

New Chairperson for the Waitangi Tribunal

The Minister of Māori Affairs, Hon Dr Pita Sharples, today announced the appointment of Chief Judge Wilson Whare Isaac of the Māori Land Court as the Chairperson of the Waitangi Tribunal for a term of five years.

This follows Judge Isaac's appointment as the Chief Judge of the Māori Land Court On 13 August 2009. His predecessors also held both positions.

"Chief Judge Isaac exhibits strong leadership qualities and has standing in the community, which is required to be a successful Chairperson of the Waitangi Tribunal," said Dr Sharples.

"The Waitangi Tribunal plays a pivotal role in ensuring all New Zealanders have a full understanding of the Treaty of Waitangi, and equipping Māori and non-Māori to create a future for two peoples as one nation. Chief Judge Isaac has the attributes to ensure that the Waitangi Tribunal continues to carry out this vision for all New Zealanders," he said.

"He has significant judicial and administrative experience from his 15 years as Judge and Deputy Chief Judge of the Māori Land Court. Over this period, Chief Judge Isaac has been a panel member on high profile Waitangi Tribunal District inquiries and has shown he can maintain the confidence of key groups through this process.

"With such qualities and experience, Chief Judge Isaac will make a fine Chairperson of the Waitangi Tribunal, and I congratulate him on this appointment," said Dr Sharples.

BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

Chief Judge Isaac affiliates to Ngāti Porou, Ngāti Kahungunu and Tūhoe.

Chief Judge Isaac was educated at St Pauls Collegiate, Hamilton, and then Otago University, graduating with an LIB BA in 1977.

Prior to his appointment as a Māori Land Court Judge, Chief Judge Isaac spent 17 years as a solicitor and partner at Burnard Bull & Co, Gisborne, where he developed an extensive practice in Māori land law and family law.

Chief Judge Isaac had 10 years experience as Deputy Chief Judge of the Māori Land Court and 15 years experience in total as a Māori Land Court Judge presiding in the

Tairāwhiti and Takitimu Māori Land Court districts. During this time, Chief Judge Isaac presided over the Mohaka ki Ahuriri and Northern South Island hearings for the Waitangi Tribunal, and is currently presiding over the National Park inquiry.

This text has been taken from the Beehive website:

<http://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/new+chairperson+waitangi+tribunal>