

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF NEW ZEALAND
WHANGANUI REGISTRY**

**I TE KŌTI MATUA O AOTEAROA
WHANGANUI ROHE**

**CRI-2019-083-110
[2025] NZHC 3972**

THE KING

v

JARROD ARNOLD DENT

Hearing: 15 December 2025

Counsel: R L Hicklin for Crown
E A Hall (by VMR) and A Brosnahan for Mr Dent

Date: 15 December 2025

JUDGMENT OF McHERRON J
[Disposition under Criminal Procedure (Mentally Impaired Persons Act) 2003]

[1] At a trial in August of this year, a jury found that Mr Jarrod Dent killed Miriama Raukawa, and wounded Marama Wall, Frederick Davy, Kahurangi Edwards, Parepumai Raukawa and Dalphina Tauherewa.

[2] Mr Dent is attending this morning by way of AVL as he did at the trial, and as recommended by his medical team.¹ He is able to see and hear what is happening in Court.

¹ *R v Dent* HC Whanganui CRI-2019-083-110, 20 November 2025 (Minute No 9 of McHerron J) at [4] and [5].

[3] I have read victim impact statements from two of the people Mr Dent wounded, Marama Wall, whose presence I acknowledge in Court today and Parepumai Raukawa:²

- (a) For Marama Wall, what happened will never go away, and he will never be what he was, before the events. Mr Dent's actions affected him in "all sorts of ways", mentally and physically. Marama worries about Mr Dent doing something similar again if he is released.
- (b) For Parepumai Raukawa, her heart is forever broken. What happened has broken her family apart, leaving her family without a mother, wife, sister, cousin, aunty and grandmother. Things haven't been the same for her, and she also suffered physically, receiving a number of stab wounds and having to spend a while in hospital.

[4] I also acknowledge Robert Rainham, the partner of Miriama Raukawa at the time of her death. I saw Mr Rainham in Court most days throughout the trial, with his friend Brent. It was a very difficult time for him, as no doubt today will be. Ka nui te mihi atu ki a koe, Robert. I acknowledge your sadness, grief and love for Miriama that brought you to the trial each day.

[5] During the trial, the Court learnt more about Miriama, who was a cherished and central member of her whānau, and a generous woman with a big heart who brought those who were struggling into her life, and her home, and cared for them. Her home was always open, and welcoming; she never locked her door.

[6] I also acknowledge Pa Johnson, Miriama Raukawa's elder brother. His evidence helped paint a beautiful picture of his sister and her role — I'll call it a vocation — of helping vulnerable people.

[7] This case has had an unusual procedural path to disposition today. In January 2019, Jarrod Dent committed the acts of killing and wounding. His first trial

² I granted the request for these statements to be read at the hearing, applying s 22 of the Victims' Rights Act 2002.

was delayed because of the COVID-19 pandemic.³ In 2021, he was deemed unfit to stand trial.⁴ In 2024, he was adjudged fit to stand trial.⁵ The Crown contested insanity, and so the matter went to a jury in August 2025.

The jury's verdict

[8] The jury's verdict on the charge of murder,⁶ and the five charges of wounding with intent to cause grievous bodily harm⁷ was "act proven but not criminally responsible on account of insanity".⁸

[9] The jury accepted Mr Dent was insane at the time, and so not criminally responsible. This meant he had a disease of mind that rendered him incapable of understanding the nature and quality of his acts or of knowing his acts were morally wrong, having regard to the commonly accepted standards of right and wrong.⁹

[10] The jury's verdict means imprisonment is not an available option. Therefore, in this hearing I am not sentencing Mr Dent, but rather I am determining what pathway in the Criminal Procedure (Mentally Impaired Persons) Act 2003 (CP(MIP) Act) will best keep him and the community safe, while upholding his human rights.¹⁰

[11] That distinction between sentencing, and this process, what we call "disposition", is important, not just to those of us in the courtroom, but also the wider public. At disposition, the Court must consider all the circumstances of the case.¹¹

What happened?

