



Building a Leadership Network

2016

Leadership NZ's sphere of influence...

The success stories of Leadership NZ alumni are an enduring testament to the value of the Programme. On the following pages several alumni reflect on the ways their lives have been influenced by their connection with Leadership NZ.

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Stephen Henry

Leadership NZ Alumnus (2008)

Stephen has always been professionally attracted to complexity, tackling difficulties and developing solutions.

He attended the Leadership NZ Programme in 2008 while Group Manager, Customers, Strategy and Enterprises at the NZ Post Group. Stephen says that he chose the Leadership NZ Programme over others on offer, because he liked the idea that it was 2-3 days each month over a year so there was more time to immerse yourself into the learning.

“The intellectual stimulation that Leadership NZ provides is amazing,” he says and admits that he relished the fact that the Programme tackles complex social issues within New Zealand.

“Every month over a couple of days we learn about issues facing New Zealand, hear from top influential people on that topic and learn about their personal leadership journey and how they got to where they are now. We are given space and time to ask questions, have a real dialogue, reflect and learn at a much deeper level than you would get anywhere else,” Stephen says.

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Stay authentic – don't be afraid to try something different nor to express your opinion or perspective because everyone has his or her value to add.

When asked how his organisation benefited from his attendance at the Programme he immediately says, “It helped me do my job better!” He then adds, “We are a customer service focussed organisation. Leadership NZ gave me the insight into the breadth, depth and complexity of our customers and how to better serve them.”

After being in the Programme for the year, Stephen undertook some volunteer work through the Leadership NZ SkillsBank (a service that matches the numerous requests from not-for-profit organisations for pro bono support to the skills of Leadership NZ alumni to those requests) and helped Neighbourhood NZ with their sustainability planning while still in his full-time GM role at NZ Post. “Again,” Stephen says, “this gave me the chance to get to know real everyday people and to think about how our business can be better in that context.”

In 2012 Stephen switched to the government sector and took up the role of Chief Operating Officer at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT). Stephen

says “Prior to going on the Programme, I was immersed in the business world of revenue and profitability. But in the Programme you are working alongside, and in teams of, people from not-for-profits, government agencies, creative industries, etcetera who are making a real difference and grappling with complex problems that you just don't get to see very often on the commercial side.”

Therefore, when the opportunity came up at MFAT to test his ‘transferable skills’ and see what value he could bring to the government sector, Stephen jumped at it. He admits that he probably wouldn't have taken on a high-level government position prior to attending the Programme. Now looking back on it, Stephen says that in the beginning, some of the commercial ideas he brought to MFAT were considered high risk at the time. “I believe that the exposure I gained through the Leadership NZ Programme around the value of diverse perspectives when addressing complex issues made my time and the programmes I developed at MFAT ultimately successful,” he says.

Stephen has recently moved jobs and into an entirely different sector. He is now General Manager, Services at the New Zealand Racing Board. Only a few weeks into his role, it seems that Stephen is already taking-on new complex challenges with a diversity perspective and is not afraid to challenge the status quo. He says he is looking forward to helping address the issues such as internationalisation and digitisation of the changing world and the impact on the racing industry, and consequently rural and principal New Zealand.

When asked what his key advice is for future leaders, Stephen says, “Stay authentic – don't be afraid to try something different nor to express your opinion or perspective because everyone has his or her value to add. Otherwise, we all end up running with blinders on.”

In realising that he has created a metaphor linked to his new workplace, Stephen expands his advice for future leaders or those considering the Leadership NZ Programme and says, “Start the race, go forth and be fearless – you can't win if you don't start. It is the best way to find out what it is that you are really good at.”

– Written by: Kimberly Rees,
November 2015



Gillian Dudgeon

Leadership NZ Alumnus (2008)

In 2007, after 22 years in banking, Gillian Dudgeon made the move into risk management at ANZ Bank, or what she so avidly describes as the ‘dark side’.

Perhaps this statement was somewhat of a premonition, as the moment Gillian took the reins, the global financial crisis struck.

“After years in roles which were about selling to customers’ needs and maximizing opportunities, the rules of the game changed. Our staff found themselves spending all day talking to customers who felt under stress and pressure.”

This string of events led Gillian to enter the Leadership NZ Programme in 2008. “It was an absolutely amazing opportunity to spend quality time over a year with a very diverse group of individuals.”

Gillian laughingly recalls the challenge of being partnered with a dancer and choreographer, whose creative background proved polar-opposite to her financial one. However it was experiences as such that provided a much stronger platform for Gillian to stand as a leader, managing teams which inevitably stem from diverse backgrounds. “The Programme allowed us to stand in other peoples shoes...which helped me think more broadly during these difficult times and to challenge the status quo.”

It is this power of diversity, of thinking and ideas, that Gillian says was the most important thing she took from the Programme. “Never take anyone at face value. We got to meet such a diverse array of speakers and attendees that I would never have normally met. It got me to view leadership through a very different lens.”

For Gillian the Programme provided the impetus for a sea change. Although this did not come immediately, Gillian says the Programme was influential in her decision to leave “the safer world of banking.” In 2013 Gillian joined the Earthquake Commission. Despite her nervousness of entering an unfamiliar world, she says the Programme challenged her to expand her horizons as such and explore the world.

Gillian acknowledges that there are no “quick fixes to rebuilding a city”. “There are some very challenging days, but Leadership NZ supported me to increase my resilience which really is a core competency for working at EQC.” It is Gillian’s ability to see the immense devastation in Christchurch, as an opportunity to make a difference to people’s lives, which distinguishes her as a fearless leader.

Gillian believes that in order to be fearless one must stand on their own for what they believe. “You can sometimes doubt yourself during these times, and they don’t always go smoothly, but that’s always part of the challenge.”

“Nothing is impossible and we can always learn and change. Feeling out of your depth is okay, but you need support around you and sometimes this comes from unexpected places.”

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It is exactly this fearlessness that Gillian says allowed her to step out of the bank and embrace the opportunity of working with an eclectic mix of people driven by a social cause - to rebuild and support Canterbury. “I also now have two colleagues who have done the Leadership NZ Programme, which is awesome!”

Since graduating in 2008, Gillian’s ongoing connection with Leadership NZ has allowed her the opportunity to participate on several interview panels. “It is so much fun to see and help shape the next intake. It also provides a great opportunity to catch up with other graduates of the Programme, all with a common bond.”

Gillian’s advice for future leaders is just as humbling, wise and genuine as she is herself. “Expose yourself to as many different environments, people and places you can. Leave New Zealand so you can really appreciate what we have here on our doorstep. This will also enable you to bring back ‘different thinking’ which will contribute to NZ’s success in the future.”

Gillian says she has been able to encourage her two children to go out into the world, to explore, experience and chase their dreams. “The Programme taught me to take the time to understand and get lots of different perspectives before making decisions. Don’t assume anything. This is such an important lesson we need to use everyday”.

– Written by: Ophelia Buckleton
November 2015



Teresa Tepania-Ashton

Leadership NZ Alumnus (2006)

Teresa Tepania-Ashton credits her humble parents for her success. As the oldest of her siblings, she saw her father work three jobs to make ends meet for their life in South Auckland.

At a young age, she worked alongside her family in developing their own tree felling business which taught her to be adaptive and gave her a variety of core business skills. “My parents always told us to be proud of who we are and that we can do anything and everything. They encouraged me to do as much as I could do, and then some more! They also said not to be afraid, to take on new challenges and to walk on your own two feet.”

