

BAY BUZZ

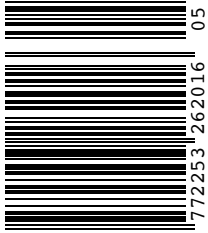
Nº60 • SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2021 • HAWKE'S BAY UP CLOSE, IN DEPTH

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BayBuzz September/October 2021

Mental wellbeing is our focus this edition ... please don't shy away. Heaps of perspective. Look behind the curtain. Note the available resources.

Then explore these other issues. Our readiness for EVs. How to pursue regional economic development? Are we amalgamating by stealth? Will HB's population growth flatten? Let's design-out waste. Are farmers doing enough for the environment? And plenty of culture & entertainment ahead ... if Covid permits.

Cover photo: Florence Charvin. This page: Kristyl Neho with participants of the Confident Me programme. Photo: Florence Charvin



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Featured Contributor



Photo: Florence Charvin

**Jess Soutar Barron
Senior Writer**

I spend my days sweating over the forge at the word-smithy, up against the red-hot end of a deadline. Brain muscle burning. Pumping the bellows of inspiration and shaping copy over the anvil of a solid brief. The pain is real. But when that well-crafted piece of writing emerges from the quenching bucket, fatigue fades away, and the bliss of satisfaction settles over my weary ego. No story is too small to swage into a polished gewgaw, no story too big to pain into a tempered weapon. Whether it's biased blathering palmed off as op-ed or researched inquiry into the state of the human condition, I'm in it for the love of words: realising their strength and making them shine.

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Photo: Florence Charvin



Photo: Florence Charvin

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FROM THE EDITOR
TOM BELFORD

When we started planning the content for this edition of *BayBuzz*, I had envisioned one article on mental health. Mental Health Awareness Week would be occurring while this magazine was ‘on the stands’.

I imagined the article would focus on the Government’s apparent slowness, despite heaps of rhetoric, to actually deliver more resources to the frontline professionals attempting to address ever increasing demand for counseling services.

But as our editorial team discussed the issue, it became clear that we needed to devote far more attention to it, and from numerous perspectives. And so mental wellbeing has become our main theme for this magazine.

Our various articles touch on different aspects of mental health policy, mental wellbeing needs and resources (especially amongst our youth and the rural community), and the broader contexts of self-esteem and physical wellbeing.

We were well down this path when another Covid lockdown occurred, adding even more stress to all of our daily routines. Certainly to the preparation of this edition of *BayBuzz* magazine, which will still appear digitally if we can't print.

Hopefully this treatment of the issues will assist you in taking care of yourselves, and encourage you to be mindful, watchful and respectful of the mental wellbeing needs of your families, colleagues and friends.

What follows is an excellent example of the caring attitude we should all embrace.

As we were working on the magazine, I saw a message sent by Mark

Aspden, chief executive of Sport Hawke’s Bay, to his work colleagues and beyond them to many followers in the sports community. I think it sets exactly the caring tone needed throughout our community, in our own self-care and in the way we care about others.

So, from Mark Aspden ...

Kia ora koutou

Many of you will have seen media coverage of the tragic death of cyclist Olivia Podmore. A number of you will also have been personally affected by suicide.

I have mentioned in the past how stunned I was by the suicide of a good friend a day or two before I started here – I had had no idea that she was at all unwell. I did learn from that is just how difficult – if not impossible – it is to know what is really going on with people. Two days before I had dinner with her and she seemed fine. I guess that life is always throwing both opportunities and challenges at us and we each respond to those in our own ways.

What I do know though is that while our work in the community is important and makes a real difference, there is nothing we do that is so critical that any one of us should be sacrificing our mental health for it. NOTHING.

I don't want you to do things which would have a negative effect on your mental health.

Nor does anyone on our management team.

Nor does our board.

Nor do any of our funders.

We can deal with any consequences

of not meeting a deadline.

There is no meeting that cannot be rescheduled.

The pool can be closed.

As COVID has shown us, any event can be postponed or cancelled.

We can come up with different ways of completing any task.

