



MEDIA RELEASE

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Rātā Foundation Announces New Chief Executive

Leighton Evans has been appointed the new Chief Executive of Rātā Foundation, who takes over from the current CEO Louise Edwards, effective 23 October 2017. Mr Evans is currently General Manager of Eastland Community Trust (ECT).

“We are excited to welcome Leighton at a time when the Foundation is going from strength to strength. He brings huge experience as a community leader and is committed to building strong, relevant community connections,” says Foundation Chair, Roger Bridge.

Mr Evans, from Gisborne, has held senior leadership roles in the Gisborne District Council and civil construction company, Quality Roding and Services, before taking up his current role at Eastland Community Trust in 2010.

Under his leadership, the ECT has made grants of \$26 million into community assets and projects as well as developing significant regional strategic initiatives involving economic and community development.

Mr Evans is excited to take up his new position.

“Rātā Foundation has a unique role to play as a funder in our communities. I’m looking forward to getting stuck in and gaining a better understanding of the needs, ideas and perspectives of the people and communities of our four funding regions,” he says.

The Foundation has an endowment of over \$590 million and provides grants to the communities of Canterbury, Nelson, Marlborough and the Chatham Islands.

“I’m committed to innovative thinking which helps create conditions for people to thrive, as well as expanding the role of philanthropy from enabler to capacity and capability builder.” Mr Evans says he wants to see the Foundation continue challenge and test itself about how we invest in the community.

Mr Evans will relocate from Gisborne to take up the role in October.

Ms Edwards, who has been at the helm for the past five years, leading the Foundation's \$25 million earthquake fund, rebrand from The Canterbury Community Trust to Rātā Foundation and the development of a new funding programme, amongst other significant changes, is stepping down to concentrate on her governance career.

Mr Bridge says she leaves the Foundation well positioned for the future and in great heart.

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