



# NEXT STORIES



Successes, learning and the future

Reflections at sunset

‘Whāia te iti kahurangi,  
ki te tuohu koe, me he  
maunga teitei’

*Seek the treasure that you value  
most dearly, if you bow your head,  
let it be to a lofty mountain*

Annette and Neal Plowman on Rotoroa Island, in front of the Chris Booth ‘Kaitiaki’ sculpture. Photo credit Andrew Poole.



## Overview

- Annette and Neal Plowman are the founders of NEXT, a ten-year spend down foundation, with a strategic focus on the environment and education in Aotearoa New Zealand
- At sunset, the Foundation has supported the rise of the nationwide predator free movement; strengthened strategic leadership and teaching practices within the education system; championed a community of outstanding leaders; and brought strategic philanthropy to life within Aotearoa
- Change has been made possible and accelerated by working with community, iwi, government, philanthropy, investors, valued friends\* and many more
- Learning and reflection have been central to the NEXT approach
- The Foundation has captured and shared its case studies and stories, and evidence-based giving as practiced by NEXT is becoming increasingly common in New Zealand

\*For detailed information on NEXT friends and the NEXT community, refer to NEXT Stories on these topics [www.nextfoundation.org.nz/category/next-stories](http://www.nextfoundation.org.nz/category/next-stories)

'Our objective was to leave a legacy for future New Zealanders in the areas of environment and education. We believe NEXT has achieved that and we have been fortunate to support outstanding New Zealanders and outstanding initiatives. Bill and the team have done a fantastic job of building a strong, influential, and engaged community united behind a common vision – making a lasting contribution to our land and our people.'

Chris Liddell  
FOUNDING NEXT CHAIR

'We had a very committed philanthropist through NEXT and the Plowman's, our objective and intent around predator free was aligned and we have had big success as a result. The partnership with NEXT allowed us to move at a manner and pace we wouldn't have been able to alone. NEXT has provided the building blocks, that now with the will of everybody including the Crown, we can go on to deliver an entire predator free Aotearoa New Zealand.'

Mike Slater, former Deputy Director General Operations DOC



Katie the kiwi being relocated on Taranaki Mouna after wandering out of the protected area.  
Photo credit Taranaki Kiwi Trust.

# A legacy for land and people

Ten years ago, Annette and Neal Plowman established the NEXT Foundation. Building on their early generosity, NEXT set out to invest in transformative, inspirational projects that would catalyse and accelerate positive system change for Aotearoa New Zealand.

NEXT has committed to this approach, investing in a select number of initiatives, and providing them with multi-year financial and non-financial support. The Foundation has targeted high performance organisations that are transformational, inspirational, and business-like. And when those organisations haven't existed, NEXT has partnered with others and built them from the ground up.

At sunset, NEXT's \$100 million spend down fund leaves a significant legacy for the land and people of New Zealand, including:

- The rise of the predator free movement nationally
- Strengthening leadership and backing innovation and improved teaching practices within the education system
- Championing outstanding leaders, including via NEXT Fellowships\*
- Building the NEXT community\*: a cross-sector and purpose-focused group of people who care for New Zealand
- Enlivening strategic philanthropy within Aotearoa

**\*For detailed information on the Fellowships and NEXT community, refer to NEXT Stories on these topics [www.nextfoundation.org.nz/category/next-stories](http://www.nextfoundation.org.nz/category/next-stories)**

'Strategic philanthropy is about a shared approach across institutions and people, for a common cause. In business, your strategy is ideally yours alone from a competitive perspective. In philanthropy, if your strategy is yours alone, it will almost certainly fail.'

Bill Kermode  
NEXT FOUNDATION

'We wouldn't have got out of the starting blocks without NEXT. They brokered instrumental relationships, shared business acumen and supported us to engage partners and funders.'

James Willcocks  
PREDATOR FREE WELLINGTON

'We always took the view that our contribution was more than just about money. That approach started with restoring Rotoroa Island and has developed from there. We have been willing to roll up our sleeves and get involved. Through Bill and the NEXT community we have worked with projects and their teams, providing financial, management and governance support. Our kaihautū (or navigators) like Margaret Bendall, Devon McLean, Jan Hania, Bridget Best, Frank Janssen, Mike Ferrand, Andrew Poole and others have directly inputted into the projects and made an incredible contribution.'

Chris Liddell  
FOUNDING NEXT CHAIR

# Predator free New Zealand

Being predator free is a matter of national importance for New Zealand. Aotearoa has one of the most remarkable ecosystems in the world. As an isolated archipelago for 80 million years, New Zealand is home to a cornucopia of unique ecological assets – including thousands of endemic species. The natural world is intrinsic to tangata whenua, national identity and the economy.

Introduced mammalian predators are the primary cause of damage to endemic plant and animal life (including the killing of millions of birds every year), so with the counsel of Sir Rob Fenwick, NEXT set its sights on a predator free New Zealand. Eradicating the three main introduced predators – rats, stoats, and possums – became NEXT's north star for the environment.

Building on the early generosity of Annette and Neal Plowman, NEXT has supported many high performing organisations working towards the goal of making Aotearoa predator free. Over time the work has stepped up – from island to mainland, and from sole funded to public-private partnerships. The mahi has also centred on research and development (R&D) and embraced the urban challenge. At every step, NEXT has brought a learning mindset to improve its contribution.

An early scan of activity in the predator free area revealed that systemic shifts were needed. While there was much goodwill and work being undertaken, it was often reactive, small scale and lacking overarching coordination or vision. Project management skills, investable propositions and R&D were needed. Even more importantly, there was an opportunity to shift mindsets and move beyond the possibility of predator free islands to build belief that eradication is achievable on the mainland. Overarching this, a social campaign and movement was required.