Perhaps this is why at the age of nineteen, Teresa was doing anything and everything (administratively) for a small engineering company. Later she spent two years in Demark working at the company’s head office. This was a big challenge and a brave step into the unknown for a young Maori girl from South Auckland in the 1980s. “It was because I had a strong sense of values and the belief that I could do anything,” Teresa says. “I jumped at the chance to live in a foreign country, outside of my comfort zone. Being overseas actually strengthened my Maori identity because it made me appreciate how being Maori was core to who I am.”

Teresa’s next professional challenge came when she transferred to Citibank at the age of 25 where she worked in both a sales and service role, building relationships with the largest corporations in Australia and New Zealand implementing global transactional banking strategies. Teresa says, “I’m so lucky to be born Maori because I inherently used the values of manaakitanga (respect and care for others) in my work when dealing with very different people in different environments. Utilising my Maori values provided the confidence for me to make hard decisions.”

“*“I also realised that being a CEO is not about being in charge – but instead, it is about appreciating the unique skills in others and supporting them to be and do their best.”*”

After 12 years of success in the corporate world, Teresa made the hard decision to leave in order to spend more time with her family and reconnect with her larger whanau, hapu and iwi. “This had its own challenges as it required a very different way of thinking and living for me,

coming from being totally immersed in the business world - it certainly tested my ability to be adaptive,” she says remembering. A few years later in July 2004 Teresa was appointed as CEO of Te Runanga-a-Iwi o Ngapuhi. This role was tough but rewarding as it allowed her to focus on developing the assets of her iwi and the aspirations of the Ngapuhi people.

Teresa says “It was such a complex and busy time in my life – juggling family and this important CEO role. Attending the Leadership NZ Programme in 2006 kept my sanity. It was pivotal in clarifying so many things for me and keeping me on track. The Programme re-instilled my father’s mantra about being able to do anything and doing more on a grander scale.” “Through the Leadership NZ Programme,” Teresa says “I learned not to be afraid to be open and sharing. I also realised that being a CEO is not about being in charge – but instead, it is about appreciating the unique skills in others and supporting them to be and do their best.”

Teresa praises the Leadership NZ Programme in not only giving her this insight, but also the tools and processes which helped her take Te Runanga-a-Iwi o Ngapuhi through a decade of expedient growth and development. Her legacy, she jokingly says, was that she left the iwi with “a succession of operational leaders.” Since November 2013, Teresa is CEO for Maori Women’s Development Inc, a micro-lending organisation providing business loans to Maori women and their whanau. She considers this her dream job. “I am helping women to be fearless, to overcome adversity and to be self-sufficient in their own business; which is adding to the economic success of Maori and making a valuable contribution to this country as a whole.”

When pressed for final words of advice for future leaders Teresa says “Don’t hold back, be brave, adaptive and embrace change. Be clear about your values and stay true to yourself.”

Teresa Tepania-Ashton is a petite person in physical stature but very large in mana – she is a great role model of courage and authenticity in leadership.

– **Written by: Kimberly Rees,**
November 2015



Taane Mete

Leadership NZ Alumnus (2008)

For Taane Mete, the value of the Leadership NZ Programme is clear – it allows you to connect with yourself and identify where you belong in the community.

It has been seven years since Taane completed the programme and his success in that time has been immense, including founding Okareka Dance Company.

“I always knew that being a director was a role I wanted to undertake, but I never had the tools. The Programme gave me vital leadership qualities and the ability to decide what I wanted my shoes to look like before I stepped into them. I had to ask myself, do I fit into these shoes or are they far too big? Or do I need to keep changing what those shoes look like?”

Taane has certainly filled these shoes, gaining his company recognition on the international stage, with sold out performances in London and Edinburgh this year.

Upon reflection, Taane says the secret to his success in New Zealand and internationally can partly be accredited to what he gained from the Programme.

“I learnt that you have to take care of your product and assure that it is the best quality it can be. Find a niche market that it belongs to, find the connection that enables that product to prosper and then go for gold!”

Although the Programme didn't click for Taane immediately his advice to future alumni is to “let it sit” and call on the relevant material when required.

“I'm still gathering the tools I learnt to this day. I often remember a lecture, or someone I met, or a small quote someone said and it will spark something.”

However what Taane did gain immediately is an insight into how to connect with the community and create productive relationships that facilitate your own thinking. He does just that by providing dance education in schools through a programme run by Okareka.

“It allows Okareka to extend our gift, the power of dance, to young people. They are the next Aotearoa so by giving them strength, we are making the country stronger.”

When asked why he runs this programme in the community, Taane says it is about helping other people with the skills you have to offer. For Taane, these skills come alive on stage through the unique beauty and power of his politically challenging works.

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The Programme was a catalyst for Taane to openly discuss difficult issues in his work, including his identity as a takatapui, or gay male in New Zealand.

“I happily live in my skin as a takatapui because at the end of the day, leadership is about being authentic. It's not beating around the bush. It's basically letting your guards down, being a little bit vulnerable and letting others see the true you.”

This inevitably requires a sense of fearlessness. Taane relates this notion to his experience of performing on Broadway as part of Black Grace dance company in 2005.

“I was definitely out of my comfort zone. So I had to connect to myself and connect to my culture. The response from the audience was that we were stand alone because we were different. Not technically or in terms of how high we could jump, but because we came with mana and strength. And that's exactly it, being fearless in being different.”

For Okareka Dance Company, being different means speaking the truth without what Taane describes as “power dressing or all the formalities.”

Seven years after completing the Programme, Taane says he still sees many of the alumni around town and sometimes at his shows. It is the creation of this tight-knit community that he loves.

Taane advises people do the Programme to identify what they look like, not only as an individual but in their community, and outside of New Zealand.

“Connecting to your culture resonates internationally because if you can't have a sense of yourself and a sense of Aotearoa-ness, then who are you?”

– **Written by: Ophelia Buckleton**
November 2015



Judy Nicholl

Leadership NZ Alumnus (2010)

For Judy Nicholl, General Manager of Aeronautical Operations at Auckland Airport, the value of the Leadership NZ Programme is quite clear - she incorporates what she learned from it into her work each and every day.

An example of this is the small Mind Map hanging on her office wall that she created while on the Programme. She says it “is a constant reminder of my anchor points when I look up from my computer screen.” Judy also has three books of notes she took while on the Programme readily available on a shelf in her office that she often pulls out when needing guidance in dealing with complex issues, or for general refreshment and inspiration. It has been five years since Judy attended the Leadership NZ Programme as part of the 2010 cohort, so this is clearly a testament to the Programme’s prolonged relevance and long-term personal influence.

Judy states, “Leadership NZ is the gift that keeps on giving. The Programme grounded me while at the same time, opened me up and provided a compass for both my professional career and personal life.”

Since graduating in 2010, Judy has embraced the Leadership NZ mission of alumni ‘to grow active leadership’ through her management position at Auckland Airport. She does this by investing in at least one (and sometimes two) of her staff to attend the Programme each year. “I do this because I know that Leadership NZ creates competent, authentic leaders, who are values-based, focussed on the future and ‘in leadership for life’. On a practical level as well, Leadership NZ provides each participant with frameworks, models and a huge toolkit to draw from. This benefits not only the participant, but also myself as the manager and the rest of the team; it raises the calibre of the whole organisation.”

Judy says there is a strong culture of sharing and continued learning within her team and an expectation of ‘the sharpening of tools’ at her organisation. “We expect that year’s participant to report back and be the example for others. Inevitably, they show greater responsibility and proactive approaches which definitely lifts the bar in a positive way for all those around them.”

