heard. Andrew Little is choosing to take the advice of officials instead of clinical experts.”

Mr Powell says the Ministry has dragged out the process of determining the specifications for the national forensic pathology service - including how it will be run, resourced and funded – for seven years. And now it is proposing to dismantle it and fragment it over four different providers.

“There’s a worldwide shortage of forensic pathologists and the unsettled situation with the service here makes it very difficult to recruit suitably trained people or to keep them once they come to New Zealand.”

A letter from forensic pathologists to Andrew Little in March 2018 made the following points:



- The national forensic pathology service performs about 60% of all coronial post-mortems and all of the forensic post-mortems each year. The remaining coronial post-mortems are performed by coronial pathologists, who are anatomical (laboratory) pathologists. Coronial post-mortems are carried out to determine the cause of death, where this is unclear.
- Deaths in complex or suspicious circumstances, however, require a forensic post-mortem. Forensic pathologists are required to visit crime scenes, testify in court and manage multiple fatality events.
- The Ministry of Justice has rejected the idea that the national forensic pathology service should continue as a single entity, with investigation of suspicious deaths, homicides and complex cases being carried out by forensic pathologists. It wants these cases managed locally, and in some regions by coronial pathologists who have no knowledge, training or professional oversight in these types of cases. (This is currently being reviewed).
- Forensic pathologists say this will jeopardise police investigations and legal proceedings, and may result in some homicides being missed.
- The Ministry of Justice is relying on coronial pathologists to provide coronial autopsy services. However, a change of training requirements by the medical college responsible for this specialty means that forensic pathologists will soon be the only ones trained to carry out post mortems – and they're already working shorthanded. As the aging coronial workforce retires, forensic pathologists will not be in a position to cover the gaps.
- A complete collapse of local coronial and forensic pathology services in some regions later this year is inevitable.

In addition to the letter from forensic pathologists to the Minister, a small delegation from the forensic pathology team and ASMS met with the Ministry of Justice (8 June 2018) and then separately with Mr Little (25 June 2018) to communicate their concerns face to face. ASMS has written to the Minister several times to seek his assistance, and has made an urgent OIA request for information about the Ministry of Justice's procurement process. ASMS has also appealed to Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern to intervene.

Mr Powell says the national forensic pathology service provides an essential service for both the justice and health systems, and it is critical it is resourced adequately to maintain a high quality, consistent service that is able to attract experienced medical specialists.

"This service has been vulnerable for a long time, and we really don't want this service run any further into the ground. The Ministry of Justice needs to be told to pull its head in and sort out the mess its created.

"The Justice Minister's refusal to get involved runs directly counter to the approach of Health Minister David Clark in his dealings with the sector, his Letter of Expectations to district health boards, and his handling of attempts to privatise Taranaki's public laboratory."

ASMS has previously highlighted the crisis facing the national forensic pathology service (p13, July 2016: <https://www.asms.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/11106-The-Specialist-July-WEB-v3.pdf>).

More information about the national forensic pathology service – what it does and the issues it faces - is in the attached Q&A. Copies of the following correspondence are also attached:

- ASMS letter to Andrew Little (10 May 2018)
- Letter from the Ministry of Justice to ASMS (12 June 2018) following a meeting on 8 June 2018
- Letter from Andrew Little to ASMS (24 July) following 25 June meeting
- Letter from ASMS to Andrew Little (10 August 2018).
- Letter from Andrew Little to ASMS (15 August 2018)
- ASMS makes OIA request to Andrew Little (15 August 2018)
- ASMS letter to Andrew Little (16 August 2018).

ENDS

For more information contact:

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Dr Paul Morrow, Forensic Pathologist in the National Forensic Pathology Service

Currently visiting the U.S. and is 16 hours behind New Zealand.

He can be contacted on landline 00-1-802-985-9549 (no cell-phone). He is available from 1pm – 4pm Sunday New Zealand time (9pm - midnight local time) – please don't call him outside of these hours.

