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Justice of the Peace system in New Zealand

I am sure most of you needed to see a Justice of the Peace (JP) for certifying copies, for a statutory declaration, or other forms that needed a formal signature. Prior to the new biometric passport you could even get a JP to sign the Swiss Passport applications.

Adrian Blaser, the Auckland Swiss Club President, is officially a JP since 01/12/2014. He has giving us a little bit of a history of the JP system and what a JP can do for you.

On the 12th of November 1814 Thomas Kendall was the first appointed JP for New Zealand. He was sworn in in Australia and sent on his way to NZ. This was the Gazette notice:

"His Excellency the Governor has been pleased to appoint Mr THOMAS KENDAL (Missionary) to be one of His Majesty's Justices of the Peace in the Bay of Islands, in New Zealand, and throughout the Islands of New Zealand, and those immediately contiguous thereto. Mr. Kendall is therefore to be respected and obeyed as such throughout the said Islands and Places".

By Command of His Excellency, The Governor. J. T Campbell, Secretary.

The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser, Saturday November 12, 1814, the proclamation appointing Thomas Kendall (sic) as New Zealand's first Justice of the Peace.

Adrian was one of 55 new Justices of the Peace officially announced on 12 November 2014, exactly 200 years later. His swearing in ceremony took place on 01 December 2014 at the Auckland District Court, presided by Judge Philip Recordon (Gazette notice: <https://gazette.govt.nz/notice/id/2014-go7151>)

So what can a JP do for you?

There are 2 types of Duties, the Ministerial Duties that all JPs can do and the Judicial Duties. Only a few JPs are doing Judicial Duties in court and this article will only focus on the Ministerial duties.

Certifying copies: If you need a certified copy for any kind of business, a JP will need to see the original and the copy, they need to check that they are identical and then the JP will attest that



Adrian at the Ceremony at Auckland District Court

the copy is a true copy of a document presented to him as an original. The JP cannot judge if the original is authentic or not. Nowadays it is also common to have to certify a printout to be a copy of a pdf sent as an email attachment or even a screen shot on PC.

Statutory Declaration: If you need to make a stat declaration, then a JP can attest that you have made this. There is a strict format to where and when to sign and you should read the document carefully and NOT sign it at home. You have to sign the declaration in front of the JP once he has confirmed your identity and you declare that what you sign in the document is true.

Witnessing your signature: Similar to the statutory declaration, a JP can witness your signature. Again, do NOT sign, the JP will tell you when to sign.

Affidavit: A JP can complete an affidavit for you. This is a document that is sworn on oath or affirmed and is normally used in a legal proceeding.

And of course there is the "**Proof of living**" form that recipients of the AHV from Switzerland need to get signed regularly. There are many other forms now that need a signature from a JP or lawyer.

JP services are free of charge, so it is a lot cheaper to go to a JP than a lawyer. JPs can be visited at home or there are many libraries, CAB, or similar places that offer regular "Drop-In" sessions. Check the local websites of your JP association.

A special note: JPs are no longer necessarily listed in the Yellow pages. Please visit www.jpfed.org.nz for JPs or all other information. If you want to check out the "Drop-In" sessions in Auckland, please visit www.jpauckland.org.nz and you will find all the information there.

If you need Adrian's service, please email him at adrian.blaser@attuned.co.nz or phone him on 021 232 7998 or 09 832 0366. He is happy to carry out some duties at Swiss Club functions, but you need to let him know in advance.

Adrian Blaser



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