

News

Former judge joins litigation funder's board



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LPF Group

Former High Court and Court of Appeal Judge Robert Dobson KC has been appointed as a director of New Zealand litigation funder LPF Group.

LPF is delighted to have him join the board at "such an important time for the development of class action law" in New Zealand, founder Phil Newland says in a statement.

He describes the former judge as a "proven jurist" with substantial legal and judicial experience.

Dobson says he has a strong interest in how LPF is helping class action law to grow in NZ.

"Having observed LPF's role from a different perspective for many years I now look forward to playing a part in continuing the development of litigation funding and assisting access to justice.

"I am very much looking forward to joining LPF in helping meritorious cases attract funding in the pursuit of justice."

Bio

Dobson was appointed as an HC Judge in 2007, and was a member of the HC's Commercial Panel from its inception in 2017 until his retirement from the bench in 2020.

Following a stint as an acting Judge in the CA from February to August 2022, he resumed his practice at Wellington's Stout Street Chambers as an arbitrator and mediator.

Prior roles also include chairing the Rules Committee between 2018 and 2020 and being chair of the judiciary's Legislation and Law Reform Committee from 2015 until 2020.

Dobson is currently Justice of the Court of Appeal of Fiji and a member of the Court of Appeal of the Pitcairn Islands.

LPF group

Newland founded LPF 16 years ago. On its website, the firm says it only funds "deserving cases with a strong legal foundation".

Previous litigation it has funded include the liquidator action against the former directors of Mainzeal, and a class action brought on behalf of CBL Corporation shareholders.

It has also funded plaintiffs for an ongoing class action for both ANZ and ASB's admitted breach of the Credit Contracts and Consumer Finance Act 2003.

In today's statement, Newland says a new legal landscape of consumer accountability is developing in the country.

He points to the granting of opt-out orders that remove barriers to justice for plaintiffs and the CA recently granting NZ's first ever common funding order, enabling plaintiffs in the banking class action to match the financial resources of two of NZ's major trading banks.

In 2022, the HC had concluded that it had jurisdiction to make a CFO, but declined the plaintiffs' application for it to make such an order at that stage.

But earlier this year, the CA **allowed** the aspect of the plaintiffs' appeal relating to the HC's decision to decline to grant the CFO. The CA made orders on the terms sought.

Emeritus chair

In another change, Bill Wilson KC has moved from his role as LPF chair to a new emeritus chair position, from where he will "provide continuity and ongoing support" to the board.

Newland says Wilson has played a significant role in the company's development as New Zealand's "leading litigation funding firm" since joining the board in 2013.

He thanked him for his integral role in "pioneering" the development of litigation funding in NZ and growing its acceptance as a critical tool in accessing justice.

"With Bill's strong support LPF has assisted many thousands of New Zealanders to achieve redress, including in leading cases such as *Mainzeal*, *Kiwifruit* and in the recent *CBL* and *Intueri* shareholder class actions."