

## MCGUINNESS INSTITUTE PRESS RELEASE

### Hon Nikki Kaye – a powerhouse of energy and ideas

Tuesday 26 November 2024

The team at the McGuinness Institute is devastated to hear of the passing of Hon Nikki Kaye today. Nikki was a patron of the Institute from February 2023.

When inviting someone to become a patron we look for people who think and act for the long term; who are doers (not just thinkers); who are creative and passionate about what they do; and who have a certain quality that is hard to explain – it is perhaps best summed up as ‘authenticity’. What I mean by this is that they know themselves and have a strong moral compass. They are prepared to back their own judgement, even when others strongly disagree. Nikki had all of the above in abundance. She also had a crack-up laugh and took real joy in people and good food. She was special. One of my favourite memories of her is a bottle of champagne that was accidentally sprayed over us at Amano, one of her favourite local restaurants. We laughed and laughed and saw it as a blessing for our friendship.

Nikki will be missed by me and many of the patrons she knew and worked with, in particular Roger Dennis. She had the ability to see through the mess and put forward an image of how New Zealand could reposition itself for the future. She understood the power of te Tiriti and embedded it in how she operated, especially focusing on building networks and skills for young people. She was 100 percent committed to embracing technology and putting in place institutions and instruments for the future. This is perhaps best illustrated by her establishment of the [Blue Nature Aotearoa Trust](#). She understood that what happens beneath the water matters and I was especially looking forward to working with her on the Institute’s One Ocean project.

Nikki was a powerhouse, full of energy and ideas for the future; she loved New Zealand and New Zealanders loved her. She will be very much missed. Importantly, she would not want us to sit back; she would want us to stand firm and continue to work hard to deliver a future that allows future generations to thrive. Much will be written about her legacy in the days and years to come, but for me, her legacy was her absolute commitment to serve future generations. Thank you Nikki for being extraordinary.

Wendy McGuinness  
Chief Executive

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