



The Right Honourable Dame Helen Winkelmann

CHIEF JUSTICE OF NEW ZEALAND | TE TUMU WHAKAWĀ O AOTEAROA

## MEDIA STATEMENT

5 March 2021

### COURT ARRANGEMENTS FROM SATURDAY 6 MARCH 2021

The Prime Minister announced today that Auckland will move to COVID-19 Alert Level 2 and the rest of the country will move to COVID-19 Alert Level 1 from 6am on Sunday 7 March 2021.

This statement explains the approach the courts will take from Saturday 6 March in Auckland and for the rest of the country. It also acknowledges the impacts of today's earthquakes and tsunami warnings.

In addition to the impacts of the heightened Alert Levels this week, some courthouses in low lying and coastal areas of the North Island were also impacted by today's earthquakes and tsunami warnings. Courthouses serving communities in Whakatane, and Whangārei were affected.

The Chief Justice thanked all those who had assisted the Courts' response to this latest disruption while at the same time coping with the impacts of the day's extraordinary events on their own families and lives.

### COVID-19

#### *Arrest courts*

Arrest Courts scheduled on Saturday 6 March will take place around the country under the applicable COVID-19 Alert Level Protocol.

The COVID-19 Alert Level protocols for all courts are published on the [Courts of New Zealand](#) website.

“All court participants are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the measures that are in place to keep our courts operating safely” the Chief Justice said.

## AUCKLAND HIGH AND DISTRICT COURTS AT COVID-19 ALERT LEVEL 2

### *Public Access remains restricted*

For physical distancing reasons, entry to the Court is restricted during COVID-19 Alert Level 2. Entry to the Court will be limited to members of the Judiciary, Ministry of Justice staff members, defendants, parties, witnesses, complainants, victims, and other stakeholders.

Members of the public (including a whānau support person or persons for a defendant) whose presence is not required at court will not be permitted to enter unless granted permission from the presiding Judge.

### *Jury trials to resume in Auckland at COVID-19 Alert Level 2*

The Chief Justice announced that jury trials will resume in the Auckland High Court, and in all District Courts in the Auckland region provided these can take place safely in accordance with COVID-19 Alert Level 2 restrictions.

Jurors who are summonsed to attend court next week are required to attend based on the detail in the summons or on any instruction from court staff.

Any jury trials that cannot safely be accommodated at COVID-19 Alert Level 2 will be adjourned or stood down. This decision is made by the local court and court staff will contact participants, including jurors, in these instances.

Any juror who is feeling unwell or is unsure if they still need to attend court as a juror, is asked to contact 0800 COURTS or check the [Ministry of Justice website](#) for further information.

*Civil matters in the Auckland High Court*

Civil matters will resume in the Auckland High Court.

## COURTS OUTSIDE OF AUCKLAND AT COVID-19 ALERT LEVEL 1

All other courts in New Zealand will return to normal operation at COVID-19 Alert Level 1 and will be open to the public.

Criminal jury trials will proceed as usual.

Everyone attending court will continue to be encouraged to wear face masks in public areas and in the courthouses.

Helen Winkelmann  
**Chief Justice | Te Tumu Whakawā**

## MEDIA CONTACT

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## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The COVID-19 Protocols for the Supreme Court, Court of Appeal, High Court, District Court – including Family Court and Youth Court, Employment Court, Māori Land Court, Waitangi Tribunal, Environment Court, Coroners Court and the Court Martial and Summary Appeal Court - can be found on the [Courts of New Zealand](#) website.

The [Ministry of Justice website](#) has information about the measures it is taking to ensure health and safety in courthouses.