



Regulatory Standards Board – assessment of interviewed candidates

Date	27 February 2026	Priority	High
Security classification	In confidence	Tracking number	MFR2026-042
Attachments	Annex 1 – Biography of candidates including interview panel summaries		

Action sought

Required from	Action	Deadline
Hon David Seymour Minister for Regulation	Select one candidate for chairperson from table 1 Select up to six candidates for members from table 2 Select length of terms for appointments Note Ministerial consultation with coalition partners once you have made your selections	4 March 2026

Contact for discussion if required

Name	Position	Phone number	1 st contact
Paula Knaap	DCE Organisational Enablement	s 9(2)(a)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Anshuman Chakraborty	Head of Legal	s 9(2)(a)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Minister's office to complete

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Approved | <input type="checkbox"/> Declined |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Noted | <input type="checkbox"/> Needs change |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Seen | <input type="checkbox"/> Overtaken by events |
| <input type="checkbox"/> See Minister's notes | <input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawn |

Comments



Regulatory Standards Board – assessment of interviewed candidates

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Purpose

We seek your selection of suitable candidates to recommend to the Governor-General for appointment to the Regulatory Standards Board (Board).

Executive summary

Authority

In accordance with section 38 of the Regulatory Standards Act 2025 (RSA), the Governor-General must appoint the members of the board on the recommendation of the Minister for Regulation.

As the Minister for Regulation, you are empowered to recommend candidates to the Governor-General for appointment, who in your opinion, have the appropriate knowledge, skills and experience to assist the board perform its functions.

Following appointment by written notice to the member, you must ensure that the appointment is gazetted as soon as reasonably practicable.

Outcome of candidate interviews

In previous briefings MFR2026-012 and MFR2026-023 you considered a long list of candidates and selected two candidates to progress to interview for Chairperson and member, and a further 11 candidates to interview for member. Thirteen interviews were held between 16-19 February 2026. A short biography for each candidate including the panel's summary for the interviewed candidates is detailed in **Annex 1**.

Selection of suitable candidates

There were two candidates interviewed for Chairperson and **table one** summarises this. Members suitable for appointment have been listed in **table two**. To ensure the Board has a broad set of skills and experience we recommend that you consider what each candidate can bring to the Board.

Next steps

Date	Process	Responsibility
w/b 9 March 2026	Final draft APH paper to the Minister	MfR
9-18 March 2026	Ministerial consultation	Minister's Office
19 March 2026	Lodge APH paper	MfR
24 March 2026	APH Meeting	Cabinet Office



Recommended Action

The Ministry for Regulation recommends that you:

- a **agree** to select one candidate to recommend for Chairperson and member and confirm the length of term *Agree / Disagree*
- | | | | |
|-----|-------------------|---------|----------|
| i. | Paul Ridley-Smith | 5 years | Yes / No |
| ii. | s 9(2)(a) | 5 years | Yes / No |
- b **agree** to select up to six candidates to recommend for member and confirm the length of terms *Agree / Disagree*
- | | | | | |
|-------|-----------------------------|---------|---------|----------|
| i. | Paul Ridley-Smith | 4 years | 5 years | Yes / No |
| ii. | Julie Hardaker | 4 years | 5 years | Yes / No |
| iii. | Dr Nicola Swain | 4 years | 5 years | Yes / No |
| iv. | Carl Hansen | 4 years | 5 years | Yes / No |
| v. | Professor Ananish Chaudhuri | 4 years | 5 years | Yes / No |
| vi. | s 9(2)(a) | 4 years | 5 years | Yes / No |
| vii. | James Christmas | 4 years | 5 years | Yes / No |
| viii. | Ian Chamberlain | 4 years | 5 years | Yes / No |
| ix. | s 9(2)(a) | 4 years | 5 years | Yes / No |
| x. | s 9(2)(a) | 4 years | 5 years | Yes / No |
| xi. | s 9(2)(a) | 4 years | 5 years | Yes / No |
| xii. | s 9(2)(a) | 4 years | 5 years | Yes / No |
| xiii. | s 9(2)(a) | 4 years | 5 years | Yes / No |
- c **note** that the draft paper for the Cabinet Appointments and Honours Committee (APH) will be sent following your selections for consultation with your Ministerial colleagues *Noted*
- d **agree** to select a commencement date for the Board
- | | | |
|----|---|-------------------------|
| i. | that the Board commences on 1 July 2026 | <i>Agree / Disagree</i> |
|----|---|-------------------------|
- OR**
- | | | |
|-----|--|-------------------------|
| ii. | an earlier point in time—in relation to which an Order in Council will be necessary—to bring the relevant provisions of Part 2 of the Act into force | <i>Agree / Disagree</i> |
|-----|--|-------------------------|

