

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF NEW ZEALAND
WHANGAREI REGISTRY**

**I TE KŌTI MATUA O AOTEAROA
WHANGĀREI-TERENGA-PARĀOA ROHE**

**CRI-2024-029-000746
[2026] NZHC 2943**

THE KING

v

AUDREY HINETAU THOMPSON

Hearing: 25 September 2026

Appearances: G A Kelly and I M Stewart for the Crown
D G A Reece and K M Barker for the Defendant

Judgment: 25 September 2026

SENTENCING NOTES OF NATALIE WALKER J

Counsel/Solicitors:
MWIS Lawyers, Crown Solicitor at Whangārei
D G A Reece, Auckland
K M Barker, Wānaka

Mihi | Acknowledgments

[1] E rere atu ana ngā mihi ki ngā mate kua whiti atu ki tua o te ārai. Haere, haere, haere atu rā. E te urupā o rātou mā, e ngā kanohi ora, i runga i te ngākau whakaute, ānei āku mihi ki a koutou katoa. E te whānau pani o Arthur, e te whānau āwhina o Audrey, me mihi ka tika ki a koutou katoa me ō koutou ngākau e kikini tonu nei. Nau mai, hoki mai i runga i te āhuatanga o tēnei rā taumaha e pīkauria nei. Tēna tātou katoa.

[2] I have acknowledged those who are no longer with us, in particular Arthur Tahere, whose sudden death two years ago still pinches at the hearts of his loving whānau. I acknowledge you, Ms Thompson, and pay special mention to your parents and whānau who remain steadfast and supportive by your side.

[3] My greetings to you all on this solemn occasion.

Hei tīmatanga kōrero | Introduction

[4] Ms Thompson, you appear for sentence today having been found guilty by a jury on 16 July 2026 of the murder of Arthur Tahere. By its verdict of murder, the jury rejected your defence of self-defence. They also determined that you either intended to kill Arthur, or that you intended to cause him injury which you knew could well cause his death and consciously took that risk.

[5] Arthur was the partner of your friend Sunday Howard. You met him for the first time on the night that you took his life. In the afternoon and evening of 7 September 2024, friends and family gathered at Sunday's home in Kaitaia. Everyone shared kai, enjoyed some drinks and socialised. Later that night, at about 11:00 pm, you, Sunday and Arthur were outside on the back porch and seating area next to it. You took exception to something Arthur said to Sunday, and the way he said it. Subsequently, you told others that you didn't like the way he was talking to Sunday. At the time however, how you reacted took everyone by surprise. You smashed a bottle on a concrete step and used it to stab Arthur in the neck. Almost immediately he suffered significant blood loss. He was rushed to Kaitaia Hospital but

could not be revived. He was pronounced dead at 12:15 am the next morning, around two hours after you had stabbed him.

[6] The law requires me to sentence you to life imprisonment unless circumstances exist making that unjust. Responsibly, your lawyers do not seek to displace that presumption. So, today I will be sentencing you to a term of life imprisonment. In addition, I must decide the length of the minimum term of imprisonment you must serve before being eligible to apply for parole. Under our law that cannot be less than 10 years, and in your case, it will not be more than 12 years because of various factors which I will come to. Before I determine the final length of the minimum term of imprisonment, I must determine the facts which led to your offending, identify any features that make it especially grave, and then make allowances for features personal to you.

Arthur Tahere

[7] I start by saying something more about Arthur James Randy Rhodes Honey Boy Kara Tahere. Tuatahi ake, e mihi ana ahau ki tōna whāriki whānui, ki ōna aho whakapapa. First, I acknowledge the rich tapestry and many strands of his whakapapa, which I will return to shortly.

[8] Arthur was born on 17 March 2002 and was only 22 years old at the time of his death. In September 2024 he had been in a relationship with Sunday, although it had been on and off for close to two years. He was the father of their young son, [REDACTED], who was about six weeks' old at the time of his father's death.

[9] Arthur lived in Auckland, whereas Sunday and [REDACTED] lived in Kaitiaia with Sunday's other young son [REDACTED] as well as her brother Malachi Howard-Cassidy. Two weeks after the birth of [REDACTED], Arthur visited them with his mother (whose remote presence today I acknowledge). Thereafter, Sunday and Arthur resumed their relationship (although they continued to live in separate cities). Arthur's second trip to see Sunday and [REDACTED] was on the night that he died.

Victim impact statement of the Tahere and Howard whānau

[10] To Arthur's Tahere and Howard whānau, I acknowledge you all. You were present throughout the trial and conducted yourselves with great mana and respect for the court, its processes and the people involved, including Audrey and her whānau. It cannot have been easy at all to hear about the events that took the life of your taonga, Arthur.

