

30

Meet our *women* of the year



Back bigger and better than ever, the fourth NEXT Woman of the Year Awards has attracted entries from all corners of the country and all walks of life. The countdown is on to the announcement of New Zealand's most inspirational female: the NEXT Woman of the Year 2013. This month we introduce the finalists in our six categories: Arts & Culture, Business & Innovation, Education, Community, Health & Science, and Sport. While many impressive women entered, these 30 stood out. They're all innovative, inspirational leaders with tremendous determination, passion, perseverance, lateral thinking and

courage who have battled their way past numerous obstacles. And they're all having a positive impact on the people around them and the country we live in. Whether they're helping migrants settle here or sending birthday cakes to sick children, starting charities in their garages or founding film festivals and arts projects, championing isolated groups or fighting for law change, making major medical breakthroughs or discovering new planets, leading the world in their chosen sport or helping businesses become sustainable, every one of them deserves a round of applause. And an encore. »

OUR FINALISTS

Arts & culture

**TINA CROSS**

Singer and entertainer

One of seven children from a working-class south Auckland family, Cross has always made her own luck. After winning the Pacific Song Contest aged 16, she carved out a career as a chart-topping, award-winning recording artist, performing nationally and overseas. Despite battling vocal cord problems that threatened to end her career, Cross has expanded her repertoire as a singer, dancer, entertainer and musical-theatre performer, embracing challenges, change and reinvention. Today she continues to sing solo and in her band The LadyKillers. Known for her positivity, energy and drive, Cross donates her time and skills to charities as a patron, entertainer, speaker and MC. In 2013, she co-founded not-for-profit organisation The Mentors to advise aspiring performing artists.

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HINEWEHI MOHI

Singer-songwriter, TV producer, founder of Raukatauri Music Therapy Centre

A champion of Māori culture, Mohi broke new ground by singing our anthem in te reo at the 1999 Rugby World Cup and releasing an album, *Oceania*, that sold 100,000 copies worldwide. Her daughter, who has cerebral palsy, inspired Mohi to establish not-for-profit Raukatauri Music Therapy Centre in 2004. Mohi is donating all profits from her new album *Raukatauri* to the centre, which helps youngsters with special needs. An award-winning TV producer through her company Raukatauri Productions, Mohi was just named programme commissioner at Māori TV. She beat breast cancer in 2011, and drove an initiative encouraging breast-screening among Māori and Pacific Islanders.

GINA DELLABARCA

Show Me Shorts Film Festival founder/director

In 2006, aged just 26, Dellabarpa set up Show Me Shorts as a much-needed forum to showcase short film-makers' work. Now it's a nationwide annual fixture screening the best short films from New Zealand and around the world. Working tirelessly to develop the festival, Dellabarpa has established new venues, events, workshops, a writers' lab, awards and a school group scheme. Undaunted by tight budgets, she's built long-term relationships with sponsors and funders, and recruited a team of volunteers. In 2012 Show Me Shorts became New Zealand's only Academy Awards-accredited film festival, allowing winners to enter the Oscars. This outgoing champion of film works unpaid in evenings and weekends, while working full time. Bret McKenzie. >>

DEIRDRE TARRANT

Dance doyenne

When Tarrant retired in April after 28 years as founding director of Footnote Dance, she left behind a contemporary dance company with a commitment to staging local works, a strong schools programme, and a world-class reputation. The dancer-turned-teacher and choreographer is known for her warmth, enthusiasm and grit, for nurturing talent and leaders, and for creating opportunities for not just choreographers and dancers, but also for composers, musicians and technicians. Working closely with city councils, performance spaces, arts foundations and festivals, she's helped contemporary dance win both the attention of the public and a firmer footing on the national arts scene. She's also raised three sons, including Oscar winner

