



## **NAPIER PILOT CITY TRUST**

# **UNITY DAY 2024**

### **Award Winner Citations**

#### **TAIATINI LEPAIAO** **nominated by Maria Roberts**

Taiatini Lepaiao embodies the Napier Pilot City Trust values of Kaitiakitanga, Manaakitanga, and Whai mātauranga. She grew up with her Samoan aiga and is intentionally passing on her Māori, Samoan and Tokelau values to the next generation, through her social work and maara kai skills.

Poipoia te kākano, kia puāwai (Nurture the seed, and it will bloom).

Following Cyclone Gabrielle, Taiatini mobilised a team providing kai for needy whānau, including misplaced whānau from Waiohiki and Tangoio, struggling whānau and grandparents with mokopuna in their care. They have produced hundreds of care packages including "Kai parcels", "Hot kai packs" "Kaumatua packs", "Women's Hygiene packs", "Kids' packs" and "Pēpi packs."

Committed to maara kai, Taiatini believes everyone needs free access to sustainable practices, so that kids can grow kai like their tūpuna and "contribute to a decolonised way of living". As former Chair of EIT Students' Association, Taiatini encourages other Māori and Pasifika to step out of their comfort zones and to become community leaders.

#### **NEILL GORDON & LAURA JACKSON** **nominated by Tu Tangata Maraenui Trust,** **Maxine Boag and Ani Tylee**

Neill Gordon and his partner Laura Jackson are outspoken advocates for the community and Te Tiriti; and organising important, impactful events supported with stunning visuals is their speciality.

Neill and Laura helped organise Matariki Mahuika last year, which saw cyclone-driftwood along the Napier-Hastings coastline set alight in a hugely successful event that attracted 25,000 people.

Neill was events manager for Maraenui's Christmas in the Park, working alongside Tu Tangata Maraenui Trust.

He travelled to Waitangi in February and helped launch Tangata Tiriti Aotearoa, TTA. And using his lived experience, this year he organised a celebration of redhead pride called 'Gingas in the Stings'

Neill and Laura are community builders who imagine creative ways for strangers to meet, and then make them happen. Neill has an irrepressible, contagious enthusiasm. He's masterful at inspiring others to realise his vision, and has a fearless focus on the end goal.

They are a creative power house who have shown themselves to be advocates for social cohesion and unity; as caring members of their community. Neill and Laura are a power couple undoubtedly worthy of the Napier Pilot City Trust Award.

## **LYNNE ANDERSON**

### **nominated by Angie Denby**

Lynne is a dedicated conservationist who has always been passionate about the natural world and is active in many community conservation groups.

These include Birds NZ/Ornithological Society. As national secretary for 4 years, Lynne regularly organises field trips for members to observe and record birdlife.

For Napier Branch of Forest and Bird, she's been secretary for the past 6 years, advocating for native wildlife and protecting habitats.

For Save the Dotterels Hawkes Bay, Lynne's seeking a change in beach culture to give mana and respect for birds' habitats; she's established a volunteer monitoring programme to collate data; and she's developed a pest control programme as well.

For Ahuriri Estuary Protection Society, Lynne leads two annual events, 'Welcoming' or 'Farewelling' the Godwits, while monitoring the gull and tern colony at Pandora Pond.

A JP, Lynne also volunteers at Cape Sanctuary aviary and for DOC Ahuriri Estuary Restoration Group. She's also been a member of the Rotary Club of Ahuriri for 16 years.

Pat Magill lived across the road from Ahuriri Estuary – and Lynne is one of many – continuing his legacy of kaitiakitanga for the natural world and for the well-being of us all.

## **MARY DANIELSON - THE PUKETAPU**

### **nominated by Caroline Lampp**

Mary is a born and bred stalwart of the Puketapu community, and for the last 17 years, the proprietor of Puketapu Hotel, an iconic watering hole and community centre since 1885.

Through hard work Mary, her family and willing staff, revived the Puketapu into the joyous hub of the community again with their hotel becoming the district's award-winning destination especially for cyclists using the new bike pathways.

Following Cyclone Gabrielle, despite being badly flooded itself, the Puketapu quickly became the community's refuge for flood-ravaged locals to meet, receive support from others, and tap into support and resources from Government and other agencies.

To further assist flood recovery, the Puketapu has been holding monthly 'locals nights', providing free meals so folk can continue to gather together for essential on-going support, and celebrate any progress. Mary has become a trustee of the Puketapu Cyclone Relief Trust which has supported the district by managing and distributing close to \$1million in donations and grants.