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“Leadership NZ creates competent, authentic leaders, who are values-based, focussed on the future and in leadership for life.”

Judy admits that she vicariously enjoys the Leadership NZ Programme experience through the staff person attending that year, but because the material is dynamic and continually upgraded, it is not a reliving experience as such. Instead, she says, it is reciprocal, “Each person, from each Leadership NZ session, brings back something

new for me to learn, incorporate into our work, or just to think about. That’s what makes it so great and motivates us to stay involved with the Programme at an organisational level.”

“Of course each participant gets different things on a personal level from the Programme as well. But what I see as the common denominator for each graduate is the confidence and ability to have enriched dialogue and complex discussions with respect and dignity.”

As a leader of a large and diverse, multi-faceted operations team, Judy role-models these traits of a Leadership NZ graduate and puts great emphasis on creating a supportive, trusting environment for her team. “Collaboration is key in operations as it usually takes more than one person to accomplish great things,” she says. “So it is very important for me to create a safe, working environment where people respect one another, aren’t afraid to give-it-a-go, fail, reflect, share, learn, give-it-a-go again and expand beyond what they currently think they are capable of. This is my role as a leader.”

Judy Nicholl, an open person - true to herself, is a fine example of Fearless Leadership and is also helping to create Fearless Leaders for our future.

— **Written by: Kimberly Rees,**
June 2015



Ian Balme

Leadership NZ Alumnus (2006)

Ian Balme attended the Leadership NZ Programme in 2006. At the time he was one of only a couple of participants that came from the rural sector that year.

“When I started the Programme I felt like a fish out of water amongst all those smart people.” However now, Ian admits that “the greatest benefit I got from Leadership NZ was that it made me feel comfortable in my own skin.”

The way Ian presents himself now, you would never have guessed that self-confidence was a prior issue for him. Being pressured to explain he says, “It was the exposure to the top leaders in the country that Leadership NZ provides which made the difference for me. Through the Programme, we had easy access and real discussions with each of them – that along with quality time spent with the other participants (people I would have never got to know otherwise) made me realise that people are people – we are all the same and yet uniquely great and have valuable contributions in our own way. It made me not be afraid to show my flaws and be who I really am.”

Ian has an interesting success story around building the Forgotten World Adventures business but before telling it, he is quick to identify the morale up front as being “you just have to back yourself.”

“*“The key to making it happen came down to sheer determination and backing myself all the way.”*”

In 2010 Ian left his position as regional councillor, working on the farm and seeing his rural community struggling both economically and socially. His neighbour was importing used golf carts for farm use from America. A spark of an idea came to him about putting these golf carts on the old unused railway line between Stratford and Taumarunui which could be a visitor’s attraction in order to experience the beauty of the area. Some people thought he was crazy, and many obstacles were put in his way to make this idea viable. But Ian says he didn’t take no for an answer “the more barriers that got put up, the more determined I was to jump over them and keep moving forward. The key to making it happen came down to sheer determination and backing myself all the way, no matter what.”

It certainly wasn’t an easy journey for Ian to establish the thriving business of Forgotten World Adventures to what it is today; a rail tour on the historic railroad line (through the Taranaki and Ruapehu Districts) that employs 24 staff, has doubled its revenue each year since opening and is significantly contributing to the economic growth of the rural towns on the tour’s route. Ian remembers “I just kept trying and many times it was jumping into the unknown and giving it a go to see what happened. But I was never afraid of failure. I like the unknown, the challenges, the sense of adventure, you may say.” This statement, in and of itself, shows Ian’s fearless nature.

When asked how he got others to go along with his seemingly crazy business idea, he says “I can credit Leadership NZ for that as it gave me the insight that it is ok to say you don’t know and to ask for help. So if I didn’t have the right skills or ability to do some aspect, I found someone who did. And that happened a lot.” He laughs “before I knew it, I had a whole slew of people that I was leading towards this crazy vision!”

Ian lights up when he talks about how the most unlikely people in his community have contributed to the development and success of Forgotten World Adventures as he says “have given their sweat and blood for it.” The business started a tradition of providing a casual chef-catered dinner once a week for all staff. Ian explains; “It is an opportunity to have those honest, round-table discussions like you do with family,” he says. “You’d be surprised what I learn in this way without any armour on and not needing to be the big boss.” This is a good example of Ian Balme being a Fearless Leader - he’s the first one to stand up and take the hits. Ian says, “I’m not afraid to find out what’s not working because then we can fix it!”

Ian’s closing remarks and piece of advice to others is “Just do it – jump in and do it – be fearless and back yourself. You’ll surprise yourself at what you can achieve.”

– **Written by: Kimberly Rees,**
June 2015



Michelle van Gaalen

Leadership NZ Alumnus (2008)

Michelle van Gaalen attended the Leadership NZ Programme in 2008 which was at a pivotal point in her long and successful executive management career.

At the time, she was Group Manager Retail at New Zealand (NZ) Post Group Ltd with full accountability across the retail business, as well as being a member of the NZ Post Group Executive Team.

“Without doubt, it was a volatile and challenging time of my career – the Leadership NZ Programme gave me fresh perspectives throughout this period” Michelle says.

On reflection, she clarifies “The Leadership NZ Programme took me out of the corporate world I was in at the time, and gave me a broader perspective in terms of the social and community issues facing New Zealand. Plus, it was wonderful to have a couple of days away from the work demands each month that year, where I could reflect on the work I was doing and recalibrate myself amongst professional peers!”

She refers to the popular quote by Albert Einstein “We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them”.



Never stop learning and challenging yourself, and always strive to get diverse perspectives in order to help with your thinking.

Michelle says that Leadership NZ provided her with access to a range of different perspectives from a cross spectrum of New Zealand society, and that the Programme came at a critical point in her career. She says that what was most beneficial was the fresh external perspective when assessing the impact of proposed business changes in her daily work environment. Her efforts were recognised, even on a global scale through the NZ Post Group winning the 2010 World Mail People Management Award for its workforce management strategy.

Michelle states that “the value of diversity in strategic planning and corporate business analysis / problem solving, was the key learning for me from the Leadership NZ Programme. It gave me that “big picture” focus, built my confidence and pointed me in the right direction in developing my career path”.

It has been an onward and upward career for Michelle. In 2011 she left the NZ Post Group Ltd to re-develop

her own consulting business (originally established in 2005) providing specialist strategy and business change support to CEOs and Executive Teams, collaborating on a number of high profile corporate projects both in New Zealand and overseas. In 2013 Michelle joined the executive team at Bank of New Zealand (BNZ) as Director of Strategy and Business Performance. In this role she’s been the business sponsor of a pilot community finance scheme aiming to improve access to mainstream credit for those previously excluded. Most recently, Michelle will be making another career move in November, leaving BNZ to be the CEO of Pinnacle Life. This will be a big change for her, going from a large corporation to a small family owned business but says she is looking forward to working with the company to “disrupt the life insurance industry in New Zealand.”

Michelle states; “Building on what I learned in the Leadership NZ Programme, I now understand that business growth in New Zealand is inclusive (of all or the majority of people) and not exclusive (at the expense of others) like it is in some other countries. Yes, you could say I am a capitalist, but a “capitalist with heart” which is a quote I heard once that, I think, defines those leaders looking to help transform New Zealand through business.” When asked of her opinion on New Zealand’s future, she reflects on her recent trip to Vietnam and her feelings when she arrived back in the country, saying “New Zealand is a small country but with a high level of sophistication, and has heaps of potential to make our impact more powerful on, and for, the rest of the world.”

