



CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF GENEROSITY

2023 marks the Acorn Foundation's 20th year as the WBOP's local community foundation. To celebrate this milestone, we wanted to showcase the extraordinary generosity of Acorn's donors and the lasting impact of their gifts on our local community. And so, on Tuesday 4 April, we were delighted to unveil a photographic exhibition in the heart of Tauranga, created in partnership with UNO Magazine and their award-winning photographer, Alan Gibson.

It's an incredible story of local generosity, and, as Lesley noted, the foundation's success is underpinned by the hard work, commitment and belief of Acorn's many volunteers, staff, donors and supporters over the years.

Acorn's impact on our community was brought to life during the event by speakers from local charitable groups: Sarah Julou from Mockingbird Charitable Trust and Jared Dixon from Live for More. Their incredibly moving stories really showed the life-changing impact of our donors' generosity – and there wasn't a dry eye in the house.

The exhibition, *Enduring Connections*, featured 18 of the more than 290 charitable groups in the WBOP who have received funding from Acorn over the years, spanning groups focussed on the arts, environment, youth, food insecurity, homelessness, health, diversity and more. The images celebrate the enduring difference Acorn donors seek to make, and the enduring support Acorn is then able to extend to our community.



We were then treated to beautiful performances by Sophie Maude, a former Mockingbird client who is now a professional singer, and Sarah Mileham, an opera singer and previous Acorn scholarship recipient.

Our event on 4 April was a wonderful celebration attended by over 170 of Acorn's donors and supporters. After an opening karakia from Acorn Trustee Carlo Ellis and a performance from Katikati Primary School's kapa haka group, community representatives unveiled each of the photographs, one by one, to cheers and applause from the crowd. Guests then took their time enjoying the exhibition as they made their way up to Tauranga Art Gallery for the reception.

Finally, current Chair Lesley Jensen was joined by previous Chair Glenn Keane and founding Chair Bill Holland to cut the 20th birthday cake. It was a lovely way to end the event – but of course, it is certainly not the end for the Acorn Foundation! Our smarter giving model involves pooling and collectively investing our donors' funds, so that the capital in the fund remains intact, while a portion of the income is distributed annually to the local community. This means that our donors' gifts will continue to give back to causes close to their hearts, forever. We can't even begin to

imagine what the foundation's growth – and its impact on our region – will look like over the next 20 years, but we do know that our donors' legacy will continue to live on through Acorn.

At the Art Gallery, Acorn Chair Lesley Jensen took the audience through the highlights of Acorn's 20-year journey. From a fledgling foundation established in 2003 by Bill Holland, with its first endowment fund of \$67,000 gifted by the late Edna Brown, the Acorn Foundation now has more than 430 endowment funds totalling \$60 million in funds under management. Most importantly, thanks to the generosity of those donors and the community foundation model of perpetual giving, Acorn has now gifted over \$13 million to the community since its inception.

Just as the Acorn Foundation would not have grown to where it is today without the support of the community, our 20th birthday event could not have happened without the generosity of so many local individuals and businesses. The Acorn team would like to thank everyone who supported the event and joined us to celebrate the occasion. To the next 20 years!

In this special 20th birthday edition of The Acorn, we're taking a trip down memory lane to revisit some of the key moments of our 20-year story so far...

2003

The Acorn Foundation is established with Bill Holland as founding Chair.



Bill Holland

Lifetime giving continues long after death

Edna Brown: Our first donor

Edna Brown grew up in Rotorua and being the youngest of 10 children she knew the importance of sharing. Throughout her life, she gave whatever she had to others in need. Edna's generosity will continue after her death, as she has established the first ever Acorn Foundation endowment fund. Edna Brown established her fund with a gift of \$67,000, which will help organisations working to improve the lives of people with medical and health needs. Thanks to the nature of an Acorn endowment fund, her gift will continue to give back to these causes – forever.



The Tindall Foundation appoints Acorn as their regional Funding Manager.

2005

The Colin Toop Fund (in memory of Patricia and Clive Toop)

Colin Toop (1918-2006)

Seven new donors have established endowment funds during 2005, two of whom were NOT introduced to Acorn by Bill Holland!

