

9 March 2020

James Watts

Acting Editor - Asia Pacific

Chambers and Partners

London, UK

The Auckland Women Lawyers' Association (AWLA) is a representative association of women lawyers in Auckland, New Zealand's largest city.

We write to express our disappointment at the New Zealand bar listings from your latest rankings, which fail to reflect the numbers of truly excellent women QCs and junior barristers in New Zealand. This will actively prejudice women seeking briefs in New Zealand.

We infer from this that your rankings are either poorly researched, or biased, or both. This is unacceptable, and we ask that you do better for 2021's listing.

Your listing for the New Zealand bar has:

- None (out of six) women at band 1
- One (out of eight) women at band 2
- Two (out of eight) women at band 3
- None (out of three) women at 'new silks'
- None (out of four) women at 'juniors'.

This is not reflective of the make up of the bar in New Zealand, and the strength of the women advocates we have in New Zealand. There are many experienced and highly skilled women barristers in New Zealand whose abilities match or exceed the men you have profiled in your listing. This needs to be corrected.

The unrepresentative and unfair nature of your listing will make it harder for qualified women to be briefed in cases where they are appropriate for the job.

New Zealand has an equitable briefing charter. It is important to many in the New Zealand profession that women be given equal opportunities for work.

International clients instructing the briefing of barristers in New Zealand often have little information (other than the recommendations of their solicitors) to go on. Your listing is one of the few resources that solicitors can offer their clients to support their recommendations.

We urge you to reconsider your listings for 2021 to ensure that they reflect the true strength and diversity of the New Zealand bar. We note that in addition to the lack of gender diversity, on its face your listing is also disappointingly weak in its representation of all forms of diversity.

---

We are circulating this letter publicly, and do so with two other pleas.

Firstly, we encourage all women at the bar to put themselves forward for listing. We also encourage them to contact us if they need any assistance with references. We ask that you to give these women, and all other women who apply to you, due consideration in your listings so that the time invested by these women will not be wasted.

Secondly, to our male colleagues at the bar, and in particular those listed by you already, we ask that they consider using their submission this year to outline the women they think should be listed. To these men we say, you know that there are women who deserve to be on this list, and for you to feature on such an unrepresentative and clearly poorly researched list does you no benefit – your credibility will rise with this list's credibility.

We look forward to your 2021 listings, which we trust will properly reflect the true make up and strength of the New Zealand bar.

Yours sincerely | Naku noa, na



Laura Carter

AWLA President