

CHAIR



Jane Meares, Barrister, Clifton Chambers, Wellington

Jane is a commercial barrister, with a wide range of public and commercial experience. Prior to joining Clifton Chambers, Jane was the chief legal adviser at the Treasury, the Treasury Solicitor. She also gained in-house experience as the manager of the legal team at the Department of Internal Affairs. At the independent bar she advises government departments and other public and commercial entities on a range of commercial and public law matters. She also has a number of governance roles.

SPEAKERS



Peter Castle, Barrister, Clifton Chambers, Wellington

Peter Castle is a commercial barrister advising the public and private sector on a wide range of commercial transactions and matters. Peter specialises in general corporate and commercial law advice including corporate transactions, mergers and acquisitions, joint ventures, commercial contracting and procurement and probity advice for large scale procurement projects and Crown asset disposal projects. Currently Peter is a probity and independent transactions adviser providing transaction and probity advice in relation to the Social Housing Reform Programme.



Ashley Cornor, Senior Associate, DLA Piper, Wellington

Ashley has been a member of the Litigation and Resource Management teams at DLA Piper since graduating from Victoria University with degrees in law and building science in 2003. He acts for a range of local authority and applicant clients in a broad number of areas, including proceedings under the Building Act 2004 and the Resource Management Act 1991. Ashley appears in the Environment, Coroners, District and High Courts on a regular basis.



Leo Donnelly, Deputy Ombudsman, Investigations and Inspections, Office of the Ombudsman, Wellington

Leo joined the Office of the Ombudsmen in 1985 as an investigating officer in the Official Information Act section of the Office. He was appointed Assistant Ombudsman in November 1996 and Deputy Ombudsman in September 2004. Leo has written papers and addressed seminars both in New Zealand and overseas on issues relating to procedural fairness, good administrative practice, and the operation of New Zealand's official information legislation and its interaction with public records legislation.



Mark Gobbi, Parliamentary Counsel, Parliamentary Counsel Office, Wellington

Mark is currently serving as a parliamentary counsel (drafting team manager) in the Parliamentary Counsel Office, an adjunct lecturer at Victoria University's Faculty of Law, and a special advisor to the New Zealand Yearbook of International Law. After some time in private practice, Mark joined the Law Reform Division of the Department of Justice, where he specialised in Bill of Rights vetting, constitutional design, electoral law, and intellectual property. At Justice, Mark developed an interest in the legislative process and the ways in which New Zealand implements its international obligations, which, after special project work for the Ministry of Transport, led him to his present roles.

SPEAKERS



Virginia Hardy, Crown Law, Te Tari Ture o te Karauna, Wellington

Virginia is Deputy Solicitor General of the Attorney General Group which includes counsel handling Treaty of Waitangi and Crown-Maori relations issues and constitutional/Bill of Rights issues. The focus of the office's work associated with the Treaty is on advising government in relation to contemporary and historical Treaty of Waitangi claims and government policy touching on the Treaty. The office also represents the Crown at Treaty of Waitangi inquiries and before the Courts, including on Marine and Coastal Area applications.



Claire Harmsworth, Senior Associate, Bell Gully, Wellington

Claire's main area of practice is providing commercial and public law advice to public sector entities, and advising a range of clients on climate change matters. A key area of Claire's practice involves advising a range of public sector entities on their procurement processes, including reviewing and drafting procurement documentation, providing probity and procurement advice. Claire has been extensively involved in developing a number of unique commercial contracts for entities in the public sector undertaking new portfolios of work.



Doris Johnston, Deputy Director for Policy and Special Projects, Office of Treaty Settlements, Wellington

Doris has worked in planning, policy and leadership roles in local and central government and been involved in policy development and operations for the Resource Management Act and conservation legislation. The Marine and Coastal Area Team and the administration of the Act are one of the groups she leads.



David Tapsell, Deputy Director Assurance (Negotiations and Settlements), Office of Treaty Settlements, Wellington

David is a commercial lawyer and company director with over 20 years' experience. He has been on the board of the Rotorua based Pukeroa Group for nearly 15 years and is also on the board of Te Puia (The New Zealand Maori Arts and Crafts Institute). Prior appointments include the board (Chairperson of the Governance and Remuneration Committee) of the Public Trust. David is contracted to the Office of Treaty Settlements as Deputy Director Assurance (Negotiations and Settlements) to assist with the completion of the historical Treaty Settlement negotiations work programme.



Simon Watt, Partner, Bell Gully, Wellington

Simon specialises in climate change law and in providing commercial and public law advice to public sector entities. He advises government departments, state-owned enterprises, Crown entities and statutory corporations on the regulatory frameworks that apply to them. Simon advises on consultation and decision-making processes aimed at fulfilling public law obligations and managing judicial review risks.

SPEAKERS



Melanie Webb, Assistant Auditor-General, Office of the Auditor - General, Wellington

Melanie Webb joined the Office of the Auditor-General in October 2015. She heads the Office's Legal Group, which provides legal advice and support across all aspects of the work of the Office of the Auditor-General and Audit New Zealand. The Legal Group has particular responsibility for managing the conduct of inquiries carried out by the Auditor-General and also administers the Local Government (Members' Interests) Act 1968. Before joining the Office, Melanie was the Chief Legal Advisor at the Department of Internal Affairs and has held various policy and legal roles within the New Zealand public sector since 1994.

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