### The Authority

The Social Security Appeal Authority (the Authority) is a statutory tribunal which was established under Section 12A of the Social Security Act 1964 and which continues under Schedule 8 of the Social Security Act 2018. It is comprised of three people - a Chair, and two members.

While it is not a requirement of the Act, the practice in recent years has been to have a Chair/Deputy Chair with a strong legal background able to interpret and make rulings on complex legal matters.

The role of the two Members positions is to assist the Chair/Deputy Chair by providing a broader community perspective to the Authority’s decision-making processes, as well as additional expertise on issues likely to come before it.

### Appointment

The Governor-General, on the recommendation of the Minister for Social Development, and consultation from the Minister of Justice, appoints members for a term of three years. Members are eligible for reappointment.

### Function

The function of the Authority is to determine appeals of decisions made under the Social Security Act 1964, the New Zealand Superannuation and Retirement Income Act 2001, and related legislation by the Chief Executive of the Ministry of Social Development. These decisions may be made either by the Chief Executive in person, or otherwise made by a delegate of the Chief Executive and which have been upheld by a Benefits Review Committee.

The Authority also has jurisdiction in respect of decisions of the Secretary for War Pensions made under part 6 of the Veterans Support Act 2014, as well as decisions on housing allocation and income related rent under the Housing Restructuring Tenancy Matters Act 1992.

### Workload

The workload of members varies, but typically involves one week a month, for 10 months of the year (the Authority does not currently sit in January and July). The Authority alternates its hearing between Auckland and Wellington, but also regularly travels to other centres around the country from time to time.

### Remuneration and Expenses

Authority members are paid a fee (currently $497.50) for each day spent on Authority business. They are also entitled to a meal and incidental allowances (currently $70.70 per day) when travelling away from home, and can claim for expenses such as travel, parking, telephone calls, and postage costs.

### Knowledge, Skills, and Experience

While specific knowledge, skills and experience requirements are not prescribed in legislation, it is expected that members have a strong connection to the wider community.

In addition, members should have:

* a knowledge of the legal framework and jurisdiction of the Authority
* good statutory interpretation skills and an understanding of administrative law
* sound judgement, an appreciation of tribunal procedures and of the concept of natural justice, and an ability to conduct hearings in a manner that enables proper participation by all involved
* practical knowledge of New Zealand social security legislation and regulations
* an awareness and respect for diversity in all its forms, including differences in belief, gender, race, religious customs, age, disability, mental capacity, sexual orientation, social or economic status, and lifestyles
* an ability to communicate clearly and effectively
* a high level of personal independence and integrity.

### Administrative Support Services

Administrative and registry support services are provided by the Tribunal Division of the Ministry of Justice, which has offices in Wellington and Auckland.