[12] Mr Dent was known to mental health services in Whanganui, and had received in-patient and community treatment. Mr Dent disengaged from these services, and

³ *R v Dent* HC Whanganui CRI-2019-083-110, 19 March 2020 (Minute of Simon France J).

⁴ *R v Dent* [2021] NZHC 1169.

⁵ *R v Dent* HC Whanganui CRI-2019-083-110, 7 June 2024 (Minute of Cull J).

⁶ Crimes Act 1961, ss 167 and 172. Maximum penalty of life imprisonment.

⁷ Crimes Act, s 188(1). Maximum penalty of 14 years' imprisonment.

⁸ See Rights of Victims of Insane Offenders 2021, s 5.

⁹ Crimes Act, s 23(2).

¹⁰ Criminal Procedure (Mentally Impaired Persons) Act 2003 [CP(MIP) Act]. See also New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990, s 22.

¹¹ CP(MIP) Act, s 24(1)(a); *M (CA 819/2011) v R* [2012] NZCA 142, (2012) 28 FRNZ 773 at [6].

lived an isolated existence between 2014 and 2019, with his main source of companionship being his animals.

[13] On 22 January 2019, Mr Dent located the body of one of his cats. This was extremely upsetting for him. He took the cat to a nearby vet clinic, but could not afford an autopsy. He then buried his cat in his backyard, while extremely distressed.

[14] The same day, his neighbours, and their friends, were sharing kai and inu together, catching up in the backyard of Miriama Raukawa's whare, located across from the peer support centre where Miriama and Dalphina Taurerewa worked.

[15] At some point in the afternoon, around 3:30pm, Mr Dent concluded (despite the lack of any evidence that that this was the case) that his neighbours were responsible for the cat's death. He went and spoke to Miriama, and she denied this.

[16] Mr Dent returned to his house, and armed himself with two knives. Mr Dent went outside to a shared driveway/backyard area, and stabbed Miriama Raukawa and her daughter Parepumai Raukawa. Parepumai's then-partner Marama Wall and his friend Frederick Davy attempted to distract and engage Mr Dent, and they too were stabbed. Miriama's friend and colleague, Dalphina Taurerewa and Miriama's boarder, Kahurangi Edwards were also stabbed.

[17] Mr Dent followed Parepumai into the road, stabbing her again, and telling her "you are all going to die". Mr Davy again distracted him, as did Mr Wall.

[18] Miriama Raukawa died from the stab wounds. The five surviving victims suffered varying degrees of injury and sought help from strangers in the road and the nearby supermarket carpark.

[19] Mr Dent went back inside his house, called his mother and the police, and was arrested a short while later. He was originally remanded in custody, but later in a secure forensic ward.

Heroism

[20] I want to recognise the heroism of those involved. The witnesses said the attack happened very quickly. The three women — Miriama, Parepumai and Dalphina — were stabbed before anyone realised what happened.

[21] Then Marama Wall yelled “stop it” and told everyone to run. Marama Wall ran around a car to create a barrier between him and Mr Dent. He was chased by Mr Dent before he turned his attention again to Parepumai. Mr Dent caught her and held a knife to her throat. Then Marama Wall distracted Mr Dent again from Parepumai. When Mr Dent was about to slit Parepumai’s throat Marama Wall yelled and told Mr Dent to come after him instead, drawing him away from Parepumai. Mr Dent then started to chase Marama instead, before retreating into his flat.

[22] Marama Wall then sought help for those who were injured. He was one of them, although he did not realise initially due to shock. Despite being stabbed himself, he helped Parepumai Raukawa by removing his singlet and wrapping it around her neck to stem the bleeding.

[23] Others too acted heroically that day. Parepumai Raukawa intervened to try and protect her mother. When the attacker grabbed Miriama, Parepumai stepped forward with her hands raised, trying to calm him down and stop the attack, even though it put her in harm’s way. Her actions gave others a brief chance to react and escape.

[24] After being attacked herself, Dalphina Taurerewa tried to get Parepumai off the property and towards safety. Despite her own severe injuries, she ran to alert people at the New World and sought help for the group.

