

## Rotary Dunedin Presentation

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## Sir John Robert McKenzie



*Sir John and Lady May McKenzie*

One of seven children of Scottish immigrants, John was born in Melbourne, Australia in 1876.

He served in the Victoria Bushmen's Regiment during the Boer War until he was invalided home in 1901.

In 1905, he established a 'fancy goods' store with his sister Ella which proved so successful, the pair quickly expanded inter-state.

After holidaying in New Zealand in 1909, John decided to transfer his business and the first Aotearoa-based McKenzie's Store was opened in Dunedin in 1910. In 1980, there were 75 stores nationwide.

With a gift of £10,000, he established the first Trust to bear his name in 1938, the J R McKenzie Youth Education Trust.

John McKenzie believed that a business should share its prosperity with those who had helped to make it prosperous and so this was quickly followed by the establishment of J R McKenzie Trust in 1940.

In 1949, he was recognised for his contribution to public welfare when he was made a Knight of the Order of the British Empire.

Sir John was a humble but inspirational man who accomplished everything with quiet resolve, minimal fuss and maximum decency.

Sir John and his wife, May, raised two sons: Don, who was killed in WWII, and Roy, who expanded and embedded the Trust's mahi. Sir John died in 1955.

### **Sir Roy McKenzie**



*Sir Roy and Lady Shirley McKenzie*

Born in 1922, Roy McKenzie attended Timaru Boys High School and Otago University, where he studied accountancy.

During the Second World War he served in the RNZAF and the RAF.

In 1948, Sir Roy married Shirley Howard. Together they had three children, Peter, John and Robyn, and nine grandchildren.

From 1949 to 1970 he was the Executive Director for McKenzie's (NZ) Ltd.

As the heir to the McKenzie's retail empire, Sir Roy pledged more money than most people will ever earn and is known as one of the great New Zealand philanthropists.

The causes he supported were numerous and varied including the establishment of the Te Omanga Trust, the first Women's Refuge, as well as several schools for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

He donated the land on which Outward Bound sits, and is renowned for his kindness and willingness to work for people in need.

He unassumingly saw himself as a 'community volunteer' and in 2004 was a winner of a Wellingtonian of the Year Award in the Community Service category.

Sir Roy sat on the J R McKenzie Trust Board from 1947 – 1993, Chairing it for 17 years. He was significantly involved in the governance of the J R McKenzie Youth Education Fund and also set up other grantmaking bodies such as:

- The McKenzie Education Foundation (1966 – 85)
- The Roy McKenzie Foundation (1986 – 95) – ground-breaking in its flexibility and innovation, this Foundation was instrumental in the establishment of Philanthropy New Zealand and Generosity New Zealand (originally known as the Funding Information Service).
- The Deaf Decade Trust (1992 – present), which now operates as the Deaf Development Fund.

Sir Roy passed away in 2007.

### **Where did The Trust Come From**

At the Conference of Rotary Clubs in Palmerston North in 1940, Sir John Robert McKenzie made a 'munificent gift' to the people of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Through a donation of £100,000 plus one-third of the McKenzie's Stores' annual profits, the J R McKenzie Trust was born. Sir John's words during his announcement at the Conference would prove prophetic:

"I have established a Trust which I hope will prove of benefit to the community, not only at present, but in the years to come."

The J R McKenzie Trust has a long history of helping to build stronger communities, primarily through making grants to community organisations.

Its vision of a socially just and inclusive Aotearoa New Zealand provides it with a touchstone as it seeks to contribute to longer term, fundamental change where fewer people are struggling, and there is less need for health and social services over time.

The Trust's initial beneficiaries were disabled servicemen, the Plunket Society, and children in need. In a true sign of the times, John McKenzie said, 'New Zealand has no greater assets than its soldiers and its children, and the country's future is in their hands.'

### **Rotary Involvement - YEF**

Rotarians play a huge part in both the JRMCK YEF and the trust itself. 6 Rotary clubs from across the country have been involved since the trusts inception. Rotary Dunedin is one of those clubs along with Christchurch, Wellington, Hamilton, and 2 clubs in Auckland.

When it comes to the YEF, our club is responsible for the administration of the regional fund, essentially covering the region of the old D9980. Grant Chirside is the current administrator of the YEF, a role he's been doing for 10 years.

In recent times the YEF has been administered by Stuart Melville, Neville Caird, Myself and Grant.

The YEF receives funding from the main JRMT trust of somewhere between \$350-\$400,000 each year and our regional fund gets a proportion of that based on population.

Grant will correct me if I'm wrong but the YEF supports around 200 or so families each year specifically with costs relating to school uniforms. Families receive a few hundred dollars per child and I know it makes a real difference to them in a real time of need.

## **The JRMck Trust**

In addition to the YEF, our club also has the responsibility of appointing a Trustee to the JR McKenzie Trust. Trustees are appointed for a 5 year term and can serve an additional 5 years if desired, ie a maximum of 10 years.

Our club has always had a bit of a succession plan when it comes to the YEF and the Trust.

Recent JR McKenzie trustees have been Stuart Melville, Neville Caird and myself. Grant has agreed to be the next Trustee on behalf of our club and he'll take up that role at the Trusts AGM in April.

Just personally, being involved in both the YEF and the Trust for 20 years has been one of my Rotary highlights. I've enjoyed it so much.

## **The Putea**

Around \$140M, we pay out around \$6M-\$8M per year.

When I joined the trust in 2014, a strategic review had just been completed. The trust went from paying out hundreds and hundreds of small grants every year, to just a few large grants to really make an impact.

Established by the McKenzie family, [Rangatira Investments](#) and the Jayar Charitable Trust are the primary sources of the Trust's funding.

Annual dividend payments from the J R McKenzie Trust's 51% shareholdings in Rangatira Investments supply the Trust with its operating and grantmaking budgets.

Rangatira Limited is managed independently of the J R McKenzie Trust, and invests primarily in New Zealand businesses.

There is one other significant trust, and that's the Jayar Trust and it manages a separate investment portfolio for the Trust which funds the Peter McKenzie Project. Originally an investment of around \$18M, the PMP's vision is "Imagine an Aotearoa New Zealand where all children and whanau flourish. Where each and every childhood is full of opportunity".

I've been chairing PMP for quite a few years and we are currently leading NZ and the world in the area of Participatory Philanthropy. PP is a discussion for another time but in basic terms, it's a way of removing the power and servant nature of grant making.

In terms of the types of groups the Trust supports, I could talk for hours about that and sometimes if I don't like the audience, I often do!

But I do appreciate that time is against us so I'll save that for another day.

I would like to genuinely thank Rotary Dunedin for giving me the opportunity to be a trustee on the J R McKenzie Trust. It's been a fantastic experience and I know Grant will thoroughly enjoy it too.

I'll finish with the quote that Roy McKenzie was drawn too. "Do not go where the path may lead. Go instead and leave a trail".

It's something the Trust has been doing since 1940 and Rotary has too!.

Thanks for listening.