



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

22 July 2026

MEDIA RELEASE

LORI-LEA WAIROA TE WINI v THE KING
(SC 157/2025)

COURTNEY PAULINE CHURCHWARD v THE KING
(SC 158/2025)

Hearing in the Supreme Court
Monday 3 August 2026 – Tuesday 4 August 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 that will hear the appeal in the Supreme Court.

Background

The applicants were 14 and 17 years old when, in 2008, they killed an elderly man, Mr John Rowe, while burgling his home.

In the High Court, having been convicted of murder, the applicants were both sentenced to life imprisonment with a minimum period of imprisonment of 17 years.

In 2011, Ms Te Wini successfully appealed her conviction to the Court of Appeal, which ordered a retrial. She subsequently pleaded guilty to an amended charge and was then sentenced to life imprisonment with a minimum period of imprisonment of 10 years. A further appeal to the Court of Appeal against sentence in 2013 was unsuccessful.

Also in 2011, Ms Churchward appealed her conviction and sentence. The Court of Appeal dismissed the appeal against conviction but allowed the sentence appeal in part by reducing Ms Churchward's minimum period of imprisonment to 13 years.

This application for leave to appeal

On 20 October 2025, the applicants applied for leave to appeal to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court has directed that the applications for leave be set down for an oral hearing before a panel of five Judges. The issue for the Court is whether the applicants should be permitted to bring second appeals against their sentences more than 10 years out of time.

The Law Association of New Zealand has been granted leave to intervene.

Viewing of hearing

This hearing of the appeal will be live-streamed. Details about access to the live-stream and the conditions of access will be posted on the [Courts of New Zealand website](#) shortly before the hearing. No recording is permitted.

The panel

The Hon Justice Cooke	The Hon Justice Williams	The Rt Hon the Chief Justice	The Hon Justice Kós	The Hon Justice Campbell
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Judges as seen from the public gallery

Counsel

- Lori-Lea Wairoa Te Wini (Applicant in SC 157/2025): *C W J Stevenson KC and O H Fredrickson*
- Courtney Pauline Churchward (Applicant in SC 158/2025): *H G de Groot, T J Conder and R H Hohaia*
- The King (Respondent): *Z R Johnston and M R Davie*

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 enquiries about the hearing should be directed via email to supremecourt@justice.govt.nz. While attending the hearing, enquiries can also be directed to the Court Registry, which is located outside the main courtroom in the Supreme Court foyer.

Contact person:

Sue Leaupepe, Supreme Court Registrar (04) 914 3613