[25] Frederick Davy stayed near Marama and Parepumai during the attack and later helped Parepumai after she collapsed on the road.

[26] There was also evidence of those who came to help after the attack, courier drivers Shane Nesbit and Glen Campbell, police and other first responders, shielding the victims, calling for help, providing first aid.

[27] In combination, these acts of heroism required quick thinking, bravery and selflessness. Without these acts of bravery and selflessness, I have no doubt more people would have died or would have had worse injuries from Mr Dent's attack.

The disposition framework

[28] The next steps in respect of Mr Dent are governed by ss 23–26 of the CP(MIP) Act. In this case, the Court must first consider whether to detain Mr Dent as a special patient under the Mental Health (Compulsory Assessment and Treatment) Act 1992 (MH(CAT) Act).¹²

[29] A special patient order is reserved for a category of persons who warrant “extraordinary precautions” and require “optimal care and treatment”.¹³ It is a restrictive detention order with serious limitations and obligations.¹⁴ The term of the order is indefinite. It will remain in force until and unless the Minister of Health directs discharge from, or variation of, the order.¹⁵ The word “special” is used because special procedures apply in relation to the treatment and management of such patients in order to safeguard the public.¹⁶

[30] The test for whether Mr Dent is made subject to a special patient order is as follows:¹⁷

[The Court must be] satisfied that the making of the order is necessary in the interests of the public or any person or class of person who may be affected by the court's decision.

¹² CP(MIP) Act, s 24(2)(a). Since he was deemed fit to stand trial on 23 March 2024, Mr Dent has been detained in a hospital pursuant to s 44 of the CP(MIP) Act. Post verdict, he has been detained in hospital for inquiries to be undertaken pursuant to s 23 of the CP(MIP) Act. Care was taken to ensure Mr Dent's detention was as “brief as possible”, in accordance with *T v Te Whatu Ora* [2025] NZSC 119.

¹³ See *R v Tuira* [2022] NZCA 394 at [16] citing Warren Brookbanks and Jeremy Skipworth “Reclassification and leave of special patients unfit to stand trial” (2015) NZLJ 215 at 215.

¹⁴ *M (CA819/11) v R*, above n 11, at [7].

¹⁵ CP(MIP) Act, s 33; *AW v Minister of Health* [2024] NZHC 2279, [2024] 3 NZLR 622 at [78]–[99].

¹⁶ *M (CA819/11) v R*, above n 11 at [9].

¹⁷ CP(MIP) Act, s 24(1)(c).

[31] The meaning of “necessary” in this test falls somewhere between expedient or desirable, and essential.¹⁸ It is a high threshold.¹⁹ However, once it is found to be necessary, the High Court has said there “is no element of discretion” — an order must be made.²⁰

[32] The meaning of “any person or class of person” can include not only the person to be subject to the anticipated order but also the victims of the proven acts.²¹

[33] The Court of Appeal has said the “interests of the public” that the Court must consider are “twofold”:²²

First, there is the need to be protected from further offending by the offender. The longer term public interest, and one that the offender obviously shares, is to ensure that the offender is managed and treated in a manner best calculated to achieve the ultimate goals of rehabilitation and reintegration into the community.

[34] The other disposition options are only available if the court is not satisfied that detention as a special patient is necessary.²³ These are to order treatment as a patient under the MH(CAT) Act,²⁴ either as an in-patient, or in the community;²⁵ or to order immediate release.²⁶

Is it necessary for Mr Dent to be made a special patient?

[35] Both the Crown and defence counsel now agree that it is necessary to make Mr Dent a special patient. But that is not enough. The Court must also be satisfied that it is necessary.²⁷

¹⁸ *M (CA819/11)*, above n 11, at [17].

¹⁹ At [17].

²⁰ See *D v R* [2025] NZHC 2270 at [17].

²¹ See Victims’ Rights Act, s 4 definition of “offender” at (a)(ii).

²² *M (CA819/11)*, above n 11, at [9].