Predator Free Wellington is on a mission for Pōneke to become the world's first predator free capital city. Photo credit Ian Robertson.



The Perth Valley in South Westland is part of the Predator Free South Westland project area. Photo credit Peter Young.

## Next supported predator free initiatives

- Project Janszoon in Abel Tasman National Park [janszoon.org](http://janszoon.org)
- Rotoroa Island [rotoroa.org.nz](http://rotoroa.org.nz)
- Taranaki Mouna [taranakimouna.nz](http://taranakimouna.nz)
- Te Manahuna Aoraki [temanahunaoraki.org](http://temanahunaoraki.org)
- Zero Invasive Predators [zip.org.nz](http://zip.org.nz)
- Predator Free South Westland [predatorfreesouthwestland.nz](http://predatorfreesouthwestland.nz)
- Predator Free Wellington [pfw.org.nz](http://pfw.org.nz)
- NEXT predator free community champion [pfw.org.nz](http://pfw.org.nz)
- Cacophony [cacophony.org.nz](http://cacophony.org.nz)

For further information and videos see [www.nextfoundation.org.nz/investments/environment](http://www.nextfoundation.org.nz/investments/environment)

'Our biodiversity is absolutely unique. A predator free Aotearoa and healthy eco system will mean thriving, vibrant fauna and a raft of endemic birds in our back yard, wake to the dawn chorus, tui and bellbirds singing, kiwi calling at night; the rata flowers or pōhutukawa in bloom on the coast; and we could swim in our rivers. We have a unique opportunity in New Zealand, to nurture those forest eco systems and move quickly to a carbon neutral outcome. We are an island nation, have a sea boundary and are at less threat from pest reinvasion. If you drive the health of your eco systems, the dream is you retain your uniqueness.'

Mike Slater, former Deputy Director General Operations DOC

# Successes and highlights

Annette and Neal Plowman's contribution to a predator free New Zealand extends from before the formation of NEXT and includes the following significant initiatives:

- Rotoroa Island in Auckland's Hauraki Gulf – now predator free
- Abel Tasman – 20,000 hectares of stoat control established, wilding pines eliminated and native species reintroduced (including kākārīki, robin, whio, kākā and pāteke) through Project Janszoon. This was NEXT's first joint venture with DOC, and the first time the New Zealand Government had partnered with philanthropy in restoration of a national park at this scale
- Rise of the national predator free movement and progress on major environmental initiatives including Taranaki Mounga, Te Manahuna Aoraki, Predator Free Wellington and others
- Establishment of the ground breaking Tomorrow Accord agreement between the New Zealand Government and NEXT. This bipartisan agreement will ensure that once predators are reduced to agreed levels, or other ecological milestones achieved, the Crown will then maintain the environmental gains. At ten years, project signings with DOC had commenced and hand over begun in Taranaki Mounga, Abel Tasman and Predator Free South Westland
- Co-founding R&D organisation ZIP and supporting it through feasibility, stand-up, and through to Government adoption of the technology. NEXT kaihautū Devon McLean observes, 'If you look at ZIP and the focus on going to zero with rats, stoats and possums on the mainland, that focus has enabled us to learn and make progress that hasn't occurred in decades for biodiversity here'
- Providing the model for and influencing the Government to establish Predator Free 2050 [www.doc.govt.nz/predator-free-2050](http://www.doc.govt.nz/predator-free-2050)
- Leveraged additional funding, multiplying NEXT's investment in the environment six-fold

'We now have the ability to completely remove rats, stoats and possums from the mainland. We didn't have that seven years ago. The result is that biodiversity is beginning to flourish where we are working. For example indicator species only exist where there are no rats. Kākārīki are vulnerable to rat and stoat predation. We now see them on the forest floor, on the ground – No fear of predation. Kea are becoming a common sight in the townships – an exciting sign of progress!'

Al Bramley  
ZERO INVASIVE PREDATORS

'NEXT have played a major part in establishing the foundation for Aotearoa to move to a predator free outcome. It has required commitment, faith, the capacity to learn and undertake transformational work at scale.'

Mike Slater, former Deputy Director General Operations DOC



The Te Manahuna Aoraki Project is securing a safe habitat for endangered species such as the world's rarest wading bird – the kaki or black stilt. Photo credit Liz Brown.

## MAJOR 'ON THE GROUND' PROJECTS INITIATED DURING NEXT'S LIFETIME INCLUDE:

- Convening diverse stakeholders around Taranaki Mounga and building the governance 'from ground zero'. The consortia includes local iwi, philanthropy, government, business, and community. The coalition has demonstrated what is possible through coalescing around a common goal
- Building the coalition to ecologically transform Te Manahuna Aoraki, enhancing biodiversity across 310,000 hectares of Aotearoa's most stunning landscapes, including braided river systems, high country farmland and alpine habitats. This was NEXT's third joint venture with DOC and the most ambitious in terms of scale and complexity
- The formation of Predator Free Wellington, achieving zero predation on Miramar Peninsula and setting sights on Wellington city. Pōneke will be the first capital city in the world to become predator free. A ratepayers survey showed an unusually high 97% community support for predator control. Project Director James Willcocks comments, 'We are seeing the result of what can be achieved when you get a critical mass of people with a common vision. We are building resilient, connected communities with incredible health and wellbeing outcomes'
- Backing Predator Free South Westland, which is eliminating possums, rats and stoats from 107,000 hectares of forest, townships and rural land bounded by rivers, alps and sea. This multi-stakeholder partnership is on track to achieve its predator elimination goal by mid-2025. Nature is thriving through the project area with significant increases in endemic birdlife such as korimako (bellbird), piwakawaka (fantail) and ngirungiru (South Island tomtit); alongside thriving native flora

'There is a groundswell and massive community support behind Taranaki Mounga, with iwi very much in the driving seat. NEXT was in the right place at the right time and was oriented well to convene and help get an outcome beyond anything first envisaged. More than forty groups are collaborating and they are the connective tissue enabling greater community connection to the Mounga. People have grown, toutouwai have been reintroduced after 100 years and there is a viable kiwi population. Also 95% of the paid staff on the Mounga are Māori and doing it from their own tribal entities. It has become self-perpetuating.'