Michelle’s practical advice to a future leader is, “Never stop learning and challenging yourself, and always strive to get diverse perspectives in order to help with your thinking. I am fortunate to have learned this from Leadership NZ and benefit from this every day in my career as well as in my personal life.”

For Michelle, listening to other perspectives and having a strong community “heart” within the corporate sector seems to have served her well.

— **Written by: Kimberly Rees,**
December 2014



Quentin McCarthy

Leadership NZ Alumnus (2013)

Quentin McCarthy attended the Leadership NZ Programme in 2013 and he was inspired to put into action some initiatives that are getting rave reviews.

Before coming on the Leadership NZ Programme in 2013, Quentin had been on dozens of leadership / senior professional development courses over his 42 year career with Downer and as a senior manager for the past 25 years (currently responsible for 620 staff) has personally facilitated numerous professional development seminars which included leadership components. It is safe to say that Quentin considered himself a “leadership guru” before attending the Leadership NZ Programme.

“I was confident in what I was doing and how I was working before, but the Leadership NZ Programme challenged my previously constructed views and knowledge about leadership. It opened my eyes and took it up to a much higher professional level” Quentin says.

When asked what makes the Leadership NZ Programme different? Quentin responds with, “It’s having those courageous, authentic conversations not only with your cohort group but with a range of diverse and inspirational guest speakers. These conversations are done in a meaningful, safe and comfortable environment which builds this foundation of professional support and knowledge you wouldn’t be able to get anywhere else.”

Quentin makes the point that anyone can learn the core principles of leadership (through books, seminars, etc) but learning how to put it all into practice both for yourself and for the environment / business you are

“ ” *It’s all about encouraging people to really listen, support one another and to find your own ‘true-north’ so you are proud of what you do.*

working in, is the difficult part and what the Leadership NZ Programme offers as its point of difference.

Just a couple of months after completing the Leadership NZ Programme, Quentin has put into action a number of unique management initiatives at Downer that are getting rave reviews. These include: an organisation-wide Maori Leadership Group designed to develop initiatives for improved Maori representation at top management levels (currently co-funded with Te Puni

Kokori); a restructured format for the area management meetings which incorporates some of the exercises learned through the Leadership NZ Programme; and even taking staff on horse-whispering sessions to exemplify critical leadership aspects!

Quentin is now a firm believer of “disruptive leadership” a theme that was galvanised for him last year in the Leadership NZ Programme. He is encouraging others to break out of the “comfort zone conundrum” and to think outside the traditional corporate sphere for planning and problem solving. He is seeing impressive and innovative results within his management teams already – people are more empathetic, collaborative and making more strategic, wide-level decisions with greater confidence than before.

Quentin points out, “After all, organisational issues are people issues. We are living in an era of constant change and need to support people in responding to the environment. It’s all about encouraging people to really listen, support one another and to find your own ‘true-north’ so you are proud of what you do and what you contribute to others (and the organisation).”

In regards to his own personal leadership journey, Quentin wants to credit Leadership NZ for making him redefine his values, and providing a supportive group of diverse professionals – people who have different backgrounds and perspectives from his own, that he can call upon and benchmark himself against. The Programme has re-sparked his energy for truthful, lifelong learning – as he says “even for an old dog like me”.

Quentin’s final comment; “Last year’s (Leadership NZ 2013) Programme has provided me with an unbelievable opportunity to view first-hand the people and industry that make up the heart of New Zealand’s success. I have a new respect for the diversity within this country and a better understanding of my own leadership role in New Zealand’s future. The Leadership NZ Programme is an absolute gem!”

– Written by: Kimberly Rees,
December 2014



Greg Orchard

Leadership NZ Alumnus (2007)

It's been seven years since Greg Orchard went through the Leadership NZ Programme and he still has no doubt what he learnt influences him every day.

Entering the Programme at the beginning of 2007, Greg was working for Housing New Zealand, feeling restless and ready for change. By the end of the year he had moved to a new role at the Wellington City Council to assist with a \$400 million renewal of their social housing.

"I had had my time and it was now time for others to move the organisation forward," he said.

"I was somewhat restless and looking for a different challenge. In fact it was probably for similar reasons that I attended the Leadership NZ Programme."

For Greg, the year-long leadership Programme exposed him to a wide range of views from a broad cross-section of New Zealanders.

“ ” *The year builds to paint a rich inter-connected picture of New Zealand now, its potential futures and the role you can play.*

"It is an environment where your opinions and thinking, and those of others are tested. The year builds to paint a rich inter-connected picture of New Zealand now, its potential futures and the role you can play," he said.

"Ultimately Leadership NZ has made me think more broadly about New Zealand and the issues we face. Hopefully this has shaped my influence of others by being more open to different approaches and perspectives, and providing opportunities to be heard while respectfully adding my knowledge to the pool."

Greg said the year provided him with a broad understanding of the country, bringing together people from across New Zealand with their varying opinions, stories and experiences. This has directly assisted him with his work in social housing, helping to identify often complex local and national issues as well as opportunities the country may have.

"It is often at a local level that these issues and opportunities play out whether they be youth employment, economic or climate change responses."

However the most important thing Greg learnt from the Programme was the importance of diversity.

"Not simply the tolerance of diversity but its celebration and encouragement. We were a diverse group of people with very different roles, backgrounds and world views.

"We were also exposed to a diverse range of views and aspirations from the various speakers we engaged with. This diversity is one of the strengths on the Programme.

"Bringing this diversity to the table enriched the pool of knowledge and enhanced for each of us our understanding of the issues."

Greg was already working to help communities with Housing New Zealand before the Programme, however has thrown himself into an extensive amount of involvement beyond his day job since 2007 with housing councils and boards.

He is on the NGO board of Accessible Properties, managing a portfolio of more than 1,100 properties specialising in the disability sector; as well as the Australasian Housing Institute, supporting the housing profession across New Zealand and Australia.

He is also chair of the University of Canterbury Quake Centre, training and teaching both professional and potential engineers, using Christchurch's recent history to inform their research and recommendations for the future.

Greg has worked with Government as part of a group looking at solutions for people with non-weather-tight homes and as part of group looking at improving the National Building Consent System.

He had been in the executive leadership team at the Wellington City Council since the end of 2007 and was appointed to the role of Chief Operating Officer in August, 2013. Working in a number of leadership positions, Greg has a proactive leadership style which has only been encouraged by the Programme. He leads people in a profession he is passionate about and from within organisations. "Lead now from where you stand. Don't wait to be asked. Work out what you stand for, step up and lead," he said.

– Written by: Rebecca Savory,
June 2014



Lynette Adams

Leadership NZ Alumnus (2009)

Ten years ago, Lynette was hired to build up a flailing regional sports trust in West Auckland. It was a daunting task and what got her through the first steps was her innate belief in enabling the community (to do for themselves) and the power of “people connecting” and building relationships.

Now upon reflection, she realises that she attended the Leadership NZ Programme approximately half way through, what is her ten year journey to date, as CEO of Sport Waitakere. “It was a time where I had accomplished the task of securing the organisation, and the services we were providing to the community were flourishing, but I needed to be doing more.”