Cushla Managh, ASMS Communications Director

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ASSOCIATION OF SALARIED MEDICAL SPECIALISTS

TOI MATA HAUORA

By email: a.little@ministers.govt.nz

10 May 2018

Hon Andrew Little
Minister of Justice
Parliament Buildings
Wellington

Dear Mr Little

MOJ – Proposed privatisation – procurement for Coronial and Forensic Pathology Services

The Association of Salaried Medical Specialists (ASMS) represents the pathologists employed in the national forensic pathology service of New Zealand. We refer to Dr Simon Stables' letter to your office, dated 28 March 2018.

ASMS is deeply concerned about the current procurement process for coronial and forensic pathology services. After discussions with our members, we think this flawed process threatens the ongoing quality and timeliness of services to police, coroners, judiciary, and the wider New Zealand public. As a result, the national forensic services are likely to become fragmented to the point where they can no longer function effectively.

These concerns are described in much more detail in the letter from Dr Stables. ASMS agrees with the points raised and asks to meet with you urgently, within the next month, to find ways to address them before the situation deteriorates further.

We note that the national service contract is currently held by Auckland District Health Board, which employs staff around the country to provide timely and high quality forensic pathology services. The procurement proposal we have seen is founded on the premise that a single provider is not required, and that the market will offer a solution. This is of concern as it appears to open the door to privatisation of a critical service by stealth.

As you know, forensic pathology is high stakes work undertaken in the most tragic and demanding circumstances – mass fatality, murder, unexplained death. It is paramount that the Government maintains these services at the highest level to safeguard the integrity of the work in approach and outcome for the benefit of affected families as well as the police and courts, whose work often rests on the pathologists' findings.

The Ministry of Justice has known for some years now about the need to invest in a secure, sustainable service, and it has not proved equal to the task. The Ministry's failure to heed specialist clinical advice about the need for this service, and the risks to it, now place these essential national services in peril. I refer you to an article about the vulnerable state of the forensic pathology workforce on p13 of the July 2016 issue of the ASMS quarterly magazine, *The Specialist* (<https://www.asms.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/11106-The-Specialist-July-WEB-v3.pdf>).

Earlier this year the Ministry wrote to our members rejecting the need for a 'global best practice approach.' We find this objectionable and concerning.

Asking the 'market' to find a solution for stretched forensic pathology services cannot be an acceptable approach for your Government.

We hope to meet with you soon.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian Powell', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ian Powell
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

ip@asms.nz

11/1/0/18

cc Hon Dr David Clark, Minister of Health



Justice Centre | 19 Alken Street
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T 04 918 8800
justice.govt.nz

12 June 2018

Angela Belich
Deputy Executive Director
Association of Salaried Medical Specialists
Level 11, Bayleys Building
36 Brandon Street
Wellington

Dear Angela

Forensic and Coronial Pathology Services

Thank you to Dr Stables, Sarah Dalton and yourself for taking the time to meet with me and my team on 8 June 2018 to outline your concerns regarding the procurement of forensic and coronial pathology.

I reiterate that the Ministry of Justice is not looking to privatise forensic and coronial post-mortem service. Rather we are seeking to leverage off the current public health service structures that currently exist for pathology services, which includes both District Health Board provided and private sector provided arrangements.

We are encouraged by the response from those District Health Boards who, through various supply configurations, have indicated a commitment and willingness to serve their communities in providing this critical service to the coronial system. Our expectation is that, once implemented, this will build greater resilience within the service and bring coronial post-mortem delivery under a clinically robust quality framework, which aligns with that of the forensic service. It also will lay the foundations for strengthening the system in future.

I also acknowledge the concerns you expressed regarding the impact of the proposed changes on your members and future training roles, in particular related to the need to ensure ongoing sustainability of the workforce and the quality of services. These areas have been front of mind as we have progressed through the procurement but will be considered further for discussion and resolution with the proposed suppliers in concluding contracts.

In the meantime, I would be grateful if you might supply the contact details of the international forensic pathologists that Dr Stables mentioned, so that we might engage them in undertaking a review of the proposed model as it affects the clinical practice of pathologists.