Jan Hania  
NEXT FOUNDATION

I was part of the team when Wellington City Council, Greater Wellington Regional Council and NEXT worked together to establish a programme of work for predator free Wellington and established the Predator Free Wellington entity. We are doing work that is globally important. It's an amazing collaboration, great outcomes for nature, people and the economy.'

Barbara McKerrow, Chief Executive  
WELLINGTON CITY COUNCIL

'Since we started goats have been eliminated, alongside deer, and pigs. We have no ungulates up there. It's massive for our biodiversity and ecological resilience. Goats will change a forest structure irreversibly. The foliage is massively different and forest rebound has been remarkable. We release kiwi each year into this environment. Whio (blue duck) numbers have doubled. Titipounamu or rifleman have rebounded to a point that some have been translocated from Te Kāhui Tupua to other reserves. There is depth to the mahi.'

Sean Zieltjes  
TARANAKI MOUNGA

'We have started a social movement in Wellington that is generating incredible outcomes across ecology, society, culture and economically. This has never been done before, ever, in the world. On Miramar Peninsula, native birds have increased by 71% across five years, pīwakawaka have increased by 500%, grey warbler by 340%, native tree weta, skinks and lizards are off the hook. That feeds into the stories we are told – people hearing ruru in the night for the first time in thirty years, seeing kākā streak overhead and awakening at a population level.'

James Willcocks  
PREDATOR FREE WELLINGTON

'Working with NEXT is always positive, they have a vision, it's ambitious and they are proving it is achievable. We had up to 150,000 rabbits on the property. You get rid of the pests and weeds and everything else falls into place. We have seen the regeneration of the flora and fauna on our property, it's dramatic. The black stilts, the kakī, use our property. There were only about 30 odd of them left. You get rid of the predators and they have a better chance.'

Andrew Simpson  
BALMORAL STATION MACKENZIE BASIN

'In Mackenzie Basin the invasion of Canadian Geese was a major hassle for the 14 run holders. We had a wonderful conversation early on and explored what might happen if all of the run holders worked together. We put up some money and added a helicopter in to the mix. In the first morning they took out 9,000 geese. All of a sudden there was excitement to work together. That is paying dividends now in terms of getting rid of rabbits and other pests. Rabbits are a main food source for stoats, ferrets and cats. Together we are taking them to zero and can keep them out permanently. It's the constant focus and going after an apparently unachievable goal.'

Devon McLean  
NEXT FOUNDATION

# Taranaki Mounga

## United for a common vision

NEXT worked with DOC and partners on the ground to select initiatives based on potential for system transformation and if an investable organisation did not exist, they would help build it. This was the case with Taranaki Mounga. NEXT worked closely with Taranaki iwi leaders and DOC, to build the Taranaki Mounga entity from ground zero. With the goal of transforming the mountains, ranges, and islands of Taranaki, Taranaki Mounga envisioned: 'He Kawa Ora' or Pathway to Restoration for Life.

The project pushes the boundaries in landscape-scale ecological restoration over 34,000 hectares of national park encompassing Taranaki, Pouakai, Kaitake and the protected Ngā Motu/ Sugar Loaf Islands. The broader Taranaki Mounga consortia includes forty groups across iwi, philanthropy, government, business, and community.

Taranaki Mounga was NEXT's second joint venture with DOC and followed Project Janszoon in Abel Tasman. Over NEXT's lifetime, goats have been removed from the Mounga, and the return of endemic manu (birdlife) and forest rebound has been 'remarkable'. The timing of the Taranaki Mounga Project was also serendipitous in relation to Treaty settlements in the region. In 2017, the eight iwi began working together on their Treaty settlement for the Mounga.

## HISTORIC REDRESS FOR NGĀ IWI O TARANAKI

In 2017, the eight iwi of Taranaki came together as Ngā Iwi o Taranaki, to negotiate collective cultural redress over their Tūpuna Mounga (ancestral mountains) and Te Papa-Kura-o-Taranaki (formerly known as Egmont National Park). Six years later in 2023, Ngā Iwi o Taranaki and the Crown signed Te Ruruku Pūtakerongo, the collective redress deed. The lead negotiator for Ngā Iwi o Taranaki was Jamie Tuuta.

This historic deal included recognition of the peaks of the national park as ancestral figures, who jointly take on the rights of legal personhood named Te Kāhui Tupua (ending Crown ownership) and the creation of an innovative co-governance framework, for ongoing management of the national park.

'I was approached by NEXT and DOC early on as a possible person to assist in leading the Taranaki Mounga project. I have always been passionate about Taranaki, and we had partners who were willing to work with each other to provide transformation and inspiration for the region. NEXT was a highly motivated partner looking to catalyse activity and was strategic about how they might do that on the back of the Tomorrow Accord, relationships with DOC and working closely with iwi.'

Jamie Tuuta  
TARANAKI MOUNGA CHAIR

'Jamie became the Chair and lead negotiator for this aspect of the settlement process, which progressed in parallel with the Taranaki Mounga Project. The redress that came out of this is significant and acknowledges the sacred Mounga as the third legal person land form entity in Aotearoa and will create a co-governance frame for the future. This creates the ideal transition for the project, ensures sustainability and reframes ownership as trust and reciprocity. It is an exemplar of the perpetual trust and legal personhood model, empowering progress to the next ambitious level of restoring life on the Mounga, and beyond, and the peoples connection with him.'

