

Sir Robert ('Rob') George Mappin Fenwick KStJ, KNZM

5 May 1951 – 11 March 2020



Sir Robert Fenwick KStJ, KNZM in Antarctica, November 2013. Photo: Dr Richard Gordon, CEO Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research.

Rob Fenwick, as he was known, was a noted New Zealand environmentalist and entrepreneur. His many endeavours demonstrated a strong commitment to conservation and sustainability.

He co-founded Living Earth Ltd (a pioneer in green waste recycling), NZ Natural (a bottled water brand) and Te Matuku Oysters Ltd. Later in life he sat on many boards and advisory panels in the areas of conservation and sustainability, including the Predator Free New Zealand Trust, the New Zealand Business Council for Sustainable Development (which he co-founded), Aotearoa Circle, and several leadership roles involved in Antarctica.

While continuing to run Living Earth Ltd, Rob undertook many of the activities for which he became well known. Living Earth, for example, has so far diverted about 2 million tons of organic matter away from landfill in New Zealand and its compost product is well known. Te Matuku Oysters are farmed sustainably in the Te Matuku Marine Reserve near Waiheke Island, and are an example of partnerships working to provide a superior product with low environmental impact.

Rob's charismatic, insightful, ambitious and pragmatic approach to all he embarked on won praise from politicians, business leaders, conservationists and sustainable business entrepreneurs.

In 1992, with others, he founded the Motutapu Island Restoration Trust.

He played an influential role in the formation of the Predator Free 2050 movement and Trust which are now recognised as the most important organisations in the control of pests in New Zealand. Combining research, development and governmental and community resources, Predator Free 2050 has set out on a path to control and eliminate animal pests from New Zealand.

Rob had a passion for Antarctica, which led to him becoming chairman of Antarctica NZ, New Zealand's Antarctic scientific mission, and chairman of the Antarctic Heritage Trust, dedicated to the preservation of Scott and Shackleton's Huts in Antarctica. He oversaw the introduction of wind generation to power the New Zealand and USA research stations as well as the Hillary Science Centre at Scott Base. In 2012 he helped create the privately funded New Zealand Antarctic Research Institute to work with research agencies to expand climate change research on the ice.

Rob was a member and chairman of many organisations including chairman of MaiFM, deputy chair of TVNZ, chancellor for the Order of St John, director of Whai Rawa Ltd, member of the Air NZ Sustainability Advisory Panel, member of the Westpac NZ Sustainability and Community panel, and director of Te Papa.

In 1998, Rob joined the Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research Board of Directors and was chair between 2004 and 2007, during which time

he helped develop the carboNZero emission certification programme. He later joined the Board of Manaaki Whenua's subsidiary, Enviro-Mark Solutions (now Toitū Envirocare), when it was corporatised in 2011.

Other positions he held in conservation and sustainability include trustee of the World Wildlife Fund New Zealand, special advisor to the director general of the New Zealand Department of Conservation, and chairman of the Fred Hollows Foundation.

Sir Rob was knighted in 2016, having received the Knight Order of St John in 2005 for his work across many organisations. He also received other honours including:

- Winner Kea World Class New Zealand Awards (2017)
- Finalist New Zealander of the Year (2016)
- Inducted into the New Zealand Business Hall of Fame (2016)
- Sir Peter Blake Medal (2015)
- Honorary Doctorate, Lincoln University (2009)
- Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit (2008)
- Distinguished Fellow of the New Zealand Institute of Directors.

Sir Robert Fenwick KStJ, KNZM will be remembered for his work in conservation and in particular encouraging people and organisations to work together to create a better world for all of us. His work in developing the Aotearoa Circle which connects public and private sector groups, scientists and others to help solve some of the world's most challenging environmental issues is an inspiration to all of us.

**Obituary prepared by
Alan Jolliffe**