

CHAIR



The Honourable Justice Simon Mount, High Court, Auckland

Justice Mount was appointed to the High Court of New Zealand in April 2025. He holds Master of Law degrees from the University of Auckland and Columbia Law School where he also held teaching roles. Justice Mount served as a Crown prosecutor at Meredith Connell and Crown Counsel at Crown Law, later practising as a barrister at Bankside Chambers, specialising in public law, criminal and regulatory law, professional discipline and public inquiries. He has held roles including Visiting Justice, District Inspector of Mental Health, and Attorney-General of the Pitcairn Islands. Justice Mount was appointed Queen's Counsel in 2017.

SPEAKERS



Henry Benson-Pope, University of Otago, Dunedin

After graduating from the University of Otago in 2013, Henry spent two years as a Judge's Clerk for Chief Justice Dame Sian Elias at the Supreme Court of New Zealand. Between 2016 and 2024, he was a Crown Prosecutor at the Office of the Crown Solicitor for Manukau (Kayes Fletcher Walker). Henry is classified as a Senior Crown Prosecutor and has appeared as lead counsel for the Crown in trials in the District Court and High Court (including for charges of murder and manslaughter) and in the Court of Appeal (Criminal Division). He has a Master of Laws from New York University, where he attended as a Fulbright and Hauser Global Scholar and focused on issues in criminal law and criminal justice. Henry currently teaches Criminal Law and Advocacy at the University of Otago.



The Honourable Justice Mathew Downs, High Court, Auckland

Justice Downs graduated from Otago University in 1993 with LLB (Hons). He later completed an LLM (Hons, 1st class) at Cambridge University and a PhD at the University of Otago. Justice Downs' doctoral thesis was recognised by the Division of Humanities as exceptional. He worked as a junior solicitor at Brewer Mazengarb in 1994, and then Assistant Crown Counsel at Crown Law between 1994-96. From 1996-2005 Justice Downs worked at Ben Vanderkolk & Associates and then Meredith Connell. He rejoined Crown Law in 2005, later becoming Senior Crown Counsel. There, Justice Downs appeared regularly in the Court of Appeal and Supreme Court. He was the editor of *Cross on Evidence* and a co-author of its 2017 edition and is now the editor of *Adams on Criminal Law*. Justice Downs was appointed a High Court Judge on 11 August 2016 and is Auckland-based. The Judge regularly presents on the law of evidence, including to fellow Judges.



Gareth Kayes, Kayes Fletcher Walker, Auckland

Gareth is a director of Kayes Fletcher Walker – the office of the Manukau Crown Solicitor. In that role he focuses on serious crime in both the High Court and District Court. Gareth clerked for the Chief Justice before completing a BCL and MPhil at the University of Oxford. From 2005, he worked in civil litigation at Gilbert Walker. From 2008 to 2014, Gareth was a prosecutor at Meredith Connell, establishing Kayes Fletcher Walker in 2014.

SPEAKERS



Ron Mansfield KC, Barrister, Auckland

Ron is a senior criminal lawyer with a well-respected national profile. As one of New Zealand's leading criminal lawyers he appears regularly in high profile criminal cases and was named LawFuel's Lawyer of the year 2024 recognising him for "championing justice in New Zealand's criminal defence arena". Ron has mentored numerous young lawyers and is widely acknowledged for his significant contributions to the legal profession and his readiness to provide assistance and support, including being a founding committee member of the Defence Lawyers Association.



Alysha McClintock, MC, Auckland

Alysha is a partner at MC and is the Crown Solicitor at Auckland. She has acted for the Crown, Crown entities and government departments in the Court of Appeal, High Court and District Court on matters including murder, manslaughter, sexual and other serious violent offences, and major drug crime. In addition to criminal prosecution, Alysha is a specialist in fair trading, consumer credit and health and safety litigation, including precedent-setting litigation before the Court of Appeal.



