

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF NEW ZEALAND

I TE KŌTI MANA NUI O AOTEAROA

SC 63/2025
[2025] NZSC 113

BETWEEN DEBORAH JANE BRIDGE
Applicant

AND THE CROWN
Respondent

Court: Williams, Kós and Miller JJ

Counsel: Applicant in person

Judgment: 8 September 2025

JUDGMENT OF THE COURT

A The application for leave to appeal is dismissed.

B There is no order as to costs.

REASONS

[1] The applicant emailed intended proceedings to the Registrar of the High Court at Wellington. The proposed causes of action were negligence, false imprisonment and defamation. The respondent in the intended proceedings was simply “the Crown”, although at various points specific Crown agencies as well as individuals were identified.

[2] The first cause of action claimed that the Ministry of Health | Manatū Hauora (the Ministry) had acted negligently in relation to the steps taken to restrict movements in response to the SARS-CoV-2 epidemic. It alleged that as there was no adequate evidence to support the existence of such an epidemic, the Ministry and various other agencies and individuals acted negligently.

[3] The second cause of action related to antibiotics the applicant had been prescribed which, she alleges, contained “toxic magnetic graphene oxide” harmful to her health. This was also a claim in negligence, but seemed to relate to legislation governing the safety of medicines rather than the individual who prescribed the medicine to the applicant.

[4] The third ground pleaded defamation perpetrated by various government agencies, Associate Professor Siouxsie Wiles and some media outlets, the defamatory statement being that the applicant was a “conspiracy theorist”.

[5] The fourth cause of action alleged that the applicant had been “unlawfully de-registered” from all healthcare facilities in the entire Tararua District.

[6] The final cause of action was in false arrest. The applicant described an incident in which she was arrested by police in a public space and in view of others. The alleged arrest was for not wearing a mask. The applicant alleged further that she was required to undertake a psychological assessment before being released without charge.

[7] The Registrar referred the matter to Churchman J for consideration under r 5.35B of the High Court Rules 2016, the Registrar believing it was “plainly an abuse of the process of the court” in terms of r 5.35A. On 7 February 2025, Churchman J struck out the purported proceeding on multiple bases, including failure to identify relevant defendants or respondents, failure to identify viable causes of action and failure to identify any form of relief the Court was capable of granting.¹

[8] The applicant appealed and the Court of Appeal dismissed the appeal, holding that “the [High Court] Judge’s analysis of [the applicant’s] pleaded claim as inadequate and irremediable is orthodox”.²

¹ *Bridge v The Crown* [2025] NZHC 89.

² *Bridge v The Crown* [2025] NZCA 246 (Mallon, Jagose and Grice JJ) at [8].

[9] The Court summed up the position in the following terms:³

[14] [The applicant's] proposed claim thus was not "founded on seriously arguable non-trivial harm"; it was not "tenable". Her argument she does not understand who "the Crown" is does not make any difference to this fundamental problem with her claim; likewise, her concern judgments have been "buried" and her reliance on Magna Carta. Instead, she sought the High Court order "investigation" of her fundamental allegation and its consequences, for that Court's remediation. That is not the judicial role or function. Her case was bound to fail.

Submissions

[10] That the applicant genuinely feels a sense of grievance in relation to the matters raised in her pleading may be seen from the opening to her written submissions:⁴

This application raises an urgent and unresolved constitutional question:

If a citizen alleges harm by the State, and every forum for redress is closed off without hearing or judicial reasoning, who then holds the NZ Crown Agents/The Executive Branch to account.

I appear today as a layperson. I am not legally trained, but I stand here seeking what the law guarantees all New Zealanders — a fair hearing, lawful judgment, and protection from arbitrary state, and unelected Crown Entities in positions of power.

I am appearing in a non-belliger[e]nt, non-combative and peaceful manner. This is done whilst observing emotional temperance and spiritual jurisprudence, guided by de jure principles and Maxims, so the truth may be ascertained and the record corrected.

The lower courts struck out my proceeding under Rule 5.35B of the High Court Rules 2016, without hearing the substance of my claim, examining evidence, or recognising the legal authorities I submitted — including those foundational to New Zealand's common law and constitutional heritage.

A principle of legality: laws (and rules) must be read in a way that preserves rights unless Parliament clearly says otherwise – and Parliament has not stated that Magna Carta's fundamental principles or the right to justice can be set aside under (HCR 5.35B).

Analysis

[11] While we acknowledge the obvious sincerity of the applicant's concerns, it is not necessary in the interests of justice for this Court to hear and determine the

³ Footnotes omitted.

⁴ Emphasis in original.

proposed appeal.⁵ We see no reason to depart from the views expressed in the Courts below that the applicant's claim is wholly untenable for the reasons traversed there. The proposed appeal therefore involves no matter of general or public importance nor is there any risk of a substantial miscarriage of justice occurring unless the appeal is heard.⁶

Result

[12] The application for leave to appeal is dismissed.

[13] There is no order as to costs.

⁵ Senior Courts Act 2016, s 74(1).

⁶ Section 74(2).