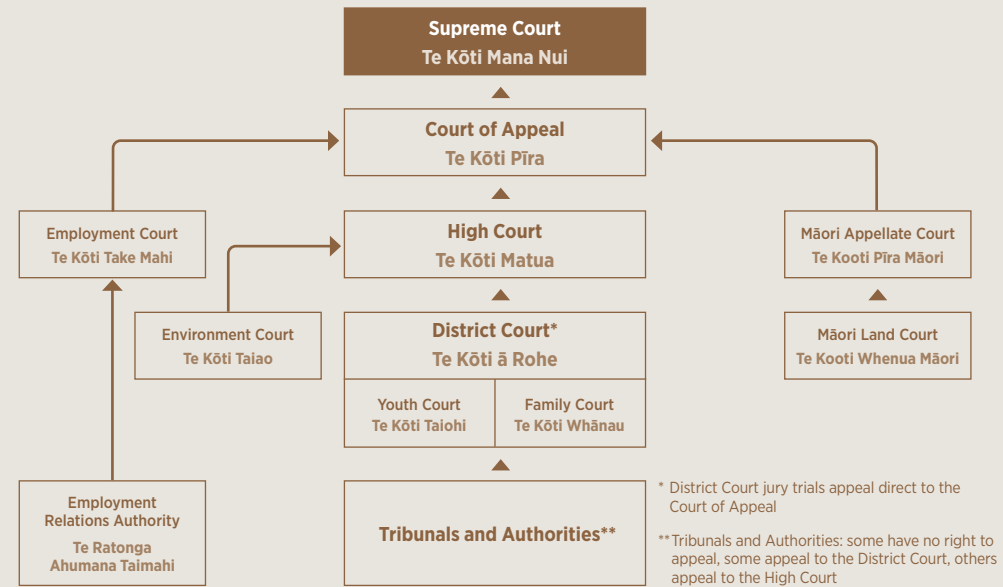


## New Zealand Court system



Supreme  
Court  
OF NEW ZEALAND

Te Kōti  
Mana Nui  
O AOTEAROA

[www.courtsofnz.govt.nz](http://www.courtsofnz.govt.nz)

The Courts of New Zealand website has information about all our courts, biographies of senior judges, daily lists for senior courts and the latest judgments of public interest.

The "Our Courts" videos can be viewed in the *Learn About Our Courts* section of the website.



