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# Social Workers Disciplinary Tribunal

## Member Position Description, 2026

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### The Tribunal's role

The Social Workers Disciplinary Tribunal (the Tribunal) was created by the Social Workers Registration Act 2003.

The Tribunal hears and determines the outcome of disciplinary charges laid against registered social workers. The Tribunal's purpose is to protect the safety of members of the public by ensuring social workers are competent and safe to practise and are accountable for the way in which they practise.

The Tribunal is funded on a cost-recovery basis through a disciplinary levy that forms part of the fee for a social worker's annual practising certificate. The Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB) sets the levy and provides administrative support to the Tribunal.

### The Tribunal's membership and appointment

The Tribunal has a minimum of eight members:

- a Chair and one or more Deputy Chairs (who must each be a barrister or solicitor of the High Court of not less than seven years' practice)
- at least five registered social workers (whose registration or practicing certificate is not suspended)
- at least one layperson (not a social worker).

An individual cannot simultaneously be a member of the Tribunal and SWRB.

The Tribunal's membership is appointed by the Minister for Social Development and Employment under the Social Workers Registration Act 2003. Layperson and registered social worker members may be appointed for terms of up to five years and may be reappointed.

### Membership of Tribunal Hearings

The membership for each hearing is selected by the Tribunal Chair. For each hearing, the Tribunal must include the Chair or a Deputy Chair, three registered social workers, and one layperson. Information about Tribunal decisions and appeals is available at <https://swrb.govt.nz/tribunal-decisions/>.

### Location of Hearings

Hearings are held online or in-person across New Zealand. The location of in-person hearings depends on where the registered social worker facing charges lives.

## **Tribunal member expertise and experience**

The Tribunal's membership should collectively have the following expertise and experience:

- an understanding of the Tribunal's role
- knowledge and experience of matters likely to come before the Tribunal
- critical thinking, sound judgement and analytical skills which can be constructively applied to a wide range of topics and human behaviour generally
- a commitment to fair process and unbiased decision-making
- the ability to communicate effectively and accurately
- an inclusive approach to group discussions and decision making
- an understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, tikanga and te ao Māori as it relates to the social work sector
- the ability to engage effectively with various ethnic and cultural groups in New Zealand
- the ability to manage and maintain excellent professional relationships with a range of people
- effective time management and sufficient time and flexibility to commit to the role.

For the registered social worker positions substantial, in-depth experience is required.

## **Workload and remuneration**

Members are expected to prioritise their commitment to the Tribunal and are required to make themselves available to hear and consider at least half of the hearings they are asked to participate in. The Tribunal's caseload can be highly variable, on average two to three hearings are currently held each year.

Members are required to review all material provided to them before each hearing, attend the hearing and review draft decisions.

Members are only paid for the hearings they take part in. The fee is set under the Cabinet Fees Framework. The current fee for work undertaken by members is \$450 per day. A public sector employee who is appointed to the Tribunal will not be double paid for their job — as a Tribunal member and as a public sector employee.

Remuneration is being reviewed in 2026 in line with changes made last year to the Framework, however, any adjustment to fees is not automatic.

Actual and reasonable expenses may be claimed for costs associated with travel for hearings.

## **Conflict of interests**

The Tribunal has processes in place to ensure that any potential conflicts of interest a member has are acknowledged when they are appointed and appropriately managed throughout the member's term.

## Information collected on Tribunal members

Information on those appointed to the Tribunal is collected and securely held by the Public Service Commission in a specialist system, 'AppointNet'. For more details, please see the AppointNet privacy statement at <http://www.publicservice.govt.nz/system/crown-entities/crown-entity-resource-centre/appointnet-privacy-protocol>