Andrew Marshall from Craigs introduced Mr. Colin Toop to the Acorn Foundation concept in June of this year. Colin sought Andrew's advice about establishing some form of cost effective 'Trust' to enable him to fulfil his desire to give back to his community, after his death.

The Acorn concept suited Colin's needs perfectly. He established a named fund with 100% of the income from this fund to be distributed annually by the Acorn Grants Committee to local charities.

Not only is the establishment of this fund great for our community, but more importantly, it has made Colin really happy knowing his contributions will benefit our community ad infinitum. So a very big THANK YOU to Andrew for introducing Colin to the Acorn Foundation.



Two thousand and five

Colin Toop Fund sees Acorn's fund pass \$1M in investments.

2008

Acorn reaches 54 donor funds, with \$1.9 million invested.

Acorn distributes over \$200,000 to community groups in the Western Bay of Plenty.

2009

Inaugural winners of the Page Acorn Engineering scholarships are announced, on behalf of Bob and Pat Page.



Bob Page



Pat Page presents Jordan Smith from Boshier Engineering with his scholarship.

2010

Second Eva Trowbridge Scholarship awarded

At a recent function for Acorn donors, we were privileged to hear from Kate Flanagan, this year's recipient of the Acorn Foundation Eva Trowbridge Scholarship.

Kate is a busy mother of two primary aged children, studying full time towards a Bachelor of Teaching. At our function Kate explained how, as she juggles the demands of her time, she is conscious of the support of her "Guardian Angel," Eva Trowbridge. The scholarship provides the inspiration for Kate to excel in her studies.

Kate is the second recipient of Eva's scholarship since it began last year.



Eva Trowbridge Donor and "Guardian Angel".



Kate and her husband Wayne and daughters Georgia and Rianna.

100th Fund Celebration with Prime Minister Hon. John Key

Acorn Foundation is celebrating signing 100 funds since its inception. This is an historic milestone for Acorn, and one which was celebrated with a breakfast at Classic Flyers in Mount Maunganui. The breakfast was attended by Prime Minister Hon. John Key, along with 260 donors, recipients, and other supporters of the Acorn Foundation.

The highlight of the function was an exceptionally generous donation from one of our earliest donors who wishes to remain anonymous. She gave \$303,000 to make her total gift to Acorn \$500,000.

Retired professional and Acorn Donor Neville Hardy spoke about his wish to help the community as well as look after his children. John Key echoed the sentiment, saying charitable organisations should focus on private community funding, as government funding can be unpredictable.

The event was a great success, and generated interest from others considering setting up a fund.



Financial Advisor Neil Thorsen hands Acorn Chairman Bill Holland a \$303,000 cheque from an anonymous donor.



Prime Minister Hon. John Key with some of the inaugural 100 Acorn donors.

2011

Sally Morrison replaces Bill Holland as Chair.

Acorn passes \$1M in grants to the community.

The Roy & Mary McGowan Fund is set up to offer Dale Carnegie scholarships to Year 13 WBOP students to develop leadership and life skills.



2013

The Acorn Memorial Oak Grove is established at Cambridge Park to honour deceased Acorn donors.

2014

Glenn Keaney replaces Sally Morrison as Chair and the fund reaches \$10M.

2015

Vital Signs – How do we rate ourselves?

The Acorn Foundation is fast growing into a major funding resource for the Western Bay of Plenty region, so it's crucial that we know what matters most to people right across the region, to ensure we direct help to where it's most needed.

Acorn has partnered with TECT, Bay Trust, Tauranga City Council, WBOP District Council, BOP Regional Council, Legacy Trust, The Hood Family and the University of Waikato to undertake Vital Signs®, an initiative aimed at measuring the vitality of the region – identifying trends, strengths and areas for improvement.

Vital Signs® is a tool developed by community foundations in Canada. It involves an online survey completed by a representative sample of people aged 18+ right across the region.