CORALIE WINN

Gap Filler co-founder

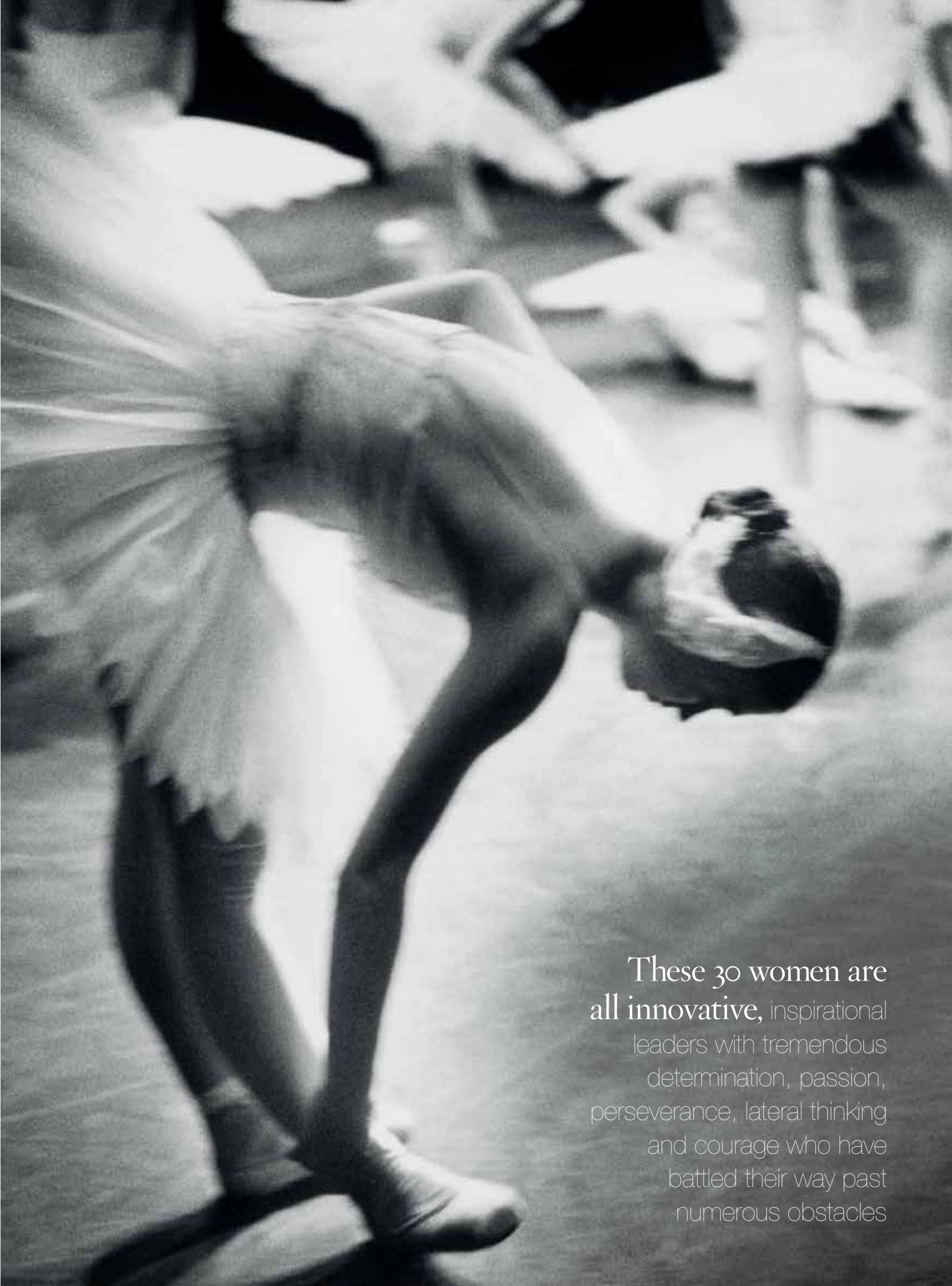
and director

After losing her arts co-ordinator job in the 2010 Christchurch quake and her house in the 2011 quake, Winn co-founded urban regeneration project Gap Filler. The volunteer-driven initiative 'activates'

vacated sites with temporary creative projects for young and old to use, interact with and enjoy: from a book exchange in a disused fridge to life-size board games and popular public space/events hub The Pallet Pavilion. Winn has turned ideas into reality with little money, recruited

dozens of funders, supporters and partners, managed four staff and many volunteers, and ensured Gap Filler remains community-driven. She's helped restore creativity, positivity, innovation and tourists to Christchurch

