

Jolyon Christopher Manning (1933–2018)

Prepared by Roger Washbourn



Jolyon Manning. Photo courtesy of the *Otago Daily Times*

Otago lost one of its strong personalities in public service, conservation, environmental management and forestry with the death of Jolyon Manning on 9 April in Alexandra.

Jolyon was born in Gore in 1933. He was educated at Southland and Otago Boys' High Schools, and took his accountancy studies at the Southland Technical College. The family moved to Dunedin where Jolyon based himself as an accountant for Preens.

Before long he moved towards the first of many public service endeavours by setting up the Otago Visitors Centre, which was the forerunner of the Otago Development Council. He later became Chief Executive of the former Otago Development Council, followed by Regional Development Executive for the Otago Regional Development Council.

Jolyon served in governance roles with the NZ Forestry Council (nine years from 1977), the NZ National Parks Centennial Commission, the Otago National Parks and Reserve Board, the NZ Tourism Council, the Dunedin City Council (1982) and the Otago Polytechnic Council. He was a lay Canon with St Paul's Cathedral in Dunedin and a Justice of the Peace.

He joined the NZIF in 1961 as an Affiliate Member and retained his membership up to his death. He was elected to Council in 1989 for two terms and held office as Vice President during 1992–1994. He was also Chairperson of the Otago–Southland section of NZIF in 1990. He retained an active interest in the local section of the NZIF and of the local NZ Farm Forestry Association. His occasional articles and letters appeared in the Institute's journal.

Jolyon's most enduring legacy, however, lies with the development of what is known as Jolendale Park, located on the outskirts of Alexandra in Central Otago. With his wife Hendrika (Enny) Waal, he purchased 6 ha of land on Bridge Hill in Alexandra in 1960. They then spent the next 58 years planting trees and shrubs on what was a barren and bleak hilltop covered only in rocky outcrops, briar and rabbits, in the heart of the driest part of the country. The couple built their house 25 years ago on-site next to the park.

The park is now covered in a variety of exotic and native trees, which were researched and hand-picked for their hardiness and drought resistance. It is rich in specimen trees from many parts of the world. The Mannings won the Flook Award in 2000 – an accolade given by the NZ Arboriculture Association to recognise high standards of practice in this field.

Jolendale Park was permanently protected by the QEII Trust in 2004 as the sole registered semi-arid woodland reserve in New Zealand. In recent years, it has been in the care of the Jolendale Park Charitable Trust after the Mannings gifted the park to the community.

He will be remembered as an environmentalist and an innovator with high standards, a wide range of interests and tireless energy. He belonged to numerous community organisations in Alexandra and had a wide and knowledgeable interest in classical music.

Jolyon married Enny in 1959, whose ongoing support in his life's successes was always acknowledged. They have three adult children, all of whom survive him.