[11] Whaea Ngairo Tahere, I especially acknowledge you, as the māngai or spokesperson. This morning you read out a very moving victim impact statement on behalf of the wider Tahere and Howard whānau. I acknowledge your description of the whānau's experiences following Arthur's death, including the insult and indignity you felt at having your tikanga (or practices) put to one side, while the criminal investigation and court processes took hold.

[12] Whaea, it is evident that you went to great lengths to prepare the written statement, which is in both te reo Māori and in English, and the accompanying PowerPoint which contained images of Arthur, his pēpeha which was set to audio and video recordings that we listened to, and to various whakataukī (proverbs) which helped to express the collective breadth and depth of your mamae (hurt).¹ I also especially acknowledge the very moving recording that you played for us of Arthur's whakaekenga (his return home). Your statement and presentation describe the beautiful, wide woven mat that is Arthur's whānau: his ancestors of many iwi, you, his whānau pani (grieving family), his connections to Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Hoani Waititi Marae and Whangaroa, and the important part that he played as a ringa raupā (a committed labourer) who volunteered for Te Pōkai o Ngāti Maru (a biodiversity management and kaitiaki group based at Te Kāretu Marae). Arthur was a moko, a son, a nephew, a brother, a treasure, a father, an uncle, a friend and a partner. Your statement Whaea was a powerful expression of the depth and breadth of the impact the offending has had on you all. Ngā mihi nui. Thank you.

¹ The contents of the victim impact statement and accompanying PowerPoint meet the purposes of victim impact statements as set out in s 17AB of the Victims' Rights Act 2002. The photographs and audio and visual clips meet the expansive definition of "information" given in s 17AA(2) of the Act.

Victim impact statement of Sunday Howard

[13] I have also received a victim impact statement from Sunday. I acknowledge Sunday, what it took for you to read it out in court to us this morning. Thank you. In your statement, you say that you have replayed everything over and over in your head from that night and you still cannot make sense of what happened. You chose to be with Arthur, yet you believed that Audrey did not approve of that. You were her friend, but she killed your partner, and the father of your younger son. Sunday, you express strong feelings towards Audrey for what she has done to you, but you also seek understanding for not having a forgiving heart. It is entirely understandable that you would harbour such feelings as a result of the impact the offending has had on you, as well as on your youngest son, and the burden you now carry of parenting him alone.

Ngā meka | The facts of the offending

[14] On the afternoon of 7 September 2024, Sunday was at home at ■ Te Ahu Street Kaitaia with her two young boys and her sister Malayna Howard. Their brother Malachi was at work at the Kaitaia RSA and did not come home until later.

[15] Ms Thompson, you were dropped off to the house by your partner sometime in the early evening at about 6:30 pm. Although you had been there earlier in the day catching up with Sunday and Malayna, you left, as you didn't want to be there when Arthur arrived. You later told police you had been talking to Sunday during the day about how Arthur talked to her. You said you didn't like that. You counselled Sunday that she didn't need to be in a relationship with Arthur, but she could still let him be a father to ■. So, you left in the afternoon, thinking that when you returned later that evening for pre-arranged drinks, Arthur would already have arrived. Your rationale for saying this is not clear to me, but in any event, Arthur hadn't arrived when you returned as he was running late. He in fact arrived much later.

[16] Before Arthur arrived, Malayna's partner Thomas Dyason arrived, as did Malachi, after his shift finished at the RSA. When Malachi got home, he cooked everyone a chicken curry. By all accounts the mood was good. Ms Thompson, you and your partner Tawhia Nicholls were planning to get married, and you wanted Sunday and Malayna to be your bridesmaids. The gathering on Sunday night was

meant to be a celebration of those plans and of the three friends being together again. Everyone was listening to music and enjoying a few drinks, whether in the house or outside on the back porch and its nearby seating area. Everyone had brought their own drinks, which were either beer or pre-mixed spirit drinks in cans or bottles. Although everyone present was in some way affected by alcohol, no one was heavily intoxicated.

[17] Arthur did not arrive until approximately 10:00 pm, having driven all the way up from Auckland. He had not met you before this night Ms Thompson. Sunday gave evidence that you did not approve of their relationship, but that she told you “I know I don’t need him, ... I want him”. By the time Arthur arrived, Sunday had already had about six bottles of Corona beer. This seemed to be on par with others (except Malachi who had been at work). You were outside when Arthur arrived. Ms Thompson, you met him as he came down to the house. That meeting was uneventful. Arthur then spent some time inside the house with Sunday and the young boys.

