

# BAY BUZZ



2025  
JULY  
+AUGUST  
No.83

## Land wars

Planning HB's urban growth

## HB's Top 50 Companies

Agribiz rules

## Local elections ahead

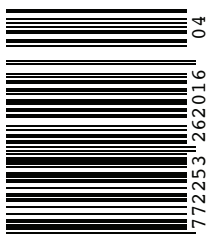
Who to blame?



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Keith Bone

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Hop aboard and be guided by our own Napier Port team as we take you inside the gates for a closer look at how we help keep Hawke's Bay moving.

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Ngā mihi,  
**Napier Port team**



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83

**BayBuzz**  
July +  
August 2025

Ratepayers out for vengeance? Fighting over our urban land. HB biodiversity projects galore. Volunteers needed to drive HB sport. HB's Top 50 businesses. Climate change ... merely inconvenient? Progress on waste reduction. Arts Festival returns. Lessons from bodybuilding. Diet intolerances giving eateries heartburn. Dog needs lover.

Saturday morning netball at Mitre10 Park, Hastings. Photo: Florence Charvin



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### Cover story

We love our organised sport activities. But they are made possible by incredible volunteers ... and we need more of them. Keith Bone photographed by Florence Charvin.

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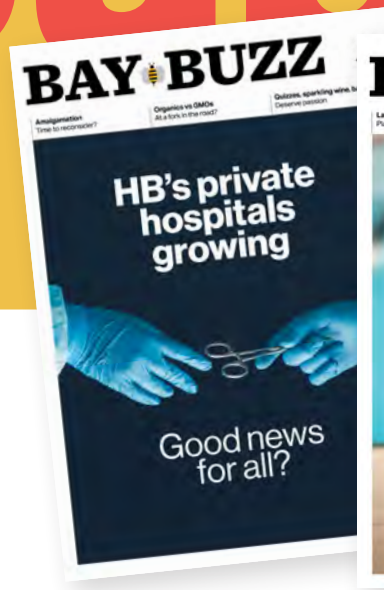
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**BAY BUZZ**  
HAWKE'S BAY UP CLOSE, IN DEPTH

**SPECIAL OFFER**  
(for new subscribers)

# Business is Booming:

## A Golden Opportunity for Aspiring Entrepreneurs

*As New Zealand's Baby Boomer generation continues into retirement, the business landscape is poised for a significant shift—and for younger generations, it may be the perfect time to take the leap into ownership.*

Michelle Menzies, Partner at Nexia Hawke's Bay, says that the coming years will present an unprecedented wave of business ownership transitions.

"We're entering a phase where opportunities abound," she explains. "With a wide range of businesses, across many industries, soon to be for sale, the door is wide open for aspiring business owners."

The numbers speak for themselves: around 25% of New Zealand's small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs) are owned by Baby Boomers, equating to roughly 100,000 registered Companies on the NZ Companies Office. Estimates suggest that nearly 77% of these owners plan to exit within the next five years.

That mass exodus offers fertile ground for Gen X and Millennial buyers to step in – not only to continue the legacy of these businesses, but also to reimagine them for the future.

While some entrepreneurs may be tempted to build their own ventures from scratch, purchasing an established business offers distinct advantages. "It's a way to hit the ground running," says Menzies.

Buyers inherit more than just a name—they gain an existing client base, experienced staff, supplier relationships, operational systems, and, perhaps most importantly,

steady cash flow. These are assets that new startups often struggle to secure in their early stages.

Access to funding is typically easier for those buying an existing business too. Lenders are more inclined to finance a proven model than take a gamble on a startup.

There's also the intangible value of trust. Boomer-owned businesses are known for their reliability, strong customer relationships, and longstanding reputations—qualities that translate into brand strength and stable revenue. Buyers often see these factors as key to ensuring a smooth transition and minimal disruption during the handover.

Yet despite their solid foundations, many of these businesses come with untapped potential – especially in the realm of technology. Menzies believes this is where younger buyers can truly add value.

"Boomers have built great businesses, but many haven't embraced digital tools to their full potential," she says.

**"Younger owners can modernise operations, improve efficiency, and expand into new markets by implementing the right tech solutions."**

From automating processes and upgrading customer service systems to launching e-commerce platforms, there are countless ways for forward-thinking owners to unlock growth. In many cases, it's about bridging the gap between traditional business acumen and modern innovation.

This generational handover also has broader economic implications.



As Boomers sell their businesses, they free up capital to fund their retirements, reducing reliance on government support. In turn, this allows public funding to be redirected toward progressive initiatives that fuel the country's economic development.

Menzies offers practical advice for both buyers and sellers. "No matter which side of the equation you're on, preparation is key." For sellers, that means tidying up financial records, formalising systems and processes, and documenting key business operations. "You want to make your business as attractive and turnkey as possible," she says. For buyers, the focus should be on clarity and diligence. Define what kind of business suits your goals, thoroughly research your options, and conduct detailed due diligence before making an offer. "It's about finding the right fit – not just financially, but culturally and operationally."

Whether you're a Boomer ready to move on, or a new entrepreneur looking to take the reins, this transition period marks a unique moment in New Zealand's economic timeline. With the right strategy, it could be the perfect time to make your move.



## From the editor Tom Belford

For the first few weeks this edition of *BayBuzz* is 'on the streets', candidates for this October's local elections will still be raising their hands. That window closes 31 July and then the die is cast.

Some 52 council seats will be up for grabs across our five councils, plus four mayoralties. Heaps of candidates to suss, although not all seats will necessarily be contested. Although three veteran mayors are re-standing, conceivably the region could find itself with four new mayors ... who knows where such a radical change in the region's top leadership might take us?

In addition, a referendum on whether to retain Māori wards on the CHB, Hastings, Napier and Regional Councils will be on the ballot. Expect tense campaigning around that issue!

The campaign season opens on a negative note, as I discuss in my article, *Stand and deliver*. An online survey *BayBuzz* has conducted confirms what anyone following local media, social platforms, chatting with friends and colleagues, or going to public meetings on any topic will have observed - people are *really upset* with councils ... to put it mildly.

Spanning all the councils, rate increases are the primary driver of upset, but one senses a broader underlying frustration that, as our survey indicates, councils are not aligned with the priorities of ratepayers.

So, a heap of blame will be dished out during the election season, all falling - fairly or unfairly - on the shoulders of those incumbents re-standing.

The danger in this is that a lot of superficial claims - if not utter nonsense - will be thrown at voters by candidates promising to 'fix' things. Call it 'rate-washing'.

Promises to get councils 'back to core services' and to 'cap rates' will

abound, made by candidates who are legitimately concerned but largely clueless as to the complexities of local government - the issues faced, trade-offs involved, and lack of alternative revenue sources available to deliver services our communities insist upon.

Hopefully *BayBuzz* readers, at least, will try to cut through the haze and take the measure of candidates peddling slogans without substance.

We're doing our best to deliver as much candidate and issue information and insight as possible during this election season, mainly through the Election Central portal of our website (a work in progress) and through our weekly online reporting. Here's what we're doing ...

- Inviting all candidates to present their qualifications and positions, unfiltered, in Election Central.
- Analysing the key issues each council will be dealing with as new councillors take their seats.
- Conducting our own candidate surveys, one for each council, so you know where they stand on these issues.
- Publishing candidate responses from other forums and surveys conducted by community organizations - Grey Power, Fed Farmers, Green Party, whomever.
- Reporting weekly in **The Buzz** e-newsletter, tracking campaign developments and exposing candidate 'smoke and mirrors' when necessary.

**This QR code will bounce you to Election Central. We'd welcome your suggestions on how to improve or add to it.**



But whether it's through *BayBuzz's* Election Central or some other way, we hope you will strive to improve your Civic IQ and vote smartly this election season. If you're angry or dismayed with your council today, look in the mirror and remember who put them there three years ago!

This edition is not all about the election.

We've saved ample space to report on HB's Top 50 Companies, heaps of grass-roots-led biodiversity projects, inspiring volunteers in our sport community, the October return of the HB Arts Festival, the struggle to sort HB's urban development, dog lust and more.

Enjoy!

**Tom Belford**  
Editor

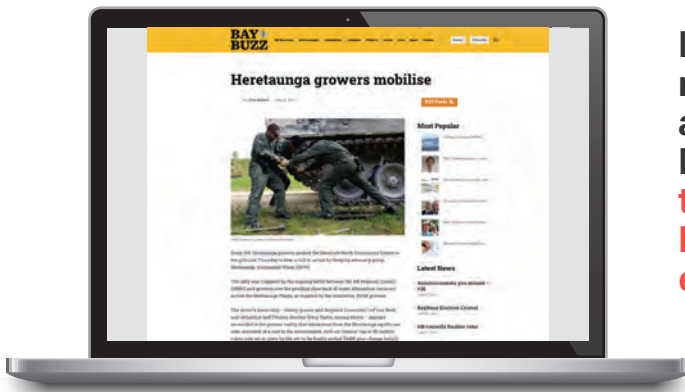
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Tom has been a two-term HB Regional Councillor. His past includes the Carter White House, building Ted Turner's first philanthropic organisation, doing heaps of marketing consulting for major non-profits and corporates.

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- Beware of rates relief saviors.
- Getting real about HB water demand.
- Will HB's population continue to grow?
- Scrapping regional councils.
- Who to blame ... who could do better?
- Who dictates HB's farming future?
- Creating a regional water agency.
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- Enhanced weekly reporting in **The Buzz** e-newsletter, tracking campaign developments.

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**The Buzz**  
Lizzie Russell

# DAY OUT

In this series, we cast a little *BayBuzz* light on local treasures – spots you might need reminding about, places to explore in our own beautiful backyard. This issue, we spend a Saturday morning at Mitre 10 Hawke's Bay Regional Sports Park.

Photos by Florence Charvin

There's nothing quite like that first fast warm-up ball on stiff, winter-morning fingers.

And there's nothing quite like the coming together of coaches, parents, umpires, administrators and organisers with friends, siblings and the players themselves on these chilly Saturdays. Teamwork at its finest and most energetic.

Four ten-minute quarters of goals and defence and lessons, grit and satisfaction. A soundtrack made up of the whistle, the side-line applause, irregular shrieks of delight and sighs of frustration.

Welcome to netball at the Regional Sports Park.







**The Buzz**  
Lizzie Russell

# BRINGING THE BADMINTON

Just a stone's throw from the netball courts, still at the sprawling Regional Sports Park, we find a bunch of young badminton players training for an upcoming rep tournament under the tutelage of coach Brian Yang.

Brian is Badminton Hawke's Bay's Community Engagement Officer and says the sport is growing in the region, with surprising numbers involved. Ninety-three teams in fact! Each team is made up of four to six players, and there are newbies joining all the time, with all levels from under 13s to adults playing at club level.

Brian's job takes him from Wairoa to Dann-  
evirke, introducing badminton to school kids  
and keeping the club network active. The  
sport is for everyone, he says, "From casual  
to competitive," and Badminton Hawke's Bay  
welcomes new players and anyone who  
wants to learn more. Check out the action at  
[facebook.com/badmintonHB](https://facebook.com/badmintonHB)



OPPOSITE: Brian Yang, Badminton Hawke's Bay Community Engagement Officer. Photos: Florence Charvin

# SUPPORTING MĀORI WARDS



Ngāti Kahungunu Iwi  
INCORPORATED

Ngāti Kahungunu values fairness and inclusion. We want our cities and districts to be vibrant and flourishing democracies where everybody participates, and our children and grandchildren can see themselves reflected in the leaders we elect.

Democracy works best when everyone participates.

We need to change the discriminatory law that enables people to squash Māori representation in local government by instigating a referendum.

We need to support Councils that have chosen to establish Māori wards to increase Māori representation.

Ngāti Kahungunu is asking you to vote against the referendum to disestablish Māori Wards.

**Nā Bayden Barber**

*Chair of Ngāti Kahungunu and  
former Hastings District Councillor.*



MAY 2025

# INVESTING IN INFRASTRUCTURE

Multiple infrastructure projects are progressing in Heretaunga Hastings – ensuring our roads, water and waste services are fit-for-purpose both now and into the future.

Hastings’ population increase projections show more than 8000 more dwellings will be needed over the next 30 years, and all these extra households need well-functioning, resilient infrastructure to service them.

This is part of Council’s ongoing growth, maintenance and renewal programme, on top of which the recovery from Cyclone Gabrielle continues, focused predominantly on repairing and re-connecting the transport network.



Kererū Gorge culvert

## GROWTH PROJECTS SNAPSHOT

The roading and three waters groundworks are complete and the diggers are on the ground at Swansea Ave where a complex of 39 new senior housing units, Te Pā Harakeke, is being built. The development is a partnership between Te Tūāpapa Kura Kāinga Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Hastings District Council, being built by Alexander Construction HB (Ltd). For more information go to [hastingsdc.govt.nz/te-pa-harakeke](https://hastingsdc.govt.nz/te-pa-harakeke)



### Howard Street

A project started in 2022, Council has provided infrastructure for around 350-plus new homes on a section of land between Havelock North Rd and Howard St. Hero International, TW Group and TUMU Property are now developing the site. Two of

the new roads created for the subdivision have been named Valona Lane and Masters Crescent, after the Gee and Masters families who previously farmed the land. A small gathering with the families, developers and surrounding community was held in May to honour this legacy.



## THREE WATERS



### Wastewater

Recent major projects included renewal of wastewater mains on Southampton St East and Main Rd, Clive in late May/June, and wastewater trunk investigations and renewals between Kenilworth/Elwood Rds and Ōmāhu Rd (from Jarvis Rd to Chatham Rd).

### Drinking water

Stage one of the Ōmāhu Rd drinking water main renewal from Nottingley Rd to Wilson Rd started in late April and is expected to be completed in October. Other recent projects include drinking water main renewals on Tainui Dr (April/May), and Cooper St, Te Mata Rd and Karamū Rd – all in mid-May/June.

## CYCLONE RECOVERY

Completion/progress dates are best estimates barring no unforeseen weather events or other delays.

### COMPLETED

#### Kererū Gorge culvert

The new culvert over Kererū Gorge was officially opened on April 17 – the second major permanent rebuild to be completed following the reopening of Chrystal Culvert last year.

#### Dartmoor Rd slip

The repair of a major washout on Dartmoor Rd, between Apley Rd and Dartmoor Bridge, was completed in April 2025, restoring this important road for the local community.



## SOLID WASTE PLASTERBOARD RECYCLING TRIAL

Managing waste and reducing the amount that goes to landfill is a key priority in the infrastructure space and a new plasterboard recycling trial, a collaborative approach that’s a first for plasterboard waste, has been launched in Hawke’s Bay.

The initiative is the result of a strong partnership between Hastings District and Napier City councils, Winstone Wallboards, Central Environmental, and major local building supply merchants – Mitre10, Carters, Placemakers, and ITM.

The system enables plasterboard offcuts to be collected, processed, and turned into new product. Read more at [hastingsdc.govt.nz/our-council/news/article/3450/partnership-leads-to-new-zealand-first-plasterboard-recycling-trial](https://hastingsdc.govt.nz/our-council/news/article/3450/partnership-leads-to-new-zealand-first-plasterboard-recycling-trial)



Puketapu Bridge

## IN PROGRESS

### Puketapu Bridge

The new Puketapu Bridge is expected to be complete by late August.

### Matapiro Bridge

The new Matapiro Bridge is now open to traffic.

### Waikoau Gorge Bridge

Strengthening work has begun on Waikoau Gorge. Once complete and inspected, all weight restrictions will be lifted.



Aerial view of Waikoau Bridge

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# BEYOND YOUR LIFETIME

Thinking about climate change and its future impacts raises – or should – a fundamental moral question. What do we care, really, about the disruption – indeed, destruction – that we are leaving in our wake?

Or for us in isolated NZ, is it just an inconvenience?

The question is especially pertinent to those of us over, say, fifty years of age, for two reasons ...

First, we've known about the problem, if we bothered to pay attention, for thirty years, right through the window when our age cohort ran the place – businesses, governments, the planet. We held the levers and called the shots.

Second, some of us will still be 'in charge' another twenty years or so. With time to assuage our guilt by taking action.

But at the same time, again as an age cohort, most of us won't live long enough to really suffer the full consequences. Anyway, we're more concerned with creeping arthritis than creeping temperatures.

I know that most readers of this column are age 50 plus. I address this question to you (myself included) ...

So why should we give a shit? Instead, just suppress whatever guilt we might feel and enjoy our golden years.

Where do you come down on this?

My job involves reading about issues like climate change. Rarely does a day go by when my various news feeds aren't peppered with alarming news about the unfolding catastrophe.

For example, huge changes ahead in terms of what food can be grown where – especially crucial global nutrition mainstays like corn, wheat,



soybeans (as opposed to 'nice to have' apples and grapes).

For the less developed world with the bulk of the population the consequences of food constraints due to warming climates will be dislocation and starvation, not inconvenience.

A recent study reported in *Nature* estimates that every additional degree Celsius of global warming on average will drag down the world's ability to produce food by 120 calories per person per day, or 4.4% of current daily consumption. Already more than 800 million people at times go a day or more without food.

Says one researcher: "If the climate warms by 3 degrees, that's basically like everyone on the planet giving up breakfast." We're already up 1.5 degrees.

The study analysed adaptation costs and yields across 55 countries for staples that provide two-thirds of humanity's calories – wheat, corn, rice, soybeans, barley and cassava.

It's the first study to systematically measure how much farmers adjust to changing climate conditions – for example, switching crop varieties, shifting planting and harvesting dates, or altering fertilizer use. Their conclusion: adaptation will offset only one-third of climate-related crop losses in 2100.

In terms of food production capacity for staple crops, the analysis finds yield losses may average 41% in the wealthiest regions and 28% in the lowest income regions by 2100.