If on any given day, or any given week, you feel that you just can't do something, or that you can't do it as well as you think you need to, then tell someone. Your manager and I will come up with a plan to deal with it. That's what we are here for.

And of course EAP services are always available.

Take care

Kia kaha

Mark

Every workplace in Hawke’s Bay should operate with those values ... and probably most do. But you never know the burdens others are carrying. And more can always be done to make those values explicit, meaningful and trusted by all.

Be well,

Tom Belford
tom@baybuzz.co.nz

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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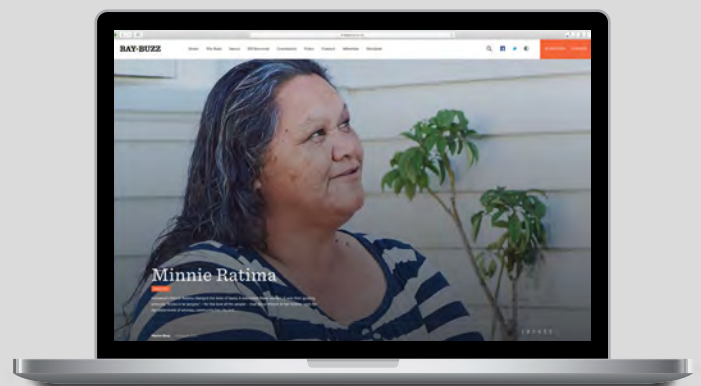
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**Elisha Milmine,
HB Wine Auction**

This year marks 30 years of the Hawke’s Bay Wine Auction. The iconic charity event brings together our local wine industry, wine enthusiasts from around the country, sponsors, a committed voluntary committee and the recipient of the funds raised, Cranford Hospice.

Pulling all the strands of the project together is Elisha Milmine. Pictured here at last year’s event with HBWA ambassador Mike McRoberts, Elisha is the one working tirelessly behind the scenes year-round to ensure the event is a glittering hit. Over the last 29 years, the Wine Auction has raised and donated \$3,917,666. Last year’s total was \$302,775.

This year’s pre-tasting event was cancelled due to Covid-19 Level 4, and the main auction event has been moved from its September date to **November 13th**.

One of many highlights to look forward to is 2021 auction artist John Lancashire’s stunning triptych *You can’t tell the sky what to do*.

All the best to Elisha and the HBWA team! ●

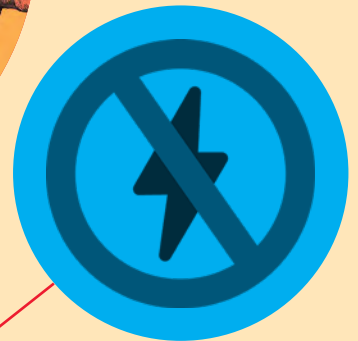


About the cover

Gracing the cover of BB60 are Biscuit and Tracey. These two walk the tracks of Te Mata Peak almost daily – what a way to start the day. See more on page 16.



What's Hot & What's Not



Hot

- The return of the RSE workers from Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu.
- The long, long HB Anniversary weekend. It's been a long, long time coming.
- Expanding our horizons at Fringe in the Stings and Hawke's Bay Arts Festival.
- Warmer weather and the accompanying change in clothes. (Florals, for spring – ground-breaking.)
- The Tribune precinct in Hastings.
- Double usage of existing space – Bayside Bagels in the mornings at the Common Room, Calye in the evenings at Village Green Café, Harvest Deli and Bar Teresa
- The iconic local event, the Hawke's Bay Wine Auction hitting 30 years of celebrating our wine industry and giving to Cranford Hospice.



Not

- LOCKDOWNS.
- Winter power outages that made winter worse.
- Staying in and moping about the lack of travel.
- Hectic, unpredictable spring weather.
- Big Box.
- The Covid-cancellation of the HB Wine Auction Pre-Tasting event. Unlucky! This means the main event could do with extra support! Head to hawkesbaywineauction.co.nz to book tickets and learn about the incredible auction lots on offer.