Once again thank you for your time.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Turner
Group Manager, Commissioning and Service Improvement

Hon Andrew Little

Minister of Justice

Minister for Courts

Minister for Treaty of Waitangi Negotiations

Minister Responsible for the NZSIS

Minister Responsible for the GCSB

Minister Responsible for Pike River Re-entry



24 JUL 2018



Angela Belich
Deputy Executive Director
Association of Salaried Medical Specialists
Level 11, Bayleys Building
36 Brandon Street
Wellington

Dear Angela

Thank you to Dr Stables, Sarah Dalton and yourself for taking the time to meet with me on 25 June 2018 to discuss your concerns about the procurement of forensic and coronial pathology.

I would like to first acknowledge the important role that forensic and coronial pathologists play in support of the court system and ensuring that the Coroners Act works as it should.

I also acknowledge that the process that has been undertaken and the changes proposed as a result have raised concerns for your members, including some concerns that have existed for a considerable time. Specifically, you identified that funding was required to train New Zealand's pathologists to work in this area in future, and that any on-call and scene attendance arrangements need to be safe for your workforce.

I am advised that Ministry of Justice officials are ensuring these specific matters are addressed in their negotiations of contracts with suppliers. I understand negotiations are moving towards a conclusion and should see new contracts start in September 2018.

I have also considered your request that I intervene to cancel the Ministry's procurement, but I do not intend to do this. Rather, I consider that the new arrangements resulting from the procurement will lay the foundations on which the existing and future challenges can be worked through with the willing cooperation of the various service providers. I was pleased to hear that the forensic and coronial pathologists work collegially in this area, and I do not envisage the new arrangements inhibiting this.

The Ministry has confirmed that, as part of the new contracts, they intend to establish formal governance arrangements, which will provide strategic, clinical and operational oversight for the forensic and coronial pathology services. Membership within these arrangements will include management and clinical representation from the contracted services providers. These arrangements will allow for concerns that you or other stakeholders have, to be considered.

The new arrangements, including the additional funding for coronial services that Government has provided as part of Budget 2018, represent an opportunity to stabilise the

service, to mitigate risks within the existing system and to develop a framework through which to further develop the service.

Thank you again for taking the time to meet with me.

Yours sincerely



Hon Andrew Little
Minister of Justice



ASSOCIATION OF SALARIED MEDICAL SPECIALISTS

TOI MATA HAUORA

By email

10 August 2018

Hon Andrew Little
Minister of Justice
Parliament Buildings
Wellington

Cc: Hon Dr David Clark
Minister of Health

Dear Mr Little

National Forensic Pathology Service

I refer to your letter of 24 July to the Association (Deputy Executive Director Angela Belich) concerning the impact of the Ministry of Justice's procurement process on the national forensic pathology service.

The Association is very disappointed with your response and believes that you have misunderstood the concern. The Ministry's process creates serious risks for this highly vulnerable and critical service and seems to stem, at least in part, from confusion about the different functions of the forensic and coronial services. This difference is more than cosmetic but does not seem to have been fully comprehended.

The approach you support will fragment an essential national service (forensic pathology) by breaking it into three regional services. This makes no sense with only seven forensic pathologists in New Zealand. The reason why this is a national service is because of the combination of highly specialised skills and a very small critical mass.

This will also have the effect of privatising the service in at least one of the three intended regions. This will be a further blow, on top of fragmentation and is contrary to the Letter of Expectations to district health boards of your colleague Dr David Clark, Minister of Health, in respect of the public delivery of health services.

The forensic pathologists advise that the risks for this critical service are high. The responsible thing for you to do would be to cease this procurement process and then discuss with the Minister of Health a relational, rather than procurement, process between the Ministry of Justice and district health boards to shape the delivery of forensic pathology.

I look forward to your response. I have copied this letter to the Minister of Health.

Yours sincerely

Ian Powell
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

ip@asms.nz

11/1/0/18

Hon Andrew Little

Minister of Justice

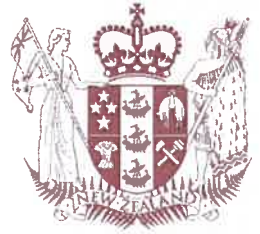
Minister for Courts

Minister for Treaty of Waitangi Negotiations

Minister Responsible for the NZSIS

Minister Responsible for the GCSB

Minister Responsible for Pike River Re-entry



Ian Powell
Association of Salaried Medical Specialists
36 Brandon Street
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15 AUG 2018

Dear Mr Powell

National Forensic Pathology Service

Thank you for your letter of 10 August 2018 concerning the impact of the Ministry of Justice's procurement process on the national forensic pathology service.