Jan Hania  
NEXT FOUNDATION

# A national movement

## System shifts in predator free over ten years

Shifts from	Shifts to
Significant activity in predator free, largely isolated, sporadic, and small scale. No uniting vision.	Coordinated activity, joined-up approaches at large landscape scale and a uniting national vision of New Zealand being predator free by 2050.
Underinvestment in research and development (R&D). Lack of investable organisations.	Start-up and stand-up of R&D organisation ZIP and Predator Free 2050 Ltd. Increased focus and public private investment.
Mindset limited to a belief that eradication is only possible at island scale.	Mindset breakthrough – eradication is possible on the mainland at landscape scale.
No social movement.	A national predator free movement.

'The biggest one is leadership. It's a combination of putting an ambitious idea out there, demonstrating credibility and then wrapping around those business disciplines to ensure we deliver flourishing biodiversity.'

Al Bramley  
ZERO INVASIVE PREDATORS

'I have watched people grow in courage and the national conversation grow in courage. Restoration of nature also speaks to reconnecting with and restoring ourselves.'

Jan Hania  
NEXT FOUNDATION

'If you look at predator free, we got lucky with the timing. The things we were doing were happening at the right time, in terms of the Government being open to doing something like Predator Free 2050, at that time. We had a bunch of irons in the fire, all joint ventures with DOC and all focused on a single goal. That is an example of making your luck too.'

Bill Kermode  
NEXT FOUNDATION

'We have done a lot of island eradications, they are more straightforward. In South Westland, we are eliminating major pests from 100,000 hectares of forest. New Zealand has a wide range of eco systems, including tussock grassland. In the Mackenzie Basin, around Lake Tekapo, we are looking to eliminate a broad suite of pests across 300,000 hectares. Major innovative technological advances have allowed us to rapidly learn and that will position us to launch towards predator free right across the country.'

Mike Slater, former Deputy Director General Operations DOC

'People seeing themselves as part of the solution is amazing. We will give Miramar back to the people and then move onto Wellington city. It has to be led by and belong to the people.'

James Willcocks  
PREDATOR FREE WELLINGTON

'I love that local community is doing it, working together with NEXT, Predator Free Wellington, Wellington City Council and Greater Wellington.'

Barbara McKerrow  
WELLINGTON CITY COUNCIL



# Predator free success factors

Factors for success in predator free have included:

- Early runs on the board with Rotoroa Island and Abel Tasman
- A relentless belief in (and going after) a seemingly unachievable goal
- Having the right team, with the capacity and ability to engage – from grassroots to Ministry
- Focus and having various irons in the fire
- A joined-up and collaborative approach. Leaning into the role of honest broker, accessing diverse networks and investors
- Tolerance for failure and learning. When you are experimenting and trying stuff out, accepting a degree of failure is part of it
- Strength in implementation and being 'hands on' in the work
- Ten years is a decent runway to enact change
- Good timing

'Government agencies have to work in a particular context. Working in partnership with NEXT, we could step beyond some of that and have greater freedom. I worked in government agencies all my life and have had a bunch of experiences. This experience with NEXT would have to be the most satisfying and rewarding. It comes back to trust, respect, risk sharing, and bringing our strengths. We have taken major steps towards a predator free outcome on a massive scale.'

Mike Slater, former Deputy Director General Operations DOC

'Project Janszoon in Abel Tasman existed pre-NEXT, was the catalyst for much of the work and was where we learned what could be done at landscape scale. The return of iconic species like kākā and pāteke has been spectacular. While it's not a location where we can eliminate (yet), the fact we have removed all the wilding conifers is a huge step.'

Devon McLean  
NEXT FOUNDATION

'We wouldn't have been here at all without NEXT. Proving feasibility is one thing – ensuring we can do the complete removal of rats, stoats, possums – but then there is making it affordable. The NEXT investment gave us the opportunity to find a way through the technical challenge, and get the cost down to an affordable model. The Government would not have taken on the 'getting to the moon' piece, without that impetus from NEXT.'

Al Bramley  
ZERO INVASIVE PREDATORS

'For Taranaki Mounga, looking into the future it is far stronger than before with people working together at scale. We were lucky to have NEXT come into our region, the work will endure.'

Sean Zieltjes  
TARANAKI MOUNGA

# Insights and learning

Alongside the milestones and systems shifts, there has been plenty of learning. Lessons in predator free include:

- NEXT is most impactful as a catalytic investor. The Foundation shifted from being a sole funder and operator, to being a partner, honest broker, and collaborator
- When working out where to focus, engage subject matter experts. Sir Rob Fenwick was instrumental for NEXT in defining a focus on predator free
- Spend time on relationships and building trust, especially at the start of a new project. Listen and be humble, 'do it at place, with people at place, who love the land.' This includes engaging iwi early, well and resourcing it
- Engage government as early as possible, while there is leverage, and give consideration to the mechanism/s that could make the result sustainable. The Tomorrow Accord was a game changer and while eradication has a higher upfront cost, the maintenance cost is much lower (forever) once you have achieved it
- Storytelling and advocacy matter, and increase your ability to influence
- A challenge is political cycles, where Ministers change every three years (or less) and civil servants every two
- While it's important to have a goal focus, this needs to be balanced with adaptability. Different approaches are needed at different times. For example there is a place for Western linear, programmatic approaches and a place for matauranga Māori values and ways of being
- A Te Ao Māori worldview is a powerful way to approach environmental issues. Bill Kermode shares, 'Iwi is a critical relationship, and the Te Ao Māori worldview is very powerful and a strong way to approach environmental challenges'
- Initiatives always take longer and cost more than you expect. Persevere!
- Make your own luck and be alive to timing
- Have fun! Be a collective that people want to be with

'Taranaki Mounga has gone from DOC singlehandedly suppressing predators, to an entire community working together to eliminate predators. Environmentally things have changed, who is working on it has changed and the cost will change. With elimination there is a bigger cost up front but a lower cost once you get there.'

