



NEXT Champions

Giving encourages giving. On top of the generosity of our founders we are also privileged to have many other generous New Zealanders giving NEXT their time, expertise and experience to help achieve our goals in education, the environment, and strategic philanthropy. We call these people our Champions – they are a critical part of how NEXT works to provide more than just financial support to for-purpose organisations.

We are extremely grateful for the Champions contributions, and we know the organisations they each support feel the same way. In this series we profile some of our Champions and discover what makes them tick . . .



INTRODUCING ANDREW POOLE

As a child, Andrew Poole used to devour books by conservationist Gerald Durrell. Now he gets the best of several worlds. His day job is as CEO of top NZ law firm MinterEllisonRuddWatts. He also Chairs the Rotoroa Island Trust, a predator free wildlife sanctuary in the Hauraki Gulf that is part of the NEXT environmental portfolio – and finds time to be part of the NEXT education kaihautū, as a trustee for another NEXT investment, The Education Hub.

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1. What is your relationship with NEXT and how did that come about?

A few years ago I was introduced to NEXT Chief Executive Bill Kermod through my day job as a lawyer. I had recently finished a lengthy term as Chief Executive and Partner at a major law firm and so I agreed to assist NEXT with a project to see if NEXT could put together a world class, leading tertiary conservation college based partly on Rotoroa Island. That involved discussions over time with a number of parties including Auckland Zoo, the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust and Massey University. I have always been a strong environmentalist and had devoured the books of Gerald Durrell who had established the Durrell Trust and a world renowned zoo on Jersey. So it was a wonderful project to be associated with.

Independently, the then Chair of NEXT, Barrie Brown, had been given my name by someone outside NEXT as a possible trustee of Rotoroa Island Trust.

Winding forward a few months, I ended up deeply engaged in the conservation college proposal (which sadly did not proceed), a trustee then the Chair of RIT and also engaged in another project to see if we could establish another tertiary institute in Taranaki with local leadership as its focus.

Although I returned to full time engagement in the law firm world in mid 2018, I have very happily retained my involvement with NEXT. I remain the chair of RIT, sit on the Education Kaihautū and am NEXT's representative (and a founding trustee) for The Education Hub which receives some of its funding from NEXT.

2. What are the ways that you engage with the Foundation and with the wider NEXT community?

As well as the regular commitments Chairing the Rotoroa Island Trust and as a trustee of The Education Hub, I also attend NEXT events and have discovered a great community of like-minded people.

3. Why do you engage with NEXT?

Simply put, I love it. I admire the work that NEXT does on the back of the phenomenal generosity of the Plowmans. My involvement in both education and environment is a world away from my day job and has opened my eyes to completely different sectors and challenges in NZ. Also, the NEXT community is a wonderful community of people most of whom give their time voluntarily. I know probably 25–30

people whom I had never met before 2016 and they are all great people. I hope to be involved for many decades.

4. What has changed for you as a result of your relationship with the Foundation?

NEXT has given me a vehicle to express my deep passion for the environment in particular and hopefully make a bit of a difference with my Rotoroa involvement. It is going to be wonderful to reintroduce the youth education programme to the island. It will allow kids from a wide range of backgrounds to understand how important our environment is and hopefully alter their and their families' understanding of the interrelationship between people and the environment.

5. Has NEXT influenced your behaviour in regards to generosity and making a difference in the world?

Yes it has. Both my wife, Rachel, and I have always been members of an environmental organisation and we support some of their campaigns financially. We met as members of the Auckland University Tramping Club in the 80s and so nature is where we are happy. Some former AUTC members have adopted the Iris Burn valley just off the Kepler Track and make visits a few times a year to set and monitor predator traps. We don't have the time (or probably the fitness!) to go on those trips but we are lucky to be able to support the work financially. We now make an annual donation which provides some of the core funding to enable work to continue.

6. Has NEXT supported you to make a difference in your own areas of passion or interest?

Yes. I now see NEXT– if NEXT agrees– as a core part of what I'd like to be involved in over the coming years.

7. What's one learning in strategic philanthropy for you?

That by taking a business-like approach, funding is much more likely to achieve a good outcome.

8. What is the future you dream of for NZ for generations to come?

A predator free environment is an almighty goal and it would be wonderful to hear the birdsong restored, as the national parks are sadly so quiet. And if we can fix education, which will require an almighty effort from government and the private sector, then we will have created the path out of poverty and towards success.