Mary continues to provide amazing support to many people in and around the wider Puketapu Community – she truly is a godsend.

## **SIMON BEAMS – WHATEVER IT TAKES TRUST**

**nominated by Tracey Benson**

Simon joined WIT in early 2020, as Team Leader at Kahukura in Riverbend Road. He was only in the role for a few weeks, when Aotearoa went into lockdown.

Being new to the social services space, this was Simon's baptism of fire. Throughout lockdown he was mentored by Tracey daily over the phone and proved himself superbly in challenging circumstances. His next appointment was Team Leader for WIT's Community Support workers where Simon successfully implemented new strategies.

Twelve months ago Simon was appointed WIT's Clinical co-ordinator, working with external clinical services – Police, Probation, Re-integration, Tangata Whaiora and Kaimahi. Again he has consistently gone above and beyond.

Simon's strengths are always being accessible and building relationships across the board. And most importantly, for WIT's clients, he has a sharp focus on reintegration back into the community. Initially working in horticulture, Simon veered towards Psychology because he wanted to understand how people think and help those who struggle. Tracey says: "Simon so deserves this award for his exceptional mahi around Mental Health and Addiction in Hawke's Bay – he's a taonga and we never want to lose him."

## **MARK KUPA – “BUNNY” – WHATEVER IT TAKES TRUST**

**nominated by Phil Ross**

Bunny Kupa has worked at WIT for many years and has vast experience working with Tangata Whaiora, our complex and often hard-to-reach whanau. His practice is filled with Manaakitanga, courage and aroha, using Whanaungatanga and Rangatiratanga in his daily practice.

Bunny sits in the kaumatua space within our organisation. He will always reach out and offer help to others. And nothing is too much of a problem for him, supporting others outside of work hours.

Last year, WIT faced the challenges of both the cyclone, and the sudden passing of one of their WIT colleagues. During these tragedies Bunny went above and beyond to support our Whaiora; stepping up and supporting our departed colleague's whanau as well as other kaimahi at WIT.

Bunny moved naturally into the kaumatua role where he displays so much courage and aroha. He is kind, humble and caring and we are blessed to have him as part of our team.

Thank you for being you, Bunny – you are truly one of WIT and Napier's unsung heroes.

## **TAKA BURTON – FOUNDER OF THE SHAMROCK BOXING CLUB, MARAENUI nominated by Tu Tangata Maraenui**

Taka is an outstanding volunteer who, by establishing and running the Shamrock Boxing Club, has helped change the lives of scores of people in Maraenui by providing free or low cost boxing classes at his home-based academy.

After his son Shamrock took his own life in 2022, Taka started boxing training again in his garage, and Tamariki would pass by and ask to train with him.

The Club grew and Taka now offers opportunities for locals of all ages and genders to train in what has become a successful magnet for the community.

Maraenui has struggled for years to find positive, affordable out-of-school activities. Now, youngsters who used to run along the roofs of the Maraenui shops, are in disciplined, team-based classes on Hilary Crescent.

Taka has a huge Facebook and Tiktok following where he shares his stories of addictions, grief and counselling, as well as his hopes; that through sport and purpose, other young people will find a way through the loneliness and sadness that drives suicide.

Taka shines a light that others can follow.

## **TE AROHA PAPANUI – TE HIWA A MĀHAKI TRUST nominated by Napier City Councillor Sally Crowne**

Te Aroha is such a positive role model for our community. Her background is in social services and health, where she supports many people to grow in confidence, capability and self-sufficiency.

She's an experienced and talented sportswoman. This wife and young mother of four also dedicates her time to growing the Maraenui junior rugby division, as well as rugby league, touch rugby, tag, girls' rugby development and the new Academy Āwhero ki te Ao set up through Te Hiwa a Māhaki Trust.

The constant mahi she delivers for these kaupapa is evident in the numerous pānui, fundraising and participation opportunities she shares – opportunities that provide inclusive spaces for tamariki while instilling values such as commitment, hard work, participation, teamwork and individual responsibility.

These inclusive environments bring together a host of local tamariki to embrace their potential and share in positive experiences through sport, which we know is so important across all facets of our wellbeing.

Te Aroha is a shining example of what one passionate person can do, with a clear intention to support her community and take action to achieve it.