So in 2009 after scoping out numerous professional development / leadership courses, Lynette chose the Leadership NZ Programme because it had a future of New Zealand focus. She admits, the Programme came at a perfect time in her professional career / development. “I thought; what a great place New Zealand is and how lucky we are to live here. What can we do to make it even better? How can I be a better global citizen and how can I contribute to making the world a better place?” Lynette says that a pivotal time within the Programme for her was after the session titled Civil Society when her sense of purpose became clear. “I realised how important it is to build and develop communities to be strong and vibrant where people are healthy and connected. I was in my dream job and what better platform is there than to use sport and recreation as a vehicle to do this!”

“ ” *I now know, and embrace the fact that I am a Servant Leader – putting the needs of others first.*

Not considering herself “a leader” before the Programme, Lynette wears the mantle of leadership proudly and now acknowledges the breadth of leadership styles and the capacity for anyone to be a leader. “I now know, and embrace the fact that I am a Servant Leader – putting the needs of others first, sharing the lead and helping people develop and perform as highly as possible.”

This approach has worked well for Lynette as she’s the first one to admit that communities are complex and the collaboration approach takes a lot of time, but the end result of empowering communities to do for themselves is well worth it.

Lynette has built Sport Waitakere as a community development organisation and is clear about her role,

as CEO, is to highlight the value that community sport and recreation provides in strengthening our society. “An example of this is a local football club with 125 volunteers who are positively affecting the lives of approximately 900 kids each week. And that’s just one club! What other medium could do that?” Lynette points out.

True to the character of the Servant Leader, the line between when the work finishes and her own personal contribution to the community is not distinct for Lynette. Not only is she passionate about supporting her staff’s professional development (so they are learning, coaching and passing on the knowledge to improve the local sport and recreation sector), but Lynette is an active volunteer on a number of not-for-profit boards, coaches a youth sport team and was instrumental in growing the regional provision of hockey for the Waitakere area, just to name a few things she is personally involved in.

Being an active volunteer she says “keeps me in touch with the grassroots issues and the barriers to participating in sport and recreation which people experience and Sport Waitakere is helping to resolve”.

This passion of Lynette’s is well recognised within the sector. Recently she was awarded a Winston Churchill Scholarship which enabled her to do some research in Australia on innovative community and recreation programmes. “I came back buzzing with ideas” she says.

Lynette clearly identifies with her organisation’s motto of Lead. Enable. Strengthen. When asked if she had one piece of advice for future leaders she says “Do the Leadership NZ Programme as every day I am using what I have learned from there” and then pulls out a quote which she refers to often and that sums up a message she likes to pass on.

**What you do for yourself dies with you.
What you do for others and the world remains
and is immortal.**

Albert Pike

– Written by: Kimberly Rees,
June 2014



Tim Hamilton

Leadership NZ Alumnus (2008)

Since graduating from Leadership NZ's class of 2008 Tim Hamilton has been busy. Fresh out of the Leadership NZ Programme, in 2009 he achieved his goal of becoming CEO of a national sporting organisation, taking the helm of Basketball NZ.

As a kid, Tim was inspired by countless sports stars and of course his family. This inspiration still has ripple effects in his life today.

After two and half years with Basketball NZ, he set up his own business, worked as a consultant and then in December became CEO of the new Netball Waikato-Bay of Plenty Zone.

It's the sort of energy you expect from a sports enthusiast.

For Tim there's no two ways about it; the Leadership NZ experience was the most significant learning period to date for him. The experience didn't just offer the usual gems of improved listening, reflection and team work skills. It also helped break that comfort zone conundrum.

"I was comfortable in my bubble; I was confident in what I was doing and how I worked in my space. The Programme took me to the edge of that comfort. I thought 'far out, wow, this is challenging! In a good way of course! I think people can get a bit too comfortable.'"

Throughout the Programme, Tim found that his perspective on the world broadened. He became more interested in the problems faced both in New Zealand and on a global level.

Most importantly, it showed how he could step up in his leadership role. After all each leader performing to their best is how the world is changed.

Not only that, but the personal insights Leadership NZ prompted also confirmed to him that he was doing the right thing. It cemented his personal values and helped him become more forthright in standing up for his beliefs.

All these traits have come in useful for Tim in helping to build strong business relationships, and in a space such as his, these are the heart of the company.

Furthermore, "unknowingly I'd formed my own values but learning to express them was something that Leadership NZ developed. Now in my discussions and interactions, I know my values are there. So now I'm

conscious of how I can contribute to good decisions in my business setting."

Tim is also living out Leadership NZ's emphasis on community involvement through his determination to foster the volunteering spirit in young people.

“ ”

I was comfortable in my bubble; I was confident in what I was doing and how I worked in my space. The Programme took me to the edge of that comfort. I thought 'far out, wow, this is challenging!' In a good way of course! I think people can get a bit too comfortable.

"I really worry about communities in the future as I think volunteers are aging and that the younger generation is not fronting up to the challenges that will be even more demanding in the years to come. We have to think broadly about the future of sport and how both current and future volunteers relate to that."

Luckily, the most important thing Leadership NZ has provided Tim is strength in his vision and values. So he's well equipped for the fight for sport, and leadership's, future.

— **Written by: Verity Johnson,**
June 2013



Penny Hulse

Leadership NZ Alumnus (2008)

Since 2008 a lot has changed for Penny Hulse. When she graduated from the Leadership NZ Programme she was Deputy Mayor of Waitakere City Council.

Then the Auckland crew (Rodney, the Shore, Papakura, Franklin, Waitakere, Manukau, Auckland City and the Auckland Regional Council) all united into team super city and Penny found herself the Deputy Mayor of Auckland Council. And as if uniting the eight siblings under the one council wasn't enough to deal with, she also became a grandmother.

Even though it's been a few years since graduating from the Leadership NZ Programme, the experience was invaluable for Penny. The Programme had a long lasting influence. Even the greatest of leaders need encouragement and one of the experience's most rewarding gifts was the confidence boost. "I gained confidence in my role as a leader even though I've had no formal training for this role!"

Another one of Leadership NZ's unique features is that it brings such a diverse range of leaders together. "I found the interaction with the other leaders from so many walks of life invaluable." Among this talent pool Penny found she began to see just how many forms leadership can take. Regrettably we can't all be Batman but Leadership NZ makes a point to celebrate all leadership. "Leadership NZ allowed us all to explore the value for leadership at all levels." And not even just the formal sense, but the informal leadership which is just as integral to success.

And the benefits aren't just personal for Penny. The Leadership NZ experience has helped the council as well. "Leadership NZ helped me understand the importance of leadership through partnership" she says, which is useful for working with her fellow elected members. What's more the Leadership NZ experience helped shift the focus of Penny's meetings to emphasise the Council's founding principles. "It gave me the opportunity to focus on leadership rather than just 'chairing' or 'running' my committees."

Naturally the demands of being a Deputy Mayor require more than the mandatory morning cuppa and occasional boysenberry Tip Top. One of Penny's biggest challenges

since Leadership NZ has been grasping the new situation of working with so many politicians from the full political spectrum. To help her manage this Penny calls on some Leadership NZ teachings: "Concentrate on the issue you are dealing with, use everyone's skills to work together for a solution and don't get side tracked by personal agendas!" This, and of course the most important teaching from Leadership NZ "listen to your inner voice and trust your instincts!"



Concentrate on the issue you are dealing with, use everyone's skills to work together for a solution and don't get side tracked by personal agendas!

And this trust is so important. If Penny could meet herself from ten years ago she'd say trust that inner voice and trust that the community usually has the right answer. That and "relax a bit more!"

