



The Right Honourable Dame Helen Winkelmann

CHIEF JUSTICE OF NEW ZEALAND | TE TUMU WHAKAWĀ O AOTEAROA

19 December 2024

MEDIA STATEMENT

Chief Justice announces judicial appointments and retirement

The Chief Justice welcomes the Attorney General's announcement today of the appointment of Justice Christian Whata as a Judge of the Court of Appeal.

Justice Whata's appointment will take effect on 1 August 2025. His appointment follows the announcement of the retirement of Justice David Goddard from the Court of Appeal bench. Justice Goddard's retirement will take effect on 31 July 2025, after six years of judicial service.

Justice Goddard was appointed to the High Court and the Court of Appeal in July 2019. Since his appointment, he has been responsible for significant modernisation programmes for the courts – including developing the *Digital Strategy for Courts and Tribunals* and leading the project to design and implement the new digital case management system, Te Au Reka.

The Chief Justice acknowledges and thanks Justice Goddard for his outstanding contribution to the judiciary and to the administration of justice.

Following his retirement from the Court of Appeal, Justice Goddard will continue to provide expert assistance to the judiciary and Ministry of Justice in connection with Te Au Reka and other aspects of the *Digital Strategy*. In addition, he will be teaching at the University of Melbourne Law School, where he is an honorary professorial fellow, alongside other ventures.

Justice Whata is from Ngāti Pīkiao and Ngāti Tamateatutahi - Kawiti of Te Arawa. He graduated from the University of Auckland in 1992 and was admitted to the bar the same year, obtaining an LLB (Hons) in 1994. He commenced practice as a solicitor with Simpson Grierson in Auckland until 1993 and then took a position in the general litigation team at Kensington Swan until 1995.

Justice Whata obtained an LLM (1st class) from the University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom, and in 1997 joined Russell McVeagh, where he specialised in resource management law and Māori issues. He became a partner in 2001.

Justice Whata was appointed a Judge of the High Court in 2011.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING JUDGE

The Chief Justice also announced today the appointment of Justice Woolford as an acting judge of the Court of Appeal for six months commencing 3 February 2025.

Helen Winkelmann
Chief Justice | Te Tumu Whakawā

Media contact

Alix Chapman
Senior Judicial Communications Advisor
0272 860 198 alix.chapman@courts.govt.nz

