



Justice of the Peace Nomination

Until 1926 women could not be appointed as Justices of the Peace. An amendment to the Justices Act allowed that a woman should not be disqualified by sex or marriage from being appointed.

BPW NZ has advocated increased participation in this important of the justice system by promoting a 50% nomination rate for women every year.

The latest statistics put the rate into the high 40's and the number of women appointed as JP's is increasing:

In 2002 29% of JP's were women.

This increased to 43.45% in 2003

And by 2005 47.4% of all JP's are women

It's nomination time again. Has your club put forward any women for appointment?

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Members of Parliament send a completed nomination form incorporating a statutory declaration. Two matters are important in considering a person for appointment; first, the nominee's personal suitability for appointment; and second, the need for the services of additional Justices of the Peace either in the business area where the nominee spends the working day or in the nominee's residential district.

Persons nominated must

- Have an adequate standard of education.
- Be of good standing.
- Be representative of their community.

Nominees should be supported by at least two supporting letters from recognised community organisations.

This is how you might write it:

Member of Parliament (*your nominee's MP's Name*)
Parliament Buildings
Wellington.

Dear (*MP's name*)

I am writing to commend to you ...(*name of nominee*), ..(*address and contact numbers*) for nomination as a Justice of the Peace.

She works as.....,

Her voluntary work includes.....

Her personal skills include (*e.g. approachability, standing in the community, highly respected etc*)...



She would make an excellent Justice because....

(Only a fairly brief letter is required at this stage).

Yours sincerely.....



Appointments

Please make sure you tell your nominee that appointments may not proceed on occasion purely because there are enough JP's in her local area, and that is no reflection on her suitability or skills. But to those nominating, remember that while this may happen to apply in one suburb in your local area it is worth trying in other areas of your community.



What do Justices of the Peace do?

Justices of the Peace are honorary judicial officers who are appointed by the Governor-General on the recommendation of the Minister of Justice. They are authorised to administer oaths, witness statutory declarations, and certify documents. Justices of the Peace are involved in an increasing number of matters including both Ministerial and Judicial duties. In the District Court suitably trained Justices carry out such functions as:



1. Jurisdiction determined by statute, including minor offences and some traffic cases
2. Issue of remands and Bail
3. Hearing of undefended cases
4. Presiding over defended trials
5. Preliminary hearing of indictable offences



Justices of the Peace have no inherent jurisdiction and may exercise only those powers given to them by statute. Section 4 of the Justices of the Peace Act 1957 states that the functions and powers of Justices shall be-



- a. To take oaths and declarations under the provisions of the Oaths and Declarations Act 1957 or any other enactment
- b. To carry out such functions and exercise such powers as are conferred on Justices by the Summary Proceedings Act 1957 or by any other enactment.



Although the office of Justice of the Peace does hold a status, the position is not an "honour" but one involving serious duties and responsibilities. Justices have the important responsibility of assisting to preserve the rule of law.

For more information about Justices of the Peace and their wider duties you can visit

<http://www.jpfed.org.nz/>

Jean Park
Immediate Past President

BPW