



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

18 February 2025

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**BARTHOLOMAEUS ROLAND LASSNIG v QIAN ZHOU AND OTHERS**

(SC 65/2024)

**Hearing in the Supreme Court Tuesday 4 March 2025**

### **CASE HISTORY SYNOPSIS**

This synopsis is provided to assist in understanding the history of the case and the issues to be heard by the Court. It does not represent the views of the panel that will hear the appeal in the Supreme Court.

#### **Suppression**

Pursuant to s 169 of the Family Proceedings Act 1980, any report of this proceeding must comply with ss 11B, 11C and 11D of the Family Court Act 1980. For further information, please see <https://www.justice.govt.nz/family/family-court/after-the-family-court/restrictions-on-publishing-information>

#### **Background**

Mr Bartholomaeus Lassnig and Ms Qian Zhou married in August 2012. In November 2012, Mr Lassnig and Ms Zhou set up a family trust where they were both trustees and primary beneficiaries. The trust was used to purchase three properties during the relationship. Ms Zhou's financial contribution to the trust was significantly greater than the contribution by Mr Lassnig. In July 2015, the relationship came to an end and the marriage was formally dissolved in April 2018. The issue became how to divide the equity in the trust, as the value of the properties had increased during the relationship. Mr Lassnig and Ms Zhou agreed that their respective financial contributions to the trust (including outgoings) should be repaid. However, they disagreed as to how to divide the remaining net equity.

Ms Zhou applied to the Family Court under s 182 of the Family Proceedings Act 1980 for an order dividing the remaining equity based on the parties' respective contributions to the trust (giving her a greater share). Section 182 empowers the Family Court to resettle nuptial settlements (here, the family trust) after a divorce.

The Family Court held that the remaining equity should be divided equally. On appeal the High Court held that it should be split 60/40 in Ms Zhou's favour. On a further appeal by Ms Zhou, the Court of Appeal ordered an 80/20 split in her favour.

## This appeal

On 17 September 2024, Te Kōti Mana Nui | the Supreme Court granted leave to appeal. The approved question is whether the Court of Appeal was correct in its analysis under s 182 of the Family Proceedings Act.

## Viewing of hearing

This hearing of the appeal will be live-streamed. Details about access to the live-stream and the conditions of access will be posted on the [Courts of New Zealand website](#) shortly before the hearing. No recording is permitted.

## The panel

The Hon Justice Kós	The Hon Justice Ellen France	The Hon Justice Glazebrook	The Hon Justice Williams	The Hon Justice Miller
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Judges as seen from the public gallery

## Counsel

- Bartholomaeus Roland Lassnig (Appellant): D Zhang and E Tie
- Qian Zhou (First Respondent): V A Crawshaw KC and L L La Mantia

## Sitting hours

Court will begin at 10:00am and conclude at 4:00pm with adjournments taken from 11:30am to 11:45am and from 1:00pm to 2:15pm. There is no afternoon adjournment.

## Enquiries

Any enquiries about the hearing should be directed via email to [supremecourt@justice.govt.nz](mailto:supremecourt@justice.govt.nz). While attending the hearing, enquiries can also be directed to the Court Registry, which is located outside the main courtroom in the Supreme Court foyer.

Contact person:

Sue Leaupepe, Supreme Court Registrar (04) 914 3613

Court of Appeal decision: [\[2024\] NZCA 177](#) (24 May 2024)

Supreme Court leave decision: [\[2024\] NZSC 116](#) (17 September 2024)