When asked about the most important issues facing us, most people were concerned about availability of Affordable Housing (18%) and the economy not providing enough Employment Opportunities (16%). Other issues mentioned were council debt/high rates, intolerance/bullying, lack of sense of community and lack of education.

To read the full Vital Signs® report, go to www.acornfoundation.org.nz.



2016

Acorn proudly supports top NZ literary award

New Zealanders are avid readers and have a huge appetite for good fiction. We also have some exceptional writers in this country, but for some reason, we don't recognise that – only 5% of books read in New Zealand are by local authors.

Hopefully, that is about to change! The Acorn Foundation, through the insight and determination of a donor who wants to change this mind-set, is now the proud sponsor of the top literary prize in this country – the Acorn Foundation Literary Award. This award was made for the first time on 10 May at the Ockham New Zealand Book Awards, to Stephen Daisley for his book, Coming Rain.

The New Zealand Book Awards Trust Chair, Nicola Legat, says the award creates a "tremendous and lasting" literary legacy. "This will make a difference not only to the receiving writer, but also to the literary fabric of New Zealand. It is a huge gift for us all. It sends a message that New Zealand literature is taken seriously."



Acorn General Manager Nicky Wilkins presents the 2016 Acorn Foundation Literary Award to Stephen Daisley.

2017

Acorn has now supported more than 200 local charities.



2018

Acorn celebrates its 15th birthday with an event at Trinity Wharf and passes \$20M in funds under management.

Farewell to our General Manager Nicky Wilkins

When she started working part time for Acorn in 2006, as the only staff member, Acorn had 24 donor endowment funds set up, \$1.9 million invested, and distributed \$103,000 to the community – mostly on behalf of The Tindall Foundation.

Twelve years later, Acorn has 300 donor funds, \$21 million invested, and annual distributions are now approaching \$1 million. That's an extraordinary achievement, and much of it is thanks to the incredible dedication and skill of Nicky Wilkins.

As Nicky's time leading Acorn comes to a close, on behalf of all our caring donors, and the community that Acorn supports, we thank her for her leadership and dedication - growing Acorn from a small seeding into a strong young tree, and wish her well for whatever lies ahead.

Glenn Keaney, Acorn Chair



Lori Luke replaces Nicky Wilkins as General Manager.

2019

Lesley Jensen replaces Glenn Keaney as Chair and Acorn distributes more than \$1M to the community for the first time.

2020

Acorn's financial self-sufficiency means more money for local charities

We are immensely proud to announce that the Acorn Foundation has reached financial self-sufficiency in our FY2021 budget. This achievement – thanks to the generosity of people all across our region – means that money that was needed to fund Acorn's expenses over the years can now help other local charities!

The foundation is fortunate that several donors have allocated a portion of the annual distributions from their fund to support Acorn's operating costs, which combined with the 1% fee taken annually from its fund – now exceeding \$36M – will cover Acorn's expenses going forward. Reaching this goal means that the foundation will no longer require corporate, trust or direct donor gifts to help cover its operational costs, freeing that money up to assist other worthy organisations in the region.

Lesley Jensen, Acorn Foundation Chair, says, "We can't thank our donors and sponsors enough for their belief in Acorn and their commitment to the success of our community foundation in the Western Bay of Plenty. We will forever appreciate their important support for our development."



Lesley Jensen and Lori Luke.

Acorn partners with the Owens Charitable Trust to take over the important local programme that has provided tertiary scholarships in the region for over 25 years.



Acorn welcomes its first ever Scholarship Committee to assist with the review of scholarship applications.

WBOP Rapid Response Fund

PHASE 1: RAPID RESPONSE

In April 2020, following the rapid closure of our borders, funders in the Western Bay of Plenty came together to establish a Rapid Response Fund to support those community groups who were experiencing increased demand and/or funding shortfall as a result of COVID-19.

The funders (TECT, BayTrust, Acorn Foundation and Tauranga City Council) supported 34 community groups with \$232,000 in funding during this Rapid Response phase.

PHASE 2: RECOVERY PHASE

In late June, this Fund transitioned into phase two of funding support, which was valued at \$777,000 at inception. Phase two aims to help key Western Bay of Plenty community groups survive the medium-term impact of the pandemic, enabling the longer-term rebuild of the community sector.



