



## NEXT Foundation Announces First Four Investments

AUCKLAND. 15 DECEMBER 2014.

NEXT Foundation today announced its first four investments in the fields of the environment and education. Selected from 287 submissions, the four initiatives each have the potential to be transformative on a large scale – in regenerating New Zealand’s native birdlife on the mainland; improving the quality of our rivers; strengthening leadership in schools, and improving the digital literacy of our teachers.

NEXT Foundation has made an initial commitment of approximately \$5m across the four projects. Each has a different timeframe and some funding is subject to jointly agreed milestones.

Chris Liddell, Chair NEXT Foundation said “We are excited to announce our first four initiatives that we believe can make a permanent contribution to future generations of New Zealanders. We are delighted to be supporting projects that have huge aspirations, and are also run by inspirational Kiwis looking to make a difference to real problems.”

Two of the partners selected are for the Environment:

- **Zero Invasive Predators (ZIP)**  
ZIP is an initiative that will enhance our native bird life through innovative methods of predator control. It is focused on developing and trialing systems to permanently remove invasive predators – rats, stoats and possums – from large areas of mainland New Zealand and secure them against reinvasion. Non-native predators kill 25 million native birds every year. ZIP will be led by conservation engineer Alastair Bramley. The Department of Conservation together with Gareth Morgan and Sam Morgan are investment partners with NEXT Foundation.
- **Te Awaroa**  
Te Awaroa, *A Thousand Rivers* will be a catalyst and support for communities that want to work together to make their river healthy. Responding to the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment’s 2013 report finding that water quality was ‘poor’ or ‘fair’ at 80% of monitored river sites, Dame Anne Salmond has created Te Awaroa with the view to “treating our rivers as Taonga not toilets.” NEXT has supported Te Awaroa with incubation funding to complete an ecosystem review and develop an action plan.

Two of the partners selected are for Education:

- **The Springboard Trust**

Springboard Trust enhances leadership and strategic planning skills of school principals, leading to more effective management of schools and most importantly better learning outcomes for students. Led by Ian Narev, Chair of Springboard Trust and a passionate Kiwi advocate for education for all New Zealanders, the Trust's 'Strategic Leadership for Principals' programme has been completed by 90 school principals in New Zealand and with NEXT Foundation support plans to expand significantly over the next few years.

- **The Mind Lab by Unitec**

The Mind Lab by Unitec is dedicated to enhancing digital and collaborative learning skills for teachers in New Zealand. Technology has fundamentally changed how we communicate, share and learn. Frances Valentine, Founder and Chair of The Mind Lab by Unitec has pioneered a postgraduate qualification for educators that is upskilling teachers to implement new digital and collaborative learning practices, and NEXT Foundation is delighted to be able to provide Scholarships to reduce the cost for 800 teachers to complete the programme.

Bill Kermode, CEO NEXT Foundation said "Regenerating New Zealand's native birdlife and healthy rivers are at the heart of NEXT Foundation's priorities for better environmental and conservation outcomes for future New Zealanders. And our first two educational initiatives supporting Principals and teachers derives from our belief that these are the two most impactful groups in the sector. We are also funding rigorous research and evaluation studies for both of the education initiatives, as we view this as a critical component of success for them."

The four projects were selected by the NEXT Foundation Board from a total of 287 submissions in July this year, after an evaluation process run against clear criteria and a thorough due diligence process. NEXT Foundation is continuing to work with other initiatives from this year's application process that it hopes to be able to support in 2015.

"This is 'first steps' for NEXT Foundation," said Kermode. "The areas of environment and education these investments are in are important, but there are others that we look forward to becoming involved in in our future application processes."

### **About NEXT Foundation**

NEXT Foundation was launched in March and will invest \$100 million over the next 10 years to create a legacy of environmental and educational excellence for the benefit of future generations of New Zealanders. NEXT Foundation will make commitments of approximately \$5-15 million per annum, to be distributed as part of an annual process, to one to four projects over their project lives.

For more information and to view video of the initiatives please visit - [www.nextfoundation.org.nz](http://www.nextfoundation.org.nz)

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