

NEW ZEALAND INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS FORUM

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FORUM TO SET PRIORITIES FOR INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS GROWTH

A new business group is being launched with the aim of expanding New Zealand's international business.

The first project of the New Zealand International Business Forum will look at strengthening New Zealand's business and economic relationship with Japan.

"Engagement with the rest of the world is critical to New Zealand's economic future. Japan is the immediate focus because of its huge economy, its importance both as a market and investment partner and the need to reinvigorate ties with New Zealand" said Chairman Graeme Harrison.

"Trade, inward and outward investment and strategic alliances all help to increase productivity and living standards. Business has a role to play alongside Government to set priorities for growing international business."

The Forum's Board members are from some of New Zealand's leading internationally oriented companies and from the country's high-level business organisations. The companies cover the dairy, meat, seafood, kiwifruit, technology and services sectors and the business organisations represent New Zealand's export, manufacturing and services industries.

Mr Harrison said the Board had retained former diplomat and industry executive Stephen Jacobi as Executive Director. Mr Jacobi would lead the Forum concurrently with his existing role as Executive Director of the NZ US Council.

"We will take a project-based approach and work closely with the Government and other business organisations to implement our objectives. Our top priority and foundation project is working with Japan, New Zealand's third largest trading partner. Over time we will develop further projects related to Korea and the European Union as well supporting existing efforts with regard to Australia, the United States and China."

Mr Harrison said the Forum would articulate publicly the needs and priorities of New Zealand's international business as well as the importance of open markets. It would conduct research relevant to New Zealand's international competitiveness.

Mr Harrison said that the Forum was the result of extensive consultation with stakeholder organisations by Business New Zealand and the former Trade Liberalisation Network, which has now ceased operations.

A formal launch will be held in Auckland tomorrow and will be addressed by the Minister of Commerce, Hon Lianne Dalziel.

The Forum's Board is:

Graeme Harrison, Chairman, ANZCO Foods (*Chair*)
Don Elder, Chief Executive, Solid Energy NZ Ltd

Rod Carr, Managing Director, Jade Software Corporation
Charles Finny, Chief Executive, Wellington Regional Chamber of Commerce
Robin Hapi, Chairman, Sealord Group Ltd
John Maasland, Chairman, Auckland International Airport Ltd
Jon Mayson, President, Export New Zealand
Tony Nowell, Chief Executive, Zespri
Mike Petersen, Chairman, Meat and Wool New Zealand
Phil O'Reilly, Chief Executive, Business NZ
Henry van der Heyden, Chairman, Fonterra Co-operative Group Ltd

An Advisory Board will also be appointed.

For further information:

Graeme Harrison, Chair, **027 573 7521**
Stephen Jacobi, Executive Director 029 472 5502

About the NZ International Business Forum

The Forum is a business organisation which aims to generate wealth for New Zealanders by helping ensure that New Zealand enterprises are fully integrated and engaged in the global economy and New Zealand's global competitive position is maximised. To enable New Zealand business to exploit new opportunities in international markets, the Forum provides leadership, works with companies and other business organisations to implement key projects and articulates New Zealand's international business priorities to both the New Zealand Government and stakeholders.