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## **‘NEXT GENERATION LAWYER’ APPOINTED CORONER IN AUCKLAND**

Auckland-based lawyer Alexander Ho has been announced by Chief Coroner Judge Deborah Marshall as a new full-time coroner for the Auckland region.

Listed as a ‘rising star’ and ‘next generation lawyer’ in the 2019 and 2020 Legal 500 rankings, Coroner Ho was attracted to the role by the “inquisitorial nature of the Coroners Court and the ability to make recommendations” that help prevent similar deaths.

“The coroner’s ultimate duty is to the deceased, and to make sure that their death is properly investigated,” says Coroner Ho.

A Fulbright scholar with extensive trial and advocacy experience, Coroner Ho was in private practice and has worked in both New Zealand and London firms, including at the specialist dispute resolution practice Gilbert Walker in Auckland and at Allen & Overy in London in their commercial and general litigation team.

“All of my working life has been spent in litigation practice, so I’m used to working under pressure. I expect I’ll still be using those skills as a coroner, except to produce findings instead of submissions.”

Legal and reasoning skills, as well as being well-organised and methodical, are all key attributes for someone in the role. But for Coroner Ho, the ability to “deal with a range of individuals and understand different cultural norms about death” are of equal importance.

“I grew up in New Zealand, but my family background is Hong Kong Chinese. I think that my personal experience gives me a unique perspective on many issues that the Coroners Court deals with,” he says.

Coroner Ho will be sworn in at a ceremony at the Auckland District Court on Friday 11 June 2021 at 4pm.

He replaces Coroner Morag McDowell, who was appointed Health and Disability Commissioner in September 2020 after nearly 13 years as a Coroner in the Auckland region.

## **ENDS**

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### **Note to reporters:**

Coronial appointments are made by the Governor-General on the advice of the Attorney-General, given after consultation with the Minister of Justice. The Minister of Justice, the Hon Kris Faafoi, has been consulted and confirmed that he supports the proposed appointments.