



Major Career Roles

Chair, The Warehouse Group Ltd

Chair, Mighty River Power / Mercury NZ Ltd

Chair, Auckland International Airport Ltd

Deputy Chair, Television New Zealand Ltd (TVNZ)

Director, Origin Energy Ltd
CEO, Fairfax New Zealand Ltd
CEO, The Radio Network Ltd

Other Career Highlights

Director, ANZ Bank New Zealand Ltd

Director, Sky Network Television Ltd

Director, Meridian Energy Ltd

Co-founder, OnBeingBold

Author, 'A Girl's Guide to Business' and 'A Woman's Place'

Dame Joan Withers is one of New Zealand's most experienced business leaders and professional directors, with a career spanning more than three decades across media, energy, retail and financial services. She is currently a Director of Sky Network Television, ASX-listed Origin Energy and has recently retired after 13 years on the ANZ NZ board. Dame Joan is a former Chair of Auckland International Airport, Mercury NZ (formerly Mighty River Power) Television New Zealand (TVNZ) and The Warehouse Group. She is recognised as one of New Zealand's leading governance figures and a long-standing champion for women in business and boardrooms.

Joan began her career in media and advertising sales before undertaking an MBA at the University of Auckland. This led to her appointment as General Manager of Radio i and subsequently CEO of The Radio Network, where she led one of the country's largest broadcasting businesses. Between 2005 and 2009 she was CEO of Fairfax New Zealand, one of the largest media companies in the country, guiding the business through a period of significant industry disruption and change.

Since moving into professional governance in the late 1990s, Joan has built one of New Zealand's most extensive board portfolios, chairing and directing major listed companies and state-owned enterprises across critical national infrastructure, energy, retail, banking and broadcasting. As Chair of Mighty River Power (later Mercury) and of Auckland International Airport, she guided nationally significant infrastructure businesses through growth, capital raising and regulatory change, while her chairmanship of The Warehouse Group from 2016 to 2025 has seen her lead one of New Zealand's largest retailers through digital and omni-channel transformation.

Alongside her executive and governance career, Joan has been a consistent and vocal advocate for greater diversity in leadership. She was a foundation member of Global Women and the 25 Percent Group, and co-founded OnBeingBold, which champions women leaders and provides mentoring and development opportunities for the next generation.

Joan has won a number of business awards, including being named the 2015 Supreme Woman of Influence in the New Zealand Women of Influence Awards, the New Zealand Shareholder Association's Beacon Award for 2014, and the University of Auckland Bright Lights Distinguished Alumni award in 2015. In 2024, she was appointed a Dame Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit, for services to business, governance and women.

Joan brings deep cross-sector expertise in:

- Media, broadcasting & telecommunications – leading major New Zealand media businesses, including The Radio Network and Fairfax New Zealand, through industry disruption and transformation.
- Energy & critical infrastructure – chairing nationally significant infrastructure and energy businesses, including Origin Energy, Auckland International Airport and Mighty River Power/Mercury, through growth, capital markets activity and regulatory change.
- Retail & consumer transformation – chairing The Warehouse Group through a period of significant digital and omni-channel change in a highly competitive retail market.
- Board leadership, governance & diversity – more than 25 years' experience as a Chair and Non-Executive Director across listed, private and state-owned entities, and a long-standing champion for women in governance and senior leadership.

Joan is known for her integrity, commercial pragmatism and generosity in sharing the lessons of her career. As a mentor, she draws on decades of first-hand experience of chairing boards, leading organisations through disruption and building coalitions across business and government, and is particularly valued for the practical, grounded support she offers those navigating the step up into leadership roles.