



Bio: Fiona Purchas, new Bellyful NZ CEO

Raised on a small beef and sheep farm in the Manawatu, Fiona grew up embedded in a close-knit rural community who demonstrated practical and genuine care for another. Popping next door to get a cup of sugar from the neighbour midway through a baking session was a common occurrence. A world of families, fun, friendship and community contribution that proved that doing things together is always more effective than doing things alone.

Fiona's involvement in SUNZ gave her leadership opportunities, which developed into a love of youth development, leadership training and creating team-based experiences. Her passion for building collaborative community through adventure and shared experiences and the ability to talk to groups led to paid work in career coaching, learning and development, as a corporate trainer. She has also been an organisational performance consultant helping with organisational reviews, strategy development and implementation in the for-good space.

After having twins, these passions morphed into supporting families with high and complex need pregnancies. She spent twelve years serving in the multiple birth community, first as Wellington Club president and later as Multiples NZ National President. Her focus was on championing the voice of women and families to government and sector organisations such as RANZCOG, NZ College of Midwives and the Ministry of Health. During this time she led a national network of volunteers in eighteen centres, increased the profile of Multiples NZ, and championed the needs of families requiring additional support.

After stepping down from this national role, Fiona became the Professional Development Manager for Taituarā, Local Government Professionals Aotearoa. This was another opportunity to contribute at a sector level while also combining her love of learning and community development. Here she oversaw the leadership development programmes, a range of other specialist sector improvement programmes, awards and scholarships programmes, and a move towards online learning.

Meeting the needs of family and paid work has always been important for Fiona, so she jumped at the chance to work locally at a local youth development charity needing leadership. Applying her practical 'on the ground care' and strong desire for rangatahi and whānau voice, she led a team of youth workers providing residential care for young people with complex needs. This reinforced her belief that partnership approaches and trust-based collaboration are pivotal to providing successful social support to those most in need.



After a career break to care for family, Fiona is excited to join Bellyful as the new CE, where she can use her leadership skills and real-world experiences to serve an incredible organisation, doing incredible work.

Fiona lives in Wellington, and will be supported by her husband Chris, three children, Archie, Joel and Ella – and their much-adored dog, Freddie.