- and given residents another reason to stay. >>



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RAELENE CASTLE
Former Netball NZ chief executive
Talk about shattering glass ceilings. In May Castle was named Canterbury Bulldogs' chief executive, making her the first female CEO in Australia's National Rugby League. That meant leaving Netball NZ. Her six years there began with pulling off New Zealand's hosting of the World Netball Championships after Fiji was scratched. Combining her sports and business background, she led restructuring of national netball from 12 regions to five zones; improved working relationships with regional netball and staff; carried the bags and drove the minibus for the Silver Ferns in Australia; and drove the establishment of the ANZ Championships, which combined NZ and Australian club leagues in a win-win for players, fans and sponsorship coffers.

SARAH WALKER
BMX champion
At the 2012 Supercross in Norway, Walker dislocated her shoulder. Yet six weeks later, against all expectations, she qualified for the London Olympics. There she became New Zealand's first BMX rider to win an Olympic medal, taking silver despite shoulder problems that later required surgery. Although she crashed out of the 2013 World Championships with a broken arm and collarbone, she always comes back just as strong. Just 25, she's medalled at every world championships between 2003 and 2011, and in 2009 became world champ in the Elite Women's and Cruiser categories. She's also won 20 national champion titles across both categories. In between training sessions, she supports other BMX riders, visits schools, and is a charities ambassador.

JULIETTE HAIGH
Rower, charity worker
Haigh didn't let tendinitis derail her final Olympics, taking a bronze at London 2012. Soon after she retired, after nine years representing New Zealand at the World Cup (five golds, two silvers) and the World Championships (three golds, one silver). The New Zealand Olympic Committee ambassador, who visits schools promoting Olympic values, is now saying yes to just about every opportunity, including writing for *OarSport* magazine. Last year she taught school kids in Kenyan slums through Kitendo Children's Charity, and in June she climbed Africa's Mount Kilimanjaro. She and five fellow climbers raised \$20,000 to launch World Vision Micro, which provides small-business loans to poor families.

SUZIE BATES
Cricketer
A former double international, Bates gave up basketball to concentrate on cricket – and it sure has paid off. The captain of national women's team the White Ferns is also the world's number one batwoman in one-day internationals, and was named player of the tournament at the 2013 Women's World Cup. Although she crashed out of the 2013 World Championships with a broken arm and collarbone, she always comes back just as strong. Just 25, she's medalled at every world championships between 2003 and 2011, and in 2009 became world champ in the Elite Women's and Cruiser categories. She's also won 20 national champion titles across both categories. In between training sessions, she supports other BMX riders, visits schools, and is a charities ambassador.

FIONA SOUTHORN
Paralympian cyclist
By day, Southorn is a real-estate agent. After work and on the weekends she's a cyclist who happens to have a short left arm and no fingers on her left hand. Southorn started road and track cycling in 2002, and has been winning trophies and breaking records at meets around the country and the world ever since. Competing in her third Paralympics last year in London, aged 45, she won bronze – and smashed her personal best – in the C5 Women's Individual Pursuit. Overcoming shyness, she's also become a motivational speaker and a High Performance Sport New Zealand ambassador, visiting schools to help young athletes set goals. Southorn's secret? Perseverance. She trains twice a day, six days a week.