Top 10 Hawke's Bay Mood Improvers

The *BayBuzz* team shares our go-to quintessentially Hawke's Bay pick-me-ups:

1. Pass the grandeur of Craggy Range Winery, under the Craggy Range itself, and take the winding road from the Red Bridge (stopping at **Red Bridge Coffee** for hot drinks and pastries, of course) to **Ocean Beach** to walk and walk and walk. Salty air in the lungs, Pacific wind in the hair, cute dogs, a paddle up to mid-calf... that's a reset.

2. **Pecha Kucha** returns for 2021's second instalment, this time at MTG Century Theatre on September 14. These events have been running in the Bay for over a decade, and I am yet to experience one that doesn't end with a crowd full of massive grins heading out into the night air. We have a wealth of fascinating characters in this community, and hearing stories from locals brings us together in a really special way.

3. Got little ones? Or able to borrow some? The **Cornwall Park playground** in Hastings has got to be one of the best around. Seeing kids get braver and braver with each ascent of the tower, or just lying back and swinging on the big, robust circular swings is guaranteed to bring the smiles.

4. Lace up and hit the hills. Sunrise Hut, **Kaweka Forest Park** or **Bell Rock** for a single day hike, or go all out and head bush for a little longer – **Lake Waikaremoana** is one of New Zealand's Great Walks and takes three to four days.

5. Breakfast Mimosa. OK, so this is not a solution for everyone, but an 'OJ with extra' on a random weekday morning



Lizzie visits the Billy Apple exhibition at Napier's MTG. Photo: Florence Charvin

can really lift the spirits or add to an already excellent mood. I recommend **Mr D** on Napier's Tennyson Street.

6. Engage all the senses at the **Hawke's Bay Farmers Market**. Enjoy the mingling morning aromas, sample cheeses, fruit, wines and more, munch on a warm cheese rod from Harald's, listen to live music, take in the sights of fresh new season produce, and hug the numerous people you inevitably bump into in the coffee or cash queue.

7. THEN, go home with your market bounty and cook with it. **Prepare something delicious** for family, friends or yourself. Yum!

8. Commune with others while moving your body, and not in an exercise class kind of way. Dance! Keep your ear out for live music acts playing at the **Cabana, Common Room, Urban Winery, Paisley Stage**, and go tear up the D-floor.

9. Head along to the **Hastings Blossom Festival** on September

11th. It's such a classic event, with a beautiful history. The festival works to "bring the community together to celebrate the arrival of Spring and renew a sense of pride in our region." The Blossom Parade itself starts at 11am and this year's theme is Transport to Delight, so we can expect some serious creativity and innovation!

10. Make like a tourist for the day and head to the 'other side'. Hastings and Havelock people, come on over and walk the streets of central Napier. Explore the exhibitions at **MTG Hawke's Bay**, climb up to the **Bluff Hill lookout** and watch the ships coming into port, perhaps a selfie photo shoot featuring Pania of the Reef, the Tom Parker Fountain and the **Viewing Platform**? And Napierites, have you enjoyed the charms of Hastings' East 200 block and surrounds, including the **Tribune precinct** lately? It gets better all the time, with top hospo, shopping and a super cool, friendly vibe. Plus, there is always something intriguing to view at nearby **Hastings City Art Gallery** and **Arts Inc Heretaunga** on Russell Street. A change of scene – even just over the bridge – really can work wonders.

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Joe and the piano

Joe Dobson is a drummer. This is just one of the beautiful incongruities of his latest project – Undergrand. The former co-owner of La Petit Chocolat, musician and get-stuff-done guy, Joe has bought a gorgeous white baby grand and now he's on a mission to take the piano to the people.

He's connecting musicians, the instrument, places and events to create moments of magic and meaning. It's a manifestation of the way Joe does things – collaboration at the core, social conscience and a search for more.

Engineering maestro and friend Isaac McCormack has crafted a custom mechanism for getting the piano into and out of Joe's van, and across terrain, so that it can head out into nature to entertain and enthral audiences anywhere from festivals to weddings – even, as shot here by Richard Brimer – the stony beach of Te Awanga!

There's an education arm to the project too, with plans to take the piano into schools, along with local sax player Anton Wuts' musical fairytale, which he's composing especially for the piano.