Even after she completed the Programme Penny still stays in touch, going to as many functions as she can. She also makes a point of carrying the Leadership NZ spirit of community involvement with her as a trustee of several community organisations, helping to run a monthly community market and of course all her community work for the council. If she had some advice for future leaders: "trust yourself, spend time with leaders you admire, and listen more than you speak." Wise words.

– Written by: Verity Johnson,
June 2013



Craig Churchill

Leadership NZ Alumnus (2010)

When Craig Churchill started the Leadership NZ Programme in 2010 he went in thinking it would be more about sharpening and adding to his existing leadership toolkit and that it would in some way make him better.

Well he was in for a shake-up and a journey of learning that continues today! He realised the Programme “was not about developing my corporate skill base. It challenged and stripped away my views on traditional leadership that I had until then thought to be okay.” The leaders who spoke on the Programme who inspired him were not “the traditional corporate” ones he expected on his radar. As a result he got a better understanding about New Zealand, its place in the world and what’s needed to make it better.

“ ”

It challenged and stripped away my views on traditional leadership that I had until then thought to be okay.

This has stood Craig in good stead as little did he know back then one of the greatest leadership challenges he would face would be the Canterbury earthquakes and the impact they would have on his team and business. “This had huge impact on our team and without a doubt some of the Leadership NZ experiences gained really added value ... things like bringing together cross functional groups to provide the best support to help our team and community, right down to intangible things like simply just being present, sitting down with people and listening.” Craig believes he listens more, and is more empathetic and engaging as a leader. Those around him have noticed changes.

Craig’s glass-half-full mindset is evident as he explains that the earthquakes provided a great opportunity to think outside the square and reset the business model more to the needs of a changing environment. “It’s not often you get a chance to sit down with a clean sheet of paper and do the things you have always talked about doing to your business.” Whilst it’s been a tough two years he is pleased to see the benefits coming through. “Our people and business are much stronger as a result.”

Perhaps one of the biggest impacts of Leadership NZ on Craig has been his “broadening” both inside and outside of his day job. The Leadership NZ Programme influenced him to think outside of his traditional corporate sphere and what it takes to be a leader in NZ, to open himself up to leadership styles and situations that are outside his comfort zone. “To think about what I give back as a leader and not just what I take.” Craig is now more connected to leaders outside of his industry which obviously benefits his organisation.

Working with community and iwi leaders really challenged some of Craig’s traditional business leadership assumptions. Things like having long-term plans and goals beyond traditional business cycles, the value of delivering more for less, having passion about your cause and having success measured in the actual difference you make, not what you earn. “The funny thing is you don’t actually realise this until you experience it.”

Community involvement is central to Leadership NZ’s ethos and Craig has enjoyed working with a number of not-for-profit groups. Currently he is the joint Chair of DARE Foundation, a Canterbury youth life skills programme. When asked what advice he has for future leaders, it’s no surprise when Craig says... “easy, spend some time supporting a community group/NFP, your skills are more valued and appreciated than you think. The rewards will exceed your expectations and will outweigh what you think now were your greatest leadership achievements. The more diverse the organisation you support, the greater the learning and satisfaction.”

**— Written by: Judy Whiteman,
June 2013**



Peter Fenton

Leadership NZ Alumnus (2006)

Back in 2006 as Peter Fenton completed the Leadership NZ Programme, travelling around the world for work was probably not on his radar to the extent that it is today. He had just been appointed as Chief Executive of Postal Services at New Zealand Post and ahead of him were a few challenges.

The Leadership NZ Programme came at a very important time for him in his own leadership development. “The broadening of perspectives, the growing needs and issues of the different sectors and communities was of real value to me personally.”

Peter led a very large postal modernisation at New Zealand Post – new mail processing automation, marketing, new post codes, site closures and significant employee redundancies. “Leadership NZ had taught me that through the huge change process our employees needed confidence not on the ‘what’, ‘when’ or even the ‘how’, but rather the ‘why’ and the destination. The response of the New Zealand Post people was fantastic. By 2010 in terms of productivity, customer service, employee engagement and improving safety, New Zealand Post was a world-leading postal business.” The story behind the ‘why’ is essential.

“ ” *Keep reading, keep listening, keep open, keep learning and keep growing.*

Today Peter works at New Zealand Trade & Enterprise (NZTE), having joined at the start of 2011. He leads a New Zealand based customer team supporting New Zealand businesses to grow internationally with market development and capability building services. International travel is no stranger to Peter with this interview being conducted remotely as he travelled through South America.

“Leadership NZ reinforced for me the importance of relationships – people do business with people and this is a vital element in our work at NZTE.”

Peter continues to be a great advocate for Leadership NZ, continually promoting the Programme

to leaders in his teams. One of his leadership team at NZTE is on this year’s leadership Programme and two of his New Zealand Post team have completed it in prior years.

When asked what is the single most important thing he learnt from Leadership NZ, Peter believes it is “the importance of storytelling by leaders. Listening to the great range of terrific programme presenters – it wasn’t what they had achieved but rather their personal challenges, insights and reflections and their sharing of those personal stories that was most powerful.”

Peter has his own stories to tell from his leadership journey so far. The Programme continually reinforced to him that readers are leaders and his advice to future leaders is to keep reading, keep listening, keep open, keep learning and keep growing.

When asked to reflect on 10 years ago, Peter jokingly says he should have bought shares in Apple! His serious response, however, harks back to one of the themes running through his career: “To work harder at building, investing and maintaining personal and business networks.” People, their stories and relationships are what make the world go round.

**– Written by: Judy Whiteman,
June 2013**



Hilary Sumpter

Leadership NZ Alumnus (2010)

Leadership has so many guises and being involved in governance of not-for-profit (NFP) boards is just one of these. For me this is a valuable contribution where people can have positive influence in areas that may directly affect your local community at a grass roots level, or on a broader and even international scale.

After participating in the Leadership NZ Programme in 2010 I was reminded of the importance of contributing to NFP boards and supporting those who are addressing issues or striving to strengthen their communities. The Programme reinforced the leadership skills I have which could be valuable to other organisations, bringing objectivity to the private and public sector and extensive knowledge for other not for profits.

When I left my senior executive role late last year I had consciously created the space to take on more board appointments. I was introduced to Springboard through Leadership NZ in 2010 and then joined Appoint (Better Boards) to prospect for board appointments.

Subsequently over the past year I have been appointed to three different NFP boards, all of which were listed on the Appoint website. Appoint was really useful in terms of being able to do due diligence on the organisations I was interested in. I've had considerable previous governance experience and I've learnt the key aspect to understand is the potential time involved, outside of attending meetings.

“ ” *The Programme reinforced the leadership skills I have which could be valuable to other organisations, bringing objectivity to the private and public sector.*

There is no doubting the commitment required for NFP boards; it's as important as any paid directorship and by making the commitment you are accountable to others – fellow board members, staff and volunteers, stakeholders and supporters. It's not something to take on lightly and there can be a fair bit of work involved, but it's also extremely rewarding. For me I have to know I can add value and manage all I have taken on so no one is compromised.

I've aligned my board appointments with my interests so I bring passion as well as skills. This for me has meant I am now on the board of Outward Bound New Zealand Trust, Akarana Rugby League Zone and the Leadership NZ board as the Alumni Representative.

The network of Leadership NZ brought Springboard and Appoint to my attention and I have developed greater networks through these organisations, all of which add further value to any governance roles I am involved in, both in terms of networks, but also support. It's helpful to be able to benchmark yourself in terms of ongoing professional development, but also to have others to go to in terms of queries and concerns.