CORNELIA BAUMGARTNER
Founder/programme director, Kidpower Teenpower Fullpower NZ
In 1993 Baumgartner founded an anti-bullying and people-safety scheme based on an American programme, and adapted it to a Kiwi context. For the past 20 years she's run nationwide workshops including Kidpower and Teenpower (in schools), Fullpower (for adults) and Parent-Child, which teach how to stay emotionally and physically safe through boundary-setting, conflict solving and self-defence. So far 33,000 children, teens and adults have taken part; some said it changed their lives. As Kidpower kept growing, Baumgartner began training other instructors. Passionate about the right to safety, she envisions a future where people safety will have equal status with water, fire and road safety in education.

JULIE KING
National co-ordinator, Click SpecialED Trust
Special-school teachers will tell you King isn't just the national co-ordinator of Click; she is 'ClickNZ'. In 2009 she single-handedly drove the establishment and development of an online community website for educators of special needs learners. The site is used by New Zealand's 29 Special Schools, eight residential schools, many special-education units, some mainstream schools, and in 60-plus countries. Bonds have been forged as once-isolated schools use the site to share resources and advice. Often working a seven-day week on her own, King's also developed a groundbreaking curriculum, plus professional development and learning groups for educators. Innovative and inspiring, she speaks publicly to promote a field she is passionate about.

SARAH FARQUHAR
Director, ChildForum
Everything Farquhar does, she does to help kids get the best possible start so they can one day achieve success regardless of background or barriers. An obese teen-turned-marathon runner, and average student-turned-internationally lauded researcher, she's focused her career on improving research, policy and practices in early childhood education (ECE). Farquhar, who advises education officials, began the subscription-based ChildForum network in 2010 to provide quality research, advice and information on ECE and encourage debate. She'll soon launch website MyEce to help parents get the best from ECE. The mum of five has often taken her preschoolers to meetings, and she lobbies hard for family-friendly work policies. »

Community



JENNY WANG
Executive director,
Chinese New Settlers
Services Trust

In 1994, a Chinese immigrant found herself lost in New Zealand. Not speaking English well, and with her qualifications going unrecognised, she couldn't find a job. Intent on turning things around, she learnt fluent English, did a social-work degree, and made it her goal to help new Asian migrants settle and integrate into Kiwi society. Founding the Chinese New Settlers Services Trust in her garage in 1998, and working unpaid for two-and-a-half years, Wang has developed it into an enterprise that provides services across social work, counselling, employment, education, housing, accountancy, and more. She oversees 37 staff, 110 contractors, and 50-plus long-term volunteers helping 15,000 people each year.

TRACEY MARCEAU
Mother, law-change campaigner

On November 7, 2011, Marceau's daughter, Christie, 18, was stabbed at her home and died in her mother's arms. Marceau's world was shattered, but she resolved Christie wouldn't be just another statistic. She worked with the Sensible Sentencing Trust to launch Christie's Law: a campaign for the tightening of bail laws which freed the man who would murder Christie. Marceau presented a petition with 58,000 signatures to Parliament while holding Christie's ashes. To help Christie's legacy live on, the family set up the Christie Marceau Charitable Trust, which will award grants for youngsters to attend outdoor personal development courses. Marceau's book *Christie: A Family's Tragic Loss and a Mother's Fight for Justice* was published in April.

JULIE CHAPMAN
Founder & CEO,
KidsCan

Armed with a small grant and a dream of helping children less fortunate than the rest, Chapman began distributing food, shoes and raincoats from her garage in 2005. Eight years later, and now armed with a \$5 million budget, KidsCan provides food, clothing and basic healthcare items to 48,000 children in 341 low-decile schools, and is set to reach three times as many kids in 2015. This is no short-term measure: well-fed, warm and healthy kids do better at school, making them more likely to break the poverty cycle. A proactive people person, Chapman brought back Telethon in 2009, has built strong relationships with communities, government and corporates, and regularly speaks out to raise awareness about poverty's impact on children.