2021

Acorn contributes over \$1.75M to the community this year.

Acorn partners with Tauranga-based FAME Trust to manage several national awards for talented young and mid-career artists.

2022

Acorn celebrates more than \$10M in total distributions since 2003.

Due to a significant gift from the R&M McGowan Fund, funding for youth development became an even higher priority. Working with many local entities, Acorn leads the development of the Western Bay of Plenty Vital Signs® Youth 2022 report.

2023

enduring connections
CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF GIVING

Acorn celebrates its 20th birthday!





Nicky Wilkins, former Acorn General Manager, promoting Acorn at the 2006 Garden Art Festival.



Acorn Foundation 2010 Trustees.



Acorn wins at the 2019 Business Awards.



Outward Bound Scholarship recipients 2021.



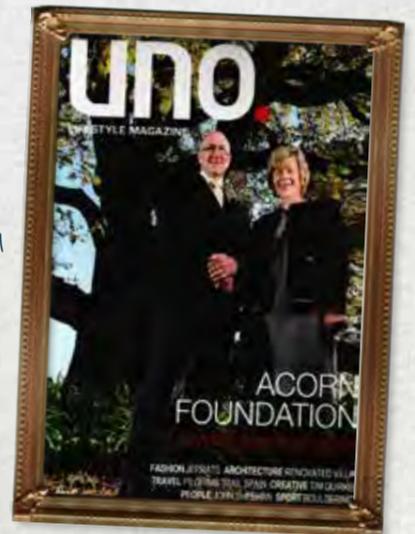
Margot McCool and Airini Beautrais winner of the 2021 Jann Medicott Acorn Prize for Fiction alongside Jann Medicott and Lori Luke.



Farmer Autovillage team with Acorn CEO Lori Luke. Farmer Autovillage established a scholarship programme to celebrate its 30 years in 2021.



Current Acorn Chair Lesley Jensen and Acorn team member Margot McCool at Niagara Falls on a trip to the Canadian Community Foundation Conference in 2017.



Former Acorn Chair Bill Holland and Former General Manager Nicky Wilkins on the cover of UNO Magazine 2013.



Former Chair Sally Morrison gifting a grant on behalf of The Tindall Foundation to Omanu Beach Lifesaving Club to assist with the REANA clean up in 2011.



Lori Luke along with other representatives of Community Foundations NZ visit Governor General Dame Cindy Kiro in March 2023.



Lori Luke and Margot McCool present a cheque to Waipuna Hospice CEO Richard Thurlow. In 2018, it was the first time for a single organisation to receive more than \$50,000 in one year.



Former Prime Minister of New Zealand Jacinda Ardern visits the Acorn team at The Collective 2020.



The Acorn team attend the 2010 Community Foundations New Zealand Workshop.

CELEBRATING OUR COLLECTIVE IMPACT

Bright future

As the Acorn Foundation celebrates its 20th birthday, we've reached quite a milestone. The Acorn team of seven staff and more than 20 volunteer Trustees and committee members remain as committed as ever to our efforts on behalf of this region.

Over 430 donor funds – and more than 600 donors overall – support the community in all sorts of ways. Donors contribute via a gift in a Will, through living giving, through corporate or workplace giving, as a regular supporter of a Community Group fund, as a member of a Giving Circle, and even as a gifter of TECT rebates.

Thanks to our wonderful donors and despite difficult market headwinds over the past several years, Acorn has reached \$60M in

funds under management that are invested for the good of our community for decades to come.

The significant growth in the fund over the past five years translates to more than \$13M overall that has been distributed to nearly 300 worthy causes in the Western Bay of Plenty and other areas important to our donors, with \$3M given away in 2022. Of that \$3M, over \$500k in scholarships and awards celebrated the best and the brightest in a variety of areas such as arts, sports, and academics.

We have a tremendous belief in the power of community foundations and of Acorn's place in this region. Knowing that overseas community foundations are over 100 years old, we understand that Acorn's story is only beginning.