

# THE EASTERN BAY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION SUCCESSFUL ANNUAL DINNER AND PROGRESS ON SUSTAINABILITY

The Eastern Bay Community Foundation (EBCF) reported a year of growth and increased community engagement at its Annual Dinner held last Friday night at the Whakatāne Golf Club. The event brought together generous local philanthropists, community leaders, and whānau to review the foundation's increasing impact on the region.

The dinner featured keynote speaker Lori Luke, CEO of the Acorn Foundation, Western Bay of Plenty, and Chair of Community Foundations of New Zealand (CFANZ). Ms. Luke has served as CEO at Acorn for seven years and chairs the national network that supports the 18 Community Foundations found around New Zealand.

The EBCF noted that years of dedicated community-based philanthropy are now yielding measurable results. The evening included the introduction of the Foundation's esteemed Ambassadors:

**Neil Craig:** Neil founded Craig & Co. Ltd in 1984 in Whakatāne, and through a series of acquisitions has grown the company, now Craigs Investment Partners, to be one of New Zealand's largest full-service investment advisory firms with 20 branches nationwide.

**Anne Tolley:** Anne has wide experience in local and national politics over the last 30 years. She is currently chair of the Horizon Energy Group Board, appointed in August 2024, and also chairs the New Zealand Chapter of Transparency International.

**Ross Green:** Born in Ōpōtiki, Ross is a property developer who founded the Kiwi Income Property Trust and has been involved in property development for nearly four decades. Ross is a generous supporter of the foundation and lives in Auckland.

The Foundation announced that its funds under management grew by 70% in a single 12-month period, indicating a strong local commitment to enduring regional support.

The EBCF has also launched the Super Legacy initiative. This programme encourages local Eastern Bay residents to contribute a portion or all of their national Superannuation payments towards the foundation's operational costs. This support ensures that all funds under management can be directed entirely to the causes they are intended to support, upholding the Community Foundation model of contributing only 1% of fund growth to operational costs. The goal is to make the Foundation entirely self-funding and self-sustainable within the next year.

Foundation Chairman, Scottie Macleod, reflected on the milestones achieved:

"The past year has been transformative for the Eastern Bay Community Foundation. To see our funds grow by 70% is a testament to the generosity of this region, and we are grateful to have so many community-minded individuals and families involved. This collective commitment ensures we can continue to build a thriving, sustainable future for the Eastern Bay."

A highly successful auction of donated experiences and goods was held during the dinner. Supported by Ross Green, Peter Francis, Goose Haddock, Robbie Ellison, Neil Craig, Sheryl Tebbutt, The Skin Code, Ōhiwa Black Diamond, Herringbone Wine, and Anna Craig, the auction brought in an additional \$22,000 to the foundation, further supporting its operational and community goals.

EBCF Manager, Angela Jackson, concluded the formal proceedings by announcing the recipients of this year's foundation scholarships, which will support local talent in pursuing their educational goals:

**Jean Smithson Nursing Scholarship:** Awarded to Beverley Taare from Ōpōtiki for post-graduate studies and to nursing student Jess Newton-Green.

**Rod McPherson Memorial Rural Scholarship:** Awarded to Alex Iremonger for a 2025 Farming Cadetship.

**Dick Anstis STEM Scholarship:** Awarded to Hugh Oyanagi, who is studying a Bachelor of Mechanical Engineering with a minor in Biomedical Engineering at the University of Christchurch.

The Eastern Bay Community Foundation continues to work hard ensuring that our local communities are engaged and benefiting from the generous local philanthropy within our region.