

Traffic Lawyer of the Year

Karen Harding

Karen Harding Law Barristers and Solicitors

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About Karen Harding LLM (Hons) LLB B.Plan

Karen is the Principal of Karen Harding Law Barristers and Solicitors of Auckland, New Zealand and is the Trust Account Supervisor. She holds a Bachelor of Laws degree from Victoria University Wellington, a Master of Laws degree with Honours with a specialisation in Public Law and a Bachelor of Planning degree from the University of Auckland.

Karen commenced practice as a Criminal Defence Barrister in May 1997 and in February 2012 she formed the firm Karen Harding Law Barristers and Solicitors that specialises in Criminal Defence litigation with a particular specialty in Land Transport Law (Traffic Law). Karen represents clients on drink-driving charges including those on serious third and subsequent offences and on all other driving related traffic offences including serious charges involving injury and death. Karen is a specialist in relation to applications regarding driver licensing matters including limited licences, alcohol interlock disqualifications, discharges without conviction and opposing the confiscation of property.

She has also presented training seminars on Land Transport Act applications. Karen is a recognised leader in Traffic Law in New Zealand. She is a strong and determined advocate in court for her clients and is always very well prepared, organised, diligent and well presented.

Karen has represented over 1000 clients many of whom have serious addiction issues. As well as zealously defending criminal and traffic charges in court Karen works with clients to help them reduce their risk of reoffending with a focus on whole client representation. As well as finding solutions for her client's legal and driver licensing problems the underlying issues that have led to their involvement in the criminal justice system are addressed through engagement with appropriate treatment providers with support and follow up client care provided.

The underlying mission of the firm is to deliver friendly competent comprehensive legal advice that applies the principles of therapeutic jurisprudence within a holistic legal defence practice. Problem solving and solution focused justice approaches are utilised to deliver legal services to obtain positive outcomes in court. The litigation process is managed to reduce stress on clients as they go through the justice system to enhance their well-being and to lower their risk of reoffending.

Areas of Practice and Expertise

- Criminal Law;
- Land Transport/Traffic law;
- Driver Licensing Applications including Limited Licences;
- Applications for relief from forfeiture confiscation of property; and
- Assisting Forced Labour/Human Trafficking victims to access justice.



Recent Work Highlights - Seeking Justice for Human Traffic Victims

In addition to running a busy Criminal and Traffic Law litigation practice since January 2015 Karen has been leading a complex multijurisdictional civil litigation in the District Court and High Court at Christchurch, the Court of Appeal as well as in the Admiralty jurisdiction of the High Court, the Employment Court and in the Employment Relations Authority (ERA) for a large number of Indonesian plaintiffs who were victims of Forced Labour practices on foreign fishing vessels whilst they were employed in New Zealand. This litigation seeks unpaid wages and compensation for Personal Grievances for wrongs committed against the fishing crew members by the foreign owners of the fishing fleet.

This case will have an impact on the fishing industry nationally and internationally. Karen has boldly taken on the challenge to seek justice for impoverished people residing outside the New Zealand legal jurisdiction who do not speak English, delivering services to them with compassion applying ethic of care principles. Karen is vigorously championing their cause in highly contentious litigation taking place over many years involving extensive interlocutory applications, complex pleadings and appeals through the highest courts of New Zealand.