

Access to Justice Award 2026

CRITERIA AND TERMS OF THE AWARD

Purpose

The Access to Justice Award is intended to recognise a New Zealander (or qualifying New Zealand resident) who has made an outstanding contribution to the promotion of access to justice.

The winner of the Award will have demonstrated a strong commitment to improving access to justice for individuals or communities through advocacy, leadership, and the giving of their time and energy.

The Award is co-sponsored by LexisNexis NZ Ltd (the Sponsor).

Eligibility

- The Award is open to all individual New Zealand barristers sole, barristers and solicitors, academics, and law students.
- A nominee must be nominated on or before the closing date for nominations in a given year. This year the closing date is 17 August 2026. The nomination form is available from the NZBA. Once completed it should be sent by email to president@nzbar.org.nz.
- A nominee does not need to hold a current practising certificate.
- A nominee must be of good character. The New Zealand Bar Association | Ngā Ahorangi Motuhake o Te Ture (NZBA) may undertake due diligence as to the nominee's good character to the extent it considers necessary or appropriate.
- A nominee must not have previously been the recipient of the Award.
- Self-nomination for the Award is permitted.
- The Judging Panel members of the Award are ineligible.
- Members of the NZBA Council are ineligible.
- Teams, firms or groups are ineligible. The Award is open only to individuals.
- Should a nominated individual retire or die before the Judging Panel makes their determination of the winner, the Judging Panel will consider that individual's nomination for the Award notwithstanding their retirement or death.

Award Criteria

The following criteria will be used by the Judging Panel to determine the winner of the Award.

The weight that each member of the Judging Panel gives to these three criteria in their assessment of nominees is entirely at their own discretion.

1) CONTRIBUTION

The extent to which a nominee demonstrates significant contribution to improving access to justice in the community or for individuals.

This can encompass, for example:

- offering services pro bono or low bono to individuals or community organisations.
- being a supplier of Legal Aid services.
- volunteering for community law centres or similar advisory services.
- advocating for the access to justice needs of the vulnerable in the community.
- organising events or activities that promote or highlight access to justice issues.
- developing innovative service models to fill an access to justice gap.
- leadership to inspire, encourage and develop legal assistance or pro bono services.
- making a career in the access to justice sector, for example, by working at a community law centre or for a charity.
- fundraising for access to justice causes.

2) IMPACT

The extent to which the nominee's contribution to access to justice has resulted in impacts and outcomes.

This may be demonstrated from an access to justice initiative driven by the nominee or which the nominee has supported.

It may also be demonstrated from a sustained record of service in the delivery of services to individuals or the community.

3) LEADERSHIP

The extent to which the nominee has shown outstanding leadership, influence or innovation to enhance the provision, management and delivery of legal services to enable better access to justice outcomes for individuals or communities.

The Judging Panel

Each year the NZBA Council will appoint a Judging Panel for the Award. The Judging Panel will consist of three people.

This year the Judging Panel will consist of the following individuals:

- A representative from the Sponsor.
- The President of the NZBA or their nominee.
- A representative to be agreed jointly by the Sponsor and the NZBA.

The Judging Panel has the right not to make the Award in a given year.

The Judging Panel's decision as to the winner of the Award will be final and no correspondence will be entered into.

Announcement of the Winner of the Award

This year, the winner of the Award will be publicly announced at the NZBA's **Bar Symposium on 3 September 2026** at the Northern Club in Auckland. The Award will be presented by a representative from the Judging Panel.

The NZBA and the Sponsor may arrange for the winner to be photographed and use those images to publicise the Award in their own and third-party publications.

The Award

The winner will be notified in advance. If the winner is not located in Auckland, they will be provided with one night's accommodation and transport to the Symposium.

The winner will receive a trophy. The winner will also receive a tailored package (according to eligibility) from the Sponsor consisting of one of the following options:

- a complimentary one-year subscription to the NZBA e-library package, provided that the winner meets the eligibility criteria for that package.
- if the winner is not eligible for the NZBA e-library package, the Sponsor will provide a customised online content package valued at up to \$3,600.
- if the winner already has a subscription to the e-library, the Sponsor will at its discretion either provide the Protege AI technology suite for one year and/or additional content to the value of \$3600 or provide a credit of up to \$3,600 on the current account;
- In addition, the winner will receive a cash prize from the NZBA of \$2,000.