[18] Sometime later, Sunday and Arthur went outside, taking their drinks with them. You were still outside. You gave evidence that the conversation between you and Arthur was fine, at least initially. However, at some point, the mood changed. Sunday gave evidence that you told a story, which included a random remark about her body. That was when she noticed a shift in Arthur’s demeanour. At first, she said he was hōhā (bothered) about it. He walked away to get another beer from his truck before returning. When he came back Sunday confronted him. He said something to her like “you and your fucking friends”, which annoyed Sunday, as he had only just met you. By her own account Sunday responded badly to Arthur’s off-hand comment, admitting she felt “pissed off”. So, she started yelling at him.

[19] The accounts of what happened next vary to some extent. This is to be expected when eye witnesses have different vantage points, with varying abilities to see and hear clearly. The key issues I must resolve are: whether Arthur was sitting or standing when you stabbed him; whether he uttered any threats before this; and how many times you stabbed him.

Who was present?

[20] First, I make a general observation about who was outside at time of the stabbing and in the lead up to it. I find that when Sunday started yelling at Arthur, she was standing on or near to the top step of the porch. You were below her, standing on the ground at the foot of the concrete steps. And Arthur was in the area where two blue chairs and a Mitre 10 bucket were. The scene is a relatively small area, perhaps only several metres in length from the top of the stairs to the furthest chair. I find that throughout what happened next, you were standing in the middle of Sunday (who remained at the top of the steps) and Arthur (who was down by the chairs). This is consistent with all accounts, including your own.

[21] As Sunday's yelling continued, Malayna and Thomas came outside to see what was happening. Malayna stood in the doorway to the house. Thomas stood in front of Malayna, on the porch, which put him behind Sunday (who was not aware he was there). Malachi was inside the house throughout. He saw none of what followed but did hear his sister yelling and the glass bottle break.

Was Arthur sitting or standing at the time of the stabbing?

[22] In one part of your police interview you said that Arthur was either sitting or standing at the time that you stabbed him, but you couldn't remember which. Towards the end of your interview, you were more candid and said that because he was taller than you, and because you stabbed him in the neck, you think he must have been sitting down, otherwise you could not have reached his neck.

[23] Your evidence at trial was inconsistent with this. At trial you said he was definitely standing. You also added detail to your earlier account. You said that Arthur "moved closer" to you, "leaned in" and you looked into his eyes. You said he was threatening you, which I will return to shortly. You said that you wanted to push him away, but you stabbed him instead, and that after you stabbed him, he fell back onto a chair. Under cross-examination at trial, you remained firm in your recollection that Arthur was standing at the time that you stabbed him.

[24] I find that Arthur was seated at the time that you stabbed him. I prefer the evidence of the Crown witnesses on this. Sunday's evidence was that Arthur was on one of the blue seats when he was stabbed, and that he remained seated until after this had happened. Although Sunday was somewhat affected by alcohol, and was worked up over her argument with Arthur, she was nevertheless focused on him throughout. I consider she would have noticed if he had been sitting, standing or moving towards you during their argument.

[25] Malayna's evidence was also that Arthur was seated the whole time. Her vantage point, from in the doorway to the house, was good. Thomas was standing on the top of the porch, behind Sunday, and could see both blue chairs. He was tall enough to see past Sunday. His evidence was that Arthur was sitting down at the time he was stabbed. His recollection though, was that he was seated on the Mitre 10 bucket furthest from the steps.

[26] In summary, all Crown witnesses present at the time recalled that Arthur was sitting when he was stabbed.

[27] In addition, I find the evidence of Amelia Gamblin, the forensic scientist who examined the scene, offers some support for this finding. On the wall of the house behind the blue chair that was closest to the steps, Ms Gamblin observed a bloodstaining pattern that included a spatter pattern. That type of pattern is created when there is either an impact (created when an object strikes liquid blood) or an exhaled event (created when blood is forced out by airflow from the nose, the mouth or a wound). The location and proximity of this blood spatter pattern on the wall behind the top of the first blue chair, suggest that the source of blood was close to the wall when the pattern was made. Ms Gamblin offered her opinion that this meant it was more likely that Arthur was sitting in that location rather than standing when his blood was applied to the wall surface. However, there was insufficient detail in any of the blood stains for her to determine that with certainty.

[28] On the ground in front of the blue chair, the chair furthest from the steps, was a second major area of bloodstaining. This was a much larger area of bloodstaining which contained several drip stains forming a larger drip pattern. A drip stain is

formed when the source of blood falls from above. I find that Arthur could also have been sitting in that second blue chair when he was stabbed.