In the shorter term, by 2050 the authors estimate climate change will drag global crop yields down by 8% – regardless of how much emissions rise or fall in the coming decades.

## ♪ Yes, we have no bananas, we have no bananas today ♪

Here in New Zealand, barley seems already hard to find. We probably won't miss the soybeans. Maybe we'll miss the bananas in our smoothies and breakfast cereals.

The global trade in bananas is worth around US\$11 billion. However, extensive research from another study reported in *Nature* indicates that as temperatures rise bananas will go bust. They're already produced in the hottest tropical climates (i.e., no headroom), in unique conditions requiring local port access, irrigation and cheap labour availability, with little scope or technological capability to adapt.

Currently, Central America, the northern and southern borders of the Amazon basin, and coastal Brazil are the most suitable regions for banana production. The total suitable area for

banana production is predicted to shrink by 60%. Only Ecuador and parts of Brazil are expected to maintain their production levels.

But hey, my last bunch of bananas originated in Ecuador, so what's the worry?

#### How about our Weet-Bix?

Per the first *Nature* study noted above, global wheat production is expected to fall 13.5%-28.2%. Currently NZ imports about 700,000 tonnes of wheat annually, virtually all from Australia. Under predicted warming scenarios, their wheat production could fall 26%-49%.

NZ produces about 300,000 tonnes for feed use and 100,000 tonnes of milling wheat (think: bread, pasta), leaving a deficit that would require another 30,000 hectares devoted to the milling crop.

But there's good news. Most milling wheat is currently grown in Canterbury, but the Wairarapa, Manawatū-Whanganui and Hawke's Bay are also suitable for milling wheat production and could support an expansion of planting.

So what's to worry? Says this report for the NZ Agricultural Greenhouse Gas Research Centre: "Most often arable crops are outcompeted for land use based on profitability, and milling wheat is no exception." In short, cheaper to import.

How inconvenient ... less bananas, Weet-Bix and pasta!

#### Searching for good news

Applauded by Federated Farmers, the Government has announced a package of measures intended to boost use of solar power on farms. The package includes real life energy data for different types of farms, feasibility studies and technology demonstrations, and a partnership with the Centre for Sustainable Finance to accelerate access to finance.

Energy Minister Simon Watts says: "Early modelling tells us that if 30% of Kiwi farms installed larger solar power systems – of the size we see on some farms already – they could generate as much as 10% of New Zealand's current electricity demand."

Even without this package for small scale solar, in our own region, CHB currently has three major 'solar farms' on the drawing boards, all in Ongaonga, which seems to aspire to be the solar capital of Hawke's Bay. The latest, covering 35 hectares, recently received \$8 million in Government loan support and is driven by Centralines.

That's all commendable. However, supporting solar is an easy call.

Much more difficult and imperative are policies that will significantly improve NZ's carbon footprint and confirm our commitment to the global community.

So for us 50-plus year-olds (and NZ), I ask again: Is global warming a mere inconvenience, threatening our breakfast of Weet-Bix with banana slices, or a survival issue for which we bear moral responsibility? ●



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- Conservative treatment as adjacent teeth are not altered
- Can be used for single tooth or multiple tooth replacement

An initial assessment is needed with your dental professional. This will ensure that you have adequate bone support to have a dental implant.

The dental implant can then be placed under local anaesthetic and not long after, you will have a natural looking tooth in your smile.



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**NOT ALL SOILS  
ARE BORN EQUAL**



**Story by Mark Sweet**

Photos by Florence Charvin

From his cottage high in the Havelock hills Richard Gaddum enjoys panoramic views over the Heretaunga Plains. For over fifty years, year after year, he has witnessed urban creep consuming more and more fertile land.

He despairs at the loss.

Since 2000 alone, gone are nearly 1,000 hectares of the three highest soil types, land that could be growing fruits and vegetables.

So passionate is Richard Gaddum about preserving the fertile soils that in 2019 he co-founded lobby group Save the Plains with concerned others; Mike Donnelly, John Bostock, and Paul Paynter.

Looking to the view we can see the mass that is urban Hastings is centred slap in the middle of super fertile Heretaunga.

Why?

### **The railway**

We drink tea and speculate.

What if?

What if the railway had been routed differently. There were competing factions.

In the early 1870's Henry Tiffen formed roads and subdivided sections in Greenmeadows anticipating his option being preferred:

The Mission Hills residential subdivision in Poraiti is underway.



Since 2000 alone, gone are nearly 1,000 hectares of the three highest soil types, land that could be growing fruits and vegetables.

Ahuriri-Taradale-Omahu-Pakipaki. In Havelock North majority land owner John Chambers objected to a Pakipaki-Havelock-Clive-Ahuriri route.

What if Havelock North had been the railway hub and main city in Hawke's Bay instead of Hastings?

Richard Gaddum would probably be fighting to draw the urban boundary half way up Heretaunga Street, and meeting town planner Mark Clews in Havelock at the Heretaunga District Council.

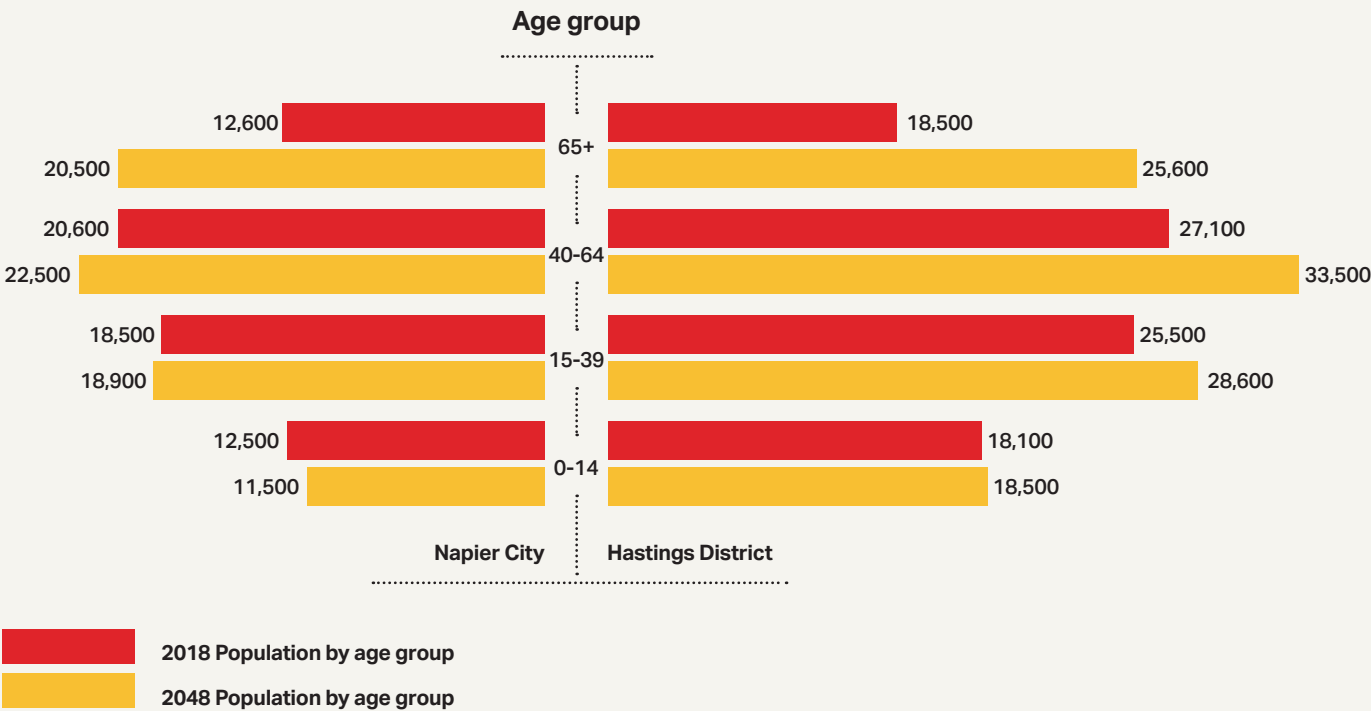
Before the railway line, before the European settlers came, the Heretaunga Plains were a vast patchwork of wetlands with clumps of bush on higher ground, mostly Kahikatea, white pine.

For Māori the wetlands were a vital food resource.

Winners in the 1870's railway tussle

Richard Gaddum

**Population changes by age group 2018-2048**  
(Stats NZ, 2022)



**By the 1950's there was broad recognition Hastings must temper expansion into productive land.**

were the settlers who drained the wetlands made so fertile through millions of years of sedimentary layering.

Losers were Māori dispossessed of their lands by means mostly foul.

The first large subdivision on prime soils was in 1879 from Thomas Tanner's Riverslea estate, cut into 240 quarter acre sections (1100m<sup>2</sup>). Others quickly followed, and the pattern of encroachment on productive land began.

Of course there was so much land back then soil fertility was not a development consideration.

**Warnings begin**

By the 1950's there was broad recognition Hastings must temper expansion into productive land.

In 1958, a report by Wellington town planning consultants Gabites and Beard, commissioned by Hawke's Bay Master Builders, stated "urbanisation of good farm land should be avoided at all costs," and that unrestrained peripheral subdivision 'could be almost suicidal.'

Among their recommendations were "consolidation within existing residential zones, redevelopment of obsolescent housing areas, and development of a new satellite suburb to accommodate 4,000 to 6,000 people on land west of the city of very low natural soil fertility." Flaxmere.

The first Flaxmere houses were well designed, and built of high quality materials, a popular suburb to buy and settle.

Later, greedy developers built crap fibrolite houses for sale and rental, and degraded the suburb.

**Then Lyndhurst**

In the history of fierce opposition to prime land loss came the Lyndhurst subdivision of 1995.

Richard Gaddum suggests I talk to Mike Donnelly. He was a Hastings District Councillor and voted for residential subdivision of 70 hectares of the very best soils.

"Biggest mistake of my life," Mike says.

Demand for housing was high. He was persuaded by the planning officers' recommendations Lyndhurst was



Planners Mark Clews, Craig Scott and Raoul Oosterkamp.

the most efficient option for connection to services. "The vote was 8 to 7"

Newspaper articles at the time mirror the same sentiments expressed by the Gabites and Beard report, and by the Save the Plains group today.

Chairman of the Hawke's Bay Fruit Growers Federation, David Mardon, told the *Herald Tribune*, "These soils are too valuable to fritter away. They are in short supply world wide," and prophetically he said, "We don't know what product down the line could be grown here."

**Today's Future Development Strategy**

Richard Gaddum has taken up the mantle of those before who fought to preserve the precious Heretaunga soils.

He tells me about the latest planning move, the Future Development Strategy (FDS), recently adopted.

FDS is a central Government requirement for Councils to project housing need and identify land suitable for development over the next 30 years. FDS replaces HPUDES - Heretaunga Urban Development Strategy - a collaboration between Hastings and Napier prepared by the Councils in 2010 and updated in 2017.

Overseeing the FDS process is a Joint Committee from the three councils - Hastings, Napier and Regional - and three Iwi authorities - Maungaharuru Tangitū Trust, Mana Ahuriri Trust and Tamatea Pōkai Whenua.

Barker and Associates, urban planning specialists, wrote the Draft report. They say 16,320 dwellings are needed in the next 30 years: 6,700 in Napier. 9,620 in Hastings.

138 submissions were received, each one evaluated in detail by Council planners.



Vanessa Thompson, Wallace Development Company, at Mission Hills.

### 9 April 2025

Hearings were held over three days in HDC chambers before five Commissioners, charged with recommending who's included, or excluded, from the FDS.

None live in Hawke's Bay.

First up is Andrew D'Arth, fourth generation fruit grower on the Heretaunga Plains.

"You have ten minutes."

He's one of many requesting a rural property abutting the urban boundary be tagged for residential. 'Reverse sensitivity' is an oft repeated issue.

Next to present, by zoom, is Oliver Boyd for Summerset Retirement Villages. He tells the panel his company are the largest home builders in the country after Fletchers. He asks the panel to provide Greenfield sites of around ten hectares. Particularly he wants 9 hectares adjacent to Summerset in Ada Street, Hastings, included in the FDS. The land is Class 1.

Rick Barker is next speaking on behalf of Peter Beaven.

### Rick Barker tells of living in Mahora years before and digging a hole for a fence post. "Four feet deep and still top soil." He says it "felt like a crime" to build on such soils.

He implores the panel to be bold and for the sake of "future food security" disallow any more encroachment on "amongst the most productive land on the planet ... 4,000 hectares lost since the 1950's." He tells of living in Mahora years before and digging a hole for a fence post. "Four feet deep and still top soil." He says it "felt like a crime" to build on such soils.

Following is land development specialist Matthew Holder, allocated over an hour, as he represents many submitters.

He starts with 95 hectares at Waimarama owned by the Chesterman family. The land was "identified in HPUDS as a future growth area," but

excluded from the FDS.

Holder argues that not including Rural Residential developments makes the planning process "arse about face". He tells the panel, "Your job is identifying potential growth areas" and is "an opportunity to identify at the macro level." Otherwise they're just "kicking the can down the road."

His next client, the Strawberry Patch at 76 Havelock Road, whose 11.6ha of Class 1 soils, Holder says, "is an ideal candidate" for inclusion in the FDS as the site is close to Havelock and would be ideal for sports facilities or Retirement housing. He suggests the Eastern side of Havelock Road is already compromised with "Howard Street, the Cranford Hospice site, a camp ground, and restaurant."

Holder points the Panel to "3.6 NPSUD allows highly productive land to be developed ... not an absolute."

Moving on.

Landowners James Fyfe and Greg Cornes, aligned with David Colville's Heretaunga Connection Project, offer reasons their land should be rezoned - close to existing services and transport routes, small holdings increasingly less viable, economies of scale, and demand for small industrial sites close to the city.

The Project, joining Flaxmere and Hastings, envisages up to 2,000 houses, plus commercial and industrial, on over 500 hectares, much on prime soils.

From Napier, Marist Holdings puts up 9 hectares of stoney unproductive land on Church Road capable of supporting 100 dwellings. Mission CEO Peter Holley tells the Panel the land has never been cropped or planted in grapes.

The Hawke's Bay jockey club and other landowners in Wall Road nominate their properties. Close to existing services and flat land easy to develop are a plus. 11.3 hectares of Class 1&2 soils is a major negative.

On the outskirts of Flaxmere in Portsmouth Road, 59 hectares of poor soils capable of housing over 600 dwellings are offered by Mavern Collective.

Neither of the above properties are in HPUDS.

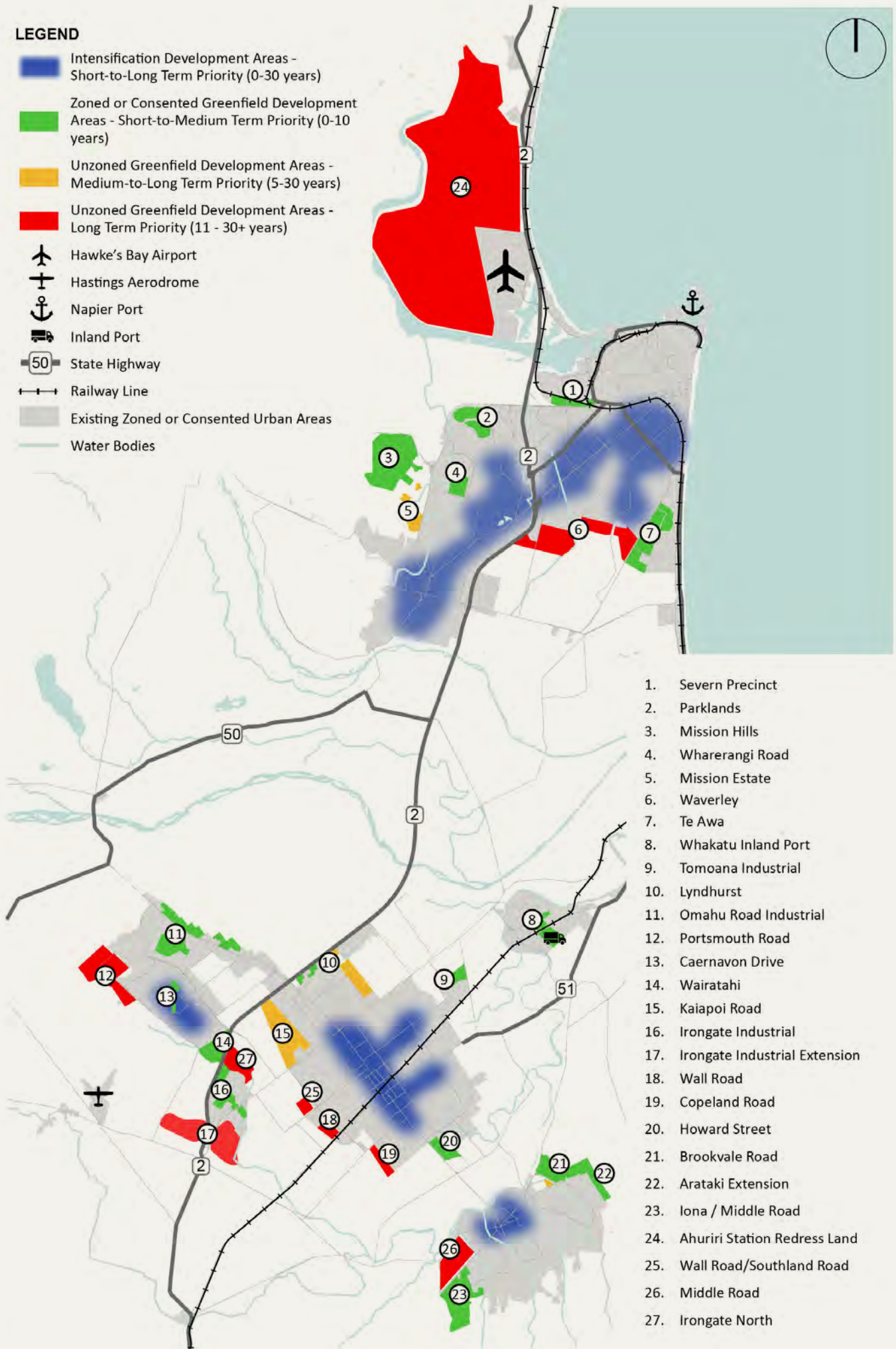
Two submitters speak to residential development along Raymond Road close to Haumoana School.