²³ At [17].

²⁴ CP(MIP) Act, s 25(1)(a).

²⁵ *D v R*, above n 20, at [18].

²⁶ CP(MIP) Act, s 25(1)(d). I consider s 25(1)(c) is not applicable, as Mr Dent is not liable to be detained under a sentence of imprisonment.

²⁷ CP(MIP) Act, s 24. See also *R v Chand* [2012] NZHC 2745.

[36] Dr Gordon Lehany, a forensic psychiatrist, prepared a report ahead of this hearing.²⁸ Dr Lehany considers it is necessary to detain Mr Dent as a special patient.²⁹ This report, read together with the wide range of psychiatric material provided to the Court prior to, and at the trial,³⁰ and the evidence at trial, strongly supports a conclusion that it is necessary in the interests of the public, the victims, and Mr Dent himself, to make an order that he be detained in a hospital as a special patient.

[37] This is because:

- (a) First, Mr Dent is at risk of carrying out serious, unprovoked violence. His actions resulted in the death of his neighbour Miriama Raukawa, and injury to five other people. The gravity of the acts proven is relevant to the assessment.³¹ Mr Dent’s behaviour was at “the most serious end of the scale”.³² This risk arose in the context of his delusional beliefs, activated when he thought other people were acting contrary to his interests or those of his animals.
- (b) Second, Mr Dent’s risk is enduring. It will continue for a long period, including if he were ever discharged from secure forensic services.
- (c) Third, Mr Dent may deteriorate quickly. If he were ever released, community-based services could fail to act with sufficient urgency. Further, community-based services would have difficulty managing him in the community if and when that relapse or deterioration occurs.
- (d) Fourth, Mr Dent’s complex mental presentation, and his diagnosis, has been the subject of differing views by treating clinicians. Dr Lehany observed “this complexity is such that going forward there is a clear question of whether it is likely that general mental health services will be able to adequately treat and monitor him in the longer term”.

²⁸ This satisfies the criteria set out in s 24(1)(b) and (3) of the CP(MIP) Act.

²⁹ Section 24(1)(b).

³⁰ These reports can be considered in this context, as done in *R v Duncan* [2016] NZHC 1094.

³¹ *R v Chandler* [2021] NZHC 1470 at [38]. See also *R v Thon Lam* [2016] NZHC 563 at [77].

³² *R v Tarapata* [2018] NZHC 85 at [17(a)].

(e) Fifth, Mr Dent agrees he ought to be made a special patient.

My decision

[38] I readily accept that to keep the community safe from Mr Dent and to keep him safe, a specialist approach to long-term treatment is required. The opinions of psychiatrists carry significant weight.³³ I accept Dr Lehany's assessment that this ongoing and effective treatment of mental disorder, and dynamic and responsive and sophisticated risk assessment and scenario-planning is only available in forensic mental health services.³⁴

[39] It is evident that, without special patient status, it is unlikely treatment and monitoring of Mr Dent will continue over the timeframe needed to adequately manage his long-term risks.³⁵

[40] I acknowledge the reports from his clinical team that Mr Dent is now relatively stable. However, I am clearly satisfied Mr Dent remains a significant danger to the safety of the community, and this state of affairs will continue until at least such time as he has received considerably more treatment in a secure environment, if not indefinitely. Further, Mr Dent requires the guaranteed layer of oversight that special patient status provides, given his complex mental health presentation. If his release back into the community is ever contemplated, that will need to be very carefully managed, supported and monitored.³⁶

³³ At [25].

³⁴ For a similar conclusion, see *Tarapata*, above n 32, at [17(c)].

³⁵ See *R v Chandler*, above n 31, at [34].

³⁶ See *R v Mason* [2018] NZHC 2116 at [22] and [25].

Result

[41] I make an order pursuant to s 24(2)(a) of the CP(MIP) Act that Mr Jarrod Arnold Dent be detained in hospital as a special patient under the Mental Health (Compulsory Assessment and Treatment) Act 1992.

McHerron J

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