The Supreme Court of New Zealand  
Te Kōti Mana Nui o Aotearoa

85 Lambton Quay, Wellington  
Phone (04) 918 8222

Open Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm

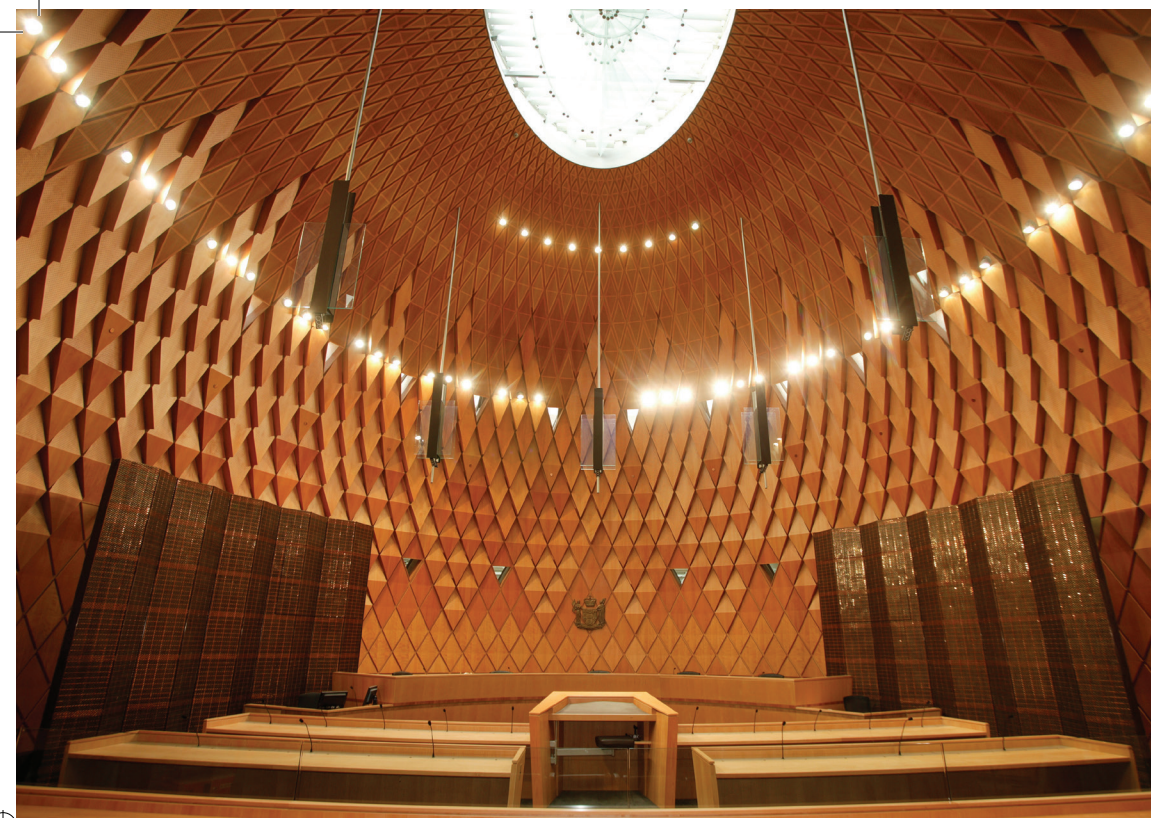
Closed on weekends, public holidays and from Christmas until the second week of January.

Guided tours of the Court and Old High Court building are available.

Email: [tours@justice.govt.nz](mailto:tours@justice.govt.nz)  
to find out more.

All photos credit to: Paul McCredie





The Supreme Court is the final court of appeal, meaning it is the highest court in the land. It recognises New Zealand as an independent nation with its own history and traditions.

On 1 January 2004 the Supreme Court of New Zealand was established. It replaced the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in London which had been the final court of appeal for New Zealand (and for other Commonwealth countries).

The Supreme Court recognises that New Zealand is an independent nation with a unique history. The objectives were simple: to improve access to justice at this level and to allow important legal issues, including those relating to the Treaty of Waitangi, to be resolved with a clear understanding of New Zealand's past and present.

The Supreme Court building was officially opened in January 2010. Inspiration for the design came from New Zealand's natural heritage.

## The Supreme Court

### OPENNESS AND TRANSPARENCY

The foyer is designed with the extensive use of glass to represent the openness and transparency of our court system. You can even see the judges at the bench from outside the court building.

Visitors can watch videos about the building and our court system on the screens either side of the foyer. When the court is in session the hearing is streamed live onto these screens so people can sit outside the courtroom and watch the hearing. People walking past the building can also see the Supreme Court is sitting.

### INSPIRED BY NEW ZEALAND'S NATURAL HERITAGE

There are many examples of New Zealand's unique natural heritage represented in the design of the building.

The bronze screen that surrounds the building was inspired by the branches of pōhutukawa and rātā trees. It is eight metres high and is made from recycled metal.



Kauri Cone

The courtroom's unique ovoid shape with its copper panelled exterior and silver beech interior wall panels draw on the form and texture of the native kauri tree cone.

The ornate screens inside the courtroom were inspired by tukutuku (woven panels) that are found within marae (Māori meeting houses).

In front of the judges' bench are two items that represent New Zealand's twin heritage – a carved waka huia (treasure box) on loan from Te Papa and a silver inkwell, crafted in 1702, which once belonged to Queen Anne and was gifted to the Supreme Court by the Privy Council in 2004.

## Courtroom layout

The Supreme Court is an appeal court. It does not normally hear evidence so, there is no dock, witness box or jury seating. It hears appeals on points of law related to cases that have been heard in the lower courts.

There is no one in the courtroom transcribing what is being said. Hearings in all our courts are recorded and transcribed by the National Transcription Service. This system allows for more productive use of court staff and reduces the time it takes to complete a hearing.