I note your disappointment in my response of 24 July 2018 to Angela Belich, but do not consider that I have misunderstood your concerns. I agree that the differences between forensic and coronial pathology are not cosmetic, and further I am clear that both are critical to the effective functioning of New Zealand's judicially-led coronial system.

The forensic and coronial pathology services are also reliant on each other to ensure that the coronial system can respond to the approximately 3,000 coronial cases and approximately 150 forensic cases it handles annually. Until now this has been delivered through fragmented arrangements involving 32 independent coronial pathologists, District Health Boards' mortuaries and their technical staff, as well as the seven forensic pathologists provided by the national forensic pathology service. I am aware that this has been argued by those involved as unsafe for several years and has not ensured the sustainability of existing services to the coroner.

In response to these concerns, the Ministry of Justice, in consultation with the Ministry of Health and New Zealand Police, has led a robust and open procurement process that has been subject to independent probity assurance.

No respondent offered a single solution that could meet all the Ministry's requirements nationwide.

However, the Ministry has been able to agree arrangements with four service providers who will secure and act together to integrate the existing forensic and coronial workforce to provide a consistent and reliable service across New Zealand.

As is the case now, the system will continue to have private sector providers involved in the system. Through this process, the Ministry has leveraged the existing health workforce and infrastructure provided by District Health Boards and their contracted private sector pathology service providers to secure services.

The selected providers will include two District Health Boards, and two consortia that each include District Health Boards and private providers. All providers involved are currently involved in providing coronial support services.

As a judicially required service I do not consider the future arrangements contrary to the Minister of Health's letter of expectations of District Health Boards, who deliver services through both public and private providers in a range of service areas, including pathology services.

The Government has also invested an additional \$7 million as part of Budget 2018 in these services. This has increased the total number of funded forensic pathologists to 10 full-time equivalents and three forensic trainee posts, across the providers.

I therefore do not intend to intervene in, or to terminate, the Ministry's procurement.

As you have sought, with the Ministry concluding the procurement, the engagement and governance arrangements being put in place will provide the vehicle for improved collaboration and involvement of suppliers and stakeholders in shaping the future development of the services.

Yours sincerely



Hon Andrew Little
Minister for Courts
Minister of Justice

Cc: Hon Dr David Clark
Minister of Health



ASSOCIATION OF SALARIED MEDICAL SPECIALISTS

TOI MATA HAUORA

15 August 2018

Hon Andrew Little
Minister of Justice
Parliament Buildings
Wellington

by email

Dear Minister

Urgent OIA Request - National Forensic Pathology Service

I note your letter of 15 August 2018.

You advise that the Ministry of Justice has led a robust and open procurement process that has been subject to independent probity assurance.

Can you please provide me with all information concerning the procurement process, and what you refer to as independent probity assurance.

My request is for all information, including, but not restricted to, all reports, advice, proposals, decisions, options, emails, telephone notes etc whether in draft form or otherwise (in fact any information whatsoever).

This request is urgent as the information is required to assess the Association's options in the face of significant changes that are about to be put in place.

Yours sincerely

Ian Powell
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

ip@asms.nz

5/1/0



ASSOCIATION OF SALARIED MEDICAL SPECIALISTS

TOI MATA HAUORA

By email: a.little@ministers.govt.nz

16 August 2018

Hon Andrew Little
Minister of Justice
Parliament Buildings
Wellington

Dear Mr Little

National Forensic Pathology Service

Thank you for your letter of 15 August in response to my letter of 10 August 2018 concerning the impact of the Ministry of Justice's procurement process on the national forensic pathology service. I appreciate the promptness of your reply.

Unfortunately, we appear to be communicating past each other which increases the risks to the viability of this critical service.

I note the reference to the "independent probity assurance". Presumably this means that the Ministry has reviewed the process rather than having undertaken due diligence and reviewed the details of the proposed service. I am doubtful that this has been an open process as there are affected key stakeholders who have not been consulted. Separately the Association has sought further information from you on this under the Official Information Act.