Briefing

MFR2026-042



**Ministry for Regulation
Te Manatū Waeture**

Proactive release

- e **agree** that this briefing be released with some information withheld in accordance with the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982. *Agree / Disagree*

s 9(2)(a)

Paula Knaap
DCE Organisational Enablement
Ministry for Regulation
Date: 27 February 2026

Hon David Seymour
Minister for Regulation
Date:



Background

1. The Board is established by section 27 of the Regulatory Standards Act 2025 (the Act). Under sections 37 and 38 of the Act you are empowered as the Minister for Regulation to recommend to the Governor-General up to seven members to be appointed to the Board, including the chairperson. The Board must have a minimum of 5 members (including the Chairperson).
2. In Briefing MFR2025-304 you agreed the key skills required and experience for the members and chairperson. The position descriptions were developed based on these key skills and the functions of the Board as set out in section 28 of the Act [MFR2025-323 refers].
3. Applicants were considered against criteria for chairperson and members.
 - a. For the chairperson role the criteria were:
 - i. At least 25 years' experience in economics, law, regulatory design or as a regulated party
 - ii. Governance or board experience
 - iii. Experience as a chairperson
 - iv. Experience as a senior leader
 - v. Application demonstrates an understanding of the Board's role
 - vi. Previous experience working alongside government (e.g. as a stakeholder or advisor)
 - vii. Membership of a relevant professional body (e.g. Institute of Directors, Law Society).
 - b. For the member roles:
 - i. At least 15 years' experience in economics, law, regulatory design or as a regulated party
 - ii. Governance or board experience
 - iii. Application demonstrates an understanding of the Board's role
 - i. Previous experience working alongside government (e.g. as a stakeholder or advisor)
 - iv. Membership of a relevant professional body (e.g. Institute of Directors, Law Society).
4. In briefings MFR2026-012 and MFR2026-023 you considered a long list of candidates and selected two candidates to progress to interview for Chairperson and member, and a further 11 candidates to interview for member.

Candidate interviews

5. Interviews were held between 16-18 February 2026 and the panel members were:
 - a. Adam Jackson: Chief Advisor to the Chief Executive, Ministry for Regulation
 - b. Katherine Rich: Chief Executive, BusinessNZ
 - c. Eric Crampton: Chief Economist, New Zealand Initiative.



6. The role of the panel was to test the candidates on their suitability for appointment to the Board. The calibre of the candidates was very high, and the interview panel was diligent in testing their understanding of the role of the Board.
7. The candidates were tested in the application of their skills and experiences to give effect to the Board's functions. They focussed on such things as the candidate's understanding of the impact of regulation, how the principles of responsible regulation might be applied, and the function of the Board. They also explored each candidate's motivation and ability to collaborate effectively (noting that different people bring different strengths).
8. **Annex 1** contains a short biography for each candidate, including the interview panel's comment.

Selection of candidate

9. Section 37 of the Act establishes that the board must have not fewer than 5 members and not more than 7 members.
10. You are empowered by section 38 of the Act to recommend suitable candidates to the Governor-General for appointment. The Act requires that the Minister may only recommend the appointment of a person who, in the Minister's opinion, has the appropriate knowledge, skills and experience to assist the board to perform its functions.
11. Reference and conflict of interest checks are underway for all shortlisted candidates and should be completed within the next few days. There is a possibility that the results from these checks may affect the suitability of a candidate. We do not anticipate any issues but will keep you updated on progress.
12. You are not required to fill all of the vacant positions and can choose to leave one or two positions vacant.
13. Under Schedule 3 of the Act, members may be appointed for up to five years or less and may be reappointed. We would recommend that the chairperson be appointed for a term of five years, and to stagger the appointment terms for the other members. To ensure that experience and institutional knowledge are not lost during subsequent appointment rounds we recommend that up to three members be recommended for appointment for five-year terms, and up to three members for four-year terms.
14. **Table 1** below outlines the candidates for chairperson and includes the interview panel's comment on suitability for appointment. You will need to select one candidate to recommend to the Governor-General for appointment.
15. Note that the chairperson must also be a member and must be recommended for appointment to both roles. Both chairperson candidates would also like to be considered for member roles, should they not be selected as chairperson.



Table 1. Candidates for chairperson

Name	Sector	Comment on suitability	Assessment
Paul Ridley-Smith (chairperson and member candidate)	Energy and infrastructure sector and legal	s 9(2)(g)(i)	
s 9(2)(a) (chairperson and member candidate)	Finance sector	s 9(2)(g)(i)	

16. **Table 2** below outlines the candidates for member and includes the interview panel’s comment on suitability for appointment. To ensure the Board has a broad set of skills and experience we recommend that you consider what each candidate can bring to the board.
17. You will need to select up to six candidates to recommend to the Governor-General for appointment.

