

WAIJ News

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Connecting Indigenous Judges Across the World

An Update from the WAIJ Executive

The World Assembly of Indigenous Judges (WAIJ) was established following the inaugural International Indigenous Judges Conference (IIJC) held in Aotearoa in 2025.

The Assembly brings together Indigenous members of the judiciary from specific countries (at this stage), grounded in shared values, knowledge systems, and a commitment to strengthening Indigenous perspectives within legal systems.

Since its formation, the interim executive has been focused on building strong foundations, including the development of its charter, governance structure, and pathways for ongoing collaboration.

Featured articles

Conference Update

Due to the timing of funding confirmation, and on the advice of our Canadian colleagues, the WAIJ Executive has agreed to postpone the second conference from 2027 to 2028. A formal date and venue will be confirmed shortly.

While this decision impacts the planned conference schedule, it allows for stronger planning and participation. We are pleased to confirm that the 2030 conference will be hosted by Australia.

To maintain momentum and connection, the Executive is exploring the possibility of hosting a one-day online conference in 2027, which will also align with the WAIJ Annual General Meeting. Further details will be shared in the coming months.



Article 1: WAIJ Executive

The interim WAIJ Executive has been formally appointed in accordance with the charter. We acknowledge the following inaugural appointments:

Co-Presidents

Justice Michelle O'Bonsawin (*Supreme Court of Canada*)

Judge Aidan Warren (*Māori Land Court, New Zealand*)

Vice President

Justice Lincoln Crowley (*Supreme Court of Queensland*)

Secretary

Justice Johanna Price (*Court of King's Bench, Alberta, Canada*)

Treasurer

Justice Christian Whata (*Court of Appeal, New Zealand*)

Featured articles

Initial Executive Assembly

The initial Executive Assembly includes representatives from the following jurisdictions:

- New Zealand
- Canada
- Australia
- United States of America
- Tonga
- Samoa
- Solomon Islands
- Kiribati

Article 2: The WAIJ Charter

Following the inaugural gathering in 2025, an interim Executive was established and tasked with developing the WAIJ Charter.

We are pleased to confirm that the Charter has now been approved by the Executive and is available for members to review by clicking [here](#).

As outlined within it, the Charter is intended to be an evolving, evergreen document, with formal review and endorsement by all members scheduled for the 2028 conference.



Article 3: Website & Membership

We are pleased to share that Tania David has been engaged to lead the development of the WAIJ website and membership platform.

This platform will include:

- WAIJ membership registration
- Conference registrations
- Secure, members-only access

The platform is expected to go live in May 2026, with membership opening at that time.

Membership has been set at \$100 NZD per judge, in line with the Charter.

Article 4: Interim Administration

As an interim measure, the Executive has resolved that all WAIJ funding will be administered by Te Kapuinga Whakawā Manatōpū (the Aotearoa New Zealand-based judicial body that hosted the inaugural gathering).

This arrangement will remain in place until a long-term structure for managing funding and membership is established.

Updates

Further updates will be shared as developments progress, and we look forward to continuing this work together.