SALLY KABAK
Grandparent advocate,
blogger, author

While raising two grandchildren and caring for a terminally-ill husband, 65-year-old Kabak continues to be a source of strength and support for grandparents in New Zealand and worldwide who are raising grandchildren, usually unexpectedly. Finding no help within the system for grandparents facing this responsibility, Kabak set up the website raisinggrandchildren.net.nz, a blog and Facebook page to share information and create a support network. Knowing how many grandparents prefer the printed page, she also self-published a guidebook: *Grandchildren, Our Hopes and Dreams*. Kabak, who works unpaid, has overcome shyness and limited finances to champion an often isolated group.

RACHEL JENKINSON
Operation Sugar founder

No kid should have to go without a birthday cake, and a seriously ill child should get an extra-special one. That's what Balclutha mum Jenkinson thought while on maternity leave with her third child. Working unpaid and funding Operation Sugar from a tight family budget, she has mustered 440 volunteers countrywide to bake customised birthday cakes and 75 volunteer photographers to capture the happy moments – particularly important when a child is terminally ill. With her husband Nick awaiting surgery for a fractured spine, she's back working 30 paid hours a week for St John, volunteering for other charities and teaching Sunday school, as well as being a mum. Somehow, she still finds 20 hours a week for Operation Sugar.

Health & science



DR KATIE GROOM
Obstetrician and researcher

Determined to help mothers and their unborn babies, Groom develops and manages clinical trials that aim to find breakthrough treatments for life-threatening or high-risk pregnancies. At Gravida National Centre for Growth & Development, Groom is lead investigator of a world-first trial treating pregnant women with extreme fetal-growth restriction with sildenafil citrate (Viagra). Getting such trials off the ground is a major feat in a field with few new treatments. The mum of two is also a specialist obstetrician at National Women's Hospital, where she's helped save hundreds of babies' lives, and counselled countless couples facing a frightening prognosis or who face losing a baby. She also lectures and supervises at Auckland University.

DR RACHAEL TAYLOR
Childhood-obesity researcher

Taylor's internationally-recognised career focuses on the prevention and treatment of childhood obesity. Among other pioneering projects, she led the University of Otago APPLE Study which found a school-based nutrition and physical activity scheme could, with community backing, reduce excessive weight gain in childhood. APPLE has guided health schemes nationally and overseas. Securing multi-million-dollar grants, Taylor is researching whether intervention in infancy or even antenatally might help prevent obesity. She strives to ensure key research findings inform health policies and initiatives. The mother of three boys under 10 also serves on national and international advisory groups.

DR BRONWEN CONNOR
Brain researcher

This pioneering scientist wants to improve the lives of the one in five Kiwis who do or will suffer from brain disorders or injuries including Parkinson's, Alzheimer's and stroke. At just 40, she's the director of neurodiscovery at the University of Auckland's Centre for Brain Research. Her research focuses on using stem cells to develop innovative strategies to replace brain cells lost through disease or injury. Last year, in a major breakthrough, Connor discovered how to create brain cells from the patient's own skin, eliminating issues such as donor-tissue rejection and ethical concerns about using embryonic stem cells. The passionate science communicator and single mum-of-two also visits schools to get students excited about health and science.

JENNIE McCORMICK
Astronomer

From her backyard east Auckland observatory, this self-taught amateur astronomer has discovered an asteroid, co-discovered a solar system, and played a significant role in the discovery of more than 20 star-orbiting planets. She became the first amateur member of the international planet-hunting collaboration MicroFUN, and the first amateur to discover a planet since 1781. Since 1999 she's gathered 2836 hours of data for four global research programmes, working unpaid, unless you count the thank you gifts of a new telescope, instruments and dome. She's also contributed data to 30-plus papers in major science journals. After her night shifts she's still up early for her job at an art gallery. »

