

## **Kurt Fearnley AO**

# Paralympian, Disability Rights Advocate & Keynote Speaker

Three time Paralympic gold medalist and two time Commonwealth Games gold medalist. He has won over 40 marathons, including New York, Chicago and London in a career spanning more than 20 years. In 2009 he crawled the Kokoda track, in Papua New Guinea, to raise awareness of men's health. Was a member of the winning Sydney to Hobart yacht crew, Investec Loyal, in 2012 and was the New South Wales Australian of the Year for 2019.



Raised in the small country town of Carcoar, Kurt Fearnley has always been determined. Being born without the lower portion of his spine has never held him back, from backyard games of football to crewing a winning Sydney to Hobart yacht, crawling the Kokoda Track and winning dozens of marathons around the world.

Turning his attention to wheelchair sports in his teens, Kurt quickly became a world beater. He started his career with two Silver medals at the 2000 Sydney Paralympic games, before making his winning breakthrough at the 2004 Athens Paralympics with Gold in the 5000m and marathon races. Following the 2004 games, Kurt conquered the world, winning seven world championships and more than 30 marathons around the globe, including 10 marathons in 2007 and three straight New York marathon titles. He solidified his standing as a marathon great by defending his Gold medal at the Beijing Paralympics, before winning Bronze at the London games in 2012 and finishing his Paralympic career with Silver in the marathon at the 2016 Rio games. Kurt finished his Australian representative as he started it, on home soil, with a win in the marathon at the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games.

In 2009 Kurt spent two week's in Papua New Guinea crawling the 96 kilometre Kokoda Track raising awareness and funding for men's health charity Movember and beyond blue. In 2012 he was an active member of the Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race winning crew aboard Investec Loyal.

Kurt is a passionate disability advocate and devotes himself to a number of national and Hunter-based charitable initiatives. He is a board member of the Australian Paralympic Committee, Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation and member of the International Paralympic Committee's Athlete Advisory Council. Kurt is a former board member of Australian Volunteers International and NSW Australia Day Council and was a founding member of the National Disability Insurance Scheme's Advisory Council. His involvement at the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games wasn't limited to competing, having been a member of the formal bid team, Games Technical Committee and an official ambassador. Kurt's exploits both in and out of sport



over many years have seen him recognised with a number of honours including 2019 NSW Australian of the Year, 2009 NSW Young Australian of the Year and 2018 The Don winner as the Australian sports person most likely to inspire the nation. In 2018 Kurt was recognised as an Officer of the Australian Order, and received an Honourary Doctorate from Griffith University for his contribution to sport and disability advocacy.

## **Testimonials**

"Kurt was received very, very well. It is rare that we have a completely engaged audience. No one checked their phone or left early and though not many people had questions for Kurt straight after his presentation, staff are still talking about how good he was.

#### - Department of Infrastructure & Transport

"Kurt is warm, engaging, funny and inspirational. Without a doubt, he is one of Australia's most focussed and exceptional athletes - his list of achievements speaks for itself. Despite this, he is supremely modest and unassuming. From the moment he "rolled" up onto the stage we were captivated, inspired and amused. Kurt left us all in a better place and motivated to achieve. We could not have found a better speaker for our conference.

#### - Avenue Capital Management

"He was simply inspirational. He is also a very personal young man who spent some time talking with the Red Bend Catholic College students who were present and shared his experiences with them by letting them handle three of his medals - his Silver Medal from the Sydney Olympics, his Gold Medal from the Athens Olympics and his solid Gold Medal for winning the New York Marathon last year.

#### - Red Bend Catholic College

"Fantastic, the response was appropriate and certainly helped cement our key conference message of Making it Possible. The way Kurt blended stories and experience made it simple for delegates to connect and contextualise the message to their own circumstance.

### - Salmat

"The audience was captivated throughout Kurt's appearance and walked away motivated and inspired.

## - SET Solutions

"Kurt was extremely well received by the audience, in fact the feedback received from the group was excellent, they all really enjoyed hearing his stories and the challenges that he



faced in his life (and overcome).

- Ernst & Young
- I have seldom been so impressed by a key note as I was with Kurt Fearnley. Kurt's discussion was exceptionally well received. You could hear a pin drop throughout the 45 minutes Kurt spoke and there was good Q&A later. Kurt's willingness to interact prior to the dinner, throughout the dinner and afterwards was excellent. We had many comments regarding how approachable he is. His discussion was frank, honest and sometimes confronting. He spoke from experience and everyone in the room (120 people) left the event talking about how elements of the discussion resonated at both a personal and professional level.
- CSIRO
- "Amazing audience response. He received a standing ovation. Highlight of our conference
- BUPA
- "Loved him you could hear a pin drop and received a standing ovation
- NSW Touch Association
- You could have heard a pin drop with an audience of 400. Moving story, great guy, Would have him back again. Highly recommend him, very inspiring.
- Pittard Training Group

VIEW SPEAKER'S BIO ONLINE 2

VIDEO OF SPEAKER C