Bill Kermode  
NEXT FOUNDATION

'We have convened; brought together and supported networks and leaders; and tried to balance approaches between programmatic and emergent. That is important: creating balance between Western linear approaches and Māori voice, expression, and values. And through those engagements we have learned that storytelling and narrative really matter. Taranaki was an exemplar. We had the right people who could talk into those spaces at the right time, with humility.'

Jan Hania  
NEXT FOUNDATION

'Change is hard, and lasting change is even harder. The projects don't necessarily work out as you first envisaged, or as quickly. The lesson is to accept the fact that the journey is not going to be perfect, but to back people and persevere.'

Chris Liddell  
FOUNDING NEXT CHAIR



# Education

It is well documented that success in education is a determinant of life course. Education can provide a path out of poverty, enhance social inclusion and empowerment, and build a fairer nation. Alongside environment, education has been a key focus for the Plowman's generosity. Annette Plowman's profession was as a teacher and education is an area of particular importance for the couple.

'High trust relationships is what defines the NEXT approach. NEXT has consistently introduced us to people who may be interested in what we are doing. The NEXT community and network is formidable.'

Pat Snedden  
MANAIAKALANI

The Plowman's early philanthropy in education began pre-NEXT, including supporting Business Undergraduate International Exchange Scholarships with AUT, an endowment to establish the Chair of Entrepreneurship at the University of Auckland, investment in Ako Mātātupu (Teach First NZ) and more. Building on these early projects, NEXT had three Whetū Ara Mārama or guiding north stars in education: education leadership, teacher excellence, and the first thousand days.

An early environmental scan identified the opportunity for NEXT to contribute to the area of professional development, while the generous support of educationalists Margaret Bendall and John Taylor guided approach. Margaret's influence was pivotal in guiding the Foundation to include the early years as a focus and she convened NEXT's education kaihautū or 'navigators,' placed alongside funded partners, providing governance and other support.



Talking Matters builds language rich environments for babies in the first thousand days. NEXT supported the organisation through start-up, theory of change and strategy development (and implementation), and advocated with other funders so the work could continue. *Photo credit Jarrod Brown.*



A Tamariki Wellbeing prototyping workshop. Tamariki Wellbeing has supported key government agencies such as Health, Oranga Tamariki, ACC and the Department of Prime Minister and the Cabinet to galvanise a more collective approach to investing in the first 1,000 days. Photo credit Soul Feather Collective.

## Next supported education initiatives

- Ako Mātātupu: Teach First NZ [teachfirstnz.org](http://teachfirstnz.org)
- The Education Hub [theeducationhub.org.nz](http://theeducationhub.org.nz)
- Manaiakalani [manaiakalani.org](http://manaiakalani.org)
- The MindLab [themindlab.ac.nz](http://themindlab.ac.nz)
- SPACE for you and your baby [parentingplace.nz/courses/space](http://parentingplace.nz/courses/space)
- Springboard Trust [springboardtrust.org.nz](http://springboardtrust.org.nz)
- Talking Matters [talkingmatters.org.nz](http://talkingmatters.org.nz)
- Tamariki Wellbeing [tsi.nz/tamariki-wellbeing](http://tsi.nz/tamariki-wellbeing)

For further information and videos see [www.nextfoundation.org.nz/investments/education/](http://www.nextfoundation.org.nz/investments/education/)

'I'm delighted to have influenced NEXT's thinking about education – to encompass the broader concept of learning, and to focus on the essential learning of the early years. NEXT were courageous in embracing this focus. The whole world was beginning to understand how crucial the early years are.'

Margaret Bendall  
NEXT FOUNDATION

'In most cases, we have put one of our team into the organisation in some shape or form, in an executive capacity or as a board observer. For Manaiakalani and The MindLab I went in as a board observer and ended up joining their boards.'

Frank Janssen  
NEXT FOUNDATION

## Successes and highlights

Over NEXT's ten-year life much has been achieved in the focus area of education, including:

- Strengthening leadership, backing innovation within the education system and building evidence-based approaches
- Backing start-up The Education Hub, who bridge the gap between teaching practice and academic research. Together with other generous givers, NEXT provided access to expertise to support scale (reach is now 900,000 users) and ensuring teachers and leaders have greater access to knowledge. Of the teachers and leaders who use the site's resources 83% shared that it gave them confidence to refine practice, 74% said it prompted a change in the classroom, and 42% said it led to a change in their school's culture. A recent webinar on Mana and Kaitiakitanga attracted 2,200 participants
- With NEXT backing, Manaiakalani has scaled to 120 schools nationally. The programme focuses on low decile schools and is associated with gains in learner social and emotional skills, including self-regulation. The programme also provides low-income families with enhanced access to digital devices and broadband. The Woolf Fisher Research Centre found that Manaiakalani accelerated gains in reading, writing and mathematics, and that the benefits of participation persist into secondary school
- Nationwide expansion of Springboard Trust's Strategic Leadership Programme for Principals, with a priority focus on low decile schools. Over the years of NEXT support, Springboard has reached 750 principals who are 'doing better than ever' and have stronger strategic leadership. NEXT also supported funding of two external impact reports (linking leadership and education outcomes), described by Springboard as a 'game-changer'

- Ako Mātātupu: Teach First NZ is focused on addressing education inequity. During the period of NEXT's support, over 400 teachers have trained or are training in this kaupapa including 108 Māori and 78 Pasifika participants. STEM and te reo Māori are key foci. Ako Mātātupu supports participants to grow as teachers and education leaders, and make a difference at classroom, school and system level. Participants work in a school serving a low-income community, while they complete their postgraduate secondary teaching qualification
- During the years of NEXT support 3,500 teachers completed their Postgraduate Certificate in Digital and Collaborative Learning with The MindLab. Since 2019, over 30% of learners on this programme have been Māori and Pasifika. An external review confirmed that programme outcomes for learners are highly valued and result in significant improvements in teaching
- Greater recognition of the importance of the early years in a child's development, has been achieved through seeding and supporting initiatives such as Talking Matters, SPACE and Tamariki Wellbeing.