I also note that currently there is no formal agreement either with the Ministry of Justice or between providers to "integrate the existing forensic and coronial workforce to provide a consistent and reliable service across New Zealand".

The Ministry of Justice has mixed together two different parts of the coronial service – that provided by forensic pathology (around 60% as I understand it) and that provided by anatomical pathology (diagnosis of diseases through examination of organs and tissues). The two branches of pathology are quite different.

Your concern about the insecurity linked to the fragmentation of the latter is shared. The Association has reservations about the appropriateness of a procurement process to address the latter as it is such a blunt limiting instrument and would recommend that this change to a relational approach involving the Ministries of Justice and Health, and district health boards. But this is not the purpose of my letter.

There has never been a satisfactory answer from your officials driving this process, other than a vague suggestion of 'consistency' as to why the National Forensic Pathology Service was included in the procurement process. This is a nationally integrated service established in part at least to address fragmentation. By comparison, it serves as a template or guidance for how the rest of the coronial service should be based. But the approach taken by the Ministry to resolve the problems of one part of the coronial service will unnecessarily lead to the fragmentation of the integrated part of the service. It makes no sense.

Your Government has professed to promote the principle that if you improve engagement with the workforce you improve performance. This is a commendable principle which the Association promotes in a manner relevant to the public health service. Your preference to take the advice of your officials

rather than the advice of the workforce, in this case the expert forensic pathologists, is contrary to this principle. It also defies comprehension.

The risk of debacle is high. But there is a way forward. There was no need to include forensic pathologists in this procurement process and the Association recommends that it be taken out. This would also assist the tight timeframes that the Ministry's implementation process requires.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian Powell', written in a cursive style.

Ian Powell
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

ip@asms.nz

11/1/0/18

New Zealand's National Forensic Pathology Service

New Zealand's National Forensic Pathology Service is being dismantled; with the prospect of fragmentation and privatisation, and with no capacity to cover gaps in service.

What does the forensic pathology service do?

The National Forensic Pathology Service was formed on 1 July 2005. It is funded by the Ministry of Justice, which contracts Auckland District Health Board (ADHB) to provide the service.

The service performs about 60% of all coronial post-mortems and all of the forensic post-mortems each year. The remaining coronial post-mortems are performed by anatomical (laboratory) pathologists. These pathologists specialise in disease diagnosis of organs and tissues which is quite different from forensic pathology.

Coronial post-mortems are carried out to determine the cause of a person's death, where this is unclear. Where deaths occur in complex or suspicious circumstances, these need a forensic post-mortem by forensic pathologists who are required to visit crime scenes and testify in court.

The service currently has seven forensic pathologists, who are employees of, or contractors to, Auckland DHB. They are specialist medical practitioners who have completed five years specialist training in addition to basic medical training, and are vocationally registered by the Medical Council of New Zealand. They perform and report post-mortems for the police and coroners in suspicious deaths and homicides, and complex deaths, as well as in any other cases where the Coroner has accepted jurisdiction and directed a post-mortem examination. They also play a vital role in the aftermath of natural disasters, such as the Christchurch earthquake.

Between them, the seven forensic pathologists have more than 100 years of experience and have worked in overseas jurisdictions and in both coronial and medical examiner systems, so are acutely aware of the requirements of a sustainable and high quality service.

Global shortages and risk to training

There is a serious shortage of forensic pathologists world-wide. The Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia (RCPA), which trains pathologists and sets standards, recently amended its training requirements so that formal training in post-mortems will no longer be given to anatomic pathologists, only to forensic pathologists. This is likely to place the forensic pathology workforce supply under further threat. New Zealand needs at least two more forensic pathologists; however, the lack of sufficient local training and difficulties recruiting in the competitive international market means we rely on overseas locum specialists to provide a service.

Forensic pathology, as a service, sits at the intersection of both the public health and justice systems in this country. Appropriate forensic processes are required for Justice and the courts, and there are also public health requirements in relation to epidemiology and New Zealand's response to a significant crisis or natural disaster.

