



ADVENTURE  
SPECIALTIES TRUST

EST. 1984

# ANNUAL REVIEW

2020



# *Our Vision*

Using Outdoor Adventure to Grow Great Communities

# *Our Mission*

To respond to the needs in our community by providing outdoor adventure programmes that facilitate the holistic development of individuals, families and communities.

# *Our Values*

**FAITH** – We are guided and motivated by our Christian faith which shapes how we work alongside people.

**ADVENTURE** – We believe healthy and positive learning can come out of well facilitated adventurous activities.

**COMMUNITY** – We collaborate with community partners to enhance their good work and to achieve shared outcomes.

**HOPE** – We believe that there is hope for all people and that positive life choices can bring about change.

**EXCELLENCE** – We strive to deliver high quality, exciting and safe programmes.





## WORD FROM THE CEO

### *Help – we are in a sticky situation...*

With 2020 done and dusted, I can now look back with a clear perspective without the influence of the stress and the abnormality of the COVID-19 impact. What I see is an organisation that I am immensely proud of; one that is nimble and able to deal with sudden and rapid change, one with amazing and committed staff that were willing to make many personal sacrifices and one that through adversity went from strength to strength. Yes, COVID-19 had a significant impact and I clearly remember the many sleepless nights as I grappled with what was happening and the uncertainty that the future held. I don't wish to repeat the constant running of numbers and going through multiple strategies in a hurry, but unwittingly we came out of 2020 in very good shape! We also bounced back from lockdown quickly being able to offer some new programming that directly responded to the mental wellness of young people that had been adversely affected.

COVID-19 did not dampen the highlights that we had in 2020. At the start of the year our entire team spent a week on Pahāōa Marae on the East Cape. This was a great learning experience helping us on our bi-cultural journey. We would like to say a massive thanks to Andrea Fox, one of our Board members, and her whānau who hosted us for the week. We also ran a new initiative encouraging Māori to take up a career in outdoor instruction. This Māori workforce development programme was all wāhine (unintentionally) who tried many new experiences including sleeping overnight on a waka in the Kawhia Harbour.

2020 also saw us refine our strategic direction which brought real clarity to the direction that our waka is travelling. We clarified our two approaches to the work that we offer. One is targeted at the general populous where we are encouraging people to be ethnically, culturally, environmentally and socially, “everyday heroes”. This means that all our general populous programmes are looking through this lens and we use outdoor adventure to encourage people to be those everyday heroes! The other is to utilise Adventure Therapy. This is taking a much more

therapeutic approach in working with those that are facing some significant challenges in life. As such we have an entire team dedicated to the work of Adventure Therapy, and at the end of 2020 employed our first specialised Adventure Therapy Clinician!

So yes, 2020 was one of the most challenging years that Adventure Specialties Trust has faced, but also one of the most rewarding. I was extremely encouraged by our amazing staff team that, through all this uncertainty, fully supported the Trust and continued to find ways of being productive while working from home. No easy task for people that are active and used to being out adventuring with our clients! I am also encouraged by those who got behind our mahi and helped ensure we got through these “unprecedented times” including those that supported our online campaign “*Help – we are in a sticky situation...*”. Thank you to my Board of Trustees who helped strategise our way through the pandemic. Thanks to all those that in a time of significant financial uncertainty supported us financially and thanks to those that acted on one of our key values, faith, and offered prayer and support.

Finally, I want to end by acknowledging two significant people who resigned from the Trust at the end of 2020. Firstly, to Glenda Simpkin, who along with her late husband Lyndsay, started the Trust 37 years ago. Glenda has put her heart and soul into the organisation as well as keeping the books balanced! The Trust will be a different place without her daily presence! Also, to Jared Partridge who after 15 years resigned to take up a year long trip travelling NZ with a caravan and family in tow! Jared will also be well missed.



  
**Tim Wills**  
CEO

(Photo from our fundraising video “*Help - we are in sticky situation*”).

# CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

*Tēnā koutou e te whānau,*

The year 2020 will be remembered by the Trustees of Adventure Specialties Trust for many things. Firstly, for the impact that COVID-19 has had on the work of the Trust and the resulting financial implications. It was a tough year and yet after many Zoom meetings, decisions, planning and consulting with our stellar team of managers, we found ourselves at the end of 2020 in a good place. We give thanks for where we are now and for the talented team of dedicated professionals that got us there.