'When NEXT joined us, we had 25 schools, we now have 120 nationally. We are pitching to go to 430 low decile schools and to get there in five years. By 2030, 40% of the entire workforce across New Zealand, aged 20 to 24 will be Māori or Pasifika. We have got to get this right. With Manaiakalani the students come out more competent, confident and go into secondary school with better learning outcomes, a full set of digital skills and higher emotional resilience.'

Pat Snedden  
MANAIAKALANI

# Supporting system change

'We have grown our user base to 900,000 around the world, produced a wide range of resources over different topics and increased the diversity of our offering. We started out creating written content and now produce video, practice case studies and online courses.'

Nina Hood  
THE EDUCATION HUB

'Over the period, Springboard has reached 750 principals, the funding has enabled us to expand from regional to nationwide and include isolated rural schools. We have just done a study of all the schools we worked with, going back four years, the feedback from principals is remarkable. Their strategic leadership has grown stronger, and it's allowed principals to realise the types of schools they want to build.'

Dale Bailey  
SPRINGBOARD TRUST

'The NEXT investment into Tamariki Wellbeing was a catalytic investment for whānau-centred innovation in the early years system. There was flexibility and trust for us to get on with the work. NEXT's backing enabled us to develop a groundbreaking innovation methodology that draws on neuroscience, mātauranga Māori and the lived experience of South Auckland families to develop compelling alternatives to the status quo.'

Aimee Hadrup  
TAMARIKI WELLBEING

'NEXT supported us with start-up and gave us space to research and trial the actions that would make real impact on the language environments experienced by babies and children. They supported us to refine our theory of change, devise a strategy and create a measurement framework. Mike was our NEXT kaihautū and is now on our board. Bill and Frank are absolute champions. They have helped us to communicate our strategy to new funders, so we could continue and expand the work as the NEXT support wound down.'

Madeleine Sheahan  
TALKING MATTERS

'NEXT has supported Ako Mātātupu over many many years. Over the last couple of years, with the support of NEXT we have become our own tertiary provider. We have been able to develop our own programmes, a postgraduate certificate and our Rautahi (first leaf) pathway, partnering with candidates without a formal degree, to complete a micro-credential with us (then the doorway is opened to them to the teaching profession). It's opened teaching up to some amazing warriors, especially te reo Māori language and cultural experts. Our new master's degree in social justice is in the approval process to be delivered next year.'

Michelle Johansson  
AKO MĀTĀTUPU – TEACH FIRST NZ

## An external independent review of NEXT investments in education found benefits to the system from it's engagement included:

- Strengthening leadership, gap-filling and backing innovation within the education system
- Enhanced professional networks and greater collaboration. Four of the programmes have contributed to the development of collaborative ways of working
- Improved outcomes for Māori and Pasifika learners backed by evidence
- A stronger future focus in the system, equipping learners for the world they will live and work in
- The evidence base has been enhanced and strengthened. Examples include The Education Hub, Manaiaikalani and others



School children at Paparore School in Te Tai Tokerau. With NEXT backing, Manaiaikalani has scaled to 120 schools nationally.

'The programmes have provided a number of broader strategic benefits for the schooling system.'

INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF NEXT  
INVESTMENTS IN THE SCHOOL SECTOR

'Manaiaikalani has grown nationally, and their internal data capture has developed. It's brilliant – real time and accurate. They have remained focused. The other organisation I would reference is the growth and engagement of The Education Hub. They have scaled with a small cost base and created a large community who are tapping into that online research.'

Frank Janssen  
NEXT FOUNDATION

'For us, it's not just been about the money. The Foundation has helped to strengthen our position in the sector and join hands with others. They quietly make introductions, it's gentle.'

Michelle Johansson  
AKO MĀTĀTUPU – TEACH FIRST NZ

# Education success factors

## Factors for success in education have included:

- Backing, connecting and creating a community of outstanding leaders in education
- A clear purpose and evidence-based approach for each programme
- Governance and management support, through NEXT kaihautū / navigators
- Long-term unrestricted funding, 'gives the organisation more room and resource to focus on the cause rather than fundraising. And you can attract top talent'
- NEXT began the transition conversation early and has supported partners with sustainability initiatives



Nina Hood is the Founder of the Education Hub.

'Bill has been really good at connecting and bringing a whole lot of people together around a common kaupapa.'

Bridget Best  
NEXT FOUNDATION

'NEXT provided connections to others on similar journeys. Everything changed with their support. If NEXT hadn't come on as a long-term funder, we wouldn't be where we are. One of the key things is the multiyear grant, that gave us security to bring people on, make plans and think more than one year ahead.'

Nina Hood  
THE EDUCATION HUB

'NEXT is held in such high regard, other philanthropic partners see that and have confidence to invest.'