[29] The third and final area of bloodstaining of any moment observed at the scene was on the side wall of the house, around the corner from the chairs, the steps and the porch. In that location Ms Gamblin observed a blood spatter pattern at a height of about 1.65 metres above the ground. Arthur was 1.85 metres tall and the wounds on his neck were 23 centimetres below the top of his head. I find that this blood spatter pattern, observed at around the height of his neck, was likely made after Arthur was stabbed and was being assisted by others to walk to a car to be driven to hospital. Beneath that wall is a concrete path that leads to the driveway at the top of which cars were parked. No one saw the stabbing occur in that area.

[30] Although the scene evidence offers some support for my conclusion that Arthur was sitting when you stabbed him, I am mindful that the photographs taken afterwards do not accurately depict what the scene was like at the key time. There was evidence given at trial that items in the scene were likely moved or kicked about during the aftermath of the stabbing when Arthur was stumbling about and sitting down (possibly on different chairs), grabbing his neck to stop the bleeding, and when people were supporting him to get to a car (and to hospital). There was also some rain overnight. I therefore do not read too much into the scene evidence. I simply observe it is not inconsistent with my finding that Arthur was sitting when you stabbed him.

Did Arthur make any threats?

[31] In your interview with police you said that both Arthur and Sunday were trading mutual threats, telling each other they were gonna “do stupid shit” to each other. You said that it was when you heard Arthur say “I’ll fuck youse both up” that you reacted, smashed the bottle and stabbed him. At trial, however, your account of the alleged threats was more elaborate. You said that Arthur issued threats including: “Come on then, I’ll fucking take you on”; “I’ll fuck you both up”; “Bro, I’ll end you both. I’ll take my son from you. I’ll fucking end you both bitch, end your son too”. I understood this last threat was a reference to Sunday’s oldest son [REDACTED], who was not Arthur’s son. You said that after hearing Arthur make these threats, your eyes

“grew dark” and you “heard an alarm” in your brain. It was following this that you took the bottle, smashed it, and stabbed Arthur.

[32] By all accounts, including her own, Sunday was the loudest person present. She yelled at Arthur, telling him to “fuck off” several times, asking him why he was there if he wasn’t there for [REDACTED]. While Arthur contributed to the argument by telling Sunday she was drunk, to go inside and have a lie down, or calling her a “loudmouth”, neither Sunday, Malayna, Thomas nor Malachi heard him raise his voice or yell at Sunday (or indeed at anyone else). None of the witnesses heard him utter any threat.

[33] I accept that Sunday’s yelling was the dominant sound, and that as the person standing closest to Arthur, you could well have heard him say things that others could not. However, I do not find credible your evidence that Arthur threatened you, Sunday or [REDACTED]. I find that Arthur did not make any threat at all. I give five reasons for this.

[34] First, no one else heard Arthur make any threat. Whereas they did hear him say other things that were adverse to Sunday (such as telling her that she was drunk and she should go inside). If the other witnesses could hear Arthur say those things, I consider they would also have heard him speak threateningly.

[35] Second, the sorts of comments the others heard Arthur say appear to me to be credible in all the circumstances — Sunday *was* affected by alcohol and she *was* being loud. It was not unreasonable for Arthur to tell her, sufficiently loudly so that she could hear, to go inside and cool off.

[36] Third, Arthur had travelled all the way from Auckland to be with Sunday and [REDACTED]. This was only his second visit since his son was born. He had just met you. At the time you were Sunday’s good friend. Arthur was at Sunday’s house where her brother and sister were present, as well as Malayna’s partner Thomas. It is difficult to accept that, within an hour or two of his arrival, in what were otherwise happy circumstances, he would have been threatening to harm you, Sunday and [REDACTED], in the way you suggest.

[37] Fourth, the type of threats you suggest Arthur made are the sort one would expect would be made aggressively and in a raised voice. Indeed, in your police interview you said that Arthur “screamed” at Sunday threatening to “fuck you both up”, and that you were caught in the middle of their “screaming match”. But no one else present described Arthur screaming or yelling. Malayna recalled Arthur was letting Sunday “have her say” and was even laughing at her. That is a far cry from yelling and screaming.

[38] Fifth, are the inconsistencies in your various accounts about what Arthur allegedly said. On the night of the stabbing, soon after it happened, you said to Sunday, “I just didn’t like the way he was talking to you”. I find that the most credible explanation for your actions. You never said to Sunday that you reacted to Arthur’s threats to you and Sunday (let alone to [REDACTED]). In your account to police the next day you said that Arthur had threatened to “fuck you both up”, however you never said that he threatened [REDACTED] (“I’ll ... end your son”). I find that was a significant addition to your evidence at trial, which lacks credibility.