One group proposes a subdivision radiating one kilometre from the school. The spokesperson evokes words attributed to architect John Scott who died in 1992.

A couple from Maraekakaho present the merits of their town being an ideal

**LEGEND**

- Intensification Development Areas - Short-to-Long Term Priority (0-30 years)
- Zoned or Consented Greenfield Development Areas - Short-to-Medium Term Priority (0-10 years)
- Unzoned Greenfield Development Areas - Medium-to-Long Term Priority (5-30 years)
- Unzoned Greenfield Development Areas - Long Term Priority (11 - 30+ years)
- Hawke's Bay Airport
- Hastings Aerodrome
- Napier Port
- Inland Port
- State Highway
- Railway Line
- Existing Zoned or Consented Urban Areas
- Water Bodies



1. Severn Precinct
2. Parklands
3. Mission Hills
4. Wharerangi Road
5. Mission Estate
6. Waverley
7. Te Awa
8. Whakatu Inland Port
9. Tomoana Industrial
10. Lyndhurst
11. Omahu Road Industrial
12. Portsmouth Road
13. Caernavon Drive
14. Wairatahi
15. Kaiapoi Road
16. Irongate Industrial
17. Irongate Industrial Extension
18. Wall Road
19. Copeland Road
20. Howard Street
21. Brookvale Road
22. Arataki Extension
23. Iona / Middle Road
24. Ahuriri Station Redress Land
25. Wall Road/Southland Road
26. Middle Road
27. Irongate North

residential hub, and a Pakipaki lifestyle block owner asks minimum lot size be reduced to 1000m<sup>2</sup>. (Currently 8000m<sup>2</sup>)

Two of the most contentious candidates for inclusion in the FDS are a 600 section development in Riverbend Road, Napier, and 54 hectares of top grade soils adjoining the Iona subdivision in Middle Road, Havelock North.

Iona developers, CDL, request inclusion. They are supported by Bupa Care, the Village Baptist Church, and multiple land owners from Middle, Gilpin and Te Aute Roads requesting their holdings be included.

First of CDL's 600 site Iona subdivision, 47 sections, are construction ready. Section prices range from \$399,000 for 415m<sup>2</sup> to \$610,000 for 780m<sup>2</sup>. The first house builds are underway.

Obviously CDL want to link another subdivision to Iona by stretching down to Te Aute Road, over 500 more sections, already partially serviced. Profit for them. Loss is the productive land.

The proposed Riverbend subdivision is a complex joint venture between developer David Colville and Ngāti Kahungunu. The site is prone to flooding and although Napier City Council supports, the Regional Council does not.

Solicitor for the developers argues the site should be included because so much work and cost has been expended, and there's a memorandum of understanding with Napier City Council.

When the Panel ask the opinion of Barker and Associates Rachel Morgan she agrees, adding it was a "matter of natural justice" that the site be included in the FDS.

A timely submission comes from the Insurance Council.

Sean Fullan cautions that Insurers are more and more taking flood risk into account in supplying cover. "One in one hundred year" flood mitigation is required in new subdivisions.

The prospect of flood insurance being withheld would impact mortgage agreements with lenders. Local authorities taking up the risk would be unpopular with ratepayers.

Mana Ahuriri Trust presents its case for 1,000 residences on Onehunga Road in Bay View. Most of Ahuriri Station is low lying and prone to flooding. The needs of the airport must be considered. Planning for development of housing and commercial are in the early stages.

Last up is barrister James Winchester and two others on behalf of Mr Apple wanting 33 hectares of Class 1 land at Whakatu rezoned for wet industry.

## **Two of the most contentious candidates for inclusion in the FDS are a 600 section development in Riverbend Road, Napier, and 54 hectares of top grade soils adjoining the Iona subdivision in Middle Road, Havelock North.**

In his thirty years of experience Mr Winchester says, "This is a particularly poor exercise and example of Council attempting to comply with statutory functions." He's at a loss why "HPUDS was irrationally dispensed with," and his criticism of Council officers and the FDS process is blistering.

Now we wait.

### **9 May 2025**

The Commissioners report back.

Richard Gaddum is furious.

They have approved 323 hectares of highly productive land be included in the FDS.

He says, "The whole process was predetermined from the outset, with little or no notice being taken of points made in the written submissions, and also from the evidence presented at the hearings. It was all a complete waste of time and money, although the Council will say that they followed due process under the Local Government Act.

"It is so disappointing that no decisions and reasons are given on why more fertile soils needed to be covered by concrete and asphalt.

"I had high hopes that the Commissioners would be brave enough to come out with a reset on how we manage our growth moving forward. Instead, we just get the same old rhetoric of planning decisions that successive Councils have done over many decades by promoting urban sprawl with no regard for our best soils.

"And the worst feature is that the Commissioners have endorsed this deplorable behaviour."

## **Lost opportunity**

Excluding rural residential subdivisions from the FDS is one of the most contentious issues of the process.

It does seem a lost opportunity to endorse and support building in the hills, on marginally productive land, more so, as Hawke's Bay has an exceptional model of rural satellite suburban development showing the way: Mission Hills in Poraiti.

The Mission Special Character Zone was created by a private plan change submitted to Napier City Council in 2017 by Marist Holdings.

The plan included transforming 207 hectares of hill country behind Mission Estate Winery into a residential subdivision of 600 sections.

In 2021, with the plan change approved, the property was bought by a consortium of investors including Havelock North based Wallace Development Company.

The infrastructure works are mind blowing in scale; massive site forming earthworks, roading, footpaths, cycleways, storm water ponding in sink holes, power and water underground, waste water connected to Napier system, and extensive planting of hill sides and road edges.

Today the first houses are under construction. Summerset are to build a retirement village. A small commercial hub - cafe, bar, restaurant, pizzeria, fish 'n chips, and a mini-supermarket are planned.

The master plan allows for higher density cluster housing but most sites are for stand alone dwellings, Stage One ranging from \$450,000 for 450m<sup>2</sup> to \$850,000 for 1000+m<sup>2</sup>.

This compares to Napier's Parklands on flat ground at \$345,000 for 400m<sup>2</sup> to \$450,000 for 603m<sup>2</sup>.

Suburbs on hill country are more expensive, but if there's a market and developers are prepared to take the risk, the sooner they're encouraged by being included in the FDS the better.

### **19 May 2025**

The FDS Joint Committee meet in Hastings.

Mayor Wise of Napier moves the Commissioners report be adopted.

Hastings Councillor Alwyn Corban calls for the Middle Road and Wall Road sites to be excluded, because they're on highly productive land, and not required to meet demand under the FDS.

The amendment is lost.

Martin Williams from the Regional



Doug Welch, DWL Homes, and Vanessa Thompson, Wallace Development Company, at Mission Hills.

Council moves an amendment that the Riverbend Road site be excluded due to its significant flooding risk.

The amendment is carried.

An unhappy Kirsten Wise moves the report be accepted with the Riverbend Road amendment.

The motion is carried.

She and Napier Joint Committee member Ronda Chrystal vote against.

Later in the day Richard Gaddum sends an email asking, "Have you seen this from the report?"

"The commissioners felt it was their responsibility to ensure growth is directed in a manner that integrates with infrastructure, maximises sustainability outcomes, and is consistent with long-term planning objectives."

He says, "This is the same old rhetoric that we have heard from successive Councils for many decades. It's as if Mark Clews wrote this for them."

### 30 May 2025

Mark Clews started work as a planner in Hastings in 1985. It was the City Council then yet to merge with Havelock North Borough Council and

Hawke's Bay County Council (1989). Jim O'Conner was Mayor.

For institutional knowledge of urban planning in Hawke's Bay, no one knows more than Mark Clews.

We meet at HDC along with fellow planners Craig Scott and Raoul Oosterkamp. Communications Director Nicki Harper, sits in.

For an hour everyone has input and the gist of the planners' point of view is thus.

The last review of HPUDS was 2017, another was due, instead, the Government mandated FDS was undertaken.

The legislation stipulated the FDS focus on urban areas and that's why the Joint Committee didn't include Rural Residential, because although providing housing, rural subdivisions are upper end of the market and don't provide big numbers.

The vast demand for housing is low/mid market, needs to be affordable and urban located, near schools and transport, hence the inclusion of Greenfields sites in the FDS.

As directed by Commissioners the next

planning priority for them is forming a rural residential strategy. No, they're not going to kick the can down the road.

And for all those landowners whose properties were tagged as potential future development in HPUDS, but not included in FDS, don't worry, HPUDS is appended, still alive, and developers can still apply for plan changes through the normal process.

Long term planning of infrastructure, future proofing, providing enough for expansion, is a major consideration when deciding where to locate new developments.

Havelock North is a good example, where long term infrastructure planning is supporting Brookvale and Arataki expansions, and Iona in Middle Road.

Same with Wall Road. Existing services are nearby. Shame about the soils.

As expected, criticism of planners not taking soil preservation seriously is vigorously rebuffed.

An example is given. The land where the Sir James Wattie retirement village is sited was twice presented for a plan change from rural to residential.

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**All plan change decisions are ultimately made by Councillors, and when challenged, the Environment Court.**

Council declined housing being built on the land as did the Environment Court. However, the retirement village proposal was accepted, that need considered to outweigh rural productivity.

As for the inevitability of some sites being re-zoned, like the Strawberry Patch on Havelock Road, the planners say they would strongly oppose an application because of the high value of the soils.

But what about the 54 hectares of prime land abutting Iona subdivision. Why was it excluded then included?

The planners pass the buck. Their job is to advise. Decisions were made by the Joint Committee and Commissioners, and everything still has to be ratified by Councils.

Maraekakaho and Te Awanga seem obvious areas for residential? They weren't included in the FDS because concentration was on the urban areas.

Also, any further development in Haumoana/Te Awanga needs to be assessed in conjunction with the Coastal Retreat Strategy, currently in the development stage.

And what of the criticism the FDS has no teeth and was a waste of time and money.

They say future planning would be happening regardless, be it HPUDS, FDS, or some other acronym.

The submissions have provided valuable information, public engagement is important, a whole lot more data has been collected, data essential in plan change processes.

And remember, all plan change decisions are ultimately made by Councillors, and when challenged, the Environment Court.

After forty years Mark Clew's last day is 4th July. Independence Day.

**16 June 2025**

I ask Richard Gaddum (aka Red) if Florence, *BayBuzz's* photographer, can take a photo. He agrees.

He asks if I'll be attending the upcoming Council meetings discussing the FDS.

I roll my eyes.

Be assured, Red will be there,

fighting for the land. He's already fired off a final missive to councils specifying nine locations where 2,925 'un-needed' houses on 302.4 hectares of the region's best soils (LUC classes 1, 2, 3) will be authorised by the FDS.

But wait, sweeping in at the last minute is Housing and RMA Reform Minister Chris Bishop, who dropped this pro-development blockbuster on local councils in a recent speech:

"My inbox is filled with story after story of council planners trying to dictate every little aspect of people's lives," he said. "If local government doesn't have the courage to make the right decisions, we will do it for them."

And his 'interim' RMA reforms propose giving him the power to do just that.

When a Minister adopts that posture, what's the point of attempting to craft a Future Development Strategy?

Councils have reacted with outrage.

Perhaps they now feel Richard Gaddum's pain. ●

**Extract from Richard Gaddum's letter to Councillors**

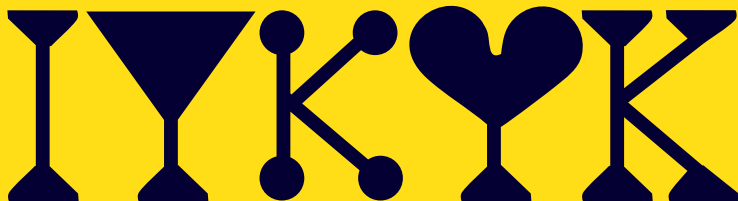
(LUC = Land Use Capability)

- **Middle Rd** area of 54ha (640 houses). Mostly LUC 2, that is from HPUDS, is not needed.
- **Wall Rd.** 11ha (110 houses) and on 85% LUC 1, balance LUC 2 soils, that is from HPUDS, is not needed.
- **Kaiapo Rd.** 73ha. (430 houses). 70% is LUC 1. 30% LUC 2, that is from HPUDS, is not needed.
- **Murdock Rd.** 11ha. (120 houses). All LUC 2, that is from HPUDS, is not needed.
- **Lyndhurst Rd Extension.** 31ha. (280 houses). All LUC 1, that is from HPUDS, is not needed.
- **Copeland Rd.** 14ha. (140 houses). 60% LUC 1. 40% LUC 2, that is from HPUDS, is not needed.
- **The Loop.** 23.5ha. (175 houses). LUC 3. Flood hazard zone. From HPUDS and is not needed.
- **South Pirimai.** 61.6ha. (370 houses). LUC 3. (Productive LUC 3). Flood hazard zone. From HPUDS and is not needed.

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## IRONMĀORI NGĀTI KAHUNGUNU MARAE WERO

### Tūtira mai ngā iwi, tātatau tātatau e!

On Sunday 25 May, IronMāori partnered with Ngāti Kahungunu Iwi Inc launched the inaugural Ngāti Kahungunu IronMāori Marae Wero! An Indigenous triathlon, encompassing connection and unity. The short distance event of 500m swim, 20km bike and 5km run provided the perfect opportunity for anyone living in Hawke's Bay or anyone that belongs to Ngāti Kahungunu iwi to get up and give it a go!

Participants represented 22 marae from the iwi, with notable representation from Omāhu Marae, and Kahurānaki Marae and a great turnout of Tāngata Tiriti representing Te Aranga Marae. Mauri Tū, Mauri Ora!

The oldest competitor from Waipatu Marae, aged 78 years and the youngest entrant at age 15 years from Houngārea Marae, both completing the full solo discipline. Some people travelled from Hamilton, Wairoa and other areas of Hawke's Bay to compete in the event. As it was an inspiring day, we look forward to hosting the next Ngāti Kahungunu Marae Wero.

Mauri Tū, Mauri Ora!



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# RUSTLING INCUMBENTS



# STAND AND DELIVER

**As you are reading this article, candidates for this year's local body elections have begun to identify themselves officially. The nomination window closes 31 July.**

It takes a fair amount of courage to stand in the current environment, especially if one is an incumbent councillor or mayor.

This last class, elected in October 2022, was quickly dealt the catastrophe of Cyclone Gabrielle in February 2023, leaving devastation still being addressed, whether to public infrastructure (roads, bridges, stopbanks, lifeline facilities) or to private lives and businesses (forced relocation, flood damage, income and revenue loss).

It's no surprise then that voters are especially grumpy, and many will use their October vote to express their unhappiness with councils in general and incumbent councillors in particular, whether fairly or not.

This article documents the level of unhappiness, but also looks into the matter of 'blame' and the credibility of would-be saviours.

## Voter mood

*BayBuzz* conducted an online poll over the month of June to get a sense of current attitudes toward our councils. Promoted via our weekly e-newsletter and Facebook page, we received over 450 responses from an audience that - I think it's fair to say - is more attentive to and informed about local issues and councils than most of the public. A generally reasonable lot.

Illustration: Brett Monteith

Our respondents skew 50-plus in age and most have lived in Hawke's Bay ten years or more. Admittedly not a random sample, but definitely likely voters and canaries in the mineshaft.

Their state of agitation is remarkable (and especially revealed in the tone of verbatim comments many respondents volunteered). Only slightly more calm than the rather hostile commentary by HB's social media denizens.

For starters, we asked:

**Which of these feelings do you have when you think about your own local council or the HB Regional Council? Respondents could tick all that applied.**

	All respondents for HBRC	Napier respondents only for NCC	Hastings respondents only for HDC
Concerned	42%	58%	49%
Disappointed	41%	50%	41%
Frustrated	33%	47%	48%
Angry	16%	28%	23%
Ambivalent	17%	11%	12%
Hopeful	19%	18%	20%
Connected	5%	6%	8%
Pleased	5%	5%	13%
Proud	3%	5%	9%
Excited	1%	1%	3%
Inspired	1%	1%	5%

This is not a picture of contentment! About a quarter are downright angry, with nearly half frustrated and disappointed. And really nothing to offset that on the positive side, the best adjective being 'hopeful', selected by two in ten respondents.

The *BayBuzz* universe certainly includes some chronic critics of council performance, but really, in my experience, is not a herd of malcontents. Yet this is the tip of an iceberg.

The Regional Council fared slightly better in this survey, but only slightly. Hastings residents were more critical of HBRC than Napier residents, possibly reflecting



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the Hastings community's greater engagement with HBRC around contentious issues like water allocation and greater cyclone disruption.

**Hastings residents significantly more critical of HBRC than Napier residents:**

	Napier respondents	Hastings respondents
Concerned	41%	44%
Disappointed	34%	47%
Frustrated	30%	37%
Angry	9%	23%
Ambivalent	21%	15%
Hopeful	19%	18%
Connected	6%	4%
Pleased	6%	4%
Proud	4%	3%
Excited	1%	2%
Inspired	1%	1%

More specifically, we asked about two complaints that come up regularly in residents' criticism in the media, café conversations, and the posted comments BayBuzz receives.