Chris Merrick, Chris Merrick Law + Consultancy, Auckland

Chris (Ngātiwai, Ma'ufanga, Niua, Tonga) is a lawyer and consultant based in Tāmaki Makaurau – Auckland. He has been in practice for 17 years, starting his career as a crown prosecutor and general litigator at Meredith Connell, before establishing the firm Moala Merrick in South Auckland. For the following decade, Chris worked primarily in criminal defence, with specialist expertise in defending children and young people charged with serious criminal offending. Chris joined Meredith Connell as a partner in 2023 leading cultural capability and leadership initiatives. In 2025, he established Chris Merrick Law + Consultancy.



Yasmin Olsen, University of Otago, Dunedin

After graduating from the University of Otago in 2015, Yasmin (Ngāpuhi, Te Ihutai) worked as a Judge's Clerk for Justice Matthew Palmer in the Auckland High Court, and then as a Crown Prosecutor at the Office of the Crown Solicitor for Manukau (Kayes Fletcher Walker). In 2024, she completed a Master of Laws at Yale Law School, and subsequently returned to the University of Otago where she is a lecturer in the Faculty of Law. Yasmin's research and teaching focuses on criminal law, youth justice and tikanga Māori and the law.



Khylee Quince, AUT Law School, Auckland

Associate Professor Khylee Quince is the Dean of the School of Law, where she has been on staff since 2017. Prior to that she was the Associate Dean Māori at the University of Auckland Faculty of Law. Khylee is an expert in criminal law and justice, youth justice and Māori legal issues. She has taught and researched in these fields, and in 2014 was awarded a National Tertiary Teaching Excellence Award for Sustained Excellence, following Faculty of Law and University of Auckland Teaching Awards in 2013.

SPEAKERS



Her Honour Judge Pippa Sinclair, District Court, Auckland

Judge Sinclair was sworn in as a District Court Judge in December 2011. She presides in the criminal jurisdiction undertaking general criminal work and jury trials. Prior to that, Judge Sinclair was a barrister practising in the criminal jurisdiction and working as a District Inspector for Mental Health Services. In March 2020 Judge Sinclair, with Judge Claire Ryan, established the Criminal Procedure (Mentally Impaired) Persons Court which sits in Auckland and addresses fitness to stand trial, agreed insanity, involvement and disposition under the CP(MIP) Act. Her Honour has authored and presented many seminars in relation to practices and developments under the CP(MIP) Act.



Henry Steele, MC, Auckland

Henry has a broad range of criminal and commercial litigation experience and regularly prosecutes jury trials in the High Court and District Court, as well as representing the Crown in the Court of Appeal. He specialises in prosecuting organised crime, particularly commercial drug offending and the laundering of its proceeds, as well as culpable homicide, serious sexual violence, including complex multiple complainant cases, and cases involving national security. Henry also advises and represents Police, New Zealand Customs and the Department of Corrections, and appears in a number of specialist tribunals on behalf of regulatory agencies.



Robert Stewart KC, Shortland Chambers, Auckland

Robert is an expert litigator and advocate with over 30 years' experience in a wide variety of practice areas, including Bill of Rights issues (freedom of expression), harmful digital communications, copyright issues, privacy, contempt, and suppression. He regularly appears in courts and tribunals at all levels, principally in the higher courts and often against leading silks. Robert is recognised as one of New Zealand's leading defamation and media lawyers and is retained by a number of the country's principal media outlets. He has presented for both CLE and the Law Association and has been a faculty member on CLE's Litigation Skills Programme.



Genevive Vear, Public Defence Service, Tauranga

Genevive Vear is a senior lawyer and specialist appeals counsel at the Public Defence Service (PDS). Her LLM from Auckland University specialised in mental health, and she regularly contributes to training and academic writing in this area, and others. Genevive has been practising criminal law, with a special expertise on mental health and appellate work, since 2009, including time with both PDS and Crown Law. In her current role she is regularly undertaking appellate work in the Court of Appeal and Supreme Court.

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