

Appointment as a Lay Member of a Lawyers Standards Committee

Lay members of Lawyers Standards Committees are established under Part 7 of the Lawyers and Conveyancers Act 2006 (“the Act”).

The statutory functions of Standards Committees are to:

- inquire into and investigate complaints against lawyers, incorporated law firms, and their employees;
- promote the resolution of complaints by negotiation, conciliation, or mediation, where it is appropriate to do so;
- in certain circumstances, to intervene in the affairs of law firms;
- make final determinations in relation to complaints; and
- lay and prosecute charges before the New Zealand Lawyers and Conveyancers Disciplinary Tribunal.

A lay member must:

- be a person of good character and be a fit and proper person to serve on a Standards Committee;
- possess all of the attributes of skill, experience, and judgement necessary to be a contributing member of a Standards Committee undertaking the full range of its statutory functions.

In addition to being of good character and fit and proper, applicants must have the skill and judgement required to deal with contentious and sometimes complex issues. Protecting the consumers of legal services is a key purpose of the Act which is one reason why it is important to have a perspective from outside of the legal profession.

Lay members are people of proven integrity and good standing in their communities and will have an established record of achievement and responsibility in their personal and working lives.

Persons who are or have been enrolled as barristers and solicitors, or as registered conveyancers, are not eligible for appointment as a lay member.