



## Shining light behind the scenes

### WORD FROM THE CEO

As much as we enjoy sharing news of the adventures we have in our glorious backyard, there are some key ingredients simmering behind the coalface, helping us do what we do, that you will read about in this issue.

The first being our longest-standing trustee Ken Stevenson, whose passion for Adventure Specialties Trust has spanned more than 30 years. Ken shares some valuable insights on the important role we have in our communities and why he's remained a steadfast supporter.

Secondly, despite their tireless efforts over (too) many years, the time has come to say goodbye to our dedicated computers and software. It is no longer possible for us to operate without efficient IT solutions backing us and we need to address our computer issues now.

It's a short and sweet one from me this time. We're working on a number of exciting projects that I'll be able to share with you all next time round, including our inaugural Social Impact Report. This is the first time the outcomes of our programmes – and the difference our programmes make in people's lives – have been compiled and documented, and the report will be an important resource for us going forward.




**Tim Wills**  
CEO

### Join us on the 'gram

Did you know you can follow our adventures on Instagram? Follow [@adventurespecialtiestrust](https://www.instagram.com/adventurespecialtiestrust) for a digital fix of fresh air and fun!





Ken, centre, wears the pounamu presented to him by Adventure Specialties Trust staff and trustees at his farewell.

## Ken Stevenson reflects on 34 years' service

In 1984, when Lyndsay Simpkin asked his friend Ken Stevenson to come onboard with his new adventure-focused venture, Ken jumped in. After 34 years as a trustee – 28 of which as Chairman – 74-year-old Ken has stepped down. Here he shares some memories and reflections from his time with us:

*My first thought when Tim asked if I could write some reflections on being a Trustee, was to ask myself why had I stayed around so long? In fact, I have retired twice but this time I think I have made it!*

*The journey started way back in the early '70s when, as young marrieds, my wife Jill and I met the Simpkin family. Lyndsay was about 15 at the time and a member of the youth group we were part of. The friendship developed to the point when, in 1984, Lyndsay and Glenda founded Adventure Specialties Trust and asked me to come on board as a Trustee. As they were both working for the Trust it was obvious who was to become Chairman by default!*

*To quote Lyndsay; "Ken, by his own admission, wouldn't know a puffin from a penguin sea kayak or an alpine butterfly from a barrel knot". I am happy to admit he is correct. I do like my home comforts. I am told snow caves don't have ensuites so I've never been in one. However, I have been on a couple of trips. One being five days down the Whanganui River where I took great pleasure in watching Lyndsay, while showing off, get turfed out of his kayak. On another trip to Whangaroa, by way of introducing me to rock climbing, I descended over a sheer cliff supported by what seemed to me at the time to be a piece of string.*

*So why would Jill and I get involved in a trust that uses outdoor adventure as its environment? There are a couple of answers.*

*As CS Lewis says; "Friendship is exceedingly profound because it is freely chosen". Friendship with Glenda and Lyndsay formed easily, and has only deepened with every passing year. Jill and I were even given the great honour of being godparents to their two boys, Tim and Nick. We all shared the desire to provide assistance – and hopefully some guidance – to those who did not have the same advantages and privileges that we were blessed to enjoy. We also shared a strong faith in a Heavenly Father who actually likes us and also wants to be our friend. Friends accept the ups and downs of our journey, forgive and forget, encourage us to pick up the pieces and 'get back on the horse' when we fall off. A desire to share those ideals and to encourage each person to achieve their God-given potential has motivated all who have been involved in Adventure Specialties Trust over the past 35 years.*

*Another motivation for me has been the quality of the programmes and the personnel involved. Inspiration has come from Lyndsay and Glenda's phenomenal commitment to the mission of Adventure Specialties, which is now very well summed up as 'Using outdoor adventure to grow great communities'. So often have I heard reports from staff of the very meaningful discussions they have had around a campfire or in a tent in the rain while on a Journey program. The opportunity to be a positive influence on young people, who are often at the stage where the decisions they make could impact their future, is an enormous privilege.*

*We have gone from working out of Glenda and Lyndsay's home in the mid 1980s to, last year, having 6,699 participants in 329 programmes run by 26 staff. It is a great tribute to the vision of Glenda and Lyndsay but also the quality and commitment of the staff over the past 35 years. Well done to you all.*

*It has been a wonderful privilege to be part of the journey. At Trustee level we have had times of fun and celebrated success, times of great sadness and times of financial stress but we have all survived and can be thankful for a safe journey.*

*Part of good leadership is, to use a rural term, 'to breed your own replacements'. I firmly believe that one of the worst things anyone in responsibility can do is to hang around too long. I probably did that but managed to retire in 2012. However, when you lose an inspirational leader such as Lyndsay, there is often some rebuilding to be done so, as requested, I agreed to come back on the trust board for a period.*

