



The Right Honourable Dame Helen Winkelmann

CHIEF JUSTICE OF NEW ZEALAND | TE TUMU WHAKAWĀ O AOTEAROA

10 October 2025

MEDIA STATEMENT

Chief Justice welcomes judicial appointments

The Chief Justice welcomes the Attorney-General's announcement today of the appointments of Associate Judge Owen Paulsen as a Judge of the High Court, and Auckland barrister and solicitor Helen Wild as an Associate Judge of the High Court.

Justice Paulsen will take up his appointment on 15 November 2025, and will sit in Christchurch. He will be sworn in on 25 November 2025 at the Christchurch High Court.

Associate Judge Wild will take up her appointment on 16 February 2026, and will sit in Auckland. She will be sworn in on 27 February 2026 at the Auckland High Court.

BIOGRAPHY

Justice Owen Paulsen

Justice Paulsen graduated from the University of Canterbury with a Bachelor of Laws in 1987. He began his career at Harman & Co and was a partner in the firm between 1991 and 1998.

From 2000 to 2001 Justice Paulsen was an adjudication and mediation member of the Employment Tribunal, while also in sole practice as a litigation lawyer. Between 2001 and 2014 Justice Paulsen was a partner in Cavell Leitch Law. In 2011 he graduated from the University of Auckland with a Master of Laws (Commercial Law) (First Class Honours).

From 2015 to 2019 Justice Paulsen was Lord Chief Justice of the Kingdom of Tonga, the professional head of the Tongan judiciary, the President of both the Court of Appeal and the Land Court, and an advisor to His Majesty King Tupou VI on the Privy Council in land cases. While in Tonga he was awarded an official Honour by the King of Tonga making him a member of The Most Devoted Royal Household Order of Tonga.

Justice Paulsen was appointed an Associate Judge of the High Court in 2019.

Associate Judge Helen Wild

Associate Judge Wild graduated from Victoria University of Wellington with a Bachelor of Laws in 1987. She worked at Simpson Grierson from 1988 to 1996, becoming a Senior Associate in 1992.

In 1997 she joined the Auckland District Health Board as Legal Counsel. She became a Principal with Chapman Tripp in 2002, before returning to Simpson Grierson as a Special Counsel in 2005.

From 2007 to 2015 Associate Judge Wild was Senior Counsel with Television New Zealand. She joined Anderson Creagh Lai Limited as a Director in 2015.

Associate Judge Wild joined the Auckland Council as Manager, Litigation and Dispute Resolution in 2016. Since 2020, Associate Judge Wild has been Auckland Council's General Counsel, the Council's principal legal advisor and head of the legal team.

Helen Winkelmann
Chief Justice | Te Tumu Whakawā

Media contact

Reweti Kohere
Senior Communications Advisor
027 224 8857 reweti.kohere@justice.govt.nz

