

First Steps graduate

Course identifies leadership strength

Emma Hammond



Winton farmer, wife and mother of three, Emma Hammond, has moved into representation roles in Fonterra and education after reconfirming her skills, identifying new ones and gaining newfound confidence through First Steps.

"I'd had a successful career prior to leaving my job after the birth of my second child and had become a bit lost and disillusioned that I'd lost my identity. I did the farm books but needed more mental stimulation, while still being there for my family.

"First Steps gave me clarity around my skills and areas of interest. It also gave me the confidence to focus on what I enjoyed and was important to me rather than trying to do bits of everything. Being taken through a process to identify areas of real interest and motivation and seeing that on a piece of paper confirmed to me what I was good at."

Realising that leadership was one of her strengths, Emma is now the Southern Southland Shareholders Councillor for Fonterra, a role she initially considered was beyond her. "It was an interesting process that took a while to work through – it would have been easier not to go for it, but I realised that advocacy, representation, policy and interpretation fitted what I enjoyed doing. I became confident that I had the ability and it was a position that fitted in with family.

Since First Steps Emma has also stepped up to become President of her children's school's Home and School Association and spent 18 months as a rural reporter for a local newspaper. "That was another skill I had forgotten and another thing that I wouldn't have had the confidence to do before.

"I've realised that I can get great satisfaction out of a small number of things and that leadership is where I am most effective. First Steps is an extremely well-researched programme that benefits women and genuinely makes a difference in their lives.

"Having a strong network of other women who have done First Steps and who have shared that experience is fantastic in that the group understands where you're coming from and provides support if you get waylaid."

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