"The people I get to have conversations with are incredible," says Joe. "Composers, festival and education people, pianists – it's amazing, a gift!"

Making his way around the country with the piano will also serve Joe's mission to investigate and solve his share of the housing crisis. Exploring places, meeting people and discussing alternative options for land use might just lead to a cooperative residential solution, with music, making and community at its core.

Hawke's Bay musician Arahi is heading out on a tour of small towns with the piano later in the year, and it'll be popping up in plenty of unexpected spots over summer and into 2022. ●

Keep an eye on what Joe and the piano are up to at undergrand.co.nz.

Photo: Richard Brimer



Harvest Deli & Bar Teresa

Imagine this – but not for too long because it should be a reality by Labour weekend – strolling into number 132 Emerson Street and being greeted by the aromas of fresh First Hand Coffee and house-made ciabatta, baguette, sourdough and focaccia. You take in the hanging charcuterie, the range of local and imported cheeses, the generously stuffed sandwiches, the small and perfectly formed selection of natural wines. It feels like you're in Napier, but there's a delectable Italian twist. This is Harvest Deli, one half of the operation.

You select your lunch and wander out into the day. When you return after the sun's gone down, you head through the deli into a low-lit cocktail bar, a den of sophistication. Bar Teresa specialises in elegant European-inspired cocktails – think Campari, Vermouth, Aperol. Clean flavours, local fruit, an edge, an elevation.

The contrasts of the combined venue match the makers. Sarah Mitchell and Andrea Marseglia got together in the Melbourne hospo scene and made their way to Napier via a stint in Auckland. She's the management and systems whiz, keeping the ship steady, he's the beverage virtuoso bringing the Italian flair and flourish. Here, they join forces with chef Conor Mertens, another recent-ish arrival, formerly head chef at Orphans' Kitchen and Chimera in Auckland and known to the local regulars at Vinci's.

Together the trio offer something new, but somehow perfectly inevitable for Napier. Light and fresh in the daylight, chic and seductive after dark.

Can't wait!

Check out harvesthospitality.co.nz for more as the opening nears.

Photo: Florence Charvin





IPCC red alert

The recently-published Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report makes for stark reading. Published on August 9th, the report details how anthropogenic greenhouse gases are causing unprecedented damage.

The language used is explicit, leaving no room for scepticism on whether it is us humans who have created the mess. “It is unequivocal that human influence has warmed the atmosphere, ocean, and land.”

The IPCC is made up of 195 governments and is one of the most credible sources of climate science.

Some 200 authors distilled 14,000 individual studies to pull together the report.

Some of the key findings include:

The temperatures are rising faster than previously thought.

Earth’s global surface temperature warmed 1.09° between 1850-1900 and the last decade. This is 0.29° warmer than in the previous report from the IPCC (released in 2013).

It looks like we’re going to overshoot the sub-1.5 degree Celsius goal.

Earth’s average surface temperature is projected to hit 1.5 or 1.6 degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels

around 2030 (a decade earlier than the IPCC predicted three years ago) in all five of the greenhouse gas emissions scenarios – ranging from highly optimistic to reckless – considered by the report.

Every region is facing increasing changes.

“For 1.5°C of global warming, there will be increasing heat waves, longer warm seasons and shorter cold seasons. At 2°C of global warming, heat extremes would more often reach critical tolerance thresholds for agriculture and health.” Simply put, hot regions will get hotter, wet regions will get wetter, etc. The water cycle is intensifying, bringing more intense rainfall and associated flooding, as well as more intense drought in many regions.

If global warming is capped at 2 °C, the ocean watermark will go up about 50 centimetres over the 21st century. But due to uncertainty over ice sheets, scientists cannot rule out a total rise of two metres by 2100 in a worst-case emissions scenario.

The sea is predicted to rise dramatically.

Oceans have risen about 20 centimetres on average since 1900, with the rate of increase almost tripling in the last decade, mostly due to Antarctica and Greenland's melting ice sheets, and glacial melting around the world. If global warming is capped at 2°C, the ocean watermark will go up about 50 centimetres over the