

# A better way to counter injustices

It is time New Zealand established its own independent and impartial criminal cases review body, with the power to investigate and refer suspect convictions to the courts for further consideration.

Why? First, recent high-profile cases have demonstrated New Zealand is not immune from miscarriages of justice. These cases have involved complaints of deeply flawed trials.

Secondly, it is wrong that defendants who can seriously claim to have been the victims of fundamental failures of justice should depend on crusading journalists, white knights or scientific experts and senior barristers willing to dedicate their time without legal-aid funding.

This should be replaced by an entity that redresses the gross imbalance in which those

challenging injustice pit their puny resources against the state.

Thirdly, criminal cases' review commissions do not exist to be advocates for the prosecution or the defence. They impartially gather and review the evidence both for and against the prisoner.

This means the Appeal Court is presented with the full picture, not just the evidence the prosecution or defence think relevant.