Throughout the year that was, the board was thankful for the enormous dedication and significant energy of our CEO, Tim Wills, and his team. They stepped up and performed with confidence and a belief in the value of the Trust to service a community that would, more than ever, need the hope that the Trust can provide. Tim continues to lead with passion, vision and a clear sense of our mission. He communicated well with the board as we navigated many varied and complex decisions.

The Trust continues to benefit from the collective governance, wisdom and passion of its trustees. Their leadership and support for Tim was invaluable in keeping the team informed. A tightly knit board working with a passionate and effective CEO has played a big part in bringing Adventure Specialties to the place we are in today.

The Trustees met two times, face to face, during 2020 and many more times online. Alongside their support through COVID-19, the Trustees also continued to investigate building options for our Christchurch branch. Other achievements shared by the board and Tim and his management team, included a restructure and a fresh approach to looking after administrative functions, a focus on Adventure Therapy as a key component, and a review of our strategic plan.

The Trust is in good shape as we launch into a new year. The fundamentals are rock solid and we have an awesome team of mission-focused, strategically aligned, passionate and energy filled adventure specialists, who all look forward with a sense of excitement and anticipation.

*Ngā mihi ki a koutou katoa*



*B. R. Knolles*

Chair - Adventure Specialties Trust  
19 February 2021

## 2020 TRUSTEES

**Brian Knolles (Chairperson), Tanya Laybourn, Jennine Thomson, Bruce Conway, Andrea Fox**



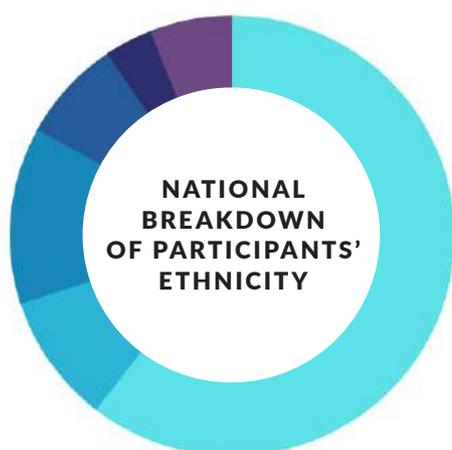
# THE YEAR IN NUMBERS

**5,064**  
Participants

**24**  
Paid staff  
members

**38**  
New  
programmes

**254**  
Programmes  
delivered

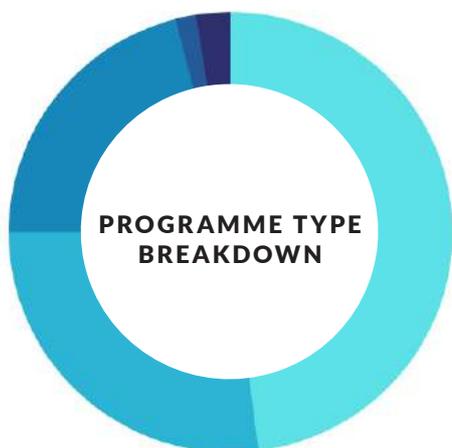


## Auckland 2,716

- 50% Kiwi/European
- 15% Asian
- 13% Māori
- 10% Pacific Island
- 6% Indian
- 6% Other

## Christchurch 2,348

- 71% Kiwi/European
- 4% Asian
- 13% Māori
- 5% Pacific Island
- 1% Indian
- 6% Other



- **32% Social Development:** outcome is the holistic development of the participants.
- **27% Outdoor Education:** outcome is to further the participant's knowledge in a specific skill or where academic achievement is the key focus.
- **37% Adventure Therapy:** clearly defined individual needs and desired outcomes identified.
- **3% Commercial:** a service provided in order to return significant profit.
- **1% Other**

## Auckland:

Total programmes delivered 155

▶ Social Development	26%
▶ Outdoor Education	27%
▶ Adventure Therapy	44%
▶ Commercial	1%
▶ Other	2%

## Christchurch:

Total programmes delivered 99

▶ Social Development	41%
▶ Outdoor Education	26%
▶ Adventure Therapy	25%
▶ Commercial	7%
▶ Other	1%

# FINANCES

*Ironically, 2020 has been the year that we celebrate reaching the goal of three months in cash reserves.*

This is a significant turning point for Adventure Specialties Trust, as strategically this has been our goal for many years and demonstrates Adventure Specialties Trust coming into financial maturity. One of the markers of a sustainable and well managed organisation is indeed having cash reserves to deal with the unexpected and to allow flexibility in decision making.