Summary of what was said

[39] In summary, I find that you were caught in the crosshairs of an unfortunate argument between Sunday and Arthur, in which Sunday yelled at Arthur telling him to “fuck off” if he wasn’t going to help with the children. Arthur did not yell back at Sunday or threaten anyone, although he did tell Sunday she was drunk and that she should go inside, perhaps repeating this several times. As Sunday’s friend, and someone who already had a lukewarm view of Arthur, I suspect you found that offensive.

[40] Your lawyers submit it is conceivable that you genuinely understood and believed Arthur to be expressing threats even if you were incorrect. I do not find that to be the case. I do find this would have been a very stressful situation for you to be in, especially given your loyalties then to Sunday as her friend, and your views about Arthur.

Post-traumatic stress disorder and the role of alcohol

[41] I turn now to the findings I make about the role that your diagnosis of severe, chronic post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) played in your offending as well as your consumption of alcohol.

[42] You said several things in your police interview the next day which indicate you didn't fully understand why you acted in the way you did. For example, you said that you couldn't control your impulses; you were "unhinged for no apparent reason"; things went "boom"; they "happened so fast"; that you live "in constant fear of being hurt by men"; and that you "lost control".

[43] Expert evidence was called at trial from two forensic psychiatrists. They agreed that you have a diagnosis of PTSD and that the symptoms made you hypervigilant to perceived threats. Dr Dean's opinion was that you "demonstrate[d] heightened sensitivity to perceived threats, particularly from men, with episodes being triggered by interpersonal conflict". Dr Immelman's opinion was that your PTSD may impact on your assessment of the presence, nature, severity and imminence of a threat. I find that your PTSD meant you were vulnerable to heightened sensitivity to perceived threats, particularly from men, and that you were triggered by the interpersonal conflict between Arthur and Sunday which you found yourself in the middle of.

[44] I also find that your alcohol consumption, combined with your PTSD, contributed to a degree to your erroneous assessment of the circumstances. Dr Immelman gave evidence that the consumption of alcohol can further reduce one's ability to carry out a nuanced appraisal of a situation, increasing the risk of misinterpreting the intent of others. Dr Dean gave evidence that your behaviour could be formulated as having been driven by "anger and disinhibition from alcohol intoxication occurring in an individual with pre-existing vulnerability due to her trauma history". He concluded that your offending occurred as a result of "a combination of alcohol intoxication, escalating interpersonal conflict, perceived threat, emotional dysregulation and impaired impulse control". Dr Dean's evidence was that all of these factors were "in the mix" including your perception of threats in

a situation involving escalating interpersonal conflict. I agree. I find that the combination of your PTSD and consumption of alcohol affected your perception of the situation you found yourself in and your response to it. You overreacted in the most extreme and unnecessary way to the verbal conflict unfolding between Arthur and Sunday.

[45] I agree with your lawyers that this was a sudden, impulsive act that was not in any way premeditated. Any forethought could be measure in moments not minutes. This distinguishes your case from the cases of *R v Millar* and *R v Browne* that were referred to me for comparison.² In both of those cases, the offender left the scene to retrieve a knife before returning and using it. So, there was a degree of forethought in those cases that I find was not present here. Your offending was impulsive and not planned. I include in this your sudden grabbing of a bottle that was lying nearby and your act of smashing it.

[46] At trial both Dr Immelman and Dr Dean gave evidence about the potential relevance of PTSD to post-event behaviour. Dr Immelman said that post-event behaviour can be shaped by acute stress responses including disassociation and emotional numbing, going on autopilot or “procedural coping”. A person in a dissociative state does not have situational awareness and is not aware of what’s going on around them. While Dr Dean accepted that you may have switched in and out of such states afterwards, he considered that your behaviour and memory of the events immediately after the stabbing did not align with a consistently dissociative state. He remarked on the series of organised behaviours that you carried out immediately after the stabbing, including telling Malayna to go back inside and call an ambulance and the police, washing the blood from your hands, face and mouth, checking your appearance, and calling your partner to tell him what you had done. Dr Dean said these behaviours demonstrated situational awareness, problem solving ability and the capacity to coherently communicate.

² *R v Millar* HC Auckland CRI-2010-90-5044, 21 June 2011; and *R v Browne* [2017] NZHC 2389.

How many times was Arthur stabbed in the neck?

