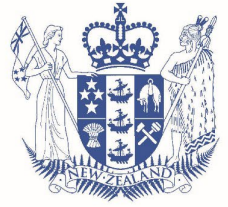


# Hon Judith Collins KC

Attorney General  
Minister of Defence  
Minister for Digitising Government  
Minister for the Public Service  
Minister Responsible for the GCSB  
Minister Responsible for the NZSIS  
Minister for Space



Frazer Barton  
President  
New Zealand Law Society  
c/a nilu.ariyaratne@lawsociety.org.nz

Dear Frazer,

Thank you for your letter dated 29 August 2025.

As Attorney-General I am the constitutional link between the judiciary and executive government and have the important role in our democratic system of Government according to law of upholding and protecting the judiciary, as an institution. I also have responsibility for upholding the rule of law, which includes the independence of the courts. We have a strong tradition in New Zealand of a politically neutral and independent judiciary, and that must remain the case.

I am aware of Minister Van Velden's comments about the recent appointment of Employment Relations Authority members. Although Authority members are not judges, part of their role is to determine issues of law, and I consider that the values of political neutrality and independence apply similarly to Authority members.

I have spoken to Minister Van Velden and to Cabinet, and we are in agreement. I have explained the need for careful use of language when speaking of the judiciary or – in this case – Tribunal member appointments, to avoid the perception of any politicisation of the judiciary. Parties before the Employment Relations Authority must be confident that the Authority member will determine the dispute before them according to the law, without regard to any future reappointment. I have no doubt that the new members, like all members of the Authority, will fulfil their oath to "faithfully and impartially perform his or her duties".

I intend to send this letter to the chair of the Authority and the Chief Judge of the Employment Court, so that it can be shared with the new Authority members.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Judith Collins'.

Hon Judith Collins KC MP  
**Attorney-General**