You may ask how we did this in a year of significant disruptions and financial uncertainty? We have asked ourselves the same thing many times! It came down to support from a number of different avenues and a significant reduction in our expenses over the COVID-19 lockdowns and disruptions. We were eligible, and received, all of the three government wage subsidy support packages, had a number of organisations and individuals offer significant and additional support, had rent relief from our very generous landlords, had funders continue to support us even though we couldn't provide service and accessed additional government and private funding that was directly tagged to supporting organisations affected by COVID-19. So yes, 2020 was a year of significant financial stress - and in the early part of the year we were unsure if we were going to survive and stay solvent.

However, the continuation of the good news is that as we close off our 2020 accounts, we know that we are in a stronger position to contend with what 2021 might bring.



● Donations	\$193,887	9%
● Capital Grants	\$34,019	2%
● Revenue Grants	\$311,154	15%
● Govt Contracts	\$74,706	4%
● Revenue from Service	\$1,178,838	58%
● Government Wage Subsidy	\$246,890	12%

*NB: Figures are representative only and may show slight variance to the 2020 Audited Accounts.*

	2020	2019
<b>Total income</b>	\$2,045,677	\$1,978,320
<b>Total expenditure</b>	\$1,692,224	\$1,891,782
<b>Total surplus</b>	\$353,453	\$86,538

# OUR SOCIAL IMPACT / OUTCOMES

Our outcomes from programmes during 2020

## OUR SOCIAL IMPACT



### WELLBEING:

As a result of participating in our programmes people have an increased sense of wellbeing. This may have physical, mental, emotional, social or spiritual components.



### SOCIAL SKILLS:

As a result of participating in our programmes people are able to work better with others. They are better able to develop strong relationships in their every-day lives.



### CHARACTER:

As a result of participating in our programmes people develop, and have a better sense of, their inbuilt character strengths – the qualities and skills that help them through life.



### ONGOING PARTICIPATION:

As a result of being on our programmes people have the motivation and ability to recreate some form of outdoor experience in their own lives, independently of programme support.



### MANAAKITANGA:

As a result of participating in our programmes people have more kindness, empathy, respect, generosity and a desire to uplift others.

## OUR OUTCOMES

*"I feel a lot more hopeful going forward".*

*"It's given me more confidence".*

*"Being outdoors makes me happy".*



*"I learnt to help others when they need help and ask for help when I need help".*

*"I had to learn to listen more to other people's opinion."*

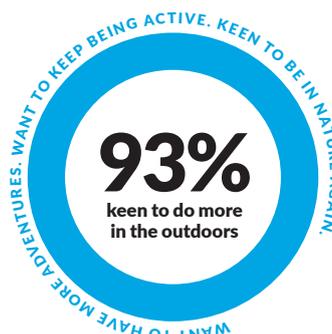
*"This has helped me practice communication".*



*"I learnt that I maybe shouldn't doubt myself as much as I do and that I have quite a few strengths that not only help me but also help other people."*

*"I am better at things than I thought, I just lack confidence".*

*"I learnt that even if I struggle I can push through and complete it".*



*"I would like to experience more tramping with family and friends. I want to be able to do more outdoor activities".*

*"Made me tell my parents about what I did and encourage them to do things with me".*

*"Being out here for a while has helped me gain a routine that I would like to keep".*

*"I learned it's not all about you. You got to be honest and helpful".*

*"I will respect my peers by using kindness".*

*"It helped me talk to people I don't like".*

*"Resilience, when my peers are at their most vulnerable to use manaakitanga".*

*"Seeing people who are down gives me motivation to help them and support as much as I can".*





# OUR PROGRAMMES

*By combining adventurous and challenging outdoor activities with well facilitated discussions and reflections, we are using the wilderness spaces of Aotearoa to support young people and families reaching their potential and helping them to become everyday heroes.*

## ADVENTURE THERAPY

Using adventure experiences and therapeutic techniques to increase the protective factors, resilience and strengths of hard to reach populations.

## FAMILY ADVENTURES

Fun filled multi-day family holiday programmes creating positive momentum for struggling families. Young mum day adventures increasing wellbeing and confidence.

## YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Intensive multi-day expedition programmes utilising a skills-based approach to create young people who are ethnical, cultural, environmental and social, everyday heroes.

## SCHOOL PROGRAMMES

Providing technical skill development, adventure experiences, holiday programmes and leadership development camps investing into young people and developing potential.

# PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2020

## COVID-19 RESPONSE PROGRAMMES

As part of our COVID-19 response we provided some day adventures for a group of young men from Rutherford College. These students were identified as having struggles with their teachers, challenges at home and challenges with each other. We were stoked to receive the following feedback from the school.

*"We hoped the boys might feel valued and learn new skills over the course of the day trips and be able to bring those skills back to school. The groups experience exceeded our expectations. At the end of each day, they came back to school energised and full of stories about the day. They enjoyed being able to engage with nature and to challenge themselves. Their reflections are very positive and mention how the programme has changed them. The programme helped build stronger relationships between the boys and with us as a school. We appreciated being able to send staff along with students so they could build stronger relationships outside of a school context. The students' relationship with adults has grown and they appear more trusting that we are keen to invest in them".*

## ADVENTURE AOTEAROA PATHWAYS PROGRAMME

We were thankful to Recreation Aotearoa and Sport NZ for receiving funding to run a pilot programme for young Māori interested in pursuing a career in outdoor education and adventure tourism. Adventure Specialties Trust facilitated the trip, which ran in partnership with seven other outdoor and adventure tourism providers. Activities ranged from an overnight trip on a waka, canyoning, mountain biking, rock climbing and white-water rafting. The activities provided an experience of Pacific way-finding and environmental navigation, adventure tourism, conservation, iwi led business, youth work and outdoor education. We made space for kōrero and pātai with role models working in each area along with people from appropriate training pathways. Feedback from the programme showed it had achieved its aim of supporting Māori with increased connection, belonging and participation in outdoor activities in a way consistent with a Māori worldview. We would love to see this become a regular pathway programme and increase the number of Māori working in our industry.

### Here's what some of our clients had to say:

*"I loved how they all shared whakapapa of the area and gave us time to kōrero. {It was a} Massive taste of how the industry rolls, and the different ways to get into the industry was awesome to learn".*

*"The activities! Mad mahi! These experiences have made lifelong memories and differences... I feel very honoured for the opportunity".*

*"Great privilege to have the speakers come through and give us just that better insight into the industry! Found it super inspiring!".*



## AORERE COLLEGE LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

We were excited to be able to partner with Auckland Airport Community Trust, to provide a leadership adventure camp for 12 Prefects from Aorere College. We love investing in young lives and when the students didn't want to get off the bus at the end, we were pretty sure they all loved it too!

**Here is an extract about the programme from their instructors Laura and Kyle:**

"In this journey-based week many students experienced something they have never experienced before which created opportunity for them to step outside of their comfort zone and to be vulnerable with one another. Activities consisted of Mountain Biking, Abseiling, Swimming, Tramping/Camping, Cooking, Team building and ABL (adventure based learning) activities. The students started out with their first lunch all sitting separately in silence while they ate, and admitted they were not all in the same friend groups at school. After a week of being in a space of vulnerability, challenge and having to ask each other for help, each student admitted an incredible growth in the connection with one another. One student admitted to the group, *"I started this journey with friends but through it I gained family"*. Arriving back at school at the end of the week, students wouldn't get off the bus as they shed tears and stories of the journey being life changing, asking for the instructors to *"come back again!!"* and *"the journey can't be finished yet!!"*.

**Below are some of the student's comments:**

*"It {the programme} exposed aspects of leadership that I didn't know I was capable of and motivated me to become a better person for my family, friends and school"*.

*"Resilience, when my peers are at their most vulnerable to use manaakitanga"*.

*"I learnt how to be positive during hard times"*.

*"Amazing, warm, funny, energetic, uplifting and motivating team facilitators"*.

## TE MĀHURI

One of our Adventure Therapy partners is Māori Mental Health provider Purapura Whetū who we run a programme for called Te Māhuri. The young people on this programme come from a variety of different backgrounds and struggle with a range of mental health issues. Alongside challenging family situations these students have lived through the Christchurch earthquakes, the Mosque attack and now COVID-19. Te Māhuri programme includes five single day programmes followed by a five day expedition/haerenga. One student on this programme showed many of the outcomes that we seek to develop including growth in social skills, wellbeing and character. On the haerenga he struggled with all the physical activity especially the long periods of walking. However, over the course the instructors saw him growing in his confidence and determination. On the last day, the instructor enquired if he still would have come now that he knows how hard it is. He replied that he definitely would have, because it got him out of his comfort zone, trying new things and making friends. Since the programme has ended, both his social worker and teacher have commented on the changes in him. He is more confident and carries himself with more mana. He is more engaged with his education and willing to give things a go. He is choosing to step into his potential. As part of the follow up of this programme, participants are sent a letter from the instructors, whom they have built a strong rapport with. This letter aims to encourage the student with the strengths that the instructors noted in them, and to keep aiming for the personal goals that they have set on the programme. Below is a quote from his letter:

*"You just blew us away with your determination throughout this entire trip. The journey had some huge physical challenges for you, where you struggled but would not give up....You are kind, resilient, strong and confident - all amazing qualities that will take you far in life. On the ride home from the hāngī you said that even though the haerenga was super hard, you would still do the whole thing again because of the experience building new friendships, and the pride you felt by achieving such an awesome journey"*.



# STAFF

## FAREWELLS

**Glenda Simpkin** - At the end of 2020 we farewelled one of the founding members of our Trust, Glenda Simpkin. Glenda and her late husband Lynsday, started the adventure back in the early 80's out of their home garage. Glenda has been part of the heart and soul of Adventure Specialties Trust. She is the sort of person who has had a go at almost every job that we have – from helping instruct, cooking, cleaning, answering the phone and paying the bills! Glenda we will miss your smile, your kind words, your big heart and your love for this place. Thank you for your vision and faithfulness over so many years. We wish you all the best on the next stage of your life – hanging out in your camper and taking your grandma duties very seriously!



## Jared Partridge -

A huge thanks to Jared for the 15 years of service he has given to Adventure Specialties Trust. We will all miss him around the office and won't be surprised if we see him back at the trust some time in the future.



As well as farwelling Glenda and Jared, we also farewelled some other wonderful staff this year. Thank you all for your hard work and dedication to our mission: **James McMillan, Anna Squires, Dale Shore, Tom Batts, Katie Gray, and Jaci Skelton.**

## STAFF TRAINING

Staff training continues to be an important part of the culture of Adventure Specialties Trust. Throughout 2020 we had a number of technical and non-technical staff trainings. This included a stay on Pahāōa Marae in January 2020 which was a highlight. This was hosted by one of our Trustees, Andrea Fox, and included bi-cultural training, Te Reo Māori, pronunciation, karakia, waiata, a study on the Treaty of Waitangi and a traditional hāngī. Andrea comments: *"Our whānau were moved by the earnest desire of the Adventure Specialties staff to learn, and show respect for, our marae, tikanga, language and people. For some staff, this marae experience was transformational."*

## INTERNS

During 2020 we had two fun loving and hard working interns training in youth leadership and outdoor adventure skills. It was great that they were able to complete their studies even with a very disrupted year due to COVID-19.

A big congratulations to our intern Cat MacKenzie who has gone onto work at Totara Springs Christian Camp and Benek who will continue on with our Trust, piloting a second year intern programme. We are excited to be able to offer this opportunity to him and keep investing in the training of new outdoor leaders.

## NEW STAFF

A big welcome to Peter Ross, Brenda Lewis and Hanna McLeay who joined our team in 2020.

## NZOIA AWARDS

We invest into our staff training and are pleased to congratulate the following employees on obtaining their outdoor instructor awards. Well done to Kyle, Laura and Joel on passing their NZOIA Bush 1 qualifications, and Anna and Grace on passing their NZOIA Rock 1 qualifications.

## STAFF OF 2020

- Tim Wills
- Jared Partridge
- Glenda Simpkin
- Mark Johnston
- Andy Balcar
- Jeff Lappin
- Amy Horn
- Anna Squires
- Dale Shore
- Libbee Dove
- Anita Sword
- David Moss
- Tom Batts
- Joel Buckley
- James McMillan
- Katie Gray
- Jaci Skelton
- Laura Vernon
- Anna Cunningham
- Kyle Smart
- Peter Ross
- Grace Robertson
- Brenda Lewis
- Hanna McLeay
- Cat MacKenzie (Intern)
- Benek Cowie (Intern)

# GRANTS

*As with so many other parts of our operation, our philanthropic funding streams were impacted by COVID-19 in 2020.*

This included the closing of many of our normal grant funding (all “pub” charities) during the lockdowns. Funding remained dynamic throughout the year with new funds also being released by both the government and some of the larger funders. In total, we were successful with 34 funding applications, which was an increase on 2019. Our largest gains were in operational funding. This is a reflection of funds being released to help our sector cover immediate operational funding and was a huge help in ensuring our sustainability. We would like to thank each funder for their support and investment into our work.