*The time has come for me to move on. I have every confidence in the new Trustees, and in Tim and the dedicated staff he leads, to carry on the inspirational vision and mission of Adventure Specialties Trust. So for the last 35 years...*

*Thank you to all the committed supporters. We wouldn't have survived without you.*

*Thank you to the past and current staff for your dedication and commitment to those we serve.*

*Thank you to the current trustees who have taken over the responsibility of maintaining the vision and mission of Adventure Specialties Trust.*

*Thank you for allowing my late wife Jill and I to contribute to the journey.*

Au revoir,  
Ken Stevenson



## Help us reach the cloud(s)

While we were busy providing our life-impacting, fear-overcoming adventures in the wilderness places of Aotearoa, our software and computers have, sadly, become digital dinosaurs. The modern world has caught up with us and we need to be brought up to speed (literally) so we can operate on a cloud-based system.

Becoming cloud-based will help us run more efficiently, securely and be more accessible. It means staff will have instant access to the information and files they need, wherever they are.

However, this all comes with a hefty price tag... and while we have purchased some new IT resources and we will be budgeting for future needs, right now we must raise \$20,000 for the initial investment in new hardware and associated set-up costs.

[Can you help us get there?](#)

We have set up a Givealittle page (details on reverse) for those of you who would like to donate. Alternatively, you can make a payment directly via bank transfer to account: 06 0153 010950900 (reference 'Computers').

## Adventure Therapy Aotearoa Conference



Many of us attended and were involved in the Adventure Therapy Aotearoa Conference, which was held in Auckland in May.

We heard from keynote speakers including Nevin Harper from Canada who is one of the head researchers in the area, and Hoturoa Barkley-Kerr who runs a trust that provides traditional sailing waka experiences.

Our very own Adventure Therapy Manager Amy Horn led the organising team, and we are honoured to support Amy in developing Adventure Therapy in New Zealand. Over the years, she has organised three successful conferences and established Adventure Therapy Aotearoa as a formal association with a leadership group that's in great shape for the future.



# Staff Update

## Welcomes

Six new faces have joined the Adventure Specialties family this year; Kyle Smart, Laura Vernon (whose photographic talent is behind much of our Instagram content!), and Anna Cunningham are on board as instructors. Anna was one of our Auckland interns last year and we're thrilled that she's sticking around! And our three new interns (pictured above during a kayak block course) - Georgia Hollebon, John White (in Auckland) and Lydia Johnson (in Christchurch) - have settled in well as they learn the ropes (!) and all else we do.

## Farewells

Instructors Jock and Gwyn Barr from our Auckland team, and Stephen Miller from Christchurch, are continuing their adventures overseas. Erin Chapman has also moved on to an exciting role at Whangarei Girls High School. We'd like to thank these awesome people for the time they've put in working with us and wish them all the very best.

## Changes

Mark Johnston is our newly-appointed Training and Safety Manager. He has had oversight of the Christchurch team for the past 16 years as Regional Manager and his commitment to having really well-trained, skilled staff and uncompromised health and safety procedures aligns well with the new role. Andy Balcar is now Christchurch Operations Manager. Congratulations to both.

## Sharing the love

**Our** programmes impact our participants in many different ways. They are life-giving as people learn about themselves and the strengths that they have. They are community-building and inclusive as people learn to work together, trust and encourage each other. And often the biggest fears our participants overcome do not relate to the adventure activities at all:

### Joshua\* | 17-day wilderness adventure

At the start of the adventure he was very low in confidence and self-belief. At times he would be overcome with incredibly dark feelings which would cripple him from interacting with his peers. Our instructors worked with Joshua over these incidences to name his feelings, distance himself from the feelings and use that distance to make decisions on what to do next and how to solve his problems. The changes in Joshua were massive and,



by the end of the programme, he became a critical member of the team.

### Susan\* | 17-day wilderness adventure

Was so shy at the start of the programme that she would not even say her name in front of the group or eat with anyone. Her fear of others was crippling. However, with encouragement from our instructors, she set herself goals to overcome this. It took her both courage and commitment but, little by little, she grew in her self-confidence and began to open up to the group. By day six she managed to eat with them and, by day 15, she was the first one to speak in a group context. This was the first time in her life she had opened up in a group and been brave enough to share.

\*Names changed for the privacy of our clients

## Donations

Your support will help us update our IT systems.

**GIVEALITTLE** Visit [www.givealittle.co.nz/cause/help-us-reach-the-cloud](http://www.givealittle.co.nz/cause/help-us-reach-the-cloud) ►

### DIRECT CREDIT

to 06-0153-0109509-00 Reference "Donations" (please email the office so we can send a receipt - [accounts@adventurespecialties.co.nz](mailto:accounts@adventurespecialties.co.nz))

### POST

to Adventure Specialties Trust, Freepost 125380, PO Box 45 152, Te Atatu Peninsula, Auckland 0651  
N.B. Tax deductible receipts will be issued for all donations.