
Social Workers Registration Board

Lay Member Position Description, 2026

The entity's role

The Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB) is the social worker regulator and the lead agency for developing the Social Worker Workforce Strategy and Action Plan with responsibility for monitoring implementation.

The SWRB'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 role of the SWRB as the regulator of social workers is set out in the Social Workers Registration Act 2003. The SWRB uses a range of regulatory tools, including:

- the registration of social workers and maintaining an up-to-date public register of individuals who are qualified and authorised to practice
- issuing annual practising certificates
- publishing scopes of practice, code of conduct, and core competencies
- prescribing standards in social work education
- managing concerns, complaints, and notifications about registered social workers
- investigating and potentially prosecuting individuals who allegedly claim to be a registered social worker.

The SWRB also enhances social workers' professional practice and provides insight into the opportunities and challenges facing the social worker workforce.

The SWRB provides administrative support to the Social Workers Disciplinary Tribunal (the Tribunal), a separate body which is responsible for hearing and determining disciplinary charges laid against registered social workers.

The regulatory functions of the SWRB are funded on a cost-recovery basis, through fees and a disciplinary levy.

The Board's membership and appointment

The SWRB is a Crown entity under the Crown Entities Act 2004. It is governed by a seven-member Board appointed by the Minister for Social Development and Employment (the Minister) under the Social Workers Registration Act. The SWRB is accountable to the Minister and monitored by the Ministry of Social Development.

Of the Board's seven members, four must be registered social workers. The other three members are generally referred to as lay members for clarity.

Members are appointed by the Minister for terms of up to three years. Members may be reappointed but cannot serve on the Board for more than six consecutive years.

The Chair is appointed by the Minister from among the members of the Board.

Board member expertise and experience

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

- strong governance experience
- senior management or executive level experience
- effective relationship management experience
- strong communications skills
- well-developed and effective financial management skills and experience
- understanding and knowledge of machinery of government and Crown entity responsibilities
- understanding of professional regulatory functions including public safety
- understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, te reo Māori, tikanga and te ao Māori, including as it relates to the social work sector
- ability to engage effectively with Pacific peoples and diverse ethnic and cultural groups in New Zealand
- extensive applied social work experience (10-15 years).

Individual lay members will not have social work experience but should demonstrate several of the other key attributes set out above.

Workload and remuneration

Members are expected to attend all scheduled Board meetings, participate in online Board activities and participate in any specialist committees established by the Board. Around eight full-day meetings are held per year with additional meetings as required.

Members are currently spending up to 50 days per year on Board business. Member remuneration is set in accordance with the Cabinet Fees Framework. The members' annual fee is \$11,250. Remuneration is being reviewed in 2026 in line with changes made last year to the Framework, however, an adjustment to the fees is not automatic.

Members are also entitled to claim expenses such as travel, parking, telephone calls, and postage costs.

Guidance and induction

The Public Service Commission has general guidance for [Crown entity board members](#) on the frameworks, duties and expectations that apply. A specific induction programme is provided for new members of the SWRB.

Appointee information held

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

Conflict of interests

The SWRB 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.

Given the potential conflict of interest between the role of a public servant and the role of a member of a statutory body, Ministers will not generally appoint public servants to statutory bodies unless there are special circumstances. The Cabinet circular which outlines this expectation, CO(02)5 *Appointment of Public Servants to Statutory Boards*, sets out the special circumstances where public servants can be appointed to statutory bodies.

A public sector employee who is appointed to the Board will not be double paid for their job (as a Board member and as a public sector employee).

Disqualification

Certain people are disqualified from being a member of the SWRB under section 30 of the Crown Entities Act 2004.

- A person who is an undischarged bankrupt.
- A person who is prohibited from being a director or promoter of, or being concerned or taking part in the management of, an incorporated or unincorporated body under the Companies Act 1993, or the Financial Markets Conduct Act 2013, or the Takeovers Act 1993.
- A person who is subject to a property order under the Protection of Personal and Property Rights Act 1988 or a personal order under that Act that reflects adversely on the person's competence to manage their affairs in relation to their property or capacity to make or communicate decisions relation to their personal care and welfare.
- A person who has been convicted of an offence punishable by imprisonment for a term of 2 years or more, or who has been sentenced to imprisonment for any other offence, unless that person has obtained a pardon, served the sentence, or otherwise suffered the penalty imposed on the person.
- A member of Parliament.
- A person cannot simultaneously be a member of SWRB and a member of the Tribunal.