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MEDIA STATEMENT – NZ MEDIA FREEDOM COMMITTEE

REPORTING THE TRIAL OF BRENTON TARRANT

We are the senior editors representing the major accredited news media companies in New Zealand (TVNZ, Stuff, Mediaworks, NZME and RNZ).

As a group and as individual editors we are committed to ensuring the outlets we represent cover the upcoming trial of Brenton Tarrant comprehensively and responsibly.

We have agreed to abide by these guidelines throughout the trial.

BACKGROUND

Brenton Harrison Tarrant is charged with 50 counts of murder and 39 charges of attempted murder relating to shootings carried out at two mosques in Christchurch on Friday, 15 March, 2019.

Victims of the terror attack include citizens of twelve different countries.

We represent accredited New Zealand media organisations that plan to attend the trial and associated proceedings for the purposes of reportage.

As editors we are mindful of the public interest in the trial, in New Zealand and internationally.

We are also mindful of our role as the “eyes and ears of the public” in the context of court reporting. In this instance, we acknowledge the particular importance of this function, given the many victims’ friends and families outside New Zealand who may otherwise be unable to engage in the trial process.

We are aware that the accused may attempt to use the trial as a platform to amplify white supremacist and/or terrorist views or ideology.

GUIDELINES

We agree that the following Protocol will apply to our outlets’ coverage and reportage of the trial:

- (a) We shall, to the extent that is compatible with the principles of open justice, limit any coverage of statements, that actively champion white supremacist or terrorist ideology.

- (b) For the avoidance of doubt the commitment set out at (a) shall include the accused's manifesto document "The Great Replacement".
- (c) We will not broadcast or report on any message, imagery, symbols or signals (including hand signals) made by the accused or his associates promoting or supporting white supremacist ideology.
- (d) Where the inclusion of such signals in any images is unavoidable, the relevant parts of the image shall be pixellated.
- (e) To the greatest extent possible, the journalists that are selected by each of the outlets to cover the trial will be experienced personnel.
- (f) These guidelines may be varied at any time, subject to a variation signed by all parties.
- (g) This Protocol shall continue in force indefinitely.

SIGNED:

Miriyana Alexander (NZME and chair of the Media Freedom Committee)

John Gillespie (TVNZ)

Shayne Currie (NZME)

Mark Stevens (Stuff)

Paul Thompson (RNZ)

Hal Crawford (Mediaworks)

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