



**COURT OF APPEAL OF NEW ZEALAND  
TE KŌTI PĪRA O AOTEAROA**

05 February, 2026

## **Case history synopsis**

*This synopsis is provided to assist in understanding the history of the case and the issues to be heard by the Court. It does not represent the views of the panel.*

### ***Brenton Tarrant v The King***

**NOTE: PUBLICATION OF NAMES, ADDRESSES, OCCUPATIONS OR IDENTIFYING PARTICULARS OF CERTAIN COUNSEL AND WITNESSES IS PROHIBITED BY S 202 OF THE CRIMINAL PROCEDURE ACT 2011.**

### ***Background***

On 26 March 2020, Mr Tarrant pleaded guilty to 51 charges of murder, 40 charges of attempted murder and one charge of committing a terrorist act. The charges arose from a mass shooting in Christchurch that took place on 15 March 2019.

He was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment without parole.

Mr Tarrant now wishes to appeal his convictions and his sentence. The appeals were filed out of time.

### ***The proceedings before the Court***

The hearing in the Court of Appeal commencing on Monday 9 February 2026 is concerned with applications brought by Mr Tarrant for leave to appeal his convictions out of time and to vacate his guilty pleas.

At the hearing, the Court will be primarily considering the application to vacate the guilty pleas. The central issue before the Court will be whether at the time Mr Tarrant entered his guilty pleas he was incapable of making rational decisions as a result of the conditions of his imprisonment, which he says were torturous and inhumane.

The hearing is set down for five days, concluding on Friday 13 February.

### ***The decisions available to the court and what happens next***

If the Court declines to grant the application to vacate the guilty pleas, then there will be a further hearing later in the year to consider the sentence appeal.



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If the Court grants the application to vacate the guilty pleas, the sentence appeal will fall away and the case will be sent back to the High Court for Mr Tarrant to stand trial on the charges.

***Provision to view the hearing***

Attendance in the Wellington courtroom where the hearing will take place is limited to counsel, media, court officials and other authorised persons.

The hearing will be streamed to an adjoining courtroom at the Court of Appeal, subject to a one-hour delayed broadcast. Members of the public may attend, however seating is limited.

Provision has been made for victims and family members to view the hearing in Christchurch via a delayed broadcast.

Entry to court buildings will be subject to additional security measures including registration and surrender of cell phones.

***The judges***

The Court of Appeal sits with a panel of three judges. The judges will be seated in the following order, as seen from the body of the court:

The Hon Justice Susan Thomas	The Hon Justice Christine French, President of the Court of Appeal	The Hon Justice David Collins
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***Counsel***

Counsel acting for Brenton Tarrant (the appellant) have their **names and identities suppressed by order of the Court.**

Counsel acting for the King (the respondent) are M Laracy, A Ewing, N Wynne, B Hawes.

Counsel to assist the Court has their **name and identity suppressed by order of the Court.**

***Sitting hours***

Court will begin at 10:00am and conclude at 4:00pm with adjournments taken from 11:30am to 11:45am and from 1:00pm to 2:15pm. There is no afternoon adjournment.

***Enquiries***

Any media enquiries should be directed via email to [seniorcourtsmedia@courts.govt.nz](mailto:seniorcourtsmedia@courts.govt.nz).