



The Right Honourable Dame Helen Winkelmann

CHIEF JUSTICE OF NEW ZEALAND | TE TUMU WHAKAWĀ O AOTEAROA

3 September 2025

MEDIA STATEMENT

Chief Justice's Annual Report released today

Chief Justice Helen Winkelmann has today released her 2024 Annual Report. The report provides information about judges, about the role and responsibilities of the judicial branch of government, and about the work of the courts in 2024.

The *Chief Justice's Annual Report 2024* also describes the priorities of judicial leadership for the year. These include initiatives to improve access to justice, to address court delays, and to respond to the recommendations for the judiciary in the final report of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in State and Faith-based Care. A key focus for the judiciary continues to be modernising the courts' systems and processes, and ensuring that any courtroom technology assists rather than hampers access to justice.

The report is intended to support public understanding of the courts, and to enable public scrutiny of how they are administered, the Chief Justice said today.

"Judges usually speak only through their judgments. This report provides the opportunity for the judiciary to speak publicly about the functioning of the courts, and in particular the challenges and opportunities for access to justice and the operation of the courts."

"The judiciary has a unique perspective on these topics, formed through the daily work of administering justice through the courts, and it is essential that this perspective is heard."

Insights from the report and where to find them

- Information on the role of the judiciary in New Zealand's constitutional framework, information on how the branches of government work together, and the bounds of judicial engagement with policy formation (Part 1)
- Work underway to address delay and improve efficiencies in the courts (Part 2)
- The judiciary's response to the recommendations from the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in State and Faith-based Care (pages 64-65)

- Resourcing issues facing the courts that contribute to delay, including insufficient courtrooms in some areas (page 39), and insufficient judges on some benches (page 22)
- Steps the judiciary is taking to ensure that technology adopted in the courts strengthens and does not hamper access to justice (from page 70)
- Updates on Te Au Reka – the digital case and court management system intended to modernise the way our courts and tribunals function, and the development of protocols for the use of remote participation in court (from page 71).
- Open justice and engagement initiatives – Part 4.
- Pacific and international engagement – Part 5.
- The judicial rollcall – a list of all judges serving in the courts as at 31 December 2024 (Appendix 4).

The report will be published today on the Courts of New Zealand website.

For further information, contact:

Alix Chapman, Senior Communications Advisor at alix.chapman@courts.govt.nz or
Liz Kennedy, Manager, Communications and Engagement at [seniorcourtsmedia@courts.govt.nz](https://www.seniorcourtsmedia@courts.govt.nz).