Dale Bailey  
SPRINGBOARD TRUST

# Insights and learning

## NEXT is a learning organisation and things didn't always go to plan. Lessons in the education area include:

- These are big, complex issues and the size of the goal needs to align with the available resource
- Bringing in more education expertise earlier and having education experts 'full time' in the work, as happened in predator free, would have led to even better outcomes
- Co-designing the work with expertise from the communities most impacted, including Māori and Pasifika, would have added value
- Securing government funding is hard work, involves good luck, good timing and you can't assume their participation
- Teachers are nation builders and need to be valued. As Margaret Bendall articulates, 'The attitude and conversation of the New Zealand public needs to change to valuing teaching as a profession, alongside valuing them financially'
- Change takes time and measuring the difference made in education is complex. Systemic drivers such as inequity are considerations

'NEXT has gifted \$100m from one family, \$50m between environment and education – we had ten years, that is pretty good giving by New Zealand philanthropy standards. That equates to \$5m a year for education. The Ministry education budget is \$1.4b per year. So, \$5 or \$6m a year of strategic philanthropy needs to be laser focused to make a difference.'

Bill Kermode  
NEXT FOUNDATION

'There was learning around education and that needing to be led by and co-designed with the communities that are most impacted, with lived experience front and centre.'

Jan Hania  
NEXT FOUNDATION

'In education, we found we were too broad and had to keep narrowing. It's a massive lesson. If you want to shift something, start very narrow. And there is the idea of being mindful of what you can achieve proportionate to your resources.'

Frank Janssen  
NEXT FOUNDATION

'In the education leadership group, I would have a more diverse group including more Māori and Pasifika leaders.'

Margaret Bendall  
NEXT FOUNDATION

'Margaret was excellent, however, I think more experts from the sector could have been included. In environment, Devon and Jan, with their specialist expertise, were full time in the work and I think replicating this model in education would have been beneficial.'

Bridget Best  
NEXT FOUNDATION

# Pride of purpose

Many people have contributed to the success of NEXT over the past ten years. We asked a few of them to share what they feel most proud of:

'I am most proud of the longstanding and good relationships with the organisations we have funded, beyond the funding. In almost all cases we have had true partnerships.'

Frank Janssen  
NEXT FOUNDATION

'NEXT has been able to support good people to do important work, on a cause that matters to them and it's been more than about the money. The kaihautū have been at the forefront of that. We have shown that business methods can help improve outcomes in environment and education. We are not the first to have done that, but we have made it work in an Aotearoa context.'

Bill Kermode  
NEXT FOUNDATION

'Personally I am proud of my involvement with Ako Mātātupu: Teach First NZ through the ten years as their NEXT kaihautū navigator. Ako Mātātupu is a long game, it has established itself as a teacher education programme focused on training teachers to work in low decile schools, in vulnerable communities, in a way that can be really meaningful.'

Bridget Best  
NEXT FOUNDATION

'I'm proud of the way NEXT, led by Bill, was willing to think more broadly about education and include the early years, and I'm proud of NEXT being open to learning, particularly in the bicultural space. Bill had a lot to do with that, in his quiet no-fuss way, he just started to learn.'

Margaret Bendall  
NEXT FOUNDATION

'I'm stoked that Talking Matters has endured and is standing on its own two feet. That investment in the early years and supporting tamariki right at the start of their lives is an enabler.'

Mike Ferrand  
NEXT FOUNDATION

'Through the Fellowship, it's been awesome to see amazing people grow in their purpose, humility and courage. A number of the Fellows reoriented and changed roles. I'm proud of that weaving of spirit, philanthropy, government, and community. Shifting power dynamics (often intrinsic in philanthropy) and bringing it to a place where deep values such as equity, empowerment and connection can be realised.'

Jan Hania  
NEXT FOUNDATION

'I'm proud of NEXT's role as an honest broker and bringing together parties to collaborate, who otherwise would not have. Creating the opportunity for people to talk and work together, on biodiversity outcomes for New Zealand.'

Devon McLean  
NEXT FOUNDATION

'I am most proud that we have positively impacted thousands of people's lives and also our precious environment. And we have supported outstanding people such as Nina Hood and Pat Snedden in education, Fellows like Kirikowhai Mikaere and Izzy Fenwick, and many other leaders in environment. We have been fortunate to find some outstanding Kiwis and supported them to do wonderful things.'

Chris Liddell  
FOUNDING NEXT CHAIR



A takahē and chick as part of the breeding programme on Rotoroa Island. Photo credit James Gow.

# Turning back time

Learning and reflection have been a key tenet of the NEXT approach. When asked what they might have done differently, further team musings included:

'I would focus on just one slice in education, get more connected with the sector, more irons in the fire, more focus, more experience, more capacity and find an incredible subject matter expertise in that one topic. Start the Fellowship on day one. More intentionally and proactively source kaihautū from day one. Support public service professional development – to see how other governments work and broaden thinking, to hopefully make public-philanthropic partnering and scaling faster and more successful.'

Bill Kermod  
NEXT FOUNDATION

'I would have tried harder to have Māori on the board of NEXT and to have another collaborator in the team with me (it can be hard if you are the only brown guy). I would invest more in the human capability across the projects and really encourage more working in a relational way. I would support NEXT to more purposefully step into that space of being an exemplar of being Tangata Tiriti in Aotearoa.'

Jan Hania  
NEXT FOUNDATION

'If we had our time again, we would not make some of the mistakes we did, but we would probably make a whole bunch of others. That's part of the journey and we accepted it right at the start – we knew it wasn't going to be perfect. We were pioneering and learning. Bill and the team did their absolute best in an impactful, intentional way.'

Chris Liddell  
FOUNDING NEXT CHAIR

'I would push for greater representation, expertise and diversity within the education kaihautū group to include those New Zealanders with a bigger stake in education doing better. Those with money, who have succeeded in the current system, and have considerable power in that system, have the most to learn from those for whom the system is not working.'