DR LEE MATHIAS
Healthcare entrepreneur

Starting out as a nurse 40 years ago, Mathias has become a healthcare leader through grit, vision and innovation. In 1995 she founded private maternity hospitals Birthcare, designing the model that transformed New Zealand maternity services. After 11 years as Birthcare managing director she left to found Auckland blood-test and laboratory provider Labtests. She's inaugural chair of the government-established Health Promotion Agency, and Auckland District Health Board deputy chair. As an entrepreneur, she develops innovative healthcare products and services, including a new blood-testing technology. She's also a governance, business and management consultant, a motivational speaker and chairs Co. OfWomen, an organisation that champions female entrepreneurs. »

Business



**SACHIE
NOMURA**

Director, Sachie's Kitchen

A Japanese Kiwi who has lived here 20 years, Nomura started her Auckland cooking school in a recession and with no business experience. Three years on, six Asian immigrant chefs have taught 4500 students how to cook simple, tasty Asian food. Sachie's Kitchen also runs masterclasses with top Australasian chefs, and team-building events. Every time a class or event runs, Nomura feeds a child through Nourish the Children, and supports many other charities. Nomura, whose series *Sachie's Kitchen* screens on Prime, is also a food columnist, commentator and consultant. In 2014 she will release a cookbook and product range and work on expanding overseas.

**NAOMI
BALLANTYNE**

Managing director, Partners Life

Over 25 years, Ballantyne has proved to be one of the strongest players in New Zealand's life-insurance industry, and a major threat to the many insurers owned by Australian banks. A proactive innovator, she led Sovereign to dominate the industry before becoming the world's first woman to found her own life-insurance company, Club Life (now OnePath) in 2001. Ten years on, she co-founded Partners

**RACHEL
BROWN**

Founder and CEO, Sustainable Business Network

Since founding the Sustainable Business Network in 2002, Brown has worked tirelessly to develop a strong national network of member businesses (currently 500) working toward sustainability. She's proved SBN's worth to corporate behemoths and small-to-medium enterprises alike. To help them follow a path to profit that benefits communities, workers, the environment and shareholders, she's developed numerous resources, services, initiatives and events including networking, training schemes, and the highly successful Sustainable Business Awards. A strong voice in Kiwi business, Brown was trained by Al Gore to present his awareness-raising Climate Reality Project.

LINDY NELSON
Executive director, Agri-Women's Development Trust

This Eketahuna sheep and beef farmer wondered why rural women weren't using their skills to become business, industry and community leaders. So she self-funded three years of research and found the main barriers were lack of education and support. With the guts and vision to fill the gap, Nelson set up the Agri-Women's Development Trust in 2010. Working long unpaid hours for two years, she secured industry sponsorship, established an experienced board, and began two low-cost courses for rural women. First Steps, a two-day programme, and Escalator, a 10-month leadership-and-governance scheme, have 300 graduates and impressive success stories.

**DEBRA
CHANTRY**
Mentor, business coach, entrepreneur, lecturer

Tapping into her many years owning and directing companies, Chantry uses her skills and networks to help people start, grow and develop their businesses. She does this through her highly successful business-coaching company Ventell Consulting, as a coach and mentor at start-up incubator the Lightning Lab, and as executive in residence and start-ups' adviser at business incubator The Icehouse. Chantry has 50 mentoring success stories from the past two years alone. With a gift for inspiring others, she's also a volunteer mentor at Business Mentors NZ, a marketing lecturer and tutor, a trustee for charity Life Education Trust, and a regional chair for Women on Boards NZ.

LISA PLATO

Creative director, Plato Design Agency

Plato and husband John started their graphic design agency in a recession, then lost their office to the quakes. Despite working from first her

house then her accountant's office, Plato kept going, and kept the staff on. Her business nous from managing her dad's cherry packhouse at 15 proved handy. In five years she's turned her

graphic design start-up into one of Christchurch's biggest design agencies providing full website services, copywriting and internet

marketing among other offerings. By 2012, turnover was \$2.8 million. By this year, when creative jobs are still scarce in Christchurch, Plato is hiring and upskilling 24 full-time staff who do pro-bono work for charities. □



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