

Hello, my focus today in the context of capacity building is on Leadership. Leadership and its development across New Zealand in the **quest** for **greater capacity** and **outcomes** for our organisations, communities and **ultimately** our national wellbeing.

I am an Alumni of Leadership New Zealand having participated in the Leadership New Zealand programme in 2006 – with the fabulous Robyn Scott I might add... and I am now an employee of the Trust . Leadership New Zealand is a charitable trust set up in 2004 by a group of senior New Zealand leaders who saw the need to change the landscape of leadership across New Zealand.

I was introduced to Leadership New Zealand and the programme whilst working with Vodafone New Zealand, where I had a career for some 13 years.

What I'll be sharing this morning is who we are and what we do to build leadership capacity across all sectors of New Zealand ; some examples of the impact that the experience we create has on individuals, their leadership capacity; and the impact on capacity across our communities and organisations. My focal point throughout this piece and the point of difference of our Programme is the **valuing of diversity** and how we leverage the **benefits** of diversity to build capacity, innovative thinking and positive action.

But first, some global context.... Since the beginning of recorded history, there are many examples of leadership within individuals and across communities. The building of capacity across communities and organisations and striving for the wellbeing of people is no new concept... whether it be for the creation of better shelter, greater food production, building communities and organisational infrastructure, or enabling better health, longer life, innovative technologies, ... or greater wealth....

However, there has been no time like this current century where the complexity of our existence on this planet **requires significant leadership**. Leadership that engenders deeper thinking, openness to others perspectives, future planning, creative ideas and positive action, deep compassion and courage to think and act outside the square.

The **status quo** of national leadership infrastructures is being challenged, we are facing highly complex sustainability issues.... we know more – there is more information available to us instantaneously and without bounds..... our economic wellbeing is at best **fragile** in the current climate, and there is a disconnect between rapid technological growth, the investment in the search for the next new innovative product/service **and the basic needs** of human sustainability and community development.

And all of this exists out there... (*wave hand...*) while we are working 50-60 hour weeks to sustain the mechanisms of our organisations, the services they provide our communities and the wellbeing and growth of the people in our teams.

From a leadership perspective however, they can't be handled in isolation of each other, can't be handled with the same approaches that we know and are comfortable with, and can't be handled without being **fully informed**, and without consideration to **others perspectives** and having a clear path to follow.

So, what does all of this have to do with Leadership New Zealand and a capacity building workshop ?

Okay. Modern brain research exists that has concluded that once we reach our thirties we have narrowed significantly the scope of our interactions with **other people**, our **interests**, **skillsets**, and **activities** to the point that we are not developing any new neural pathways in our brains... i.e. we are not learning to think differently, which means that we are not open to new approaches, or to be more creative or courageous... and therefore to act differently... or to have any greater impact....

It is therefore critical for our personal success and for the success of those people in our communities that we are serving that we are continually growing our neural pathways.... and this can be through personal development and through exposure to new perspectives and new experiences.

The Leadership New Zealand programme was built on this premise. After researching various leadership development models around the world, the founders for Leadership New Zealand found one that could be adapted for the New Zealand environment just across the ditch.

And so since 2005 each year we take 30 odd leaders with great potential from across New Zealand from every sector of New Zealand – private, public and the not for profit and community sectors – participants range from commercial leaders, community leaders, leaders from the rural sector, from the religious sector, from the arts, sole operators, organisational leaders, and from most disciplines..... We expose them to the reflections of prominent New Zealand leaders with great experience and expertise in their respective fields and from as equally diverse as the participants. They speak to the group on leadership issues that impact New Zealand and the people of this country and the group have conversations on their perspectives of what they have heard, how it has impacted them, and the broader leadership implications for them and the groups that they are connected to.

What does this do? It challenges people's paradigms... their world view is challenged... a view that is born out of their values, the beliefs that they hold and the exposure they have had to life and to leadership thus far. The group learn from **each other** as much as from the speakers who address the group over the year.

They develop a deep appreciation for each other's worlds, a compassion. And where previously judgements existed through a filter born out of sometimes misinformation (often in the media) or predetermined ideas from a belief system that may have existed from a very young age – respect develops for the new paradigm of awareness.

The magic is in the diversity of the group and the fact that they are exposed to very poignant experiences and stories whilst sitting next to an individual from an environment that they might not ever have connected with and then having the opportunity to discuss it in infinite detail from a variety of angles.

They ask the naive questions of each other and take each other's hearts and minds into recesses they did not know existed.... I want to acknowledge Louise O'Halloran for her enlightening presentation yesterday. I chose to go to a session on a topic that I know very little about. Louise's material was rich, it was probing and provocative as well as covering an extremely broad area with deep insight and in a highly informed context... it blew my mind.... I literally felt my brain stretching and scrambling to create some context for what I was hearing. It was like a dive into an icy

mountain river... stunning parts of my thinking awake and forcing me to reconsider some of my own paradigms. How often do each of you feel like that in a given week..? What opportunities are you creating for yourselves to challenge how you're thinking and how you are approaching what you are doing each day?

Attending conferences like this one are critical for your portfolio of personal development, and how often are you at conferences or in groups where you find yourself mixing with the same people, the same speakers, the same thinking and the same perspectives...? What can each of you do differently to stretch your thinking to a place of real creativity and thoughtful action? Creating greater capacity within yourself, for your organisations and for those who benefit from your services. ..

My greatest value yesterday came from attending that workshop on a topic that I know nothing about, and no immediate need for - yet I found myself thinking differently about global issues that I already knew existed **but** they were through a **different lense**...

