

Citation Honorary Doctorate: Sue Suckling OBE, Doctor of Science, *honoris causa*

Lincoln University's loss was the business world's gain when Sue Suckling decided a life in the lecture theatre was not for her at the tender age of 23.

Today, after forging a career where she has been at the forefront of a multitude of companies and organisations, most of them underpinned by science and technology innovation, she is back at Lincoln to be made an Honorary Doctor of Science.

Ms Suckling moved down from the North Island after earning Bachelor of Technology (Honours) and Master of Technology (Honours) degrees from Massey University. In 2012 Massey awarded her the Distinguished Alumni Achievement Award for her drive and contribution to science and innovation and business success.

She lectured for two years at Lincoln University before leaving to work in the meat industry as a food technologist where she rose rapidly up the ranks to become chief executive at Pacific Foods.

She became the first recipient of the first New Zealand Business Woman of the Year award only four years after stepping away from Lincoln, and was awarded an OBE for her contribution to New Zealand business in 1996.

In April 2010 the Council of the Royal Society of New Zealand elected her a Companion of the Royal Society, a title which recognises outstanding leadership in science, and contributions to the promotion and advancement of science and technology in New Zealand.

Ms Suckling's resume of directorships is extensive.

She is chair of the Callaghan Innovation Board, ECL Group, Barker Fruit Processors, Jacobsen Pacific, and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority, and a director of NZX listed companies Sky City Entertainment Group and Restaurant Brands. She is also Managing Director of Acemark Consulting Group and a member of the Takeovers Panel.

She has also been chair of NIWA and AgriQuality NZ, director and deputy chair of GNS, and a founding director of Antarctica NZ, as well as one of the two independent Directors on the New Zealand Dairy Board. In the latter role she chaired one of the dairy industry projects that prompted the formation of Fonterra.

In 2006 she chaired the Joint Industry Advisory Board for the Lincoln University/University of Canterbury project "Building a University Enterprise Culture", and is one of the inaugural Fellows of the New Zealand Institute of Directors.

She has helped SPARC with various independent reviews to drive change and performance improvement in sporting organisations, which includes her appointment as chairperson of Basketball New Zealand after it suffered financial issues, as well as handling problems in rugby league and swimming when they faced difficulties.

More recently Ms Suckling has undertaken performance improvement reviews of some of our key government organisations such as the Treasury, Department of Conservation, NZ Trade and Enterprise, and Statistics NZ

She was reported as saying her career took its early turn because she was a problem solver "not an academic", citing she preferred the adrenalin of conquering issues and making a difference.

She described her strength as being able to look at an organisation or a project, define where it wants to be, and determine what needs to happen to get it there.

“In New Zealand it is possible for people to make a difference,” she said when she undertook her role as establishment chair of Callaghan Innovation.

She had four “awesome” kids and wanted New Zealand to be a successful country where they and their friends stay “because we’ve got a lot happening”.

As a “make-things happen person” she has done her best to fulfil that vision.

It is with pleasure that Sue Suckling is awarded the degree of Doctor of Science *honoris causa*.