

NEW ZEALAND (/NEWS/NATIONAL)

Graham Philip receives three-year jail term for acts of sabotage

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Photo: RNZ / Andrew McRae

The first person convicted of sabotage in New Zealand

P (<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/478039/nz-legal-history-made-as-graham-philip-pleads-guilty-to-sabotage>) has been sentenced to three years and one month in prison.

Sixty-two-year-old Graham Philip appeared in the High Court in Hamilton today.

Philip pleaded guilty to seven charges over damage done to Transpower infrastructure in November 2021 as a protest over Covid-19 mandates.

P He had also pleaded guilty to one charge of entering agricultural land with intent to commit an imprisonable offence

Until now all details were suppressed but after submissions from the Crown, the defence and media, Justice Tahana allowed just a taste of what happened to be reported.

There was one act of sabotage that caused a fire, and the total cost of repairs was likely to exceed \$1.25 million.

Reparation was not called for as the court accepted Philip, who had no money or resources, had no way of paying it.

The Judge allowed a sentencing discount of 20 percent for his guilty pleas and 10 percent for good character.

He had no previous convictions.

The court heard Philip was well regarded in his Christian community and by a former employer. The judge even received a letter signed by inmates saying he had helped them in jail.

Philip has been in custody since being arrested.

Justice Tahana's sentence starting point was four years and six months. The maximum for sabotage is 10 years in prison.

She said while Philip's risk of reoffending was low, the risk of harm if he did reoffend was high.

Crown prosecutor Amanda Gordon said Philip did not show remorse and that the harm from his actions would have been blatantly obvious to him.

Defence lawyer Bill Nabney said Philip clearly accepted his actions were not proportionate to his vaccine mandate opposition and that he now accepted what he did was wrong, and regretted it.

"He felt that the views of those who opposed the government's actions weren't being heard, that the mainstream media weren't taking notice, that really it needed something to be done to promote those views," Nabney told the high Court.

"But he also accepts that what he did was wrong."

Justice Tahana said that due to this being the country's first sabotage conviction, finding case law to help in sentencing was difficult and she referred to a case from Canada.