**We asked: Do you agree or disagree with this statement: I believe my local council is in tune with my priorities?**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Ambivalent	Disagree	Strongly disagree
<b>HDC</b> (Hastings respondents only)	3%	22%	15%	36%	26%
<b>NCC</b> (Napier respondents only)	3%	12%	17%	34%	34%
<b>HBRC</b> (all respondents)	3%	14%	30%	29%	25%

Clearly respondents believe councils are out of touch - 68% of Napier residents say NCC is not in tune, 62% of Hastings residents say their council is not in synch, and 54% of all respondents say HBRC is not in tune. Only HDC musters 25% in tune. And of interest, 30% are ambivalent about the Regional Council's priorities, reflecting longstanding confusion about what that council does.

How could there be such a glaring mismatch? I'll come back to this in a moment.

**We also asked: Do you agree or disagree with this statement: I generally trust our councils to do the right thing?**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Ambivalent	Disagree	Strongly disagree
<b>HDC</b> (Hastings respondents only)	2%	25%	17%	34%	22%
<b>NCC</b> (Napier respondents only)	3%	20%	17%	32%	27%
<b>All respondents</b>	3%	24%	16%	32%	24%

**Unfortunately, given the public mood, the elections will be more about assigning blame.**

For both HDC and NCC, fewer than three of ten respondents say they trust their council to do the right thing. Are councils doing the 'wrong' things (as suggested by response to the previous question - e.g., spending money on 'baubles') or are they just perceived to be bungling appropriate things they should be doing (e.g., clearing streams, fixing potholes)?

In either case, no vote of confidence! A fair call?

#### **Sack 'em all!**

We'd like to think that the upcoming local elections are about choosing the best possible candidates to make difficult choices about public issues that affect all of us. But this requires informed consideration of both issues and people.

Unfortunately, given the public mood, the elections will be more about assigning blame.

I say 'unfortunately' for a number of reasons.

First, survey upon survey in New Zealand and elsewhere reflect a steep decline in public trust in institutions of every kind - governments, churches, media, business ... all traditional sources of authority. This isn't the place to examine that phenomenon, but it should be noted that none of our candidates - and especially those currently in power - are invulnerable to this profound baseline distrust.

Second, blame will be poorly assigned. When a council is perceived to screw up something or not listen, who is at fault? Councils make virtually all of their decisions collectively - when do you ever hear of a

'dramatic close vote' that decided to proceed with (or kill) policy or project X?! There's no individual accountability amongst 'rank and file' councillors. When was the last time you heard of a councillor storming out of a meeting and denouncing 'that's the worst decision this council has ever made and here's why'!

So if you think your council hasn't been listening or isn't in tune with your priorities, all you can do is vote against the whole lot of them ... except of course for your old school mate or cousin, who gets a free pass.

And while you're at it, you can protest vote against your current mayor if you live in CHB, Napier or Wairoa. They were in charge and personally responsible for all the mess-ups, including the cyclone.

Third, remember the cyclone. For sure, councils can't blame every problem on that disruption. They were capable of dumb decisions before and after, so it's fine to identify and criticise those. But don't blame them for spending money on fixing our roads and bridges and augmenting our civil defence capabilities.

Fourth, consider the past. Decisions to neglect water infrastructure were made for decades prior to today's crew. Our pipes and pumps didn't start to fail in November 2022. But only now are councils facing up to the consequences, which include punishing costs that must somehow be met.

As I see it, the deck is stacked against all incumbents seeking re-election this year, whatever their individual merits.

Hopefully voters will be more discriminating as they sort out the dead wood.

#### **Voter responsibility**

Which brings up the core point ... *Who do you vote for?* And here the burden of responsibility shifts. After all, it was *you* who voted in all those 'idiots' in 2022 who are now incompetent and don't listen!

So, what will you do to improve your civic IQ?

Will you do a better, smarter job in 2025 or just throw darts at the board? How will you get informed? Will you do more than read - and believe - candidates' 150-word profile in your Voter Guide?

Smarter voting implies knowing something about the issues, not just the candidates' bland assurances and cute family photos. You don't need to know everything. On just two or three



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**What will you do to improve your civic IQ? After all, it was *you* who voted in all those 'idiots' in 2022 who are now incompetent and don't listen!**

important issues you really care about, study up enough to detect and challenge candidate bullshit.

That's the critical step to better local representation.

Nowhere will this be more important than in assessing candidate claims and promises about rates. The nonsense is already happening, even before most candidates have declared.

'My highest priority will be to get rates under control.' That's it? Not getting my vote.

'I promise to eliminate waste.' OK, who are you going to fire? Would you reduce the number of councillors? How about fewer councils? Now you have my attention.

'I promise to spend only on core services.' OK, that's a bit more specific. But which are the 'un-core' activities you deem superfluous? How big a part of the council's current spend are those 'un-core' services?

'I promise to cap council rates at the inflation rate.' OK, but firstly, some of councils' biggest costs - e.g., roading materials, insurance, interest rates - outpace consumer inflation. Other core services expand as population increases. Other services, like longer library hours, expand precisely because councillors listen to citizen demands. How would you offset all those increases? Your cut is someone else's sacred cow.

In none of the rates debate over the coming months are you likely to hear reference to the fact that everyone who has actually studied council rates across New Zealand has come to the same conclusion ... the whole framework for paying for local government is broken and unsustainable.

The bottom line is that our councils need a more robust funding toolkit, they need more funding from central government (especially for national scale problems like coastal hazard protection, civil defence, legacy infrastructure catch-up), and they need to look at more 'radical' regional consolidation. Let's see candidates who 'get' that as opposed to knee-jerk 'rates saviours'.

BayBuzz will do its best over the coming months to cut through the candidate haze.

This will include our own candidate surveys, asking candidates to front up clearly on both cross-cutting issues like regional growth, water services & security, Māori wards, and council-specific issues and priorities. We'll publish candidates' responses to the surveys of other community groups. We'll explain the issues in contention. And given sensitivity over rates, we will be looking at rating the candidates on their rates claims, not in terms of agreeing/disagreeing, but with respect to specificity.

Some of this we'll present in our September/October magazine. But given the pace of the campaign and the number of candidates, much more will be delivered in our online reporting, so please tune in to that. ●

All of our campaign coverage and issues analysis will live on our website's Election Central 2025 domain: [baybuzz.co.nz/2025-hb-local-council-elections](https://baybuzz.co.nz/2025-hb-local-council-elections)



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But as demand continues to grow, so does the need for skilled professionals behind the scenes. That's why Broad Electrical Services is actively looking for qualified electricians to join their expanding team. With a strong pipeline of diverse projects, competitive conditions, and a collaborative, supportive work culture, it's an opportunity for tradespeople who want more than just a job—they want a career.

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# BAY COMMUNITIES ARE TURNING UP FOR BIODIVERSITY

Story by Bonnie Flaws

Photo by Florence Charvin

**In the last few years, Hawke's Bay has built a thriving, community driven series of biodiversity projects – most of them spearheaded by individuals on a mission who have recruited others in their direct sphere to join them.**

Once a region lagging others in this respect, Hawke's Bay is now home to at least several hundred small and large projects, many driven by landowners in rural, urban and peri-urban areas.

Biodiversity Hawke's Bay's Belinda Sleight outlined the range of initiatives. As Biodiversity Community Facilitator she liaises and collaborates with different community groups and projects in a very much 'on the ground' capacity.

"Every week or so I hear of some other new group," she says.

"In Hawke's Bay, the majority would be doing planting projects, planting native trees and shrubs, sometimes just increasing the amount in an area. Or it can be the restoration of a landscape, recreating ecosystems and habitats that have been there in the past. Like restoring a wetland. Whereas some projects are more like amenity projects, increasing the number of native plants in an area.

"The other side of things is around trapping, focusing on ship and Norway rats or Mustelids like ferrets, stoats, weasels and also possums and feral cats too, which are a real problem in Hawke's Bay."

## **From landscapes to neighbourhoods**

Some projects are huge in scale, like the work that Mana Ahuriri is doing with Napier City Council and other stakeholders to restore Ahuriri Estuary - Te Whanganui Ā Orotū - which *BayBuzz* covered last year in a feature article.

The Estuary is a nationally significant Wildlife Refuge, supporting a diverse flora and fauna, including migratory birds, in a variety of habitats including conservation wetlands, terrestrial wildlife, and native fish spawning areas.

Other high-profile projects include Predator Free Māhia, which removes possums and rats from the Māhia Peninsula and Cape Sanctuary at Ocean Beach, which *BayBuzz* has also featured.

"They are doing restoration among existing industry operations," Belinda says. "They have a fence to cut off the supply of possums and predators from the area and they have lots of Kiwi, Kākā, Wētā and of course sea birds that nest in the area. A lot of community



Heidi Stiefel, founder of Predator Free Napier Hill, with students from Napier Central School. Photo: Florence Charvin

members volunteer to check traps and grow and plant trees. It's a big community project."

The growing number of catchment groups looking after waterways also count as biodiversity projects.

But the vast majority of projects are relatively small.

Senior Biodiversity Advisor at Hawke's Bay Regional Council, Natalie de Burgh says the bread and butter of her team's work is the Priority Ecosystem Programme, working with mostly private landowners to secure key ecosystems across the region.

"That's recognising that it's easier to protect existing ecosystems than bring back old ones ... When you are protecting remnant bushland or wetland you can get your outcomes much quicker and cheaper," she says.

Natalie also sits on the committee that oversees Biodiversity Hawke's Bay Environmental Enhancement Contestable Fund. In early June, 17 community projects got the green light for funding.

There are two rounds of funding this year for the contestable fund after the Eastern Community Trust joined HBRC and DOC to supply a pool of money for biodiversity projects, which is usually about \$50,000 a year. This year it has been supersized to \$110,000.

There are two bands of funding available to community projects, with a minimum amount of \$1,000 and maximum of \$15,000 available. The next round of

**"My family had been trapping up at Boundary Stream for a couple of years and the Predator Free NZ backyard programme had a fund available for small community groups to apply to, so I set up a small project."**

Heidi Stiefel

funding opens in September.

Natalie says the money is used for things like fencing material, plants, traps and bait for maintaining traps, while the labour is usually from a volunteer force.

"There is a lot of riparian planting, trapping for pests and then some people have specific species they are looking after, like Kiwi at The Environment, Conservation and Outdoor Education Trust project in the Kaweka Forest Park. At Cape Sanctuary their specific species is Kākā. Then there are Dotterel on Marine Parade - their nests are in the rocks and look like rocks. And then there are long tailed bats in Central Hawke's Bay, which they are finding more of," she says.

### Urban projects

There are also urban projects for enhancing biodiversity.

Predator Free Napier Hill is a great example of that. Run by resident Heidi Stiefel, it builds on the success of a previous initiative.

"My family had been trapping up at Boundary Stream for a couple of years and the Predator Free NZ backyard programme had a fund available for small community groups to apply to, so I set up a small project.

"On Napier Hill there was an intensive passive eradication and rat control programme between 2009-2014. Koromako (bellbird) and Tui increased threefold, just from controlling possums. So we have a really good base. There are already Tui here, three or four Kererū, the odd Kākā. We find skinks on Bluff Hill now. That is just from reducing the number of predators."

Heidi is aiming for 20% of homes on Napier Hill to have traps, or around 500 traps. There are currently 140 traps.

"When you're working full time it's hard to get going but I'm trying to build it up and get more of a structure and make it more sustainable, get more people involved ... with community groups like ours, you get the benefit of knowing your neighbours and connecting and community resilience. This is well documented," she says.

Another Napier-based community biodiversity project is the Jervoistown Forest Project, spearheaded by resident Vanessa Moon.

"I had the idea of doing something in 2021, so I contacted Belinda at Biodiversity Hawke's Bay. Fish and Game HB is in Jervoistown and Belinda suggested we use them as an anchor project because they were extending



“That’s recognising that it’s easier to protect existing ecosystems than bring back old ones ... When you are protecting remnant bushland or wetland you can get your outcomes much quicker and cheaper.”

Natalie de Burgh,  
Senior Biodiversity Advisor,  
Hawke’s Bay Regional Council

LEFT: Natalie de Burgh.  
RIGHT: Jervoistown urban corridor project.



their grounds and planning to plant lots of natives. They also had a big shade house. We started volunteering there, eight of us, potting up plants. So then our group put in hundreds of hours planting up Fish and Game on Inverness Road.”

That led on to other projects, including a big one currently underway planting up the berms in Jervoistown in natives to create an urban corridor of

habitat for native species.

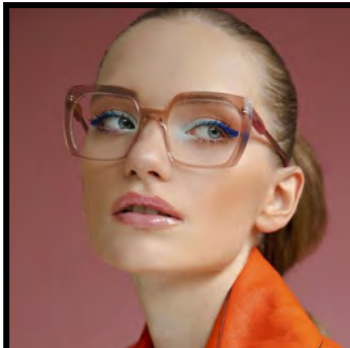
“There is a core of five of us and about eight or nine in total, all retired people apart from one,” she says.

“Last year we did a big planting on the southernmost Gordon Road Berm. We used a \$1000 grant to buy the plants and that is all planted up now and looking lovely. We try to involve the community by having working bees at the weekend, mostly at Neverman’s Bush,

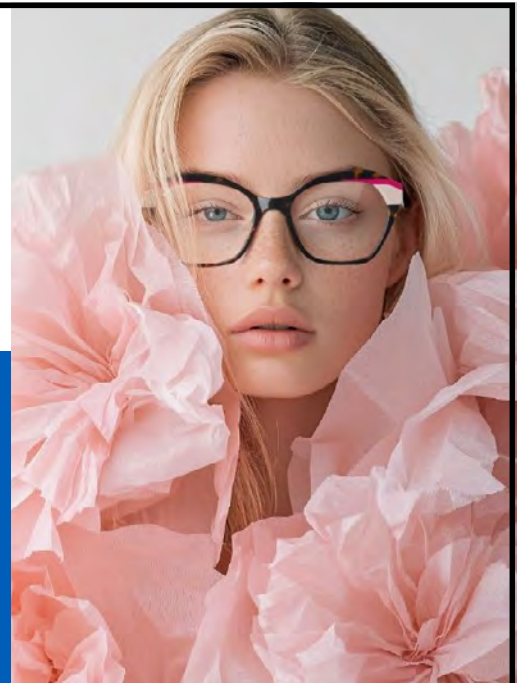
another place we work”.

If you want to learn about projects that might be going on in your area, you can check out Biodiversity Hawke’s Bay’s project portal [www.biodiversityhb.org.nz/projects](http://www.biodiversityhb.org.nz/projects).

And if you want to set something up yourself, Belinda is there to give advice and assistance. ●



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# Caring for ageing smiles

## Modern dentistry is transforming oral health in Havelock North

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At Woodhams & Walker Dental in Havelock North, our experienced and compassionate team is committed to helping you maintain a healthy, confident smile through every stage of life.

Whether you're dealing with wear and tear, missing teeth, or concerns about your appearance, we combine the latest in digital dentistry with good old-fashioned community care. Led by Dr Humphrey Walker, who has over 30 years of clinical experience, our practice provides tailored solutions in a warm and welcoming environment.

### The changing needs of smiles

Just like the rest of our bodies, our teeth and gums change with age. Common issues we see in our patients from middle-age onwards include:

- **Tooth wear and erosion:** Years of chewing, grinding, or acidic diets can wear down enamel, causing sensitivity or aesthetic concerns.
- **Gum recession:** This exposes tooth roots, making teeth more vulnerable to decay.
- **Dry mouth:** Often a side effect of medications, this increases the risk of cavities.
- **Missing teeth or ill-fitting dentures:** These can affect both function and confidence.

Unfortunately, these changes often occur gradually, and many people don't realise there's a problem until pain or difficulty chewing sets in. That's why regular check-ups are essential. With early detection, we can intervene before small issues become major concerns.

### How digital dentistry makes a difference

At Woodhams & Walker Dental, we've invested in cutting-edge digital technology to ensure precision, comfort, and faster results. This includes 3D scanning, CEREC crowns, digital X-rays, and computer-guided treatment planning, which is all designed to make your experience smoother and more convenient.

### Here's how digital tools enhance your care:

- **Faster, more accurate diagnostics:** Digital imaging helps us to spot issues like bone loss or fractures before they worsen.
- **No more gooey impressions:** Our 3D intraoral scanner captures your mouth in high detail, which is more comfortable and highly accurate.
- **Better-fitting restorations:** Whether it's implants, crowns, bridges, or a partial denture, digital impressions ensure restorations feel natural and secure.
- **Improved long-term planning:** We can track changes over time and make informed decisions for preventative or restorative treatment.

The technology helps us streamline care, while maintaining high clinical standards.

### Meet the team behind the smiles

At the centre of the practice is Dr Humphrey Walker. Humphrey grew up in Havelock North and returned 25 years ago to raise a family while practising in Taradale. During his time in Taradale, Humphrey cared for patients from across the wider region, from Central Hawke's Bay to Wairoa. Humphrey is a strong believer in the value of long-term patient-practitioner relationships and has seen first-hand how powerful continuity of care can be.

Working alongside Humphrey is Oral Health Therapist Kate Fairweather, who brings 10 years of clinical knowledge and a special focus on preventative care and hygiene. Kate is especially passionate about educating patients on how to maintain healthy gums and teeth between visits.

Humphrey's Dental Assistant Mackenzie ensures every procedure runs smoothly while keeping you comfortable in the chair, and Annalysa at reception is always ready with friendly support, whether you're booking an appointment or discussing treatment options.

Together, we work to provide a caring, supportive dental experience for patients.

### Your smile deserves attention at every age

Ageing doesn't mean giving up on a healthy, beautiful smile.

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"I just want people to have a good sporting experience. What they learn in the sport will be small compared to what they take with them for life."

