

Theresa Gattung CNZM

Professional Profile

Theresa Gattung is a New Zealand business leader, entrepreneur, author, philanthropist and investor. Her best-selling autobiography *Bird on a Wire* was published in 2010.

Professional career

Since 2011 Theresa has been involved in several entrepreneurial start-ups.

She is Chair of Tend, a mobile primary healthcare app that transforms a visit to the doctor into a secure video consultation. Tend launched mid-2020, with a mission to put digital healthcare in the hands of all Kiwis.

Theresa introduced Coralus (formerly SheEO), an international community that supports, finances, and celebrates female entrepreneurs to New Zealand in 2017 and was the New Zealand Lead for five years successfully achieving the goal of creating a perpetual fund that will continue to support at least five ventures per year in perpetuity.

As co-founder of My Food Bag, alongside Cecilia Robinson and Nadia Lim, she helped take a start-up launched in March 2013, to a nationwide company and household name, with a turnover of over \$130m.

From October 1999 to June 2007, Theresa was CEO and Managing Director of Telecom New Zealand, a \$5 billion turnover telecommunications business operating in New Zealand and Australia, listed on the NZX, ASX and NYSE. During her tenure as CEO she led Telecom through world-changing technology developments and the evolution of the business from a traditional telco to the number one IT provider in New Zealand.

Before becoming CEO, Theresa held roles at Telecom as Group General Manager, accountable for revenues of NZ\$3 billion and responsibility for over 3,500 staff, and General Manager, Marketing. Prior to Telecom, Theresa held a number of marketing roles in the financial services sector.

Governance positions

A professional Chair and company director, Theresa has held multiple governance positions. She applies her leadership skills, international business experience, marketing and branding expertise to corporate and charitable governance roles, including her role as a member of the National Advisory Board on the Employment of Women

Her governance career began in 2008, as the inaugural Chair of Wool Partners International, charged with reinvigorating the international market for New Zealand's strong wools.

In 2009 she joined the AIA Australia Board as an Independent Director and was appointed as Chair of the Board in 2010. AIA Australia won the Australian & New Zealand Insurance & Finance Life Insurance Company of the Year in 2012, 2013, 2015 and 2017 and the Australian Financial Review Smart Investor Life Company of the Year 2012. Following the AIA Group's acquisition of Sovereign in July 2018, Theresa was also appointed Chair of AIA Sovereign New Zealand.

From 2011 to 2017, she was Chair of the Wellington Board of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. She was also a Director on the Royal New Zealand SPCA National Board from 2016 to 2018 as it transitioned to become ONE SPCA.

A full list of Theresa's governance positions includes

2021- present: Chair, Global Women
2019- present: Chair, Tend
2018- present: Chair, AIA New Zealand (formerly Sovereign)
2017- present; Chair, Pūriri Education Charitable Trust
2017- present: Global Board Member, World Pulse
2016- 2021: Chair, Co. of Women
2016- present: Member of the National Advisory Board on the Employment of Women
2016-2018: Director, Royal New Zealand SPCA
2013- 2020: Co-founder, Inaugural Chair, Director, My Food Bag
2013- present: Inaugural Chair then Director, The Six Senses Group
2012: Chair of the New Zealand Advisory Group for the Frankfurt Book Fair
2011-present: Chair, Telco Technology Services
2011- 2017: Chair, Wellington SPCA
2010- 2021: Chair, AIA Australia
2008- 2011: Chair, Wool Partners International

Philanthropy

Theresa is involved with a number of not-for-profit and philanthropic interests, including being co-founder of the World Women Charitable Trust and Patron of the Cambodia Charitable Trust. The Cambodia Charitable Trust began by establishing primary school education sponsorship for girls in the two poorest provinces in Cambodia. This programme grew to include support for secondary school education and university study and now operates throughout Cambodia.

In 2021 she funded the Theresa Gattung Chair of Women in Entrepreneurship within the University of Auckland Business School and also launched the Gattung Foundation whose main charitable purposes are to support the relieve of poverty, the education and advancement of women, Māori and Pasifika to reduce inequality and the care, support and protection of animals.

Recognition and awards

In the 2015 New Year's Honours List, Theresa was made a Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to business and philanthropy.

Other awards include

- Became a Laureate of the New Zealand Business Hall of Fame 2023
- Inducted into the Co.OfWomen Hall of Fame 2021
- Inaugural NZ Women's Entrepreneurship Day Pioneer Award for her trailblazing leadership and empowerment of women by the UN Women Aotearoa New Zealand 2021
- Zonta New Zealand Women of Achievement 2019
- Lifetime Achievement award at the Westpac Women of Influence Awards 2018
- RNZSPCA Hall of Fame 2019
- Inaugural winner NEXT Lifetime Achievement Award 2017
- Inducted to the Marketing Hall of Fame at the TVNZ Marketing Awards 2015
- Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to business and philanthropy 2015
- University of Waikato Distinguished Alumni Award 2007
- Victoria University of Wellington Distinguished Alumni Award 2007