



Chief Justice of New Zealand

Press statement

24 March 2018

Chief Justice Dame Sian Elias says she expects all judges to deal with litigants, witnesses and counsel with respect and courtesy.

“Bullying of counsel is not acceptable. That is made clear in the Guidelines for Judicial Conduct. If it is occurring I and the heads of the bench want to know about it and we want to stop it.”

The Chief Justice was responding to a Criminal Bar Association survey of experience by legal practitioners of harassment and bullying, including by judges.

The Chief Justice said it was difficult to tell from the survey whether the concerns expressed about judges were confined to in-court conduct perceived as overbearing or belittling or whether it extends to other conduct which should not be tolerated.

“If proper standards are not observed, I encourage those who are affected or who have observed such behaviour to raise their concerns with the head of bench or with me or to make a complaint to the Independent Judicial Conduct Commissioner.”

The Chief Justice said she would be discussing the survey findings with the Criminal Bar Association to understand better the concerns that have been expressed and what steps should be taken to address them.

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Media inquiries

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