Keith Bone



# VOLUNTEERS: THE HEART OF SPORT UNDER THREAT

**Story by Damon Harvey**  
Photos by Florence Charvin

**“Whatever you can give – even if it’s organising half-time oranges or driving a carpool – it all counts.”**

That simple truth from Sport Hawke’s Bay’s Play, Active Recreation and Sport Team Leader Caitlin McIver sums up the reality facing community sport. Volunteers don’t need titles or trophies – they just need to turn up. But across the country, fewer people are.

The latest National Sport Club Survey paints a worrying picture. The average number of regular volunteers at sport clubs – those giving three or more hours a month – has almost halved since 2019, dropping from 31 to just 18. It’s a shift that Gordon Noble-Campbell, chair of the Amateur Sport Association, calls an “existential threat” to grassroots sport.

And while average club membership has recovered post-Covid, and in many cases grown, the volunteer pool has shrunk. Athletics, football and rugby union are especially feeling the pressure.

OPPOSITE: Keith Bone at Hawke’s Bay Regional Aquatic Centre

Here in Hawke’s Bay, Caitlin McIver sees it first-hand. “Volunteers are critical to sport,” she says. “Most people think of coaches and managers, but behind the scenes, it’s everything from governance and event planning to field setup and hospitality. Without them, sport doesn’t happen.”

McIver says the decline isn’t surprising in today’s climate.

“People are busy. There’s economic pressure. And the new Incorporated Societies Act adds more complexity to club life.”

But that makes celebrating and retaining volunteers even more important.

Sport Hawke’s Bay encourages schools and clubs to acknowledge their volunteers, and they run surveys like Voice of the Coach to help regional sports organisations better support those on the ground.

“Volunteers need to feel valued, that’s how you build a sense of belonging, and that’s what keeps people involved.”

McIver believes the conversation around volunteering needs a reset.

“You don’t have to give your life to a club, just a bit of time, in whatever way works for you. Every bit makes a difference.”

And beyond what they give to sport, volunteers often gain just as much. Research shows stronger social

connection, better mental health and even improved physical wellbeing are among the benefits.

Despite the national decline, some clubs, like Napier City Rovers, continue to punch above their weight. With a mix of skilled volunteers and key paid roles, they create a match-day experience that runs on teamwork and pride. It’s a model McIver sees echoed in other strong clubs across the region.

And then there are individuals like Keith Bone and Shelley Cameron. The heartbeat of community sport. The ones still showing up.

## **Keith Bone: Swimming for life**

“I swim for life,” says Keith Bone, matter-of-factly, as he talks about his daily journey over seven speed humps and 1.4 kilometres from his home to his second home – the Hawke’s Bay Regional Aquatic Centre at Mitre10 Sports Park.

Whether it’s pulling on his togs and easing into Lane 5 for some laps with his fellow master swimmers, or rallying the next wave of champion swimmers or water polo players, Keith is there. Morning, evening, rain or shine – the 65-year-old is part of the pool’s DNA.

If the pool is a community, Keith is its unofficial mayor. Always on duty, even when he’s not.



Sport Hawke's Bay's Play, Active Recreation and Sport Team Leader, Caitlin McIver. Photo supplied

"I swim for my health - and if I'm going to do that, I'll drag in as many other people as I can too," he grins.

Keith isn't just a swimmer. He's an orchardist-turned-volunteer powerhouse who's given more than 30 years of his life to swimming and water polo.

He first stepped onto a pool deck as a parent volunteer when his three daughters began swimming competitively. One minute he was timekeeping, the next he was studying the rulebook. By 2003, he'd qualified as a national-level swimming referee.

He's chaired the board of Swimming Hawke's Bay-Poverty Bay, served as a board consultant, and helped lead the creation of Hawke's Bay Water Polo. In between all that, he coaches, referees, and mentors - all voluntarily.

And what drives him? Health, heart and humanity.

Swimming is in the Bone family's

blood. His brother Mark represented New Zealand and coached the national team. Another brother, David, now coaches the New Zealand Under-20 Water Polo side and is currently in Croatia. Their sister Jan captained the New Zealand women's water polo team for 10 years.

Swimming wasn't just something the Bone kids did - it was a way of life.

Keith swam competitively too in breaststroke and individual medley, but it wasn't until his three daughters took up the sport that he found himself deep in the volunteer world - officiating, coaching, chairing committees and always pitching in where needed.

More recently, life threw him a curveball: a serious back injury, followed just ten months later by a heart attack, right on the cusp of the COVID lockdowns.

That's when swimming became more than a passion - it became his lifeline.

"If I don't swim, my mobility is really poor," he says. "Swimming is my rehab - my medicine. It's the one thing I can do to stay mobile. So, I do it. And I do it with others."

He's in the pool six mornings a week - three swimming, three coaching. Add in the water polo sessions and Tuesday night training, and it adds up to more than a full-time job.

"Swimming comes first, water polo second, and fishing third," he laughs. "And some days, swimming and water polo switch places."

Ask around the Regional Aquatic Centre and most people will know Keith.

He's the guy having a yarn on the deck, adjusting a backstroke ledge for a new swimmer, or running drills with disabled athlete Lance Dustow, a promising para swimmer on the autism spectrum.

"I just want people to have a good sporting experience," he says. "What they learn in the sport will be small compared to what they take with them for life."

His squad of fellow masters swimmers - the Heretaunga Sun Devils "Old Devils" - has grown into a bit of a movement.

Lane 5 is their spiritual home.

"We started back in Flaxmere," Keith says. "Now we've got over 30 regular swimmers, from all walks of life. You've got to earn your stripes to get into Lane 5!"

That's the thing about Keith. It's never just about him. He's the glue, the connector.

He'll greet a new swimmer, make sure their parents feel welcome, and before long they're helping out at events or sitting on timekeeper chairs themselves.

According to former Olympic swimmer Willy Benson, Keith's contribution to swimming is immeasurable. "If our sport didn't have people like Keith, we just wouldn't be able to provide the amount of opportunities that we provide for kids within the day."

Willy praises Keith's commitment, saying he has given up his time to help "everyone else's kids," and notes that there aren't enough people like Keith who are willing to dedicate themselves to supporting youth sports.

He also mentions that Keith loves a bit of banter and has found renewed enthusiasm through water polo, which has given him "another lease on life" to help kids and adults alike.

Keith himself gets enthused seeing new generations come through the pool - kids who once splashed in Learn to Swim programmes now bringing their own children back.



Keith Bone: "We're here on a journey," he says. "Let's go on that journey together." Photo: Florence Charvin

### "I'm seeing third-generation swimmers now."

Keith Bone

"I'm seeing third-generation swimmers now," he says with quiet pride.

His own grandchildren - five of them - are all in swim programmes, in London, Cambridge and Wellington.

"We tried to get the Bone family together for a swim-off once," he chuckles. "I challenged Mark to a race, but I'm not allowed to compete because of my heart. Still, we're all swimmers."

Keith has been a fierce advocate for better pool facilities over the years, including standing up for community pools like Frimley, which he believes should be restored, not removed.

He's equally passionate about making swimming accessible for all ages, especially those in lower

socio-economic areas who can't always get to the main aquatic centre.

His pride in the Regional Aquatic Centre is unmistakable.

"It's the best facility in New Zealand," he says, still in disbelief. "Every time I walk through the doors, I pinch myself." And it's not just about performance - it's about connection. "It's a hub, a place where people of all ages come to move, to laugh, to be part of something."

As for how long he'll keep swimming and volunteering? "Until I can't do it anymore," he shrugs.

"My mother swam until she was 82. We taught her to swim properly at 50."

Keith Bone swims for life. And if you're lucky enough to cross paths with him, there's a good chance he'll have you swimming too - or at the very least, holding a stopwatch.

"We're here on a journey," he says. "Let's go on that journey together."

### Shelley Cameron: All heart on the sidelines

It's known as the beautiful game and for Shelley Cameron it's also been a beautiful way to spend a life. Not as a pro, not in the spotlight, but from the sidelines - coaching, organising, planning, mentoring, and above all, giving.

Shelley has worn nearly every hat available in the world of local football. She's coached junior and senior girls, helped run clubs, sat on committees, and steered strategy for the women's game. If football was a team of volunteers, Shelley would be the playmaker - seeing gaps, finding space, and connecting people.

Her love for the game runs deep.

"I've always played sport, I come from a sporty family - it's just what we did," she says.

That upbringing instilled not just a passion for participation, but a sense that sport is something you contribute to as much as you take from.

It started small, helping out at her local club, Taradale, where she eventually became club secretary and then a life member.

When her eldest daughter turned five, Shelley took up coaching. "Just Saturday morning chaos with little kids running around," she laughs.

But it wasn't long before her coaching talents were spotted by Central Football's Leon Bernie, who asked her to help with a rep side. From there, she was hooked.

Coaching was never just about wins and formations. It was about showing up, modelling what leadership looks like, and helping young women find belonging.

"I was probably the first female coach a lot of the girls had ever had," she says. "It's important for girls to see women in those roles. We coach differently, and I think that matters."

Now Shelley coaches both the First XI and senior futsal teams at Napier Girls' High School.

She's also a key figure at Napier City Rovers, where she's been helping build a proper women's programme. "They'd be the first to admit they hadn't done women's football well," she says. "But now they're genuinely trying to get it right, thinking about things like facilities, what girls need to feel comfortable, and how to support them properly"

It's a big ask on top of a full-time job, but Shelley has found the right balance. As a sales rep, her role gives her enough flexibility to do what she loves outside of work hours.



"You don't have to be a star to get something out of sport. It's good for your body, your head, your confidence. It teaches you how to lose, how to lead, how to get along with others."

Shelley Cameron

**“Just jump in. If your heart is in the right place, the rewards are huge. You’ll get more out of it than you ever expected.”**

Shelley Cameron

“I just start early when I need to, so I can make it to school games or trainings. I’m lucky, but I’m also super organised,” she grins.

And then there’s the buzz, the reason she keeps turning up.

“Seeing the players enjoy themselves, watching them grow, that’s the payoff,” she says.

“You don’t have to be a star to get something out of sport. It’s good for your body, your head, your confidence. It teaches you how to lose, how to lead, how to get along with others.”

Teenage girls are a particular passion.

“There’s a huge drop-off in sport at that age, and it’s a real shame,” she says. “I get that there’s pressure – social media, part-time jobs, trying to fit in – but sport gives them so much that’s positive. We’ve got to keep finding ways to make it work for them.”

That might mean offering paid coaching gigs during school holidays, or making sure they see the many paths they

can follow in sport – not just as players, but as coaches, umpires, organisers.

“There’s a role for everyone,” she says. “We just need to make sure those roles are visible and supported.”

Shelley has two teenage daughters, both still involved in sport.

One is studying teaching at EIT while coaching a junior team and playing at a high level herself. The other, in Year 12, plays football and futsal too.

“It’s really cool to see that they’ve picked up those values,” Shelley says. “They help their coaches, they pitch in, even when I’m not coaching them. They’ve seen what volunteering looks like – and that it can be fun.”

Not that it’s always rosy.

“Of course it can be hard. I’ve heard the odd grumble – people assuming my kids are in teams just because I’m coaching. That stuff’s not easy. But the positives completely outweigh the negatives.”

Some of those positives are personal. Lifelong friendships, watching girls she coached as kids become successful young women, or even seeing some of them progress to the professional side of sport.

She fondly mentions Charlotte Lancaster, who went on to play professionally for Wellington Phoenix as well as in Australia. “That’s pretty special,”

she says.

And yes, she still plays – rolling subs and all.

“I mostly just coach now, but I’ll sub myself on if I need to fix something on the field,” she laughs. “Then roll straight back off.”

So what would she say to someone considering volunteering in sport?

“Just jump in. If your heart is in the right place, the rewards are huge. You’ll get more out of it than you ever expected.”

Shelley Cameron may not be scoring the goals, but she’s absolutely changing the game. ●

Starting like most kiwi kids playing rugby barefoot on frosty Hawke’s Bay mornings, Damon became a sports editor for the local rag and then a sport promoter for the ASB Tennis Classic, the national rugby championship and the Auckland Blues. He served 15 years on the board of Sport Hawke’s Bay, five years as chair, and continues to be involved in sport governance locally. A third-term Hastings District councillor, in his spare time he’s an action man – surfing, mountain biking, a gym bunny and a newcomer to water polo.



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# Kaweka Health Campus: A New Era for Hawke's Bay Healthcare

Hawke's Bay has a new benchmark in healthcare.

With the completion of Stage Two, to be known as Kaweka Specialist Centre and Ward, the region now has a fully operational health campus. It's the first new hospital in over 100 years, designed to serve both public and private patients.

What began as a bold vision in 2020 is now a thriving, community-focused facility delivering vital health services to thousands.

Backed by a joint venture of hospital specialists, management, and local families, Kaweka is the result of a \$100 million investment into Hawke's Bay's health future. The completed campus is expected to welcome over 6,000 patients a year and draw more than 30,000 visitors.

"This is a hospital that will serve the entire community, public and private patients alike," says Kaweka General Manager Nick Pullan.

## The Vision: A Comprehensive Health Facility

Stage One opened in 2022 and quickly showed the demand for high-quality, accessible care. Since then, more than 9,000 surgical procedures have been performed, with 42 percent of those for Health New Zealand patients.

Kaweka Specialist Centre and Ward adds further capacity and capability, including 31 inpatient beds (four of which are ICU), and is expected to double annual surgical volumes from 3,000 to 6,000.

The Kaweka Health campus is now home to a range of independently run specialties that operate from within the building.

These include cardiovascular services (G & H), radiology and oncology (Canopy Imaging and Canopy Cancer Care), ENT (ENT Head and Neck Surgery Hawke's Bay), as well as General



Surgery (Hawke's Bay Surgeons), Urology (Hawke's Bay Urology), Hearing and Balance, and Ophthalmology (Eye Institute).

Kaweka Health itself runs the core hospital services, which include inpatient beds, ICU, hireable clinic space, a lecture theatre and seminar rooms.

"Our specialty areas include Bariatric Surgery, Endoscopy, ENT, General Surgery, Gynaecology, Ophthalmology, Orthopaedics and Urology," says Nick.

## Extensive Services, State-of-the-Art Care

Kaweka's range of services has expanded significantly. The campus now houses five operating theatres, expanded recovery spaces, additional overnight care facilities, and a cutting-edge radiology suite offering MRI, CT and breast imaging.

A cardiac catheterisation lab has also been added to the 6,000-square-metre facility.

"We have a dedicated, highly experienced team delivering exceptional surgical and post-op care using the latest technology," says Nick.

One example is consultant cardiologist Bob Gerber, an expert in intravascular ultrasound-guided stent implantation, pacemaker and defibrillator implants, and coronary stenting.

His service brings new offerings to the Hawke's Bay community, who previously had to travel for such procedures.

Kaweka Health works as a collective campus with local specialists and providers coming together to enhance Hawke's Bay's opportunity for quality healthcare. Thanks to our highly dedicated and experienced surgeons and specialists, we offer new and innovative solutions to our patients.

The addition of Canopy Cancer Care and radiology specialists expands access to diagnostics and nationally recognised oncology care, again operated independently within the campus.

Kaweka is not just a hospital, it's a hub. With an on-site pharmacy, café, and conference and meeting rooms for hire, the campus is also a place of connection for patients, visitors and healthcare professionals.

## Community at the Core

One of Kaweka's defining features is its strong public-private alignment. While offering top-tier private care, the hospital also plays a vital role in supporting the public health system.

"We're not just here for those who can afford private care," says Nick. "We've already completed around 4,000 procedures for Health New



Nick Pullan General Manager and Anouk Doevendans-Lumb, Perioperative Manager at Kaweka Hospital.

Zealand, and with the campus fully operational, that number will only rise.”

Kaweka helps address regional bed shortages by providing 27 inpatient beds and four ICU beds, which helps ease pressure on public hospitals and improve access to timely care.

Board Chair and ENT specialist Stephen Toynton says the Kaweka development is unique in both ownership and vision.

“Hawke’s Bay, in common with much of New Zealand, simply requires more healthcare facilities. Kaweka Health and Westside Healthcare, the building owners, have made a huge impact by providing this facility,” he says.

“The advantage over most private or public hospitals is that Kaweka is owned by the clinicians and local families, who themselves are part of the Hawke’s Bay community.

This creates an exceptional work culture and positive atmosphere. Being independent also keeps the decision making effective and nimble. We’ve had incredible support from Hawke’s Bay families who have shared our vision for a new standard of surgical care.”

### A Better Patient Experience

Kaweka has been designed with patients and their families in mind. From its intuitive layout to welcoming spaces, every detail aims to make the hospital experience less clinical and more human.

The café provides a relaxed, social setting for visitors and staff, and the campus layout makes navigation simple and accessible.

“We want people to feel comfortable the moment they walk through our doors, whether you’re here for surgery, visiting a loved one or attending a meeting,” says Nick.

Patient feedback supports this. The hospital consistently scores above 90 percent on net promoter scores, a strong indicator of satisfaction and quality of care.

### Looking Ahead

Kaweka isn’t standing still. Growth plans are already underway, with a dedicated respiratory and sleep specialist service led by Dr Daniel Garner on the horizon. Another emerging focus is post-natal care.

“There’s a real opportunity to offer

post-maternity support in a calm, comfortable environment,” says Nick.

Over the coming years, Kaweka aims to operate at 95 percent theatre capacity by utilising the fifth theatre and scaling up ICU and inpatient services.

“We’re not stopping here,” says Nick. “This is about building a sustainable health system that meets Hawke’s Bay’s changing needs.”

### A Cornerstone for Regional Health

Kaweka Health campus is setting a new standard for regional healthcare. It bridges the gap between public and private, while offering compassionate, expert-led care to the people who need it most.

As Hawke’s Bay continues to grow, Kaweka is ready to grow with it, leading the way in patient-centred healthcare and strengthening the region’s health infrastructure for generations to come.