It's great to see Leadership NZ reaching its 10th year with the corresponding nearly 250 alumni. The organisation is reaching new levels of maturity, which is seeing it collaborate effectively in areas where there is mutual value, such as with Appoint. This is a positive alignment that sits well with both organisations' values and is one which complements and builds on the work the alumni have taken part in during the Programme. It's also a positive long-term influence of Leadership NZ, which is the true value of the organisation, enabling sustained positive impact through its reach.

It's important to me to be able to contribute to community in the broadest sense of the word and for me this means being involved at governance level. This was a key message for me after participating in the Programme in 2010 and it's an ongoing long-term stance.

**– Written by: Hilary Sumpter,
June 2013**



Ngaroimata Reid

Leadership NZ Alumnus (2007)

My congratulations to Leadership NZ for 10 years of leadership building and development and the positive impact this has had on individuals, whanau, hapu, iwi, businesses, organisations and communities.

Ka tangi te Tukaiaia kei te moana,
ko Ngatiwai kei te moana e haere ana
Ka tangi te Tukaiaia kei te tuawhenua,
ko Ngatiwai kei te tuawhenua e haere ana
Ko Te Whanau a Rangiwhakaahu te hapu,
Ko Te Whanau a Rangiwhakaahu te marae

I was really thrilled to be invited to participate in the 2007 Programme. I was a very different person back then, but I clearly remember the moment that I acknowledged that I was a leader when I listened to Sir Bob Harvey tell his story. Although our journeys have been very different there were common threads. I remember thinking that I was just as good as Bob was.

From that moment I think leadership took on a whole new meaning for me and I continued to develop my own leadership style throughout my Leadership NZ year. I became aware of the influence that I had and how I could use that influence within my whanau and community. I learnt new leadership skills – reflection being one, something which I routinely practise.

The past six years have been filled with some great lows and even greater highs. Taking care of my health and wellbeing was one of the first things I tackled as a new leader. I wrote about my efforts in a monthly column in a city wide health newsletter and through this I was able to influence others to engage in fitness. This went on to me developing a partnership with the Unitec School of Sport, which supported my training to run in the 2012 New York Marathon. During this time I spoke at public events, sharing the stage with one of New Zealand's top endurance runners. She spoke about her journey and I spoke about mine. Many people have told me how I have inspired them to reach their fitness goals.

I have received great satisfaction out of supporting friends, whanau, colleagues and organisations to develop and grow through my consultancy business. In 2011 my business success was acknowledged when I received the Dame Mira Szaszy Alumni Maori Leadership Award for Excellence in Maori Business from the University of Auckland – a great moment; my parents would have been proud.

This year has been no different, and I have been given another leadership opportunity and have become a member of the Australia New Zealand Academy of Management and the International Indigenous Women's Forum (Foro Internacional de Mujeres Indignas). In May I went to New York and participated in the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the UN Indigenous Global Women's Caucus, led a delegation from the International Indigenous Global Leadership School in talks with the UN Special Rapporteur and chaired a panel on education.

“ ”

Although our journeys have been very different there were common threads. I remember thinking that I was just as good as Bob was.

In 2007 I said I would start my PhD studies which I have commenced this year focused on Indigenous Women's Leadership. I can see my international profile growing and work increasing but having said that I remain committed to my whanau, marae, my voluntary work with the Maori Women's Welfare League, work with Maori Radio and marathon running.

Leadership NZ has been a game changer for me, it has absolutely led me to a life in leadership – and that's okay with me.

– **Written by: Ngaroimata Reid,**
June 2013



Adrian Wimmers

Leadership NZ Alumnus (2009)

Adrian Wimmers has a passion for making a positive difference for New Zealand through the work that he does, and in 2009 his passion for his work was solidified by the Leadership NZ Programme.

Prior to the Programme, Adrian worked for KPMG in the UK, the Netherlands and most recently seven years in New Zealand advising the Government on a range of financial and commercial issues.

More specifically, he was focusing on connecting the public, private, and NGO sectors to create a more effective national system for improvement, based on measuring effectiveness of programmes and having success as the incentive for financial support.

The Leadership NZ Programme showed Adrian the potential of his ideas and gave him the confidence to take the next step in his career.

“Leadership NZ provided me the opportunity to look at what I was doing and actually realise that it had merit to really keep pushing in this direction,” said Adrian.

“ *I try to be at the front edge of disruptive change and it's because I really believe that we can do better as a country.*

Adrian was nominated for partnership at KPMG at the end of his Leadership NZ year and became a partner at the end of 2010.

“For me, I had my epiphany moment about halfway through the year where I realised that the only person that was limiting me from stepping up to the next stage in my career was me. It was just this moment of reflection when I realised my firm has put me on this because they're looking for me to step up and looking for me to become a leader in the things that I do and the only one who's nervous about this process is me, not them, they're waiting for it.”

He is now the head of KPMG's infrastructure and projects group, and leads KPMG's financial and commercial advice to the public sector.

“I see my job as helping the Government make better decisions.”

Adrian went on to work on one of the first public-private business cases in 2009/2010, to be the financial commercial advisor to the Ministry of Education on the first Public Private Partnership to close in New Zealand, as well as leading a team on the first social bond in New Zealand.

“Leadership NZ got me to a place where I was certain I was in the right place... I was incredibly pleased to find myself working in a partnership at a large company that thinks the same way I do. That people want to make a difference in this country.”

Adrian is in a unique position, collaborating large corporate companies with small social businesses, combining his advanced business skills with his passion for making a positive difference.

“I try to be at the front edge of disruptive change and it's because I really believe that we can do better as a country – that we can get better at measuring and managing the right things.”

Outside of KPMG, Adrian is also involved in projects through Victoria University, as well as a member on the board of Inspiring Stories Trust.

“To be a part of an organisation that is purely focused on inspiring young New Zealanders and focusing on the eco-system of social enterprise and social entrepreneurship through just storytelling and inspiration, that's a wonderful place to be. And I just pinch myself on how lucky I am to be a part of that. And combined with what I'm paid for, it just adds up to a package where I feel like I'm helping to make New Zealand a better place.”

– Written by: Rebecca Savory,
December 2013



Meredith Youngson

Leadership NZ Alumnus (2006)

Meredith Youngson sat in the Leadership NZ audience in 2006 and heard from a speaker who had given up his job and financial stability in order to follow his passion. This struck a chord with her and since then that is exactly what she has done.

Moving with her husband Robin in early 2012 from their Swanson home in west Auckland and re-locating to beautiful beach-town Raglan has been the disruption she was looking for in her life.

Meredith and Robin left their previous jobs in Auckland to launch their new worldwide movement, Hearts in Healthcare, bringing compassion back into the health system.

"We go where the passion is and help it flourish," said Meredith, discussing their online network for healthcare workers.

“ ” *It feels like you've set yourself free... I think it probably changed [my path] more than I ever realised at the time.*

Prior to this, Meredith had worked for 17 years as a microbiologist, taking time off while having children, before becoming heavily involved in a number of community-development projects in Swanson.

Ready for a new challenge, Meredith was inspired by people she met through Leadership NZ who were following their passion and loving it, saying the Programme had a big effect on her future.

"It feels like you've set yourself free... I think it probably changed [my path] more than I ever realised at the time."

The Leadership NZ Programme taught Meredith three important things about herself and her leadership style.

She started to recognise and value her own style of leadership. "I'm a servant leader. I'm a nurturer and I love looking after people," said Meredith, preferring to work within a group opposed to out-the-front.