Table 2. Candidates for member

Name	Sector	Comment on suitability	Assessment
Julie Hardaker	Local government and legal	s 9(2)(g)(i)	
Dr Nicola Swain	Academic science and health	s 9(2)(g)(i)	



Name	Sector	Comment on suitability	Assessment
Carl Hansen	Economics	s 9(2)(g)(i)	
Professor Ananish Chaudhuri	Academic economics	s 9(2)(g)(i)	
s 9(2)(a)	Legal	s 9(2)(g)(i)	
James Christmas	Legal	s 9(2)(g)(i)	
Ian Chamberlain	Building sector	s 9(2)(g)(i)	
s 9(2)(a)	Local government and health	s 9(2)(g)(i)	
s 9(2)(a)	Legal	s 9(2)(g)(i)	



Name	Sector	Comment on suitability	Assessment
s 9(2)(a)	Central and local government and legal	s 9(2)(g)(i)	
s 9(2)(a)	Legal	s 9(2)(g)(i)	

Cabinet Appointments and Honours Committee

18. Once you have made the selections you wish to recommend to the Governor-General we will prepare a draft Cabinet Appointments and Honours Committee (APH) paper for your consideration. We recommend it is immediately distributed to your Ministerial colleagues for consultation during the week beginning 9 March 2026.

Ministerial consultation

19. You are expected to consult with your Ministerial colleagues on all significant appointments to bodies within your portfolios, providing a minimum of five working days for consultation. Once Ministerial consultation is complete, the APH paper must be lodged in CabNet no later than 10am on Thursday 19 March 2026, to ensure that it is submitted for the APH meeting on Tuesday 24 March 2026.
20. You are responsible for ensuring that consultation is undertaken in accordance with the coalition agreements entered into when the Government was formed.

Next steps

21. The table below outlines the immediate projected timeline for the appointment process.

Date	Process	Responsibility
w/b 2 March 2026	Briefing with interview assessment to the Minister	MfR
w/b 9 March 2026	Final draft APH paper to the Minister	MfR
9-18 March 2026	Ministerial consultation	Minister's Office
19 March 2026	Lodge APH paper	MfR
24 March 2026	APH Meeting	Cabinet Office
31 March 2026	Cabinet expected to confirm APH recommendations	Cabinet Office



Proactive release

22. With your agreement, the Ministry will proactively release this paper at the appropriate time in accordance with Official Information Act 1982 and Privacy Act 2020 requirements to support transparency and public trust in decision-making processes.



Annex 1: Short biography of candidates including the interview panel summaries

Candidates for chairperson or member

Name	Short biography
<p>Paul Ridley-Smith</p> <p>Sector: Energy and infrastructure sector and legal</p>	<p>s 9(2)(g)(i)</p> <p>Paul has a background in law and has held senior leadership roles at HRL Morrison & Co/Infratil, Contact Energy Limited, Buddle Findlay, and Linklaters in Hong Kong and New York. He has extensive governance experience including as the Chairperson of Manawa Energy Limited (previously Trustpower Limited) and the Chairperson of Snapper Services Limited.</p> <p>He has a strong focus on customer and consumer relations, government relations, regulatory risk, commercial law, financing, investment banking, real estate development, and aged care provision.</p> <p>Paul holds an LLB from Victoria University of Wellington and an MBA with honours from Columbia University in New York City.</p>
<p>s 9(2)(a)</p>	<p>s 9(2)(a), s 9(2)(g)(i)</p>



