

## *Dawn Sangster*

The Escalator Programme is creating prospective future leaders with the skills and capability to govern and lead rural organisations and communities.

Before starting the programme, Dawn had been involved in farming for 25-years and had served her community in a wide variety of leadership and governance roles.

- ❖ B Ag Com degree from Lincoln University 30 years ago
- ❖ Farm advisor for MAF, Assistant Accountant in London
- ❖ Marriage and raising of three sons
- ❖ Working alongside her husband David, managing and growing the family farm
- ❖ School Board of Trustees and leading various community, sporting and cultural activities.

Escalator was the catalyst for Dawn to contribute at higher levels. Five months after graduating she was elected as a director of the Alliance Group Board. Six months later, Dawn was awarded the NZ Institute of Directors' 2012 aspiring director award for Otago/Southland.



## One piece of a learning puzzle

"I love the land and want to protect and grow what we have for current and future generations. I see the land as the basket that provides food for our country. As a director of a significant dairy farming company I was hungry to learn and get better at what I do. I want to share those skills to grow others and multiply our potential for success.

My experience of Escalator has been powerful and one that I will always be thankful for. I find I face many situations that can be related to a lesson or an example from the programme.

For me, Escalator is one piece of a learning puzzle that is never complete, but each piece leads to a greater sense of understanding. It has given me

valuable tools to analyse situations and therefore get to the heart of what the real issues are.

The way I receive messages now is helping me to understand my fellow board members, shareholders and whanau. Escalator has helped me ask better questions that lead to open, honest discussion and resolution. I hope that this is evident in the way I am at the board table. In the long-term it is results and relationships that matter.

Escalator has enabled me to get to know more key people in the agricultural industry. The AWDT arranged for me to be mentored by one of New Zealand's leading rural CEOs, during and after the programme. Having a professional who is prepared invest his time in me is huge."

"I have a strong sense that this programme will help produce future leaders of industry and commerce. If I could buy shares in any one of you now, I would."

*Fonterra founding director, Earl Rattray, speaking at the 2011 Escalator graduation.*