

Harkness Fellowships Trust

Annual Report 2024

Chair's foreword



It was a privilege to take up the role of Chair for the Harkness Fellowships Trust Board (NZ) from Patrick Smellie at the beginning of 2024. I'd like to thank Patrick for his service to the Board and for the extensive work he did as Chair to relaunch and reinvigorate the Harkness Fellowships after the COVID hiatus. This relaunching saw the Trust Board strengthen its relationship with the Leadership Development Centre at the Public Service Commission, which took on the role of supporting the promotion and administration of the Fellowships. The Board's partnership with the LDC has been invaluable in promoting the Fellowship and ultimately in selecting outstanding Fellows.

The Board's aim is for Harkness Fellowships to develop public service leaders through a sought-after fellowship experience in the United States. This is not all that far from where the Commonwealth Fund started in 1922, with the aim of enabling fellows to spend time in the US developing their careers. When these fellowships focused on healthcare policy and practice in 1996, a dedicated group of alumni came together to continue a general development Fellowship.

It is a testament to the commitment and vision of those alumni that the Board are now kaitiaki of an endowment of approximately \$2.5 million, which enables us to provide one Fellowship per year to the value of \$60,000. As you'll see from this report, the value of the experience to Fellows is worth every penny – both to them and to Aotearoa New Zealand.

This year the Board focused its efforts in three areas – lifting the visibility of the Fellowship through engagement and promotional activities, strengthening governance and administration, and selecting leaders with impact. This report summarises our activities in each of these areas and looks ahead to 2025.

In terms of our goal of selecting leaders with impact, we were pleased to select Sarah Box as the 2024 Fellow – her topic focused on governance of artificial intelligence – highly relevant to New Zealand policy-makers. We look forward to hearing from Sarah on her return from the USA.

I'd like to acknowledge the Board this year – John Boshier, Peter Griffin and Heather Baggott. Here's to the year ahead and the upcoming Harkness @100 celebrations.

Ngā mihi nui
Aphra

Chair, Harkness Fellowships Trust Board

Harkness Board 2024 – year in review

Harkness Fellowships develop public service leaders through a sought-after fellowship experience in the USA.

Lift visibility of Fellowship through relationships & engagement

Promotional activities:

- ✓ Publish Fellowship reports (incl old ones)
- ✓ Set up LinkedIn page for Fellowships
- ✓ Presentations and profiling 2023 Fellows' findings/impact
- ✓ Update website, promote past Fellows

Engage Fellows network:

- ✓ Social event at selection time
- ✓ Engage alumni network by email

Maintain and build on relationships:

- ✓ Incoming Ministers
- ✓ Public service leaders
- ✓ Commonwealth Fund: planning for 100th anniversary of Commonwealth Fund (2025)
- ✓ Axford Board
- ✓ MFAT

Strengthen governance, administration, financial position

Agree roles/responsibilities with LDC:

- ✓ Review 2023 and 2024 selection
- ✓ Agree roles/responsibilities with LDC/PSC

Review/renew Board membership:

- ✓ Consider Board needs and membership

Strengthen financial position:

- ✓ Manage fund well, seek funding opportunities as they arise

Other admin:

- Sort document management – get files from Fulbright and past Board members

Select leaders with impact

Refine 2024 selection process:

- ✓ Implement lessons from 2023
- ✓ Support LDC with targeted promotional activities/networking
- ✓ Ensure support for Fellows in place
- ✓ Promote impact of Fellows on return

Planning for 2025 selection process:

- ✓ Promotional activities

2024

Promotional activities:

We aimed to **publish all Fellowship reports** – some are now on the Harkness website. Both Jym and Aimee have undertaken **extensive post-Fellowship promotional activities** since returning in January (see next pages). This year a **LinkedIn page** for the Fellowships was set up – this has a small but growing number of followers (see analytics page below). The **Harkness website** has been updated, with past Fellows promoted.

Engage Fellows network:

We held a small but positive **social event** celebrating Sarah Box's Fellowship, and heard from Aimee and Jym at this event. It was attended by the Minister for the Public Service, who spoke warmly. We **engaged the alumni network by email** to invite them to this event – though this was limited and there is more to be done to ensure we maintain a strong alumni network.

