

Citation Bledisloe Medal: Mr John Acland CNZM

John Acland, the recipient of the 2015 Bledisloe Medal, has combined a high achieving business career with a strong commitment to public service.

The Bledisloe Medal, initiated in 1930 by the Viscount Bledisloe, former Governor-General of New Zealand, is awarded to a former student or past or current staff member of Lincoln University who has made an outstanding contribution in his or her chosen field, advanced New Zealand's interests, and/or brought credit to Lincoln University.

Mr Acland attended Lincoln University in 1956 as a student in the Intensive Diploma of Agriculture course.

He farmed Mt Peel from 1960 until 1990. Over this period he was also involved with entrepreneurial leadership in the agriculture sector in a variety of roles which included: the sustainable development of tussock grassland, the introduction of Ritchie ear-tags, cross breeding of exotic beef cattle for export to Australia, deer farming, and white water rafting.

He set up the Lynn River company in Geraldine to market ear-tags with his brother Mark.

Mr Acland was awarded a Nuffield farming scholarship in 1968 and later became the chair of the Nuffield Farming Trust.

His public service has included a long connection with Lincoln University where he has served as a member and chairman of the Lincoln University Farmers Conference Committee and as a farm visit host to students for over twenty years.

After 20 years of active involvement in Federated Farmers, which included being chair of Meat and Wool South Canterbury, he became a director of the Primary Producers Co-op Society (PPCS) and chair of the Canterbury Frozen Meat Company (CFM). He was also chair of Meat NZ from 1997 to 2002

He has also recognised the potential of Maori Farming to the economy and led the revival of the Ahuwhenua Trophy which was originally given by Lord Bledisloe in 1933 to highlight excellence in Maori farming. Following the re-established award he then chaired the judging panel.

He was a member of the Historic Places Trust from 2004 and chairman from 2008 to 2010. During his tenure in the role there was a major review of the Historic Places Act, a major project to undertake deferred maintenance of trust properties, and programmes to boost third party revenue and develop a sustainable financial strategy.

He also led the successful fundraising to develop the Totara Estate and formalise its place in the history of frozen meat industry, and is a dedicated guardian of the heritage aspects of the Mt Peel homestead and church.

In January 2003 he was appointed to chair the Land Access Ministerial Reference Group tasked with the challenging task of exploring access within the New Zealand outdoors. His report led to him

chairing the Walking Access Consultation Panel, and in turn to the creation of the New Zealand Walking Access Commission of which he was the inaugural chairman. In this role he championed close links between the rural and urban environments, and is a very passionate proponent for strengthening New Zealand's access culture and heritage.

He was awarded a Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit in 2003 and was made a life member of the Historic Places Trust in August 2010. His nomination citation for the latter said he showed desire to serve his community without seeking financial reward, which it described as the hall marks of a true philanthropist.

It went on to say in an understated way he listened to alternative, and sometimes strongly worded-views, and looked to achieve outcomes which met the needs of all.

"These are the traits that New Zealanders admire. Characteristics seen in those that we, as a people, regard as special, as people of true mana."

Mr Chancellor, it is with pleasure that I present Mr John Acland for the award of the Bledisloe Medal for 2015.