

The countdown is on to the announcement of New Zealand's most inspirational female, the NEXT Woman of the Year 2012. This month we introduce the finalists in our six categories: business, health & science, education, arts & culture, sports and community. While we received many great entries, these 30 women stood out. All are exceptional achievers who deserve to be celebrated for their passion and success.

MEET OUR 30 FINALISTS

BUSINESS



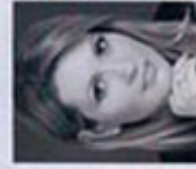
JANINE HALL
Founder,
Surf Haven Ball



ANNA-MIEKE ANDERSON
CEO,
MiaDonna

Based in Oregon, USA, Anderson founded MiaDonna, an ethical jewellery business that makes conflict-free diamonds. MiaDonna has grown 192% since 2009 and this year was one of Portland's fastest-growing companies. The expat also created The Greener Diamond Foundation, which rebuilds African communities affected by unethical diamond mining; its projects include a Sierra Leone farm run by reformed child soldiers and local youth.

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BELINDA SCOTT
Breast surgeon

Scott has dedicated her career to improving our breast cancer survival rate. She established the only female-owned breast clinic (Breast Associates) and helped found the New Zealand Breast Cancer Foundation. She is an advocate for less radical surgery and performed NZ's first sentinel lymph node biopsy, a less invasive treatment. She educates women about early detection and speaks at girls' schools about body awareness.



FRANCA RONCHESE
Scientist

Believing the immune system holds the key to treating disease, Ronchese established the country's first cancer immunotherapy programme in the 1990s, when few female scientists were heading major research. Since then she's secured millions in funding. Her pivotal discovery has attracted global players, featured in leading academic journals, and put New Zealand at the forefront of a cancer therapy that could transform medicine.

HEALTH & SCIENCE



DEBORAH BUSH
CEO,
Endometriosis
New Zealand

A founder of Endometriosis New Zealand, Bush has made a major contribution to the promotion and prevention of the condition. An advocate for the 100,000 Kiwi women with endometriosis, she developed the world's first menstrual health and endometriosis programme in schools. Bush has penned many articles on endometriosis, presents her work at medical conferences and is ambassador of the World Endometriosis Society.



VANESSA THORNTON
Clinical head,
Middlemore
Emergency Dept

Middlemore Hospital in Auckland has the busiest emergency department in Australia, and more of those Thornton runs it. Daily she deals with life-and-death situations and an unpredictable patient load, and yet remains unflappable and upbeat, motivating and mentoring her team of fellow life-savers. She also finds time to engage in research, write papers and attend conferences, plus help Middlemore Foundation with fundraising.



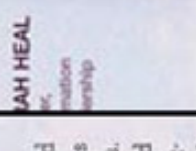
JENI PEARCE
Sports scientist

Dietitian Pearce is a familiar Kiwi media commentator on health issues, but her reputation is international. She has penned 13 books, developed programmes for world-class athletes and the New Zealand Defence Force, and pioneered the field of sports science. In 2007, she was honoured by the English Institute of Sport to be head of high performance nutrition, with diet responsibilities for UK athletes at the London Olympics.



DONA WHITE
CEO,
North Port
Events

Events in 1993. Since then it's created a multi-million dollar business. North Port is the largest event management company in New Zealand. Dona White presents New Zealand at the Exhibition Australia.



LEAH HEAL
CEO,
Leah Heal
Relationship
Partnership

Leah Heal's management leadership has been recognised since being named in the 2000s. Despite being named by Big Sister as one of New Zealand's most powerful women, Heal has been named a 2012 Entrepreneur magazine's 'New customer' and a 2012 Entrepreneur magazine's 'New customer'.

Flipping to Flying, in 2006, and led the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority's information strategy project.