Maintain and build on relationships:

The Minister for the Public Service was engaged in and briefed on the Fellowship to support her attendance at the annual function – this was a highlight. There is the opportunity to **brief other Ministers and MPs** to maintain visibility of the Fellowship, and to brief the **new Public Service Commissioner and CEs** when appropriate. We maintained our connection with **the Commonwealth Fund** via the Chair – the 2024 Fellow was introduced to senior administrators at the Fund, and over a short zoom meeting they reiterated support for the NZ Harkness, its renewed focus on leadership and the ongoing connection to the US. The **connection between Harkness and Axford** was maintained through the Harkness Board chair continuing as an ex-officio member of the Axford Board. The Chairs of both Axford and Harkness **met with MFAT** to discuss the position of both Fellowships and to maintain their visibility with MFAT officials. The **Deputy Chief of Mission in the US Embassy** was briefed by the Treasurer on Harkness activities. A refreshed relationship with **IPANZ** was formed by the Chair, with IPANZ agreeing to promote the Fellowship through its quarterly journal.

Looking ahead to 2025

There are three opportunities in 2025 to lift the visibility of the Fellowship through relationships and engagement:

- **Harkness @100:** the planned celebrations for the 100 year anniversary of the Harkness Fellowship, planned by the Commonwealth Fund
- **Strengthen and build on our relationship with the Axford Fellowship:** Axford is the incoming 'sister' Fellowship to the Harkness – our shared goal should be to build a strong Harkness/Axford network on both sides of the Pacific for the benefit of both countries
- **Build our online presence:** LinkedIn is a supportive and positive way to lift visibility and impact of Harkness Fellows, and create an alumni community.

Actions

- Build and enhance LinkedIn profile – share page with Axford Fellowships and promote both Fellowships
- Harkness @100 – plan for a big celebration in 2025, engaging the wider Harkness network (including Healthcare Fellows)
- Engage Ministers and MPs to maintain awareness of the Fellowship
- Maintain visibility with public service leaders
- Maintain contact with US Embassy and MFAT
- Build on refreshed relationship with IPANZ

Webinars and Publications

- Inspiring Communities ‘Child Rich Communities’ Online Kōrero’
- Auckland Co-design Lab’s ‘Practice Foundations’
- [IPANZ lunchtime webinar](#) and an article published in the [IPANZ Public Sector journal](#) has stimulated interest from around the country, with requests for follow up conversations/workshops from people based in Taranaki, Nelson and the Far North wanting guidance around how they could put these learnings into practice in their rohe.

Presentations:

- Social Investment Agency
- Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission
- Community and Social Innovation, Auckland Council
- Child and Youth Community of Practice, Auckland Council
- Auckland Policy Office (with Jym!)
- Plunket’s ELT
- Tindall Foundation Board
- Ministry of Health – Public Health Strategy and Engagement Group
- Cross-agency leaders involved in early years (Te Puna Aonui, Health, Education, Social Development, Te Puni Kōkiri, Oranga Tamariki, ACC)

Exchanges with contacts in the US since returning

- Session with Stanford Center on Early Childhood on the connections between mātauranga Māori and neurodevelopmental science and how we have brought these together through He Hīkoi Mahara (a partnership with Brainwave Trust)
- Ongoing connects with the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University - just last week reached out to connect me with Mindiroo Foundation from Australia who are interested in the work we have been doing

- Recently established a monthly learning exchange with UCLA Center for Healthier Children, Families & Communities (who are looking at potentially bringing us over to work on a project together in New Mexico and have invited us to a global convening in LA next year). I have engaged a number of different NZ-based collaborators in these conversations to share the love!
- Ongoing coaching connects with Joan Lombardi from Stanford University

Reflections on leadership impact of Fellowship

“A year on, I can say that the Fellowship has really galvanised my leadership, it has given me push I needed to step more into thought leadership space and the learning I gained has helped me navigate the uncertainty of a rapidly changing public sector landscape with more ease. It has given me practical ideas for how the public service can break out of its echo chamber and collaborate meaningfully across sectors (including with philanthropy, business and local government).”



Presentations

- New Zealand Planning Institute Conference, Kirikiriroa
- Auckland Policy Office Policy Insights Presentation (with Aimee)
- Ministry for the Environment

Publications / articles

- Published report – to go onto Harkness website
- Learning Development Centre [article](#)

Upcoming

- Article for New Zealand Planning Institute
- Presentation to Te Manawahoukura - Te Wananga o Aotearoa
- Fabians Society panel on climate adaptation
- Grey Lynn Festival - Sustainability Tent Talks

Global Indigenous Planning Conference

I am continuing to meet every three weeks with my hosts at the University of New Mexico and the rest of the Global Indigenous Planning Conference organising committee. The conference will be hosted in Tamaki Makaurau in March 2026. We are planning for 250 - 300 attendees from Aotearoa and around the world. Significant details will be released later this year.

