

Citation Honorary Doctorate: Tā Mark Solomon, Doctor of Natural Resources, *honoris causa*

Tā Mark Solomon has spent 16 years leading his iwi on its post-settlement journey.

His service to Ngāi Tahu, as well as a plethora of other leadership roles for Māori and for the nation, sees him honoured today.

Of Ngāi Tahu and Ngāti Kurī descent, his major role is that of Kaiwhakahaere (chairman) of Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu.

In 2013 he was made a Knight Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit, for services to Māori and business.

He took the chairman's role for the tribe in just days after it settled with the Crown for \$170m in 1998 as redress for injustices that had significantly impaired the social, cultural and economic development of the tribe.

The gains made by Ngāi Tahu since then have been many.

Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu's now has a net worth exceeding \$1 billion and since settlement, over \$320m has been invested in tribal development.

One of the tribe's priorities has been investment in environmental initiatives, particularly programmes designed to ensure the ongoing availability of mahinga kai (traditional food species). Last year Ngāi Tahu allocated \$2.7 million to environmental initiatives, many of which Tā Mark has taken a personal interest in. At a national level, he chairs the Iwi Leaders Group on Conservation and he is also a member of the Freshwater Iwi Leaders Group.

Tā Mark plays an active role in ensuring his Iwi is at the forefront of environmental practice, whether that be in terms of initiatives that support sustainable fisheries or best farming practice. New Iwi initiatives last year included Whenua Kura, a training programme to encourage Māori leadership in agriculture in partnership with Lincoln University and Ngāi Tahu Farming.

The Iwi is also heavily invested in ongoing environmental programmes in the region such as Whakaora Te Waihora, a joint commitment to the restoration and rejuvenation of the mauri and ecosystem health of Te Waihora/Lake Ellesmere and its catchment.

Tā Mark has represented his local Papatipu Rūnanga, Te Rūnanga o Kaikōura, since 1995 and is the current chair. He has contributed to his community in many capacities, ranging from roles as a trustee of Takahanga Marae, a school board trustee and as a member of the Kaikōura coastal guardian group Te Korowai o Te Tai o Marokura.

He has also been a director of the Museum of New Zealand, Te Papa Tongarewa, and was an original member of the Minister for Māori Affairs' Māori Economic Taskforce.

He holds directorships with Te Ohu Kai Moana, the Māori Fisheries Trust, and with two North Island Iwi – Ngāti Ruanui and Ngā Rauru. He is a director of Te Tapuae o Rehua – a partnership between Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu and the major tertiary organisations of the South Island, which includes Lincoln University.

He also works with the Canterbury Mayors and the Earthquake Recovery Minister to spearhead the earthquake recovery process.

Among Tā Mark's passions is his desire to see young Māori take up educational and training opportunities. He is an advocate for the sanctity of whānau and takes a strong stance against whānau violence. He embraces cultural diversity and supports Christchurch's refugee and migrant communities.

Māori were the first small enterprise owners in New Zealand, long before the Europeans arrived, and Tā Mark believes Māori desire for intergenerational and values-based investment is an aspiration that will bring prosperity not only to iwi but to the nation as a whole. He is a fierce advocate for ensuring careful use of natural resources to ensure each generation is catered for.

It is with pleasure that I present Tā Mark Solomon for the degree of Doctor of Natural Resources, *honoris causa*.