



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

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20 April 2022

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Submissions for Supreme Court appeal hearings now published on Courts of NZ website**

Submissions for all Supreme Court appeal hearings with only limited exceptions, together with relevant outline of arguments and chronologies are now public on the Courts of NZ website<sup>1</sup>.

This initiative follows a decision by the Judges of the Supreme Court late last year to improve the transparency of court processes and advance public understanding of the Court's work.

Submissions will be [published](#) one working day ahead of scheduled hearings, with the intention of providing media and the public with relevant information. It is expected that the publication of these documents will also support law schools with the teaching of law, advocacy and procedure.

Speaking today, Chief Justice Winkelmann says that efforts to further strengthen open justice must be consistent with the need to protect suppressed, confidential or sensitive information.

“We must balance the need for transparency with the interests of parties – including victims and their whānau – and other countervailing interests. The need for necessary safeguards means that there will be limited exceptions to the publication of submissions,” she says.

The Court has adopted the practice of publishing online copies of written submissions, chronologies and outline of arguments for all appeal hearings unless a contrary direction is given by the Court. That decision is recorded in the new “[Supreme Court Submissions Practice Note](#)”, which came into effect 1 February 2022, and applies to appeals where submissions of all parties were filed thereafter.

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<sup>1</sup> For appeals where submissions of all parties were filed after 1 February 2022.

There was strong support from the profession for the proposal to make written submissions publicly available on the basis that it supports understanding of what is in issue in the proceeding and helps maintain confidence in the administration of justice.

Further improvements to the way the record of appeal hearings is accessed by the public are currently being worked on, as the Court seeks to enhance visibility of its processes.

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