The programme encourages the participants to build time into their lives to reflect more – to reflect on who they are and the issues they face day to day , and to develop better questioning skills – questioning to gain deeper insight and to search for the nub of issues;

The outcomes for our Alumni are significant – life changing in fact. I know this from my own experience and from the regular stories we capture across each year as participants continue to traverse their leadership journey long after the programme year is over We publish these stories on our website each month and they are available for anyone to view in each of our monthly online newsletters.

And there are actually a number of Alumni present at this conference who are our not for profit members ...

The most common reflections on the value of the year... are..

The Exposure to a group that is so diverse is invaluable. Engaging with leaders across the programme year who are facing leadership challenges within their communities, their organisations and within themselves that can often be quite similar, but within a different context invokes creativity.

Alumni graduate as better informed, broader thinking individuals on a myriad of issues, from the pressures of building a sustainable future for New Zealand, to the very personal challenges experienced by communities all over the country.

And they become more community minded. We deliberately ensure there is a balanced representation of private and public sector and community leaders to create deeper awareness and respect for the leadership challenges faced on the “other side of the fence”.

And they have a network of people across the country who they are connected to for life. This provides an instant pool of knowledge, resource, skills and experiences to draw on to support each other and themselves in their endeavours. A growing network of connected leaders who are the future makers for New Zealands wellbeing.

So what do 30 odd leaders do with this newfound capacity? The most obvious impact is on their immediate circles of influence --> their organisation, their families, their community. As better informed leaders who are empathetic to sectors and situations previously unknown to them, with greater self awareness, great courage and compassion emerges creating the confidence to forge new pathways and new paradigms .

The heightened awareness of national and sectoral challenges creates a motivation across the group to take action, to be able to make a difference on a variety of levels.

For the HR Director of Foodstuffs to discover that a foodbank in a fellow participant's community is about to run out of food there is an easy solution... Redirect overstocked items to the Foodbank indefinitely and enable its ongoing sustainability.

Hearing the heartfelt story of a participants son who was desperate to follow his dream to attend a specific engineering course in the States but without the means, it was an easy call for the Downer EDI participant to present the case to the D EDI leadership team, and for them to then develop a strategy for encouraging members of the Pacific Island community into an engineering internship with their organisation, enabling the young man to attend his course and then join Downers as the inaugural intern the follow year – thus shifting a paradigm for a community who had previously provided labourer resource only in the company's teams.

For the recently appointed Alumni at Tainui Group Holdings in the Waikato, it made perfect sense to collaborate with a fellow Alumni at a prominent Auckland law firm to increase the firms organisational knowledge and awareness of iwi culture and history to allow that firms more effective handling of iwi legal matters and to develop deeper empathy for the cause and outcomes.

A 2005 Alumni has created a social media community of aspiring young directors aged 35 -45 to develop their governance capacity and directorship potential following her programme year. Check out Springboard's website..

A 2007 Alumni is developing a social movement to create a highly accessible New Zealand , a first in the world beginning with the creation of a leadership programme accessible to leaders with disability across New Zealand.

Through our community engagement programme SkillsBank, Alumni can volunteer for projects that provide capacity building to not for profit groups across the country ranging from mentoring of nto for profit leaders to complex organisational development projects.

Examples of these are...

An Alumni of Maori descent being nominated to a Waitakere Abuse and Trauma Centre Board to assist the Board to create a more culturally aware organisation and become a bicultural entity.

When an Alumni was nominated to the Huntingtons Disease Association board as Chair, the organisation had funding left for only one more month's operation, and was thinking it would have to close it's doors, leaving its constituents affected with this debilitating disease and their families with no support. Within a year the organisation has been transformed to a sustainable and

operationally effective service that is engaged in collaborative discussions regularly with national and regional entities like health boards, the brain research institute and national advocacy and educational groups to bring creative thinking into the brain disease space and the future impacts for New Zealand.

In each of these examples and many others, the key to the success of the connections is in the openness of the individuals to try something new.....

So just a little bit off tact, my husband and I decided four years ago to spend the NZ winter in Canada so that he could follow a dream to build golf courses through the Canadian summer... we've been up there for the last three summer seasons with our four yr old son. Whilst there I found a country leading the way in social development and social entrepreneurship, a country of true altruists.

At my most recent stint up in Canada last winter, I spent some time with members of the Muttart Foundation and Dr Christopher Smith shared with me the details of a survey performed by the M Foundation in collaboration with the Canadian HR Council over 2010.

The survey took place across the two provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan to establish the barriers to developing greater leadership capacity across the not for profit sector.

The report findings were very relevant to New Zealand and our own climate, but so as to not steal any of Marcel's thunder, i'd just like to share with you only one quote only that was notated in the report...

An excerpt from the W.K.Kellogg Foundation report entitled "Building leadership capacity for the 21st century" was referenced in that survey report and it gave reference to the characteristics necessary for successful leaders of the future.

"In addition to having confidence and excellent management skills, future leaders must be able to recognise their strengths and weaknesses and know how to build complementary teams... They should be able to build collaborative working relationships across numerous and varied constituencies and stakeholders, feeling comfortable operating at all levels of society to affect and institutionalise change. The new leader must know how to network and build coalitions, must know how to work with corporations, governments and other not for profit organisations, because the complexity of modern problems will require the three sectors to combine their resources and influence to forge new solutions." "Leadership needs to be thought of as a collaborative process for effective, positive social change."

So I encourage each of you to take two things away from what I have shared so far... **take time** to focus on your personal leadership capacity and **create opportunities** for you, your organisation and your communities for diverse and creative thinking – that means looking over the fence regularly and building a genuine interest in how we work together for a united, healthy New Zealand.

Recall Stephen Burkeman's quote used yesterday "Your current safe boundaries were once unknown frontiers" take a step out into your next frontier.

Thank you