[47] Dr McCarthy described two wounds to the right side of Arthur's neck. The larger of the two was a slightly "gaping" wound which was 5.6 cm in length when its edges were re-approximated or closed together. The depth of that wound was approximately 5.5 cm. The track of the larger wound penetrated not only the skin and soft tissues but also the deeper structures of the neck. On the righthand side of the neck was an almost complete transection of the right carotid artery (the main blood vessel that leads from the heart to the brain). There was also a small notch on the thyroid cartilage (a firm structure at the front of the neck). The result of the carotid artery nearly being severed is that there would have been a significant amount of blood loss in a short space of time. The direction in which this larger wound was inflicted was from the back of Arthur's neck to front and from the top of his neck down. This was the fatal injury of the two.

[48] The smaller of the two wounds on Arthur's neck was located very close to the larger wound, only about 0.3 cm separated them. It was a triangular or curved shape which measured about 2.5 cm by 2.5 cm. Its approximate depth was 4.5 cm. This wound, however, had a different track. It was inflicted from the front of the neck to the back. In other words, it proceeded in a different direction from the larger, fatal wound. The smaller of the two wounds penetrated the muscles towards the back of the neck but the post-mortem examination did not reveal any other major damage from it.

[49] Dr McCarthy's evidence was that because the two wounds tracked in divergent directions, they were likely inflicted as two separate blows. However, she could not rule out the possibility that they had been caused by a single action with an irregularly edged weapon such as broken glass.

[50] I find that you stabbed Arthur to the neck twice. This not only aligns with the pathologist's evidence of the more likely scenario (given the divergent direction of the two track wounds), but also with what you told police. In your police interview, you described two stabbing motions. In answer to the officer's question, "Okay and then you've gone towards him and you've stabbed him in the neck twice", you agreed.

When the officer asked you whether those movements were made in quick succession, one after the other, you agreed saying “yeah, they were fast”. You said that you thought the first strike had not done anything, so you struck Arthur’s neck a second time (saying you “pushed him back, and then I went in”). You also accepted that you struck Arthur in the neck deliberately. Later, in response to the interviewing officer’s question “Yeah the act of stabbing him twice, that was an intentional act?” You said “Yeah, the second time I went for it”. I find you inflicted the larger, fatal wound second.

[51] I place little weight on the fact that none of the Crown witnesses observed you strike Arthur’s neck twice. Although they were well placed to hear the nature of the argument between the two of you, or to see something as obvious as whether Arthur (who was six foot tall) was sitting or standing, they could easily have missed two stabbing motions made in quick succession.

Type of murderous intent

[52] I agree with your lawyers that you did not intend to kill Arthur. Rather, I prefer a finding that you stabbed Arthur twice to the neck recklessly. That means I find that you intended to cause him injury, which you knew could well cause his death and you consciously took that risk. That finding is consistent with the question the jury asked in relation to the second type of murderous intent. A reckless intent is consistent with the fact that you acted suddenly and impulsively but still appreciated the consequences of your actions. In your interview, you frankly admitted that the likely outcome of someone being stabbed in the neck with a broken bottle was death. I consider the jury rejected your defence of self-defence and this was not a case where they found you were acting in self-defence but that your actions were not reasonable. Your intervention in the conflict between Arthur and Sunday was unwarranted and constituted a gross overreaction to the situation.

Ngā āhuatanga hē kē atu o te hara | The aggravating features of the offending

[53] The parties agree that there are no mitigating features of the offending (that is, there are no features that might lessen the seriousness or culpability of your offending).

[54] Aggravating features are those features which increase the seriousness of your offending and which may justify a higher starting point of the minimum term of imprisonment. The parties disagree over the aggravating features, however I consider that very little turns on this.

[55] I find there are three interrelated aggravating features: your deliberate creation of a lethal weapon out of a nearby beer bottle; your use of that lethal weapon twice; and the fact that you struck Arthur to the neck, a very vulnerable part of the human body.

[56] You had not been armed with a weapon at the time that the argument between Arthur and Sunday developed. However, during it, you bent down and grabbed a glass beer bottle that was on the ground, which you smashed onto a concrete step. Those were deliberate acts which had the effect of creating out of an otherwise smooth object a dangerous weapon with a sharp and jagged edge. There was no need to do this unless you intended to use it to cause serious injury to Arthur. You did then use it, striking him in the same part of the neck twice. As you said in your interview, the second time you “went for it”. I find these were brutal and unexpected acts by someone of your usual mild manner.

[57] I acknowledge the submission made by your lawyers — that not every murder involves the use of a weapon, but the ones that don’t, typically involve prolonged, brutal violence through punches or kicks together with murderous intent. They submit it is difficult to understand why that type of violence should be considered any less culpable than violence involving the use of a weapon. Their submission underscores the point that each case must be assessed on its own facts. Without the broken beer bottle, I doubt you could have killed Arthur. If you had stabbed him to another part of his body, or only stabbed him once, not twice to the neck, perhaps he would still be alive. I find that the combination of these three features moderately aggravates your offending. But as I explain shortly, when your offending is assessed against other comparable cases, little turns on my assessment.

