

Chief Judge of the Māori Land Court

Position Description

The role of the Chief Judge

The Role

The role of the Chief Judge of the Māori Land Court encompasses judicial, representative, administrative, relationship management, and strategic functions. A key demand of the role is leadership of the Court.

Core Responsibilities

The core responsibilities of the Chief Judge are set out below:

Role	Description
Judicial	
	<p>Key functions for the Chief Judge under Te Ture Whenua Māori Act 1993 include performing judicial functions under Te Ture Whenua Māori Act 1993, the Fisheries Act 1996, the Māori Fisheries Act 2004, the Māori Commercial Aquaculture Claims Settlement Act 2004 and the Takutai Moana Act 2011.</p> <p>The role may also involve the following roles and responsibilities, as set out below.</p> <p>If also appointed as Chairperson of the Waitangi Tribunal, that role includes convening Tribunal's Governance Group that provides strategic direction and reviews the progress of the Tribunal's work programme.</p>
Public Representation and Leadership	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Maintaining a high public profile.▪ Undertaking public speaking engagements.▪ Liaising with Māori communities, governance bodies, and landowners.▪ Representing the Māori Land Court at official functions.
Administrative	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Providing guidance and support to the bench of the Māori Land Court, including:<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ managing day-to-day judicial deployment, leave, and sabbaticals.▪ managing judicial complaints.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ managing judges' conferences; and ▪ managing the Māori Land Court's Judicial Education programme. ▪ Administering applications relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ powers of correction under sections 44 – 48 of Te Ture Whenua Māori Act 1993.
Relationship Management	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintaining the confidence of Māori communities in the institution of the Māori Land Court. ▪ Managing relationships with the Māori Land Court on operational and technical matters. ▪ Maintaining relationships with key government bodies, including Ministers (e.g., Minister of Māori Development, Minister for Courts), the Ministry of Justice, and Te Puni Kōkiri. ▪ Managing relationships with the Chief Justice, other Heads of Benches, the legal profession, and the academic community.
Strategic	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Providing a strategic focus for the Māori Land Court bench. ▪ Contributing to policy and legislative initiatives that significantly impact whenua Māori and the role of the Māori Land Court.

Criteria for appointment as Chief Judge

The following criteria will be used to assess candidates for the role of Chief Judge of the Māori Land Court:

Statutory Criteria

Candidates must be eligible for appointment as a Māori Land Court judge under section 7 of Te Ture Whenua Māori Act 1993. Under section 7, judges must be 'fit and proper' for the position, and must:

- be deemed suitable, having regard to their knowledge and experience of te reo Māori, tikanga Māori and the Treaty of Waitangi
- have held a practising certificate as a barrister or solicitor for at least 7 years;
- be under the age of 70 years
- stop practising as a barrister or solicitor.

General Criteria

Successful candidates should display the following skills and attributes:

- legal ability, including:
 - excellence in the practise and/or theory of law, in particular knowledge of and experience with Te Ture Whenua Māori Act 1993, the Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975, the Fisheries Act 1996, the Māori Fisheries Act 2004, the Māori Commercial Aquaculture Claims Settlement Act 2004 and the Takutai Moana Act 2011
 - extensive experience in the Māori Land Court and the Waitangi Tribunal.
- technical skills, including:
 - court administrative and organisational skills
 - the ability to manage a courtroom
 - high capability in te reo and tikanga Māori
 - a good understanding of tribal structures, history, and culture
 - high-level communication skills
 - the ability to analyse complex and competing factual and legal material.
 - mental agility
 - effective time management
 - the ability to produce clear, reasoned judgments expeditiously.
- qualities of character, including:
 - honesty and integrity
 - open-mindedness and impartiality
 - courtesy, patience and social sensitivity
 - breadth of vision, independence, and acceptance of public scrutiny

- leadership qualities and the ability to manage and lead a bench of judges and staff
- standing and good reputation within the community.
- Reflection of society, including:
 - active involvement in the Māori community.
 - an awareness of, and sensitivity to, the diversity of modern New Zealand society
 - a good knowledge, acquired by experience, of New Zealand's life, customs and values.