She also learnt how important it is to stay grounded in your family, and being a leader didn't mean your family life had to suffer.

Thirdly, you should be doing a job you love.

"I've been really lucky. I loved almost everything I've done. What you love changes over time, you don't always have

to be stuck in that same thing all time... I'm not the type of person who wants to repeat her life over and over again, I like to try new things."

The Programme provided her with the confidence to follow her passion and fulfil her potential.

"I think Leadership NZ really opened that door to me understanding myself which gave me a lot more satisfaction and a lot less stress."

All of this experience and learning has led her to Hearts for Healthcare, founding the project with Robin who was previously a consultant anaesthetist.

"At the moment the health system is based on disease and problems. We would rather it was based on wellness of patients and staff; it's about caring for people. It's not about re-inventing, it's about connecting the people who are already doing that.

"We've found there are so many people in healthcare all around the world who are feeling burnt out and isolated and aren't satisfied with their jobs. Connecting two of those people in the same hospital who may not have even met each other before is just about a human connection."

Her positive outlook on life means she defines herself by what she is for not against, attracting likeminded people and ideas.

"If you know what you're for then you're living to your true values and you're living an authentic life and it's so much more satisfying and actually a lot more effective."

Meredith has a clear vision of her own identity and this is reflected in everything she does.

"I guess disruptive leadership is really about following your passion, not being stuck in either your own paradigm or someone else's... It's about not following a conventional path."

**— Written by: Rebecca Savory,
December 2013**



Alistair Kwun

Leadership NZ Alumnus (2006)

In 2006, Alistair Kwun was self-employed and searching for who he was and where he was heading. The Leadership NZ Programme was the perfect combination of “right place, right time” for him.

During a year of soul-searching it gave him a sense of grounding, shaped the direction he was heading in and helped him discover what he wanted to do next.

“It was very much a catalyst for me to discover who I am,” said Alistair, acknowledging the Programme as a key part of his identity and current projects.

“The Programme was a gift to me, and a very generous one. I had no idea what leadership really meant until I completed this Programme.”

Alistair left the Programme with a new direction as well as three key messages he now carries through his community projects.

“To me the Programme is centered around innovation, making things happen and generosity of spirit... It’s inspired me to give back to the communities which I serve.”

As well as this, he learnt the importance of working in a team of diverse personalities and creating environments that bring out the best in people.

Alistair was inspired to embark on a number of “passion projects” that he ran outside of his professional life as an events manager for SkyCity.

Identifying himself as a cultural innovator, he wanted to explore what it meant to be Chinese in New Zealand and his own cultural identity.

“*To me the Programme is centered around innovation, making things happen and generosity of spirit.*”

He became heavily involved in the New Zealand Chinese Association, shaping the annual Leadership Development conference for Chinese New Zealanders.

Driven by his own experience discovering his identity through the Leadership NZ Programme, he wanted to pay-it-forward and provide other people with the same opportunity.

“I feel quite privileged to be able to give back like this, I think that’s one of the things that gives me the most satisfaction

out of the work I do in the community. It’s the idea of sharing knowledge but contributing to helping people find who they are and realising their potential.”

The Leadership Development conference had a snowball effect to many other projects for the New Zealand Chinese Association including the Banana Conference, a cultural storytelling platform to share Chinese stories with New Zealanders of all ethnicities.

“Traditionally a lot of the cultural storytelling is celebrated within individual communities. The environment we’ve created is we’ve invited non-Chinese to come and learn about us together. Through that we’ve created a dialogue and a stronger sense of belonging for the people who come along and share with us.”

Following from this came Future Dragonz, a project focusing on the well-being of future generations and a network for young professionals, based around the new ways of thinking.

“There’s a sense of disruption coming through. What we’re about is what I would call cultural innovation, we’re not afraid to challenge the traditional. Through that, new stories emerge.

“We have grown up with certain stereotypes that we’re trying to challenge... The programmes that we’ve created are about breaking up those stereotypes, and that’s really important to me. [We are] challenging what it means to be Chinese in New Zealand.”

The programmes aim to disrupt the traditional practice of “work, work, work” and telling fresh and contemporary stories.

“It’s about caring for others, and it is about standing up for what you believe in,” said Alistair.

Alistair hopes that some of the people he is working with in the New Zealand Chinese Association will continue on to also take part in the Leadership NZ Programme, just as he had the Programme recommended to him by 2005 Alumni Gia Nghi Phung.

— **Written by: Rebecca Savory,**
December 2013



Deidre Otene

Leadership NZ Alumnus (2008)

For Deidre Otene, 2008 was a turning point in her life taking part in the Leadership NZ Programme and since then she has embarked on a new journey of passion and a dream job.

*Ko Maungataniwha te Maunga
Ko Taapapa te Awa
Ko Ngatokimatawhaurua te waka
Ko Rahiri te Tupuna
Ko Poroa te Tupuna
Ko Hokianga Whakapou karakia te Moana
Ko Mangamuka te Marae
Ko Ngapuhi te Whare tupuna
Puhi Kai Ariki
Puhi Moana Ariki
Puhi Taniwha Rau
Ko Kohatutaka me Te Uri Mahoe nga Hapu
Ko Ngahuhi me Te Rarawa nga Iwi
Ko Deidre Otene ahau
Ko Tegen Atarangi Stillwell raua ko
Temanamai I nga Rangi Stillwell toku tamariki*

Prior to the Programme, Deidre had worked her way up through multiple government department jobs, being recognised for her skills with many promotions along the way.

Starting in Work and Income as a case manager and most recently working as a Youth Offending Teams coordinator for Manukau City Council, she has had a fair amount of experience with helping people.

However it wasn't until she joined the Leadership NZ Programme that she discovered where her true passion for helping people sat and how she could use her skills to make this passion both a reality and a career.

"I will admit that the Programme was actually life-changing for me, not just on a career level but on a personal level as well," said Deidre.

"The Programme content, in particular the guest speakers who I heard from and engaged with, as well as the programme participants allowed me to explore what really was important to me and what direction I really did want to take."

Following the Programme, she embarked on her new journey by moving to Queensland, Australia and working for

The Benevolent Society and indigenous communities. Despite loving her work there, she returned to New Zealand in 2011 to realise her dreams in her own community.

"I was given the confidence to take the risk and plunge into my dream career and to do that in my dream setting, which is where I have worked my way to where I am now."

Deidre joined a team of Manurewa community groups all working towards similar goals for their community, and is now based at the Manurewa Marae as the project manager for Taiohi Whai Oranga, a youth health initiative built on holistic needs of young people and their families.

Hoping to empower youth, empower the community and disrupt and overcome stereotypes, Deidre said, "It's about taking risks and challenging the norms and working outside those norms to create positive change."

“ ”

They turned the light on for me that when you're passionate about something you can actually make it your career, and achieve the passions that have been placed in your heart.

Inspired in 2008 by the likes of guest speakers Judge Joe Williams, Bob Harvey and Sir Paul Reeves, Deidre has found great satisfaction in now working within her community and for her community.

"They turned the light on for me that when you're passionate about something you can actually make it your career, and achieve the passions that have been placed in your heart. That's what I'm doing now."

As well as working full-time in her project manager role and supporting her family, Deidre is also studying for a conjoint Law and Arts degree through the University of Auckland part-time.

Deidre was awarded the Vodafone World of Difference scholarship for 2013, allowing her to continue her inspiring journey.

– **Written by: Rebecca Savory,**
December 2013



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