We would also like to thank the large number of individuals and trusts who have supported us this year in both regular and one-off donations. This has been a huge help to us and also a huge encouragement to our team as we feel the support and love of our wider community and contacts.

## **Thank you to the following funders for your support in 2020:**

Longview Trust, Four Winds Foundation, NZ Lottery Grants Board, United Way, Wilberforce21, COGS Waitakere, COGS Rodney/North Shore, COGS Manukau, Exceptional Systems Support Fund (Sports NZ), Foundation North, John Ilott Charitable Trust, Rata Foundation, Keith Hay Trust, Henderson/Massey Local Board, Auckland Airport Community Trust Microfund, Auckland Airport Community Trust, MK Hunt Foundation, The Southern Trust, The Trusts Community Foundation, Mazda Foundation, Foodstuffs Community Trust, Pub Charity Ltd, New Zealand Community Trust, The Lion Foundation, Mainland Foundation, Youhtown INC, Tū Manawa Active Aotearoa Sport Canterbury, Tū Manawa Active Aotearoa West Auckland.

*“I learnt that powerful words and actions can have big consequences and can affect others from harming themselves. I also learnt that respect can come a long way”.*

*“Seeing each of our team members struggle and thrive toward the last day made our bonds and connections stronger”.*

*“Throughout the Journey I learnt how to work as a team instead of doing it all myself”.*

**— Kaipara College Students**



*“This 10 day trip taught me appreciation for the main things in life, food, water, shelter and friends. It taught me to push hard in everything, to try hard but have a good attitude doing it too. This trip taught me to follow my dreams and it taught me that the culture I live in today is changing and it’s up to me to make good changes for myself”.*

**— Kaipara Journey Student**



# COMPLIANCE

*One of the positive sides of working from home during the COVID-19 lockdowns was that it gave us time to do a thorough review of our safety systems and also to ensure we were meeting the Ministry of Health requirements for operation during alert level 2 plus.*

Our rafting operation had previously been audited under Maritime NZ, however this changed in 2019 to be audited under the adventure regulations. This change required us to be audited on the river during which we proved to be a well-oiled organisation.

In 2020, we also had our surveillance from OutdoorsMark to ensure we are still meeting our safety requirements. We passed this with flying colours!! In 2021, we will be due for our full three yearly audit as required by Worksafe NZ.

In 2020, we had also prepared for our MSD social development audit, which allows us to have government contracts. Due to COVID-19 this has been postponed until 2021.

# EMERGING NEEDS

*One of our top priorities for Adventure Specialties Trust in 2021 is finding a new building for our Christchurch branch. They are currently in a short term rental and a more permanent base needs to be found.*

We are excited about the prospect of purchasing our own property and our Trustees have been working hard to make this a reality. In 2021 we hope to see this work come into fruition. We are also looking forward to a big fundraising campaign in order to make it suitable for our needs and create a space for our clients.

Working in a COVID-19 environment there is a need to ensure that we are a flexible operation and able to cope with sudden changes and disruptions to our work schedule. Another emerging need is to provide adventure programmes directly relating to the challenges that young people and whānau face due to COVID-19. There has been an increase in individuals who have been negatively

impacted by living in this uncertain environment and we have identified the need to find funding to provide programmes to increase personal wellbeing, resilience and social skills.

*"I've gained confidence in myself"*

**– Living and Learning Centre Participant**



# FINAL WORDS

*What a year 2020 has been! As I started this review sharing what a strong position we ended the year in, I am happy to end the review with some exciting news for 2021.*

As this Annual Review goes to print we are proud to let you know that we have just purchased a building for our Christchurch branch. This is a first in the 37 year history of Adventure Specialties Trust. It will help us immensely, not just with our immediate need of a stable home for our Christchurch team, but also financially as we have our own asset – and strategically, as we are able to kit it out to suit our needs for the coming years. We are so thankful to be able to wisely use the resources we have to invest into the lives of tamariki, rangatahi and whānau in our communities. Also, a big thank you to all those that have got behind us throughout 2020, without your support so many people would have missed out on life changing experiences and we are now in a good position to keep serving our communities into 2021 and beyond.

**Tim Wills**  
CEO



# *Creating everyday heroes*

*"To be able to ask for help has changed our connections".*

— Aorere College Student



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