

Kia ora kou tou.

My name is Dr Damien Puddle and I am the new CEO of Parkour Earth. I first became aware of parkour in 2006 after seeing a [Rogers mobile advertisement on TV](#) while living in Canada. In 2007 I returned to my home country of New Zealand and began a degree in Sport and Exercise Science. One of the first people on the course that I made friends with was [Barnaby 'Barnz' Matthews](#), one of, if not the first practitioners in New Zealand (more recently of [Fortunes](#) band fame) who honed his practice traveling back and forth between New Zealand and Australia, forming strong relationships with those who would later go on to form Team Farang. In 2008 I took my [first nervous step](#) to join him out training and the rest is history. After a bad concussion from playing rugby, I gave up playing contact sport and almost exclusively devoted myself to training parkour and using my studies to support the growth and development of parkour in New Zealand.



I helped to form Parkour NZ in 2010 and took over the leadership position in 2013. Along the way, I published New Zealand's first research on parkour, seeking to understand more about the [forces experienced during parkour drop landings](#). After completing my degree with honours, I wanted to continue pursuing my studies and parkour research to increase the awareness of parkour in New Zealand and abroad. However, I couldn't think of a topic within biomechanics that was significant enough for the community and that would warrant at least three years more study. Instead, I focused my attention on personal training, group fitness instruction, and parkour coaching - along with the ongoing administration and development of Parkour NZ and the national community. For this work I have received several honours, including administrator of the year within the sports industry in my region of New Zealand.



Over time, my interest shifted from the quantitative science of movement to the qualitative science of why people train parkour and what influences their practice - their 'why'. This led to doing my PhD in the globalisation of parkour under the supervision of two of the world's most [respected scholars investigating the sociology of action sports](#). My PhD thesis, [Making](#)



[the Jump: Examining the Glocalisation of Parkour in Aotearoa New Zealand](#) was an exploration into better understanding the global and local forces that shape the experiences of New Zealand based parkour practitioners. I continue to try and publish from my thesis and share my learnings with the community at large. In particular, I've written about the experiences of attempting to [retain and foster parkour community values whilst adopting organised processes](#) to support the protection, growth, and development of parkour.

Unbeknownst to me at the onset of my thesis on parkour and globalisation, was that one of parkour's most significant global challenges would present itself. As a practitioner heavily involved in supporting my local and national community I was deeply upset with the ignorance, lies, and arrogance underpinning FIGs capitalist pursuit of usurping parkour from the hands of its true proponents. As a researcher, I was fascinated to learn about [history repeating itself](#), the lack of formal systems in place to protect an activity from the juggernaut that is the Olympic network, and the grassroots efforts of the global parkour community to voice its opposition. Since that time I have [shared my thoughts openly](#) and tried to [catalogue the journey](#) to both preserve this piece of history and find ways to learn from it.

From the earliest days of parkour's global dissemination, parkour practitioners have sought to share, collaborate, connect, and explore with each other. The desire to set up some kind of [international organisation or network](#) to support the international community is an old one, but until Parkour Earth, no previous attempt to create an international body had occurred via the true collaboration of nations. My support for the formation of Parkour Earth, of which I was a founding elected board member, is built on the hope of the power of a democratic process that accounts for and cares about the depth, breadth, and nuances of our beautiful global community.

A close friend and training partner of mine shared with me a powerful thought recently: The possibility of FIG castrating the social potential for parkour is an ugly possibility, but the internal lack of our own sense of responsibility and collective stewardship is equally ugly. Perhaps more so, because that is what would enable FIGs efforts to be truly destructive. Therefore, only in the establishment of a strong base of relations and esteem for each other do we eliminate the footholds of anything less authentic gaining purchase.

Like my predecessor, I work fulltime in the community play, recreation, and sport industry while volunteering as the CEO for a national parkour federation, and now Parkour Earth. I'm married to a superstar of a wife and mother, and have two wonderful girls. It's impossible for me to do everything and it's naïve for us to rely on our community champions to do all the work. We must carry the responsibility together.



If your country hasn't considered being a part of Parkour Earth and joining your voice with France, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Finland, Poland, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand, please see the [join page](#) on our website and start the journey. If you have previously considered joining and decided not to, will you review your position and share with us how we can make Parkour Earth work for you?

Unequivocally, #WeAreNotGymnastics. But Parkour Earth's mission is not to fight FIG. That would limit the potential of what parkour has to offer. Parkour Earth is a platform, a movement if you will (puns intended); the opportunity for us to shape the collective future of our practice on a global level. We need your voice at the table because only you know the needs of your local/national community, and only together can we make a real difference. I look forward to working with you all.

In closing...

...I am in awe of, and thankful to, the founders for sharing with us their life practice.

...I am stoked that Barnz took me under his wing all those years ago.

...I am forever grateful to the New Zealand community for being there with me and for me through my leadership journey.

...I raise a glass (of water, because I think beer is yuck) to all of you who are out there plastering yourself across the walls and branches of the world.

...I commend those of you who are staying true to your values and are supporting parkour in your corner of the world.

...I pass on my sincere thanks to Eugene Minogue, Parkour Earth's transitional CEO, for championing the fight and showing us a positive way forward.

Finally, I want to say that I am truly privileged to have the opportunity to serve all of you. I look forward to one day talking and training with you all in the future.

Thank you and God bless.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Damien Puddle
Chief Executive

Parkour Earth