[www.kawekahospital.nz](http://www.kawekahospital.nz)





# TOP FIFTY





# HAWKE'S BAY'S TOP 50 EMPLOYERS

Bay Buzz has been on the hunt to identify the region's largest private sector employers.

With more than 21,600 companies in Hawke's Bay employing around 80,000 people, private sector businesses are key drivers of our economic engine.

But most businesses in Hawke's Bay are small affairs, sole traders or employing just a handful of people. More than two thirds of businesses in Hawke's Bay have no employees whatsoever, and in 2024 more than 86% had a payroll of five or less. Just over 100 businesses (half of 1% of all businesses in Hawke's Bay) had a payroll of 100 or more.

In the search for the Top 50, we've excluded Health New Zealand, the region's largest employer, the councils, schools public and private, government departments like MSD, retailers like supermarkets and chain stores unless headquartered here, as well as professional services firms like insurance brokers, lawyers and accountants. What we've looked for are employers either wholly based here, or with a local decision-making presence as part of a nationwide business.

Photos: Florence Charvin

And then there's the seasonality factor, which plays a massive part in our economy. It's not unusual for the seasonal workforce of primary sector businesses to outstrip their permanent staff numbers by between 100% to 400%, providing employment for hundreds of additional people.

We've excluded seasonal spikes for the purpose of compiling this list, and disregarded contract staff as they are not employees. We've hunted for the largest permanent workforces year round.

Identifying those who should be on the list has been no easy feat. Those with high profiles are easy to spot, and they talk about their staff numbers. But those who aren't required to disclose, or who don't want or need publicity, are a little harder to identify.

For this reason we've asked for help from those more likely to know than us. You might have thought our Regional Economic Development Agency, or the economic development staff of councils, or the HB Chamber might have such listings, but they don't. We don't claim to have it 100% right, so feel free to tell us what we've got wrong!

The accompanying chart lists our Top 50 by permanent workforce,

**Identifying those who should be on the list has been no easy feat. Those with high profiles are easy to spot, and they talk about their staff numbers. But those who aren't required to disclose, or who don't want or need publicity, are a little harder to identify.**

in alphabetical order. As you might expect, it strongly reflects the agricultural core of Hawke's Bay. Businesses involved in primary produce, either growing or processing, feature prominently, as do businesses who service those growers and processors. Our primary and adjacent sectors are a big machine, requiring a huge support network to sustain it.

The exceptions are businesses that operate in other sectors such as construction, healthcare, and infrastructure.

## Hawke's Bay Top 50

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ABB</li> <li>• Alexander Construction</li> <li>• Big Save</li> <li>• Booths Transport</li> <li>• Bostock NZ</li> <li>• Bremworth</li> <li>• Brownrigg Agriculture</li> <li>• C3</li> <li>• Cedenco</li> <li>• Conroy Removals</li> <li>• Craigmore Sustainable</li> <li>• DGL</li> <li>• DSK engineering</li> <li>• Farmers Transport</li> <li>• Freeze Dried Foods</li> <li>• Freshco</li> <li>• Frost Fan</li> <li>• Furnware</li> <li>• Future Products Group</li> <li>• Gemco</li> <li>• Greenmount Foods</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heinz Wattie's</li> <li>• Hustler</li> <li>• Isaac's Plumbing and Electrical</li> <li>• Kaweka Hospital</li> <li>• Kiwi crunch</li> <li>• Lowe Corp</li> <li>• McCain</li> <li>• MCL Construction</li> <li>• Mr Apple</li> <li>• Napier Port</li> <li>• Pan Pac</li> <li>• QRS Wairoa</li> <li>• Ravensdown</li> <li>• Re-Leased</li> <li>• Rokit Apples</li> <li>• Royston Hospital</li> <li>• Stead Construction</li> <li>• Summerset</li> <li>• T&amp;G</li> <li>• Taylor</li> <li>• Tranzit</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tumu</li> <li>• Tupore</li> <li>• Turfrees</li> <li>• TW Group</li> <li>• Unison Networks</li> <li>• Vet Services HB</li> <li>• WineWorks</li> <li>• WoolWorks</li> <li>• Yummy Fruit</li> <li>• ZIWI</li> </ul> |
|---|---|---|

**As you might expect, our list strongly reflects the agricultural core of Hawke's Bay. Businesses involved in primary produce, either growing or processing, feature prominently, as do businesses who service those growers and processors.**

The smallest 'big' company in our Top 50 has only 60 employees, and there's a few ties for employee numbers, so the

Top 50 is actually the Top 52. The table below details Hawke's Bay's percentage of population by industry,

and the percentage of all businesses in that sector, demonstrating the impact of big players.

Sector	% of population by industry	% of business by industry
• Manufacturing	12.5%	4.4%
• Healthcare and social assistance	10.6%	4.5%
• Agriculture forestry and fishing	10.2%	14.7%
• Construction	9.4%	10.8%
• Retail trade	8.7%	5.3%
• Education and training	7.8%	2.4%
• Professional, scientific and professional services	6.9%	8.3%
• Public administration and safety	5.8%	1%
• Accommodation and food services	5.2%	3.9%
• Wholesale trade	4.0%	2.5%
• Rental hiring and real estate services	2.5%	20.8%
• Financial and insurance services	2.2%	7.9%



Pan Pac has a permanent workforce of 450 employees. Photo supplied

## WHO ARE OUR TOP 12?

Given our focus on permanent workforces, our Top 12 employers are as follows.

### 1. Tumu, permanent workforce 600

A family business with a 50 year track record that was founded in Dannevirke by Hugh O'Sullivan, to mill and sell timber from his farm. Now active in seven sectors: wood processing and manufacturing, property and development, finance, retirement living, transport and logistics, import and distribution, and private capital.

### 2. Heinz Wattie's, permanent workforce 450

Food processor with nearly a century's connection to the region. Now owned by multi-national HJ Heinz Group, one of the largest food and beverage companies in the world. Wattie's produces and market a wide range of food products, including frozen and canned fruits

and vegetables, sauces, baby food, and pet food, for New Zealand and export markets. Crops grown locally for Wattie's include peaches, pears, plums, boysenberries, beetroot, corn, tomatoes, sweetcorn, pumpkins and onions. With seasonal workforce, 950.

### 3. Pan Pac, permanent workforce 450

Timber grower, processor and exporter. Operating for 50 years, and owned by Japan's Oji Group, a pulp and paper industry leader. Produces mainly appearance grade timber and wood pulp products. Also has operations in Otago. Just over 1% of Hawke's Bay's work force is employed directly or indirectly by the company. Pan Pac's contractors number 400.



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Unison Networks has a permanent local workforce of 407 employees. Photo: Florence Charvin

**4. Unison Networks, permanent local workforce 407**

Electricity network business operating in Hawke’s Bay, Taupō, and Rotorua. Also owns complementary businesses in contracting, transformers, and switchgear, to ensure Unison is strongly positioned to leverage the opportunities and tackle the challenges associated with electrification. Unison’s vision is to lead a sustainable energy future that supports the changing energy needs of consumers.

**5. Mr Apple, permanent workforce 400**

New Zealand’s largest grower, packer and exporter of Apples. Part of Scales Corporation. Grows 12 varieties of apples on more than 50 orchard locations on 1,200 hectares in the region, exporting more than five million cartons of apples. Mr Apple’s seasonal workforce is estimated to be around 2000 workers.

**6. Yummy Fruit Co, permanent workforce 340**

Operated by the Paynter family, fifth generation orchardists specialising in apples and stone fruit, grown on 700 hectares in Hawke’s Bay. Was the first grower to individually label fruit in New Zealand.

**7. TW Group, permanent workforce 338**

Owned by Cam Ward and Simon Tremain. A vertically integrated property development, civil construction and trade business with 14 businesses under the TW umbrella. Offers clients “the full suite of development and construction services, from the planning phase through to the final lick of paint.”

**8. Napier Port, permanent workforce 322**

North Island’s second largest port by tonnage. Fifty five per cent owned by Hawke’s Bay Regional Council, with the remaining 45% listed on the NZX in 2019. Predominantly export

focussed, with wood, pulp and paper, apples and pears, meat and other chilled produce making up the bulk of container exports. Log exports are the lion’s share of bulk cargo. The port’s operations indirectly support many thousands of jobs and businesses across the region.

**9. T&G Global, permanent workforce 319**

Grows apples in Hawke’s Bay, but also a grower of apples, tomatoes, citrus, and blueberries in other regions. Also partners with third party growers. Exports to more than 60 countries. T&G’s 12,500m2 Whakatū packhouse is one of the largest in the southern hemisphere, with the capacity to pack 125 million kgs of apples annually. Peak seasonal workforce for harvest 2025 was 670. Majority owned by BayWa Global Produce, a German conglomerate.

**10. Bostock, permanent workforce 200**

New Zealand’s largest grower of organic apples, also supplying

onions, pumpkins, and organic apple cider vinegar to the domestic market. Exports to over 20 different countries throughout Europe, the Middle East, Asia and North America. Seasonal workforce estimated to be around 800.

### 11. Rokit Apples, permanent workforce 200

The snack sized apple developed for global consumers. Exported to 30 countries. Grown by the company or by licensed growers across 850 hectares in Hawke's Bay and Gisborne. In 2021, Rokit opened a new 21,000 m<sup>2</sup> United Nations-certified cool store and packhouse facility in Hawke's Bay. Seasonal workforce exceeds 600 at peak times.

### 12. ZIWI, permanent workforce 165

Manufacturer of super premium petfood that's exported to more than 30 countries. Invested around \$120 million to establish ZIWI in Awatoto, including 12,500m<sup>2</sup> \$85 million super kitchen, after many years in Bay of Plenty. Pioneered air dried technology 20 years ago and continues to innovate producing a range of wet (canned), air dried, and freeze dried foods for cats and dogs.

### Seasonal work complicates

There are some businesses whose seasonal workforces dwarf their permanent staff numbers, with meat processing being the prime example. Affco Wairoa has a total workforce of 650, but only 35 are permanent. Bay Buzz suspects that similar ratios apply at the region's other meat processors (who have not disclosed permanent roles): Ovation - 400 workforce, and Silver Fern Farms - 900, which would mean 23 and 52 permanent roles respectively.

### Our future job growth

A 2024 report from Infometrics, completed for the Hawke's Bay Regional Economic Development Agency (REDA) predicted 6,000 new jobs between 2024 and 2029. This compares to 9,400 new jobs in the previous five years. Unsurprisingly, two thirds of new jobs in 24-29 will be in Hastings District, our economic engine. Healthcare, social assistance, horticulture and fruit growing are expected to create the most jobs.

Infometrics predicts 1,300 new jobs in health and social assistance, 1,100 in horticulture and fruit growing, 550

in professional scientific and technical services, 450 in other services, and 425 in administration.

Construction, and sheep and beef cattle farming industries are expected to shed jobs.

Across the rest of the region Napier is predicted to have 1500 new jobs, and Wairoa and Central Hawke's Bay, hardly any.

Job creation reflects current and future market conditions, i.e. demand for goods and services, and the optimism of employers to hire.

For businesses to hire, in addition to optimism, they have to have a suitable labour pool. Quite a number of our Top 50 have workforces lower than that published on their website. One business, preferring anonymity, said this about their workforce: "We are looking for a lot more staff but they are simply, surprisingly, still not out there due to a few factors. Likely a lot of people moving to Australia when things went quiet in recent years in NZ for the construction sector. We particularly need more skilled commercial roofing staff."

Other research published late last year by the REDA highlighted the lack of skills and talent impacting a "broad range of economic development participants". A handbrake to our employers. Academically our students are not achieving at the same rate as New Zealand as a whole, and Hawke's Bay Māori are further behind. More of us have no qualifications, compared to the rest of the country. Skills focused initiatives are not maintained or scaled up. And not surprisingly: the experiment to centralise the tertiary institutes like EIT has weakened local connections between tertiary provision and industry.

What are our chances of developing our own home grown pipeline of work ready, suitably skilled workers? Based on past history, pretty low.

And then there are the global factors like pandemics, bird flu, and the recent Trump instigated tariff war that impact demand for Hawke's Bay produce, and the jobs it supports.

If our Hawke's Bay private sector workforce is to grow, the make-up of our Top 50 tells us it will come mostly from our horticulture sector. Only this sector has enough scale to significantly grow our private sector workforce.

The rest, and no disrespect to the thousands of hard working business owners out there, is chicken feed in comparison. A precarious position for the region to be in. ●



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# Ratepayers take note – waste reduction changes are afoot

**Substantial changes are in the cards for how we deal with waste in Aotearoa New Zealand, and many have a direct impact on councils and their ratepayers.**

The Ministry for the Environment recently called for submissions on proposed changes to waste legislation which are aimed at altering how the waste minimisation funding is allocated to councils and how they can spend it. Waste minimisation funding is allocated to councils by central government and comes from the waste levy, which is charged at landfills.

The waste levy is a central government charge that's part of the fee you and I pay when we dump waste at a disposal facility. Some of it is automatically allocated to councils, and some is available for projects through the contestable Waste Minimisation Fund.

The proposals also look to make changes to improve compliance, monitoring and enforcement, and shore up controls on litter, among others

We chatted to council waste minimisation staff in Hawke's Bay to get their thoughts on the proposals and how they could impact their work.

## **Changes to councils' share of funding**

At first glance the proposals may seem technical – not something the average ratepayer worries about. However, as Central Hawke's Bay District Council Environmental Waste Manager Robert Hon points out, it's often councils (and ratepayers like us) which pick up the tab for dealing with waste.

The highlight of the proposals for him is a '80-20 split' of the total portion of waste minimisation funding allocated to councils.

Currently, the funding is allocated

according to the size of the population a council serves. The proposal is to allocate 20% of the total waste minimisation funding across all councils as a flat rate, with the remaining funding based on population size.

The result will be more funding for smaller councils to use on waste reduction projects. It's been well received in the region.

"Overall, we feel the proposals are very practical, which is good. In terms of the funding allocation, the proposed 80-20 split is a fairer way of doing it and is long overdue," Robert says.

Napier City Council's (NCC) submission on the proposals agrees and suggests this could even be extended in future. "There should be consideration for regions which experience significant seasonal population fluctuation, and perhaps the base flat rate should increase to accommodate seasonal variation."

Hastings District Council Waste Planning Manager, Angela Atkins also agrees and calls for a more nuanced approach to allocating the flat rate. "We would encourage a more data-driven approach which would account for populations spikes due to tourism, sparsely populated areas, and base costs of delivering minimum services," she says.

## **More teeth for litter enforcement**

Another win for the councils is the proposal to change enforcement around littering. Currently the legislation places a cap on the financial penalties that can be levied on an offender subject to prosecution through the courts. When you consider that even very hazardous illegally dumped waste is subject to a cap, it puts things into perspective, Robert says.

"Imagine if someone dumped a

tonne of asbestos. The cap may be much less than the cost of cleaning this up. The proposed change is a better system for disincentivising illegal dumping," he says.

## **Changing how waste funding is spent**

What waste levy funding can be used for, is another area which is potentially set to change. While the councils are largely in favour of the proposed changes, there are two areas of concern.

The first proposes that councils can use this funding to deal with emergency waste – think Cyclone Gabrielle. Angela says while she agrees funding from the waste levy can be used for emergency waste, it shouldn't compete or take away funding allocated for delivering a council's Waste Management and Minimisation action plan and activities.

"The experience of Cyclone Gabrielle has shown that the costs of dealing with emergency waste can run into many millions and this could wipe out funds for any other local waste minimisation activities for many years. There is potential for the Government to turn down funding requests for emergency waste management, as there would be an expectation that council's levy funding would be used," she says.

Government should have a separate pool of funding to support councils facing the significant and unexpected costs of managing waste after major emergencies, such as severe weather events, she says.

The Ministry for the Environment has since announced an Emergency Waste Fund, but this is limited to 60% of the total eligible costs.

Another issue is the vague wording around the proposal looking to broaden the scope of what councils can spend waste minimisation funding on.

The wording – “reduce environmental harm or increase environmental benefits” – is open to interpretation.

NCC’s submission says, “There is a significant risk as to how this could be interpreted and/or applied by councils to various activities. It can potentially dilute the effect on actual waste minimisation.”

While Angela shares these concerns, she points out there are circumstances when broadening the scope could be good. Food waste is a particular example, she says.

“Reducing food waste by upcycling cannot currently be funded by waste levy funding. But if we’re running projects to redistribute food so it gets used by humans rather than going to animal feed, or upcycling food waste into food products, it would increase the environmental benefit and potentially allow the projects to be eligible for waste levy funding,” she says.

Robert expressed similar worry around the vagueness of the language. “There is concern the money could be used on things which aren’t waste related. But for us at CHB District Council, it shouldn’t be a problem because we are a small team which works very closely together,” he says.

### Dealing with problem waste

Most notable for us at 3R are proposals around extended producer responsibility (EPR) schemes. You may know another term for the same concept, ‘product stewardship’ – where manufacturers, importers, and retailers take responsibility for their products at end of life.

What’s proposed is a new framework for EPR schemes in New Zealand, potentially speeding up their development. It would also remove government accreditation for voluntary product stewardship schemes.

This takes the burden off councils and ratepayers for dealing with problematic waste – think tyres, electronic waste, mattresses, single-use plastic etc. The regulated product stewardship scheme Tyrewise, for end-of-life tyres, is a good example of how product stewardship can have a big, positive impact.

Tyrewise, has been hugely successful in keeping tyres out of landfill or being dumped in paddocks, since it began operating last year. It’s funded by the Tyre Stewardship Fee, which is paid on new tyres and covers the cost of their collection and recycling at their end of life.

