



**CHIEF DISTRICT COURT JUDGE FOR NEW ZEALAND
TE KAIWHAKAWĀ MATUA O TE KŌTI-Ā-ROHE
Judge Jan-Marie Doogue**

6 March, 2018

Statement from the Chief District Court Judge, Judge Jan-Marie Doogue:

The Coroner’s inquest findings into the death of Christie Marceau

“The findings of the Coroner’s inquest into the death of Christie Marceau highlight the risk created by information gaps in the criminal justice system and expose where some of those gaps are, especially around the quality of information that is placed before judges.

To make sound, safe decisions that protect people from further harm, judges need as much information as possible. We rely on everyone across the system to capture that detail to the best of their ability and bring it to the court’s attention.

This inquest has demonstrated the value of thorough, evidence-based inquiry for dispelling rumour and unfair speculation, and for shedding light on the complexity of the inter-dependant processes in the system which formed part of the backdrop to Christie’s death.

The quality of information available to judges in bail hearings concerns me as Chief District Court Judge. District Court judges have led an initiative to provide judges considering bail applications in certain types of violence cases with a pack that gathers together all information about a defendant held across various police and court files, and including victims’ views. The Ministry of Justice has helped us trial these “Judge’s Packs” successfully in four regions and judges are eager to see them rolled out nationwide.

While these sorts of initiatives improve judges’ knowledge, they cannot eliminate risk completely. Risk factors include those arising out of mental disorder where accurate clinical diagnosis may not always be possible.

Today's findings also underscore the importance of good quality court administration and support services for both the people affected by crime and decision makers.

District Court judges are determined to play our part; we owe it to all parties involved in criminal proceedings, and the communities which the District Court serves, especially victims and their families – families like the Marceaus.”

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