



# NEXT STORIES

**NEXT**  
**FOUNDATION**  
Investing in our land, our people

# Storytelling as a tool for reflection

BY BILL KERMODE

Kia ora koutou and welcome to the second issue of the NEXT Stories.

NEXT turned five earlier this year, which represents the half way point of its ten year life as a spend down foundation. Since then I've been reflecting on the NEXT journey, and in particular the importance of reflection, learning and storytelling. At NEXT we made the call early on to share our stories as we went - including how we approach philanthropy, what was working and what we are learning.

NEXT has a strategic philanthropic approach, which means we focus in specific areas, partner around a shared goal (sometimes called collective impact), and are interested in shifting the dial on key issues, such as predator free New Zealand and educational leadership. It also means we are a learning organisation and are committed to sharing what we are learning along the way.

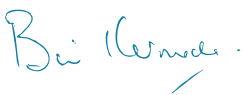
In this second NEXT Stories issue we have four articles, including NEXT's approach to governance (internally and with our partners); how we select grant partners; and our thinking when it comes to sustainability - why it matters, what it means and how NEXT approaches this.

The fourth article shares the voices of our grant partners and their experience of being in relationship with NEXT. Over the last five years we have commissioned two independent evaluations of NEXT from a grant partner perspective. Our experience has been that providing grantees with a confidential forum to provide feedback gives us valuable insights, increases equity in the relationship and hopefully keeps us humble! These insights have helped us refine course in a bunch of areas and strengthen how we operate.

I hope that our experience, and in particular what we've been learning, may be useful to others and may even inspire more strategic philanthropy as a tool for impact. Thank you to everyone involved in the creation of these stories - your time and efforts are valued, I appreciate your contribution.

Feel free to share the NEXT Stories, and as always I welcome your feedback.

Ngā mihi nui,



Bill Kermode  
CEO NEXT Foundation



## Acknowledgements

Ngā mihi nui and many thanks to Annette Culpan who independently researches and writes these papers on behalf of NEXT. Annette's passion for chronicling NEXT's journey in as accurate and engaging a manner as possible has been the powerful force driving the NEXT Stories. Thanks also to the various grant partners who participated in interviews in 2016 and 2019. Participants were thoughtful, generous and honest in sharing their experiences, perspectives and wisdom. Their knowledge, reflections and insights are valued and provide a foundation for affirming practice, learning and strengthening. And a special mention to Alison Sykora for sub-editing and Ben Birks for peer reviewing the 2016 paper.

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The kākāpō is a large nocturnal, flightless, green parrot with a distinctive owl-like face and a waddling gait. While they cannot fly they climb well.

It is a critically endangered species, with only around 200 alive today. The Department of Conservation undertakes a major effort to protect the species, through its Kākāpō Recovery programme.

*Photo credit: Stephen Jacquier*

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