Organising the conference has allowed me to speak to a range of people in leadership positions, within universities, iwi governance, and businesses both here and overseas. I have been able to secure support and interest from many people and institutions. The Harkness Fellowship has given me the confidence to take on the leadership of this conference.

Reflections on leadership impact of Fellowship

“Ten months on since returning, I have been able to reconsider my leadership and what I want to achieve with it, and what I need to do to develop it further. I have decided to leave my role at the Ministry for the Environment and after initially taking time to look after my baby daughter full time, will study te reo Maori full time in 2025 in an immersion environment at the respected Te Wananga o Takiura o Nga Kura Kaupapa Maori o Aotearoa. Being able to converse in te reo Maori will allow me to honour my tipuna, support my whanau with their reo, and allow me to expand my leadership into te ao Maori and other areas.”



Activities in 2024

Agree roles and responsibilities with LDC/PSC:

This was the second full year of our partnership with the Leadership Development Centre (LDC), and the LDC has now provided administration support for two fellowship rounds. We **reviewed the 2023 selection process** via written feedback from 2023 Fellows, and used this to improve the 2024 process. The process is becoming streamlined as the relationship beds in. We intended to formalise the relationship further by **agreeing roles and responsibilities**, but used this year to further test and develop these. We have greatly appreciated the support of the LDC both in administering the Fellowship selection process and in providing leadership coaching to Fellows.

Review/renew Board membership:

This year has seen us have a small number of Board members, which has enabled us to discuss our needs for the future at a number of Board meetings. In particular, there is the need to bring on members who represent the 'new' Fellowship while being aware of the significant legacy and history of the Fellowship.

Strengthen financial position:

This year we sought to **manage our fund well**, which we have done with the oversight of the Treasurer, and the support of Public Trust and Anthony Thyne. We have benefitted from a change to the risk profile of the portfolio, with the original \$2M endowment now totalling ~\$2.5M. We did not seek any additional funding, instead consolidating our financial position.

Other admin:

It was a goal to sort our document management and to put in place a long-term solution for file storage. This did not happen due to resource constraints.

Looking ahead to 2025

With the relationship between LDC and Harkness Board now strong, there is the opportunity to formalise it and ensure it endures beyond the current people holding the relationships. This might look like:

- an MOU to set out roles and responsibilities
- reimbursement by the Trust for some costs being incurred by LDC in support of the Fellowships (paper to be discussed)

New Board membership is an opportunity to spread the workload for the Board.

Actions

- Formalise and further embed relationship with LDC
- Appoint a deputy Treasurer to enable succession for current Treasurer

Activities in 2024

Refine 2024 selection process:

Implement lessons learnt from past Fellowships: we sought feedback from our two 2023 Fellows on the process for applying for, receiving, and being supported on their Fellowships – and used this to refine the 2024 process. In particular, we ensured that payments were set aside early to enable ease of transfer.

We **supported LDC with targeted promotional activities** on the Fellowships, and this resulted in a suggestion from LDC to engage the Fellows network in mentoring opportunities. The annual event to celebrate the 2024 Fellow was a big success – many thanks to the LDC for playing a big part in the organisation. LDC played a strong role in providing **support for Fellows in place** through pre-departure coaching, and Board members supported the current Fellow. Fellows took up many opportunities to **promote their findings on return**.

Planning for 2025 selection process:

This is underway with LD, and **promotional activities** can be a tie-in point for other engagement activities (eg, briefing CEs, Ministers etc). Lessons learnt from the current Fellow will also inform this process.

Looking ahead to 2025

The 2025 selection process is an opportunity to promote the Fellowship and to engage past Fellows. We are now in a strong rhythm with the LDC, and formalising the relationship will build on this.

There are a range of policy and leadership challenges and opportunities for the public service on the horizon – new technologies, emerging societal divides, international tensions, environmental and climate issues, and changing expectations of the public and Ministers for integrated, holistic public services, delivered more effectively and efficiently. The 2025 Fellowship is an opportunity to seek insights from the US into one or more of these.

Actions

- Continue to have a small selection panel comprising both Board members and senior public servants.
- Focus Fellowship applications on emerging opportunities and challenges for NZ and the public service.

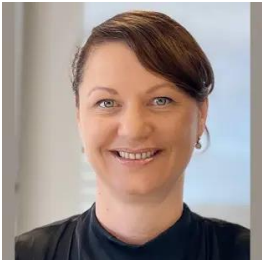




Aphra Green (Chair), Harkness Fellow 2015



John Boshier (Treasurer), Harkness Fellow 1976



Heather Baggott Deputy Public Service Commissioner, Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission



Peter Griffin, Harkness Fellow 2012