[58] In relation to other aggravating features which the Crown submits are present, I find they are either neutral, or implicit in the offence of murder itself and do not

aggravate it. There is actual violence, significant harm and profound loss in almost every homicide. Arthur was a fit young man. I do not consider he was made vulnerable simply by being seated when you stabbed him. I do not find that your actions were premeditated. I accept your lawyers' submission that your actions could not have been any more impulsive.

Ngā āhuatanga o te mauhere | A life sentence and a minimum period of imprisonment

[59] The Sentencing Act 2002 provides that when a person is convicted of murder, they must be sentenced to life imprisonment unless, given the circumstances of the offence and the offender, a sentence of life imprisonment would be manifestly unjust. The presumption of a sentence of life imprisonment for murder recognises the sanctity accorded to human life in our society, and our community's abhorrence (strong disapproval) of the crime of murder.³ Here the parties agree that a sentence of life imprisonment is appropriate.

[60] Such a sentence means that you will remain in prison throughout your life unless and until the Parole Board releases you into the community, on parole, at the end of the minimum non-parole period set by the Court. If you were to be granted parole and released into the community, you may only remain there as long as you comply with your parole conditions and do not re-offend. The life imprisonment sentence means that you remain liable, for the rest of your life, to be recalled to prison to complete your sentence.

[61] I must determine what the appropriate minimum period of your imprisonment (MPI) should be. The Crown submits that an MPI of greater than 10 years is required to satisfy the purposes of sentencing, which include deterrence, denunciation and holding you to account. Specifically, the Crown submits that an MPI starting point of 12 years' imprisonment is appropriate. That is higher than the 11-year MPI adopted in the cases of *Millar* and *Browne*. The Crown submits that increase is justified given the aggravating features it says are present. Your lawyers submits that both *Millar* and *Browne* involved a greater degree of forethought, most notably the retrieval of a knife.

³ *R v Williams* [2005] 2 NZLR 506 (CA) at [57].

The offender in *Browne* also pursued the victim. I consider that an MPI of slightly less than 11 years is warranted. However, because of my decision about what further reductions are warranted for your personal circumstances, and because I cannot sentence you to an MPI of less than 10 years, I do not need to articulate precisely where between 10 and 11 years the starting point sits.

Ngā kōrero mō te tangata | Your personal circumstances

[62] I now turn to say something about you Ms Thompson and your personal circumstances. I have gleaned what I am about to say from a number of helpful sources. These include letters from your whānau which tell me about your upbringing, your usual character and your qualities. I want to acknowledge all the Thompson whānau, especially your parents Oral and Makerita Thompson, for their faithful and devoted support of you, including during trial. They are as saddened and shocked as anyone by your offending. The love your family has for you is evident.

[63] I start with a letter from your mother, Makerita Thompson. You are the seventh of your parents' nine tamariki (children). You carry the name of your paternal grandmother. Your mother describes the home you were brought up in as being similar to a train station, with whānau dropping their children off at all hours "thinking [she] couldn't count". You were raised in a Christian home because your father is a church minister. You are described as being very clever and able to achieve whatever you put your mind to. You gained degrees in business and administration. From childhood to adulthood, your mother says you were the child you would want by your side. You are strong in character. Your mother expresses her most sincere apology to the Tahere family. She says:

My daughter took your son's life. I will carry that to my grave. My sincere condolences to all Arthur's whakapapa. This was not the plan. This was and is not the damn way this was supposed to go. I can't express just how much brokenness I feel for your all. My utmost utmost aroha to you all.

[64] Your older sister, Te Kiri Thompson, says that you are bright, clever, calm and passionate. She says that you love wholeheartedly and heavily. Over the years she has seen you pick yourself up from rock bottom. She describes you as headstrong, but caring and the kindest person she knows.

[65] I have also received a letter from your eldest niece, [REDACTED], who lived with you and your late fiancé, Tawhia Nichols. She said that you are a caring person who looked after not just her but also her little boy when he was born. She describes you as a great aunty and an even better nanny to her son, who loves you very much. Your niece says you are the type of person who would give an arm and a leg for those you care most about.