Margaret Bendall  
NEXT FOUNDATION

'We would have perhaps anticipated earlier the challenge that comes with the revolving doors of people in Government. I am on my sixth Minister of Conservation and it can be hugely time absorbing.'

Devon McLean  
NEXT FOUNDATION

# The influence of a generous kiwi couple

Neal and Annette Plowman have never sought recognition, nevertheless their impact on those they have worked with is enduring, as the team shares:

'Annette and Neal have put considerable thought and design into their philanthropy. They have been strategic and that is inspirational. I have always been socially minded and the experience with the Plowman's has amplified that and influenced where I choose to focus.'

Bridget Best  
NEXT FOUNDATION

'Neal and Annette have given me the most extraordinary opportunity of my life: to be supported to get on and do some transformational things. I recall when we were wrapping up Rotoroa Island and talking with Neal, he said, 'That was fun, what's next'. I said I was interested in Abel Tasman. Within three months they had committed resourcing. Their generosity has been consistent over such a long time and has meant we could actually make a difference.'

Devon McLean  
NEXT FOUNDATION



Devon McLean appreciated the opportunity of a lifetime to work on incredible projects such as Rotoroa Island.

'They have such humility, live simple lives and are exceptional humans, it's beautiful. They could have bought yachts and flown all over the world, but they haven't. As a couple Annette was really interested in education and people, I have held her hand walking along on a dark night and it's just lovely. Neal is a laser-sharp thinker. They have complementary energy.'

Jan Hania  
NEXT FOUNDATION

'Annette and Neal, with their family's support, entrusted a significant portion of their wealth to good people, enabling others to do their best in two fields of endeavor, the environment and education. This was not just generous, it was an example of taking personal responsibility, in trying to make the world a better place. I salute them, and their family.'

Margaret Bendall,  
NEXT FOUNDATION

'Giving while living is Annette's big thing and that is something I now get and do. Annette and Neal bring operational excellence to their business life, their private life and they are big on completion. They have influenced me in the way they deal with their kids in relation to their wealth, and that is a model (on a much smaller scale) that we are using. The reason Neal and Annette were able to do a NEXT is they had sorted out what they were doing with the kids.'

Bill Kermode  
NEXT FOUNDATION

'I have been fortunate and honored to know Annette and Neal for forty years, a substantial portion of my life. Their generosity is overwhelming. They are humble and a wonderful partnership. It's a combination of being generous, low-ego and committed partners. They are outstanding New Zealanders.'

Chris Liddell  
FOUNDING NEXT CHAIR

## Advice to others

Neal and Annette Plowman invite anyone with more than enough to live on, to gift some of their money to the causes that matter most. When receiving the 2018 Kea World Class New Zealand Supreme Award, Annette challenged all those who had accumulated wealth to give away at least half of it during their lifetime.

'My advice would be to start small, experiment, see what works and scale over time. That was our journey. NEXT is the latest evolution in a journey the Plowmans have been on for decades. One of the key decisions is where to focus. We listened to experts in the fields of education and the environment, for example Rob Fenwick in environment. Rob was a wonderful human being, friend to Annette and Neal, the Foundation and influenced our early focus on predator free.'

Chris Liddell  
FOUNDING NEXT CHAIR

'I would say be curious, learn deeply and understand what the meaning of rangatiratanga, whakapapa and whānauanga really mean. These elements are universal to all of humanity. We need to relearn how to connect to nature, one another and ourselves.'

Jan Hania  
NEXT FOUNDATION

**For those thinking about their own legacy and philanthropy, the NEXT team shared some suggestions:**

- Make sure the kids (or any dependents/ loved ones) are taken care of, unambiguously
- Consider where you wish to focus, seek expert advice and set a crisp goal
- Find the right, trusted and expert people, 'Your biggest decision as an investor is who you are going to work with'
- Bring the values of compassion, humility, and listen to the community
- Be open to learning from Te Ao Māori
- There is great satisfaction in applying your skills to what you care about, and combining this with multiyear funding
- Tap into people who have 'been there done that'. The Centre for Strategic Philanthropy is a fantastic resource and can help with advice and connections

'The Te Ao Māori worldview is a very powerful and strong way to approach issues, especially environmental. There is the saying, 'I am the river and the river is me'. Being able to both swim in the river, and source food from the river, and then use it in other ways too are multiple uses that Māori see as important. The Pākehā world doesn't always think about things in the same connected-up way. Māori have an intergenerational connection to the land. It is powerful.'

Bill Kermode  
NEXT FOUNDATION

'Be humble and listen to community.'

Bridget Best  
NEXT FOUNDATION

# The Future

As a decade of giving draws to a close, NEXT celebrates the people and partners who have helped to fulfill its vision. The Foundation is proud of what has been achieved in building a legacy of environmental and educational excellence, for the benefit of future generations of New Zealanders. At sunset, NEXT hopes that by sharing its successes as well as its learnings, it may provide insight and inspiration for those looking to make their own contribution to a better Aotearoa New Zealand.

'The Plowmans are delighted with what happened with NEXT. We committed to a ten-year spend down to focus on maximum impact and have achieved that. We are now looking at how we build on the foundation NEXT has created. We'd love to do something even more substantial for future generations of New Zealanders.'

Chris Liddell  
FOUNDING NEXT CHAIR



Final reflections: As a decade of giving draws to a close, the legacy shall be an enduring one. Lake Wahapo in South Westland. *Photo credit Peter Young.*



For more information go to the NEXT website

**[WWW.NEXTFOUNDATION.ORG.NZ](http://WWW.NEXTFOUNDATION.ORG.NZ)**



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