Current situation

The Ministry of Justice initiated a procurement process in November 2011 to bring all coronial pathology services under one contract, and to include the National Forensic Pathology Service. This was not successful and was closed in 2016. The Ministry then launched a second procurement round, with the same aims, and in April 2017 forensic pathologists in the National Forensic Pathology Service were advised of the Ministry's plans and timeframes. Subsequent delays have

resulted in the current contract for the National Forensic Pathology Service being extended until 1 October.

Forensic pathologists are worried about the ongoing delays, the reliance on coronial pathologists, lowering of standards and quality, lack of adequate funding and resourcing, restrictions in availability to assist police and the dismantling of the national service. They are concerned that the Ministry does not understand the core work of forensic pathologists, thereby placing this work at risk.

By choosing a procurement process, the Ministry of Justice has unwisely chosen to use a blunt instrument to address a complex issue and one in which commercial confidentiality gags the free and frank professional discussion by experts that is essential to ensure the right decision is made.

Brink of collapse

As it currently stands, they advise that forensic pathology in this country is on the brink of collapse.

The Ministry is relying on the availability of coronial pathologists to provide coronial autopsy services but this workforce is aging, and the RCPA's decision means that forensic pathologists will soon be the only ones trained to carry out post-mortems. As the coronial workforce retires, and if any part of the replacement coronial service fails, forensic pathologists – themselves working shorthanded – will not be in a position to cover gaps.

Collapse of service in some regions seems inevitable as there is no longer a desire by the Ministry for a single national forensic pathology service that would normally be tasked with providing a continuous and 24/7 service. It is likely that some regions, currently served by a forensic pathologist, will, under the Ministry's proposal, only be served by coronial pathologists who do not have the same level of training or expertise.

Despite these concerns – and indeed, in the face of them – the Ministry of Justice seems determined to press ahead with a flawed procurement process that will have lasting consequences for New Zealand's ability to provide a sustainable, quality forensic pathology service in this country, and which runs counter to the Labour-led Government's express commitment to the ongoing public provision, and resourcing, of essential services.

What needs to happen?

The Ministry has decided to dismantle the National Forensic Pathology Service and distribute forensic and coronial pathology services over four different providers. This is foolhardy and short-sighted. The current procurement process, if it continues, will lead to fragmentation and partial privatisation of coronial and forensic pathology services. It is deeply flawed and should be halted.

Forensic pathology an essential health service

Forensic pathologists are looking to the Government to inject a dose of common-sense into the process in order to prevent the complete breakdown of forensic pathology services.

An important aspect of this requires consideration of the interface, and the resulting tensions, between Justice and Health in administering a national forensic pathology service. Forensic pathology is an essential health service, but this is not adequately recognised or prioritised by the Ministry of Justice. In addition, the Ministry's lack of willingness to engage meaningfully with the

people who know most about the national service – the forensic pathologists themselves as well as other key stakeholders, is deeply concerning.

If the Ministry's procurement process is to continue, the National Forensic Pathology Service should be taken out of it. Instead, the team of forensic pathologists that make up New Zealand's current national service should be properly consulted and involved in co-designing a new national service. This service needs to be sustainable, support training, provide high quality forensic pathology services, and meet or exceed international best practice standards.

A clinically robust, quality forensic pathology service is needed, staffed by experienced, specialist forensic pathologists. The path the Ministry of Justice is on will not provide this.

Communicating our concerns to the Ministry and Government

A number of attempts have been made to communicate the concerns raised by forensic pathologists with the Ministry and the Minister of Justice, Andrew Little.

- Forensic pathologists wrote to Andrew Little on 28 March 2018, outlining their concerns in detail.
- ASMS wrote to Andrew Little on 10 May, seeking his assistance.
- Small group of ASMS and forensic pathologists met with Ministry of Justice officials on 8 June and then separately with Andrew Little on 25 June.
- Andrew Little wrote to ASMS on 24 July, advising that he would not intervene.
- ASMS wrote a further letter to Andrew Little on 10 August.
- ASMS has also appealed to Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern to intervene.
- Letter from Andrew Little to ASMS (15 August 2018)
- ASMS makes OIA request to Andrew Little (15 August 2018)
- ASMS letter to Andrew Little (16 August 2018).