

With the deepest of sadness, Quayside mourns the loss of our Chair, Dr Warren Parker, who passed away suddenly on Friday 29 December 2023.

While it will take time to come to terms with his loss to our team, our Board and the wider NZ community, we take solace in the deepest of respect and honour that was paid to Dr Parker at his funeral on Saturday 6 January in Rotorua.

Warren recently became Chair of Quayside in 1 November 2023 after 8 years as a Director of the Quayside Board.

Harking from the Northland town of Tutamoe, Warren's roots in the rural sector run deep. Raised on a mixed dairy, sheep and cattle farm, early years laid the foundation for what would be an abundant career in agriculture.

An academic powerhouse, Warren obtained a Bachelor of Agricultural Science (Honours), a Masters in Farm Management and a PhD in Animal Science from Massey University.

Warren's dedication to the rural sector and expansive knowledge has reached many organisations throughout his leadership, notably as a Professor and Head of Department at Massey University, Chief Operating Officer at Ag Research, Chief Executive Officer at Crown Research Institute, Scion and again as Chief Executive at Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research. In addition to his role on the Quayside Board, Warren also was a Director of Predator Free 2050 Limited, Farmlands Co-operative Society Limited and Genomics Aotearoa. He was Chair of the Forestry Ministerial Advisory Group, Chair of Pāmu and Chair of the New Zealand Conservation Authority. We know his composed demeanour and considered approach will be deeply missed around these Board tables.

There were moments of mirth at Warren's funeral as two of his four brothers recounted childhood memories and adventures in remote Tutamoe and Warren's natural prowess for academics and physical adventure, which stood him in great stead for the rest of his life. Stories of humanity and 'teachable moments' abounded.

Warren was remembered as a husband, dedicated Dad, proud Poppa and a man of great kindness and faith. Woven throughout the funeral were strong memories for each and every person of Warren's kindness, intellect, leadership and love for our whenua, but above all, kindness.

We also learnt things we did not know – like he was one of five brothers, achieved dux of Northland College and a mighty axeman.

Some words continue to resonate, 'knowledge is no weight, knowledge is a gift' – wise words from Warren's own father.

Lyndon Settle, CEO of Quayside, remembers Warren as a "great people leader and calm governor, of immense mana across many sectors of New Zealand. He will be greatly missed by myself and the Quayside team, and we send our aroha to his whānau".

"With an extensive career and senior leadership roles in various organisations, Dr Parker's impact at both a regional and national level was significant, and he will be deeply missed. We extend our heartfelt sympathies to his family, friends and colleagues." said Chris Ingle, Bay of Plenty Regional Council acting CEO.

We will remember Warren as a robust governor, a good debater around the Board table, a strong supporter and proponent of our whenua and climate change. But most of all, we will remember his largeness of life, care for our people and others around him and how he helped shape the past and the future for Quayside.

No reira e te Rangatira Warren, moe mai ra i runga i te ringa kaha o ihoa o nga mano. Rest peacefully, Warren, in the embrace of the Creator.