Candidates for member

Name	Short biography
<p>Julie Hardaker</p> <p>Sector: Legal and local government</p>	<p>s 9(2)(g)(i)</p> <p>Julie is a lawyer specialising in employment law and independent investigations for workplace and local government issues. She has significant public sector experience, including Crown Entity roles, and was the Mayor of Hamilton for six years.</p> <p>Julie currently holds several board appointments, including Director at Water Services Authority - Taumata Arowai, Deputy Chairperson at Auckland Transport, Deputy Chairperson at Bay Venues Limited, and member of the Charities Registration Board. She was previously the Chairperson of Governance New Zealand Inc and Chairperson of the Environmental Protection Authority.</p> <p>Julie is a Chartered Fellow of the global Chartered Governance Institute and holds an MMS (Hons) 1st Class and an LLB (Hons) 1st Class from the University of Waikato.</p>
<p>Dr Nicola Swain</p> <p>Sector: Academic science and health</p>	<p>s 9(2)(g)(i)</p> <p>Nicola is an Associate Professor at the University of Otago, she is a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) and has a Bachelor of Science (Honours). Nicola is an experienced governor with over 15 years of experience in regulatory, tribunal, and ethics decision-making frameworks.</p> <p>Nicola has served as a lay member and Deputy Chairperson of the Medical Sciences Council and a member of the Human Rights Review Tribunal, hearing claims under the Human Rights Act, Privacy Act, and Health and Disability Commissioner Act. Previous governance roles include non-lay member of the Health and Disability Ethics Committees, and Chairperson of the Medical Sciences Secretariat and ADL.</p> <p>Nicola has also held senior professional roles at the University of Otago and Te Pūkenga / Southern Institute of Technology. She is a member of the Institute of Directors and International Association of Medical Regulatory Authorities.</p>



Name	Short biography
<p>Carl Hansen</p> <p>Sector: Economics and electricity sector</p>	<p>s 9(2)(g)(i)</p> <p>Carl is an experienced leader in organisational change, with a strong background in economics and regulatory theory. He has significant experience chairing and advising electricity industry groups and boards, as well as developing policy and advising Ministers and government agencies on a wide range of issues. Carl's current roles include as a member of the Reserve Bank Monetary Policy Committee, and he serves as a Strategic Advisor to the Meridian Energy Board and Management.</p> <p>Carl's previous roles include Founder and Director of Capital Strategic Advisors, Chief Executive of the Electricity Authority, and various positions at M-co NZ Ltd.</p> <p>Carl holds a Master of Arts in Economics from the University of Michigan and a Bachelor of Social Sciences with First Class Honours in Economics from the University of Waikato.</p>
<p>Professor Ananish Chaudhuri</p> <p>Sector: Academic economics</p>	<p>s 9(2)(g)(i)</p> <p>Ananish is a Professor of Experimental Economics and former Head of the Department of Economics at the University of Auckland, specialising in behavioural and experimental economics. He has held various academic positions, including Visiting Professor of Public Policy at Harvard Kennedy School and Visiting Research Scholar at the University of Munich. Ananish is a leading interdisciplinary researcher with an extensive record of policy engagement, and public commentator.</p> <p>He is a member of various professional organisations and has been involved in significant service roles, including consulting for MinterEllisonRuddWatts and testifying in the New Zealand High Court.</p> <p>Ananish has a Ph. D. and M.A. in Economics from Rutgers University in New Brunswick, an M.A. in Economics from Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi, and a B.Sc. in Economics from Presidency College, Calcutta University.</p>



Name	Short biography
<p>s 9(2)(a)</p>	<p>s 9(2)(a), s 9(2)(g)(i)</p>
<p>James Christmas Sector: Legal</p>	<p>s 9(2)(g)(i)</p> <p>James is an independent barrister at Britomart Chambers, with a focus in public law, specifically statutory interpretation, the Crown-Māori relationship, environmental law and legislative reform. He is a current member of the Ministerial Health Infrastructure Committee, and on the board of the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, and was previously a member of the Ministerial Advisory Group for the review of Treaty references.</p> <p>James has previously held senior advisory roles in the Ministry of Defence, to the Prime Minister and the Attorney-General. He is a member of the New Zealand Law Society, New Zealand Bar Association, and New Zealand Institute of Directors. James is a National Party nominee.</p>
<p>Ian Chamberlain Sector: Building sector</p>	<p>s 9(2)(g)(i)</p> <p>Ian is an experienced governance professional and small business owner with a background in carpentry and joinery in New Zealand and the United Kingdom. He has held board and chairperson positions in national industry associations and community organisations, including New Zealand Certified Builders (NZCB).</p> <p>Ian is currently a member of the P3604 Timber Framed Buildings Review Committee at Standards New Zealand and has served in various capacities at the Building Officials Institute of NZ (BOINZ).</p> <p>He is a member of several professional organisations, including the Institute of Directors, Building Officials Institute of NZ, and Passive House Institute NZ.</p>

Briefing

MFR2026-042



Ministry for Regulation
Te Manatū Waeture

Name	Short biography
s 9(2)(a)	s 9(2)(a), s 9(2)(g)(i)
s 9(2)(a)	s 9(2)(a), s 9(2)(g)(i)

Briefing

MFR2026-042



Ministry for Regulation
Te Manatū Waeture

Name	Short biography
s 9(2)(a)	s 9(2)(a), s 9(2)(g)(i)
s 9(2)(a)	s 9(2)(a), s 9(2)(g)(i)