[66] Your father also tells me something of your upbringing in his letter. You were born in the Waikato on 2 September 1995 (and so turned 31 this month). When you were a child, your whānau moved to Auckland following your father's ministry work. Two years later your whānau moved again, up to Te Tai Tokerau, Te Hiku o Te Ika (the tail of Maui's fish). Your father says that was where you began to flourish. You enjoyed school and a new social life. It was in the North that you became friends with Sunday and Malayna as you were all working in the kumara fields of Dargaville together. Your father describes frankly a sad turn in your early adult years when partying and drinking unfortunately became a way of life. He says it exposed you to more negative trauma which I will not detail here to protect your privacy. But I acknowledge that notwithstanding the loving family upbringing you had, you also experienced trauma at times. This is consistent with the expert evidence we heard at trial that this trauma contributed to your eventual diagnosis of PTSD.

[67] I have also read and taken into account a cultural report prepared by Patrick Mendes dated 7 April 2026 which was prepared prior to your trial. I acknowledge all the matters Mr Mendes speaks of, including your whakapapa. You identify strongly as Māori with deep connections to Ngāti Paoa and Ngāti Haua in the Waikato as well as Ngāpuhi and other Māori communities in the North, including in Kaitaia, Pēria and surrounding communities. He says that you present as a proud Waikato, Ngāpuhi wāhine Māori of resilience and depth who has survived significant trauma and loss. He says you have already taken tangible steps towards change.

[68] I have also read a brief pre-sentence report prepared by the Department of Corrections. It speaks a little of the schooling you received at Hamilton Girls High School, Taipa Area School and Kaitaia College. It says that you left school at the age of 17 and were employed at various jobs as a kitchen hand, cook and barista. It says

you then went home to look after your grandfather until he died. The pre-sentence report records the tragedy you experienced soon after the death of Arthur, which was that your fiancé, Tawhia Nichols, died within a month from a brain aneurism. I acknowledge there has been much trauma in your life, Ms Thompson, including the death of your fiancé while you were in prison following your arrest.

[69] You have acknowledged to the various report writers that you considered you have an issue with alcohol consumption. As I have mentioned earlier, I find that this did contribute in some way to your offending on the night. This is not a mitigating feature.

[70] You do not have any previous convictions. Your offending, which you committed at the age of 29, was entirely out of character. You are entitled to an allowance for this.

[71] The Crown submits that no allowance is available for remorse. They refer to the pre-sentence report in which you discussed your offending with the report writer. You said that your actions were in reaction to threats made by Arthur and that you were scared. You said you held your arm up to stop him from coming any further, and that you did not intend to kill him. The report writer concluded from your description of events that the offending appeared to be an impulsive act of self-defence fuelled by alcohol and fear for your own safety. The Crown submits that the jury's verdict of murder contradicts the report writer's view and your continued claims. In the absence of any expression of remorse to the pre-sentence report writer, nor any appreciation of the consequences of your actions on Arthur and his community, the Crown submits no reduction is appropriate.

[72] Since your meeting with the pre-sentence report writer, you have written a letter of apology. In it, you express remorse for causing Arthur's death. Although you might still disagree with the jury's verdict, that does not mean you cannot be remorseful for the profound loss your actions have caused to so many. I find your letter to be a heartfelt and sincere expression of remorse for the loss you have caused.

[73] Finally, in relation to your personal mitigating factors, Ms Thompson, you spent a period of just under 16 months on electronically monitored (EM) bail. During this time, you lived at a supportive rehabilitation facility where you were able to participate in activities run by those facilities. You complied with the conditions of your EM bail throughout. In accordance with accepted principles, I find you are also entitled to an allowance for this.

[74] In summary, I find you are entitled to allowances from the starting point for your prior good character, your PTSD and background trauma, and the time you spent on EM bail. I do not consider it necessary to articulate how much of an allowance I make for each factor on its own or in combination. That is because, I cannot impose a minimum period of imprisonment that is less than 10 years. I consider the combination of mitigating factors would readily have reduced the starting point to that level.

Whakaotinga | Sentence

[75] Ms Thompson, the minimum period of imprisonment that I will impose on you shortly is aimed at holding you accountable for the irreparable harm done to Arthur, his whānau and his wider community. It should deter you and others from committing similar offences, denounce your conduct, and hold you accountable and responsible for the harm that you have caused. In reaching it, I have taken into account all the information put before me today, including about you, and the effect that your offending has had on the victims. I have endeavoured to achieve consistency with the most comparable cases. I am mindful that I also need to impose the least restrictive outcome that is appropriate in all the circumstances.

[76] Ms Thompson, will you now please stand. For the murder of Arthur Tahere, I sentence you to life imprisonment. You will serve a minimum period of imprisonment of ten years.

[77] Kua tutuki. Ms Thompson, that brings me to the end. Will you please stand down.

Natalie Walker J