

23 August 2024

Hon Judith Collins
Attorney General

By email: j.collins@ministers.govt.nz

Tēna koe, Minister

Re: Ministerial comments about the judiciary

I am writing on behalf of the New Zealand Law Society Te Kāhui Ture o Aotearoa, regarding yesterday's media reports about inaccurate comments made by Hon Shane Jones, regarding High Court Judge, Justice Cheryl Gwyn.¹

The Law Society acknowledges there may have been no intention for the initial comments to be shared publicly, nor a belief that they were likely to be publicised.² However, we are concerned at the tenor of the comments, given the context of statements made by the Minister in February and April this year, and the manner in which they implicate the objectivity and impartiality of the judiciary.

This letter is intended to record the Law Society's concern about these statements and the prospect of further, similar statements in future. However, I also take this opportunity to convey the Law Society's support for your letter to all Ministers and Parliamentary Under-Secretaries, dated 15 March 2024, in which you set out the constitutional convention of comity and the requirements of the Cabinet Manual. We are grateful for your leadership on such matters.

Nāku noa, nā



David Campbell
Vice President

¹ The reports indicate that the Minister described Justice Gwyn as a 'Communist Judge.'

² The Cabinet Manual refers at para 4.13.