For example, residents can now take up to five tyres at a time to public collection sites (such as transfer stations) for free, so they can be recycled. Tyre shops, vehicle dealerships, and anyone who generates end-of-life tyres around the country must register with the scheme and in turn has access to free tyre collections on demand. There are currently over 5,000 registered partners across the motu.

The proposals are welcome Robert says. “We’re really happy to see there is discussion around EPR and how it will work. Too often profits are privatised, while the costs of dealing with the waste are socialised – which isn’t fair. Our strong preference is to increase the pace of dealing with

problematic waste through EPR schemes,” he says.

The NCC submission agrees, saying the proposals “should make the system more workable” and allow for faster implementation of EPR schemes.

We at 3R also support the creation of this framework but have highlighted a number of concerns with the details of the proposals, which we feel should be refined and improved to have the best outcomes for business, society, and the environment.

You can read our submission in full on the 3R website news page.

Overall, the proposals have the potential to make it simpler to bring EPR schemes to life and could really shift the dial on resource efficiency and waste.

While submissions have closed you can still have a look at the proposals on the Ministry for the Environment website. ●



3R submission on waste minimisation



Proposals on the Ministry for the Environment website

Dominic works at 3R, which designs, implements and manages product stewardship schemes for individual businesses or industry-wide groups. They also help businesses take a fresh look at their waste to first minimise and then recover what would otherwise be wasted.

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## Feast or famine

If you've read our *HB's Top 50 Employers* article in this edition (you should), you probably noticed a pattern – 60% of them are in the food business, either as direct producers or as businesses that exist mainly to service food producers.

They are the bulwark of the region's agribusiness sector, which in turn is the bulwark of the region's entire economy when one takes into account all the other legal, accounting, HR, comms and other service providers for whom HB's agribusinesses represent a major chunk of their income. Plus the trickle down as all these folks buy cars, electric bikes, coffees, pay rents and rates.

That's our present economic reality. But what about the future?

We've seen that one cyclone can have a billion dollar impact just on that sector alone.

Climate change with severe weather promises future disruption to the primary sector, but so too does a lengthening list of other disruptors – rising sustainability expectations of overseas consumers (our food sector's lifeline), transport costs and other supply chain issues, generational ageing within the farmer community, limits on the extent of additional versatile soils (if not actual loss, see Mark Sweet's article), and more profitable non-food uses of land (from forestry to solar farms).

To say nothing of wars and pestilence, which, granted, would affect most if not all sectors and economies.

As a region, most of our economic growth eggs and aspirations are in this one basket. Is that healthy? Or a prescription for increasing regional economic vulnerability or stagnation?

How much more meat, wool, squash, onions and apples can we

squeeze out of finite Hawke's Bay? For how long? And is that our region's best path forward?

Any decent investment adviser would say too much concentration of one's assets in one category is dangerous. Diversify, they would say. Shouldn't that apply as much to the region's 'portfolio' as it does to our personal ones?

Yet in the face of that prudence, the last iteration of our Regional Economic Development Agency (REDA) issued a report identifying six industries that would drive and "underpin the region's economic development". Five of those were forestry and wood processing, horticulture and associated processing, meat and meat processing, food and beverage product manufacturing, and machinery and equipment manufacturing (which in HB relates significantly to food production and processing). They threw in another for good measure – wool and textile manufacturing.

Double down on agribiz, said REDA. Huh?!

Including wool, these industries were estimated to add 2,131 jobs in Hawke's Bay over five years (2024-29). Within that fasten-your-seatbelts number, most notably 1,800 jobs were to come from horticulture, whereas meat would lose 85.

### Peak meat?

Let's look at meat, which accounts for 36% (the largest chunk) or \$1.2 billion of HB's export value in 2023.

These days, the meat industry (and the Government) boasts of record NZ meat (and wool) export sales – up 8% to \$12.3 billion in the year ending June 2025. Here's where all our food exports go. Our meat and wool heads predominantly (52%) to the US and China.

But these reports always emphasise

How much more meat, wool, squash, onions and apples can we squeeze out of finite Hawke's Bay? For how long? And is that our region's best path forward?

export revenue. And our meat exports are currently enjoying very favourable pricing and currency conditions. So we're generating exceptionally high revenue off the volume we are producing.

What gets less headline attention is the actual *production levels* that earn the revenue. And for our meat and wool exporters, the production future is not so rosy. As this chart indicates, beef cattle volumes are predicted to be flat over the next five years, while the country's sheep flock is in steady decline. (See livestock numbers chart on p62.)

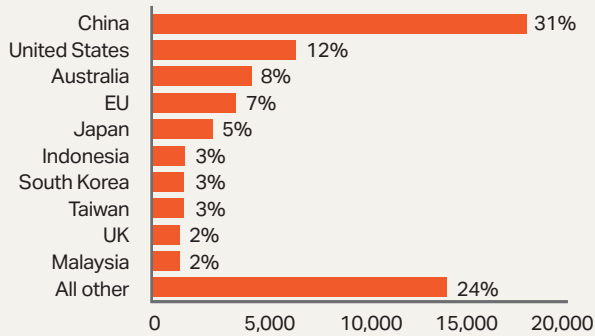
No one is suggesting these stock trends will reverse. It's tough to see how flat or lower volumes can sustain the high revenues currently enjoyed. Throughout NZ, meat processors are contracting – our own Silver Fern Farms has had two years of losses; AFFCO is said to be struggling. And ASB reports: "The expected average profitability across all classes of sheep and beef farms is forecast at \$45,300 for 2024/25." Not good news for a key inter-generational issue – farm succession. No wonder job losses are predicted for HB ... only 85?!

Forest harvest volumes are also flat. Only horticulture is predicted to grow, with apples leading the way, happily

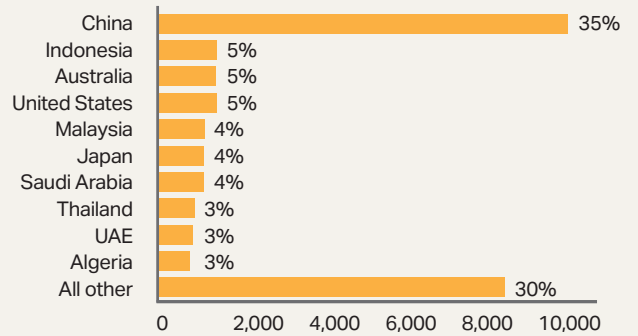
# New Zealand's top export markets

Year to 31 March 2025, NZ\$ million and percent

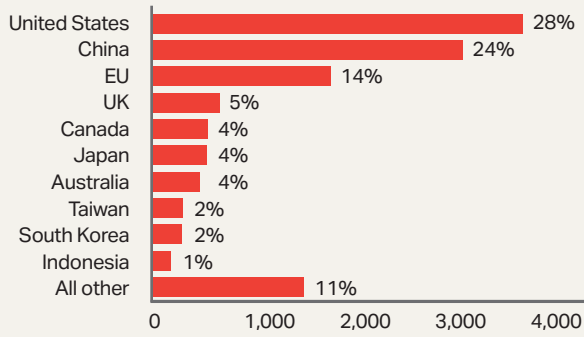
## All primary industry exports



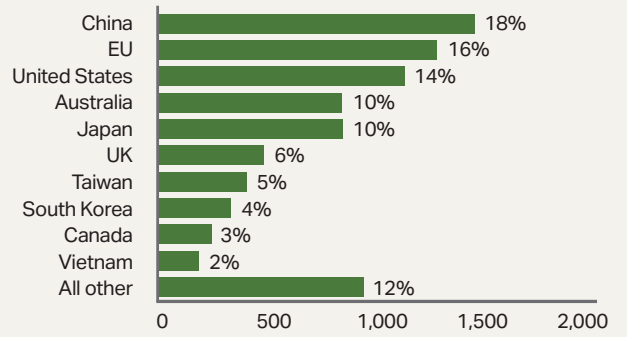
## Dairy



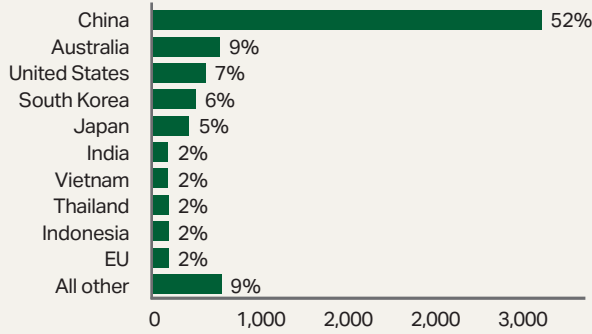
## Meat and wool



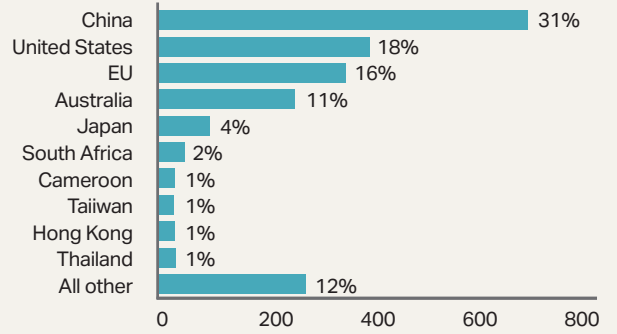
## Horticulture



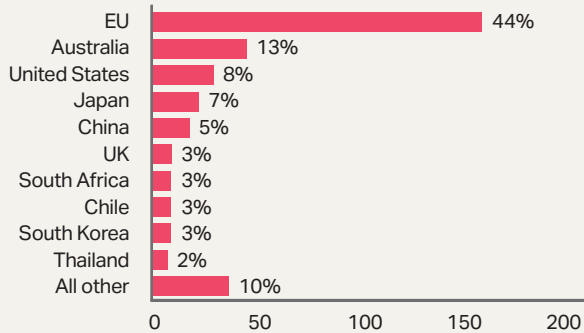
## Forestry



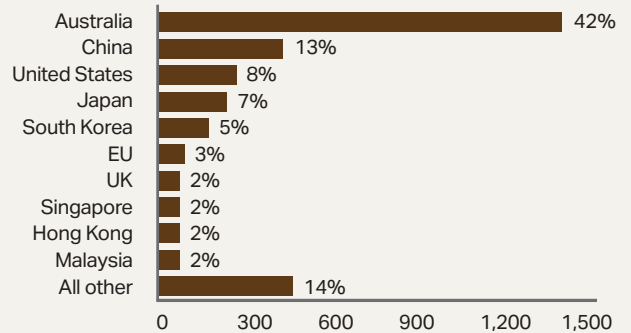
## Seafood



## Arable



## Processed food and other products



## Livestock numbers 2021-29

As at 30 June, million head

	Actual				Forecast				
	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Total cattle	10.2	9.7	9.6	9.5	9.6	9.6	9.6	9.6	9.6
Beef cattle	4.0	3.8	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7
Dairy cattle	6.2	5.9	5.9	5.8	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.9
Total sheep	25.7	25.1	24.4	23.6	23.2	22.9	22.7	22.6	22.5
Breeding ewes	16.3	15.4	14.8	14.6	14.4	14.4	14.3	14.2	14.1
Lambs marked and/or tailed	22.9	22.0	21.0	21.0	19.3	19.9	19.8	19.8	19.8
Total deer	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7

for Hawke’s Bay, but even there volume growth is predicted to be modest and only 300 more hectares are expected to be planted by 2029.

Our apple industry in particular has prided itself on innovation and per-hectare productivity. Indeed our apple breeders, juice and cider makers are trying to extract more value from our harvests. But there will be a physical limit to the value that can be extracted.

Meantime, in Hawke’s Bay, we don’t make wine, raise beef cattle and sheep, milk our few dairy cows, grow apples and squash, or harvest pine trees to meet the food and fibre needs of our region, or even the wider population of New Zealand. We produce virtually all of this stuff for overseas consumers.

So let’s get real, they and their governments are our masters when it comes to both the price paid for our production and, equally importantly, the acceptable conditions in which that production occurs. By that I mean standards and expectations on everything from chemical residues to animal welfare to labour treatment to environmental footprints. And those expectations are only getting tougher. Heard enough? As important as it now is, does HB’s primary sector sound like a growth opportunity to you?

When do we decide to pursue economic diversification? How do we suppose that might occur? Do our councils or a new Regional Economic Development Agency have a role to play in stimulating other discussions or opportunities?

So let’s get real, [overseas consumers] and their governments are our masters when it comes to both the price paid for our production, and equally importantly, the acceptable conditions in which that production occurs.

These are questions I’d like to hear our local candidates address – either to suggest specific ways to prime the diversification pump, or to concede they see local government is a mere bystander. ●

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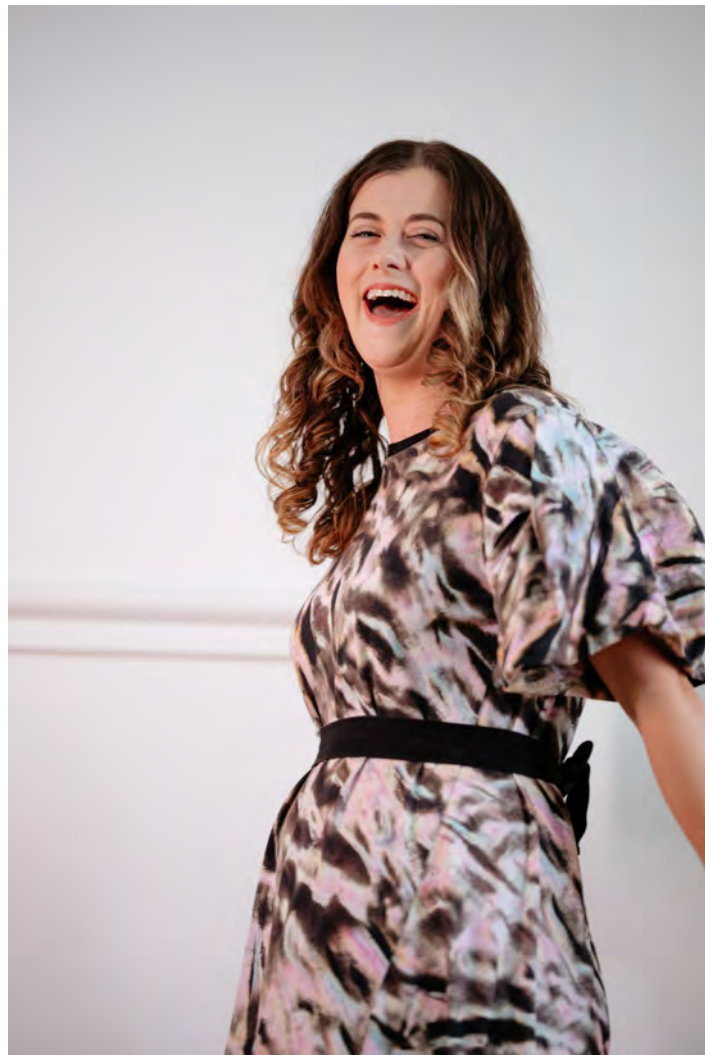


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## Life Lizzie Russell



The Hawke's Bay Arts Festival was absent from the 2024 arts calendar. Arts Inc. Director, Jade Baker, fills Lizzie Russell in on what's coming this year.

Photos by Florence Charvin

### Is there going to be a 2025 Hawke's Bay Arts Festival, and if so, when?

Yes! We are delighted to share that the 10th Hawke's Bay Arts Festival will take place 9-19 October. As one of Hawke's Bay's most loved arts and culture events, it'll be a chance to experience an exciting mix of bold ideas, beautiful performances and incredible global and local talent - all concentrated into ten unforgettable days.

### What's been going on since the last big one in 2023?

Over the past year, we've been through a period of consolidation and creative reset. We've looked closely at our model, connected with our community, and reshaped things to build a stronger and more sustainable future for the Festival. While we didn't deliver a full-scale Festival in 2024, we have had lots going on under our umbrella organisation - Arts Inc. Heretaunga, including a new Sculpture event, the Bridge Pa Sculpture Trail which we launched in March of this year in Partnership with Paritua. The response was amazing, and we're excited to grow this large-scale outdoor art event further in 2026.

Some other highlights from the past year include the Uku Clay National Ceramic Awards and work with artist Richard Brimer to develop a programme of musical collaborations, with amazing artists like Connan Mockasin, Riki Gooch and Jeff Boyle, for his fantastic exhibition *40 Vintages*. This was also supported by Hawke's Bay Winegrowers and a raft of local wine makers who got behind this great Hawke's Bay story. We were also delighted to support the Hawke's Bay Poetry Slam as part of our enduring

partnership with the Hawke's Bay Readers and Writers Festival, which continues for this year.

Looking ahead we now have five key programmes that we deliver annually: Hastings Arts Centre, Hastings Blossom Parade, Hawke's Bay Arts Trail, Bridge Pa Sculpture Trail and, of course, the Hawke's Bay Arts Festival. We are one of the few festival organisations in Aotearoa engaging with artists and audiences year round - and that's something we're really proud of.

### What can we expect from the 2025 Festival?

The 2025 Festival is a special one - it marks our tenth anniversary, and is a celebration of everything we've learned, loved, and lived, while casting our eyes forward to what's next.

This year's programme includes circus, music, theatre, comedy, dance and visual arts - a mix of returning favourites and exciting new artists within your favourite genres. We've shaped the schedule with the audience experience at its heart, making it easier to see multiple shows without having to choose between them. Whether you're a long-time supporter or a first-time Festival goer, there will be something in the programme for you!

### Who's making it happen?

The Hawke's Bay Arts Festival is produced by Arts Inc. Heretaunga, a small but mighty charitable trust with deep roots in our local community. Every dollar needed to deliver the Festival is fundraised, which means we work with purpose, care, and a real sense of accountability to our audience and supporters.

We're deeply grateful for the ongoing backing of Hastings District and Napier City Councils, and for the incredible support of our corporate sponsors,

"We are one of the few festival organisations in Aotearoa engaging with artists and audiences year round - and that's something we're really proud of."

Jade Baker, Festival Director, Arts Inc. Heretaunga

philanthropic grant-makers, Festival Patrons, and Members. It's this collective investment that makes the Festival possible.

### What are you most looking forward to in the 2025 Festival?

There's a moment that happens in the theatre, when an audience member sees, hears or feels something that connects them to an idea deeply, when they understand something new about themselves and those around them. I just love that in live performance.

I can't wait to welcome the Festival audience back, to be in the room with the community and to experience those moments together.

### How can we get involved?

This really is a Festival by and for the community, and we'd love people to get involved in whatever way feels right - whether that's through volunteering, helping to spread the word, or coming along and bringing a friend.

Our Patrons of Hawke's Bay Arts Festival programme is a huge part of making the Festival sustainable, so if you're passionate about the arts and creativity in Hawke's Bay, we'd love to have you on board.

One of the key things that you can do to support any arts organisation right now is to buy tickets early - it's a small act that makes a big difference. We're so excited about what 2025 has in store. ●

Cirque Bon Bon presale is now live, with full festival programme available from 31 July. Tickets available on HBAF and Eventfinda websites. [hbaf.co.nz](http://hbaf.co.nz)

OPPOSITE: Jade Baker, Festival Director, Arts Inc. Heretaunga.

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# Trust yourself

*BayBuzz* regular columnist and Havelock North trainer Janine Couchman competed at the World Natural Bodybuilding Federation Australia (Natural Elite) competition in Brisbane in May this year, and regularly travels for events. Here, she shares her insights and lessons for those of us involved in less intense training at home in the Bay.



### Five lessons learned through bodybuilding that have nothing to do with muscle.

It's fair to say that I'm drawn to big, scary goals that push me outside my comfort zone. In the past I have been deeply involved in the ultra-running world - a space that demands serious grit and mental focus. Alongside this, my work as a personal trainer and coach has grown my passion for helping women discover their strength, both physically and mentally.

So when I turned to competitive bodybuilding, it was about choosing a challenge that scared me. I was curious about the discipline, the extremes, the mental resilience required. And I did it for the same reason I encourage my clients to try new things, even when it feels daunting or self-belief is low: because showing up for yourself is where change begins.

Whether or not you've ever stepped foot in a gym, these lessons are for anyone who's trying to stretch themselves, stick to something tough, or simply grow.

#### **1. Big, scary goals are doable – if you break them down**

The idea of standing on stage under bright lights, being judged on your physique, might sound intense. It was. I found the prospect absolutely terrifying. But it became less overwhelming when I stopped focusing on this outcome and instead put my energy into the next step: the next meal, the next training session, the next early night.

You don't need to conquer the whole mountain in one leap. You just need to take the next right step. And then the next. Trying to pay off debt? Focus on the next payment. Building a new habit? Focus on today, not the whole year. When the bigger picture feels daunting, zoom in. You don't have to be fearless. You just have to take

a small step that moves you in the right direction. If you aren't yet doing what you want to be doing - make that first step smaller. The finish line feels impossibly far - until it doesn't.

#### **2. Putting yourself first doesn't mean putting others last**

One of the hardest shifts I had to make during prep was becoming less accommodating to others. Friends visiting our beautiful region did not find me so fun, considering all the incredible wineries and restaurants on offer here! During prep, I had to say no to social events, stick to routines my kids didn't always love, and sometimes rest instead of working or socialising.

All this focus on myself felt a bit selfish. But putting myself first wasn't about ignoring other people's needs - it was about treating my own needs as valid. I wasn't putting my needs above those of others, I was positioning myself as an equal. And luckily Hawke's Bay is also a mecca for walks and picnics.

In a world that often applauds women for being selfless, I have learnt the value of boundaries. Whether you're pursuing a degree, healing from burnout, or carving out time to move your body, you are allowed to protect that space.

You don't have to be at the bottom of your own priority list to be a good person. In fact, you'll be better for everyone around you when you're better to yourself.

#### **3. It's a privilege to choose your challenge**

Most of life's hardest moments don't come by choice. Grief, illness, unexpected loss - those things find us. So when we're in a season where we *can* take on a challenge of our own making - when we have the freedom, health, and resources to choose our challenges - this is a gift. It builds resilience in a

**I wasn't putting my needs above those of others, I was positioning myself as an equal. And luckily Hawke's Bay is also a mecca for walks and picnics.**

controlled environment. It helps us practice doing hard things. And when life throws the real curveballs, we have more tools in our kit. We've been tested - on our terms - and we're stronger for it. Strength is a skill. And like any skill, it gets better with practice.

#### **4. Struggle makes success mean more**

There's a particular kind of joy that only comes after effort. When you've struggled - really struggled - and still finished what you started, that success hits differently. It's the deep, soul-level satisfaction that comes after a period of discomfort.

The contrast between the struggle and the achievement creates depth. It imprints on you. And that emotional weight gives the outcome more value. Whether it's rebuilding after a breakup, finishing a degree, or healing from something difficult, the hard work you put in makes the result that much sweeter.

#### **5. Confidence comes from keeping promises to yourself**

Confidence isn't something you're born with or something you get from applause. It's something you build through action. Specifically, by doing what you said you would do, even if you've only said it to yourself (maybe also a coach you don't want to flake on).



The most powerful lesson I learned wasn't about lifting effectively or hacking my metabolism - it was about trust. Not trust in others, but in myself. Every time you show up and follow through on your plan, you build self-trust. That trust becomes confidence. This confidence doesn't look loud or flashy. It's not about being perfect. It's about being honest and consistent.

If you've ever struggled with self-doubt, start small. Pick one promise. Keep it. Then do it again. Following through, especially when it's hard, is proof that you can rely on yourself. And that quiet, earned self-respect? That's where real confidence grows.

**In the end, it was never about the stage**

Bodybuilding may have been the setting, but it was never really the story. The real growth happened in quiet moments: choosing discipline over comfort, self-respect over approval, and long-term gains over instant gratification.

You don't need a competition to learn these things. You just need something that challenges you - a goal that makes you uncomfortable, that forces you to confront yourself. That's where growth lives. Become someone who finishes what they start. Someone who trusts themselves. Someone who can do hard things.

And here's the good news: you're already strong enough to begin. The moment you decide to trust yourself, to show up for yourself, is the moment everything changes.

Choose your challenge - and start. ●

**If you've ever struggled with self-doubt, start small. Pick one promise. Keep it. Then do it again.**

Janine Couchman is a personal trainer and fitness coach specialising in strength training women of all ages and stages. As well as private coaching, she delivers an eight-week group programme at Peak Fitness and Health. She can be found at [janinecouchman.com](http://janinecouchman.com) and [@JaninecouchmanPT](https://www.instagram.com/JaninecouchmanPT)



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# FROM MY BENCH TO YOURS



## A NEW SPARKLE IN HAVELOCK NORTH...

Jewellery has always been more than just sparkle to me. It's memory, meaning, and a little bit of magic. After more than 20 years in the jewellery industry, I've learned that the most treasured pieces aren't always the biggest or the flashiest. They're the ones that mean something. A grandmother's ring, a charm from a first love, a necklace gifted just because.

That's the spirit we've brought into Studio Seven Jewellery Design, the new chapter that's unfolded in the space that many of you knew as Unio Goldsmith in Havelock North. I'm proud to carry forward that legacy while putting our own creative spin on it, a space where people can come to transform, create, and fall in love with jewellery all over again.

One of my favourite things we do here is remodelling. So many people bring in pieces that have sat unworn for years, things passed down, things out of style, things they've simply grown out of. I love the moment when someone sees their redesigned piece for the first time. It's like watching something come back to life.

We're also embracing the exciting shift in the jewellery world: lab-created diamonds and coloured lab-grown stones are changing the game. These stones are every bit as beautiful and durable as natural gems, but they're often far more affordable. It means more people can access beautiful, ethical jewellery and more room for creativity with colour, too. Deep blues, blush pinks, champagne tones... we've seen some absolutely stunning pieces come to life lately.

It's not just custom work or high-end sparkle here. One of the most joyful things we've brought into Studio Seven is the Nomination charm bracelet collection. These pieces are special they're personal, meaningful, and make brilliant gifts. Whether it's a milestone, a memory, or just a little token of love, there's a charm for everyone. I love that they work for anyone, all ages, genders, and cultures. No rules, just meaning.

We've also got a beautiful selection of watches, pearls, diamond jewellery, and ready-to-wear pieces in store plus inspiration from nature itself. I once designed a pendant based on a leaf I found on a walk. Sometimes beauty just falls at your feet.

So, if you're in Havelock North, I invite you to stop in and say hello. Bring in that forgotten piece in your jewellery box or just come and browse, have a chat, and see what's possible.

We're here to help your jewellery tell your story, whether it's a new one or one that's ready to begin again.

### **Kyleigh Griffiths**

Business Manager - Studio Seven Jewellery Design

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## Puppy love

**Desperately seeking: a hot date for Cosmo Jones. He's a stunner... GSOH, loves beach walks and lazy nights on the couch watching Netflix. Shaggy blond locks. Puppy-dog eyes. Nice manners. Plays well with others. Sits on command. Maybe a little possessive, especially around balls. He's a bordoodle (or a colloodle): Mother a working dog – ginger long-haired border collie. And his dad? Carrot, the farmer's wife's pedigree miniature poodle.**

Cosmo struts his stuff around Pākōwhai like he knows his ancestry is full of waterfowlers, circus performers, Crufts champs and dogs who speak French; like he knows he's hypoallergenic, and the second most intelligent breed listed with the Royal Kennel Club. He's a softie, a show off, a party boy and a smooch.

Which is why I'm sure he'd be a great plus-one for somebody's bitch.

At the dog park, every third dog has a bit of poodle in it (and all the rest wish they did!). Cavoodles, spoodles, foodles, whoodles, groodles, retro-doodles and goldiepoos, maltipoos, westiepoos, papipoos and corgipoos. Oodles of poodles everywhere. I'm yet to meet a Saint Bernadoodle, but it's only a matter of time.

Poodle crosses are de rigueur and I imagine mine would make lovely puppies. Chocolate-box cuties for small children and people with hangovers to cuddle on bean bags. Clever too. Cute dogs who can search out drugs and lead blind people across busy roads. And calm. Calm, cute, clever dogs who can help the anxious, the allergic, the epileptic, and kids who can't read very well.

The Hawke's Bay pup-ulation

includes 165 poodles. A whole caboodle of doodles too, going by what I see at the dog park every day. (Those are just the registered dogs, and -oodle owners always register their dogs, they are *those* kinds of humans!)

Poodles are the best of all worlds. They are working dogs deep down who know how to dig and fetch, but they have manners too. From Mum's 'teacup' Boudica to my favourite lawyer's 'standard' Sir Frederick Fine, poodles make the best companions. If dog is man's best friend, then poodles are man's *best* best friend.

It's not easy to find a 'companion' for my stud muffin though. It's not the kind of thing you can easily google. And approaching potential partners in parks is harder than you might think: "Hey, you've got a cute schnauzer, can I grab your digits?..."

I have browsed the NZ Stud Dogs page on Facebook and it's intimidating: a griffin on his back showing off his family jewels, a Chihuahua whose owner brags that he was born with "both testicals so should be very fertile". Jeff the Yorkie appears twice and has fathered five litters already - "Proven Stud!". Odin the Pom has had three litters and is still "looking for love". Moose is a retriever with "charm and beauty".

It's probably not very PC either, trying to make more dogs. Maybe we have enough already. Even in the -oodle category. Rescuing doodles is more ethical than breeding them.

Rescues can be a nature vs nurture lottery. No matter how much I aggrandise Cosmo's charisma he is also the product of a fair amount of training (thanks Augusta and Al). The poodle's often not the problem, it's the spaniel bit, the terrier bit, the retriever bit, and the collie bit that need exercise, a strong hand and a firm voice. Trade Me has oodles of poodle-cross designer dogs listed for adoption at about 10 months when they mature from a

storybook puppy into an actual dog with all the barking, bolting and belligerence that goes with it.

Hooking-up any kind of canines can be dangerous too. My mate ended up in a moonboot for months when she tripped over labradors copulating on her back deck. Another friend has PTSD after her jack russell got knotted with the neighbour and was stuck like that for hours with her kindly-aged kids watching gobsmacked from the kitchen window.

More than one friend has suggested a side hustle: A dating app for dogs. Tinder, Hinge or Bumble but doggie-style. Call it Bounder or - dare I say it? - Boner. I take a photo of Cosmo wearing sunglasses on his head and holding a fish then post it to social media. Zero swipes right.

I ask my single friends for tips and they tell me just start with a coffee ... that diving in straight away with "How do you feel about children?" might come on a little strong.

I guess that depends on which life stage you're up to. A three-year-old bichon frise might hear her body clock ticking and be prepared to leap into something more meaningful than a meet-cute over a puppaccino.

And, Cosmo's not fussy. When it comes to love buddies, anything can canoodle with an -oodle. Foxy, spitz, shitzu, lowchen, lhasa apso, xoloitzcuintli the Mexican hairless dog ... the combinations are endless.

So if there's anyone out there with an 'intact female' who fancies a 'play-date', my boy's in ... balls and all. (But only 'til the summer, then I don't care how cute or clever he is, it's "snip snip"!). Email him directly at [cosmojonesthedog@gmail.com](mailto:cosmojonesthedog@gmail.com) ●





## Coeliacs stay home!

It's not that the restaurant and catering industry players are intolerant, but more that they are ever-more stretched by intolerances.

Stretched both in everyday preparation of meals for the allergic, intolerant and the picky and in resourcing the ever-increasing compliance requirements. It won't be long before we see the first restaurant to ban those with allergies and susceptibilities. The writing is on the wall and in the paperwork. The pile of which is growing.

The days of asking the waiter if the mashed potatoes are keto-friendly are over and your 'nut' allergy is no longer sufficiently specific to guide you through the menu options.

"Which nut?" The frazzled waiter will scream at you before cross-referencing your reply to a stack of laminated sheets on his clipboard. The exchange will inevitably end in you going home hungry. Frustration levels on both sides will be high enough for you not to return to the establishment and for them to be glad of that. The restaurant will implement a gluten-free free policy and an all-round no allergies here mate sign on the door.

The too-hard basket is brimming with allergens and intolerance to intolerances and is where your docket will end up unless you sign a three page waiver which absolves the establishment of all responsibility.

Forget 'foraged food'. There's no way of guarding against cross-contamination with who-knows-what in the woods. It's possible that beads of sweat from an over-glutened brow may have cascaded onto the wild fennel. It's not about claiming that this didn't happen, it's about proving that I have measures in place to assure that this didn't happen and measures to report on it if it did happen.

The risk is neither plausible, nor probable, nor even possible. In seriousness, however, there is a prevailing

wind that carries the food service industry closer to a buyer-beware-attitude. An extreme stance of making no claims and offering no information to the customer is on the way. Menus will read: 'assume that everything contains all allergens'.

Liability and the associated penalties are here. Traders must mitigate the risks. The time has come for food providers to protect themselves against penalties.

During the last audit of my Food Control Plan it became clear to me that I should no longer make claims to my food being gluten-free. I shouldn't make claims at all. Instead, to remove myself from potentially costly liability I should use phrases such as 'no added gluten'.

"There's always something," I muttered. Curmudgeonly is my default response now that I'm sixty. Actually it has been a feature for quite a while.

Let me be clear, my FCP and the audit procedure are not arduous. It's a great piece of legislation and is administered well by the local council. Now there's a phrase we don't hear often enough!

You'll have noticed on food packaging that gluten-free has been replaced by no added gluten. Other allergens are the same. The 'made in a premises that also handles nuts' byline has been around for a while. This, similarly, shifts liability away from the producer.

There is now a requirement to be more specific. No longer does 'Contains nuts' cut the mustard. Mustard which is made at a premises that also processes nuts. The type of nut must be stated. Pea or pecan? Wall or chest?

The game is different for restaurants rather than packaged goods. Should restaurants stop making any claims at all? Yes. The risk of cross-contamination is high. We have the coeliac friendly Te Mata Figs café, which will be followed by more I believe. The restaurant trade is all about hospitality, but that may change for some customers who will be regarded as too-hard-to-handle.

Communication is key. On both sides

**No longer does 'Contains nuts' cut the mustard. Mustard which is made at a premises that also processes nuts. The type of nut must be stated. Pea or pecan? Wall or chest?**

of the table. Menus should declare possible allergens and cross-contamination risks whilst customers should make their allergies known as soon as possible. Ideally a day before dining. This shows respect and allows the cooks and chef to put some time into creating an alternate offering.

Recently, as I was serving food I was asked what herbs I used. I trotted out the list of aromatics thinking that the guest wanted the recipe. But no! Their follow up question was "Have you used any basil?" I answered no (Basil! In winter!). "That's good because I'm allergic to basil."

What an exasperatingly idiotic way to communicate! Wait until I've cooked the paella and then instigate a process of herb-elimination rather than simply telling me of your allergy. The follow-up question was "Is it gluten-free?" "Yes, everything is," I replied. "What about this one?" says the guest. I wanted to say "Do you know what everything means?!" ... but I was polite, helpful and hospitable. Because that's the game I'm in.

I suspect that the reason many diners like to declare their intolerances at the last minute is so that they can do so in front of an audience. 'I'm allergic to pink peppercorns, but I love a bit of attention'.

Let's talk in advance to avoid upset. No one wants to see 'Coeliacs Stay Home' placards in the street, but the day is coming! ●

Ian Thomas is a caterer and formerly free range egg farmer, cooking demonstrator, and manager of a commercial food production business. He specialises in cooking paella. [paellaagogo.com](http://paellaagogo.com)



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