

**News release**

21 April 2015

**Mai Chen appointed to BNZ board**

BNZ today announced that Mai Chen has been appointed to the BNZ board of directors.

Chairman John Waller said he was delighted to make the announcement, which he describes as aligning with BNZ's mission of supporting a higher-achieving New Zealand.

"Mai Chen is an outstanding New Zealand leader, combining expertise in public law with wide-ranging commercial experience. She will bring fresh and diverse views to board discussions, alongside the formal business of our board.

"Mai Chen has had an outstanding and varied career to date. She has acted as an advisor to government ministers on major legislative and policy changes, and chaired government reviews, lectured at leading universities and authored many books. Mai has established influential not-for-profit leadership organisations for women, Asian New Zealanders and Pasifika.

"She has pioneered the practice of public law in New Zealand, including co-founding Chen Palmer, a leading law firm specialising in public and administrative law, legislation and public policy as well as employment law," Mr Waller said.

Mai Chen has served on the Securities Commission and on the advisory board of AMP Life Limited (NZ), on the NZ Board of Trade and Enterprise's Beachheads programme, on the Asia New Zealand Foundation board, the Royal NZ Ballet board, and on university and polytechnic councils. She was also inaugural chair of NZ Global Women, is the current chair of NZ Asian Leaders and was instrumental in establishing the BEST Pasifika Leadership Programme.

Mai Chen is currently Managing Partner at Chen Palmer and an adjunct professor at the University of Auckland Law School.

"I cannot think of a company that better aligns with my own diversity values while also being at the heart of a key New Zealand industry," Mai Chen said.

"I relish the challenge of working in a sector subject to so much disruption and fast-paced change. The challenge of demographic disruption is as important as technological disruption, especially in a super-diverse market like Auckland.

"As a BNZ board member I look forward to contributing my years of experience in strategic problem-solving, in running a successful business, and in innovating new services, products and organisations, as well as my expertise in managing regulatory risk, and in showing the relevance of 'cultural intelligence' to large organisations," she said.

Mai Chen's role as a BNZ director is effective from 21 April 2015.

**Ends**

For further information or high res image, contact: Katherine Cornish, external relations manager, BNZ. T. 09 924 8658, M. 021 947 835, E. [katherine.cornish@bnz.co.nz](mailto:katherine.cornish@bnz.co.nz)

## **Mai Chen - selected biography**

Mai is one of NZ's top constitutional and administrative law experts and specialises in central and local Government policy and legislation, especially as it applies to business. She litigates major cases and is one of NZ's top strategic problem solvers of law, public policy and business problems. She co-founded Chen Palmer - one of New Zealand's first boutique law firms and was Australasia's first "Washington-style" law firm specialising in legislation and public policy.

Chen Palmer won the Best Boutique Law Firm in 2010, and Best Public Law Firm in the New Zealand Law Awards from 2007-2011, and 2013, and was a finalist in the Employment Law Awards in 2011.

Mai is adjunct professor at The University of Auckland School of Law. She was previously adjunct professor in commercial and public law at the University of Auckland Business School.

Mai sat on the Securities Commission, on the NZ Board of Trade and Enterprise's Beachheads Programme, the Asia New Zealand Foundation, the Advisory Board of AMP Life Limited (NZ), and was president of the Harvard New Zealand Alumni Association (NZ) for ten years.

Mai is the inaugural chair of NZ Global Women, including NZ's top 200 women leaders and founded NZ Asian Leaders in 2013 to connect top Asian NZ CEOs and emerging leaders with New Zealand companies doing business in Asia to enhance their success. She also helped to establish the Pasifika Leadership Academy at BEST Pacific Institute of Education, formerly led by Olympic medallist Beatrice Faumuina.

Mai was in the top 10 finalists for 2014 New Zealander of the Year. She won the supreme Judges Panel Award and the Professional Excellence Award at the New Zealand Chinese Business Elite Awards in 2012, and also the Business and Entrepreneur Women of Influence Award in 2013. Mai won *Next* magazine's Business Woman of the Year in 2011, and is a World's Best New Zealander in the Kiwi Expatriates Network. Mai was listed in the 2009 and 2010 *unlimited* magazine's top Influencers List.

Mai is the author of *Public Law Toolbox*, published in 2012, and *Transforming Auckland: The Creation of Auckland Council* published in 2014, both by LexisNexis. The second edition of *Public Law Toolbox* was published in 2014.

She is currently working on a 'superdiversity stocktake' of law, public policy and business implications using NZ's experience with its biggest city Auckland as an example, since it already has about a 50% Maori, Pasifika and Asian population. The 'superdiversity stocktake' will be published at the end of this year.

Chen was born in Taiwan in 1964, and moved to New Zealand at the age of six. Mai has a first-class honours degree in law from Otago University, a master's degree from Harvard Law School, is a Fellow of the New Zealand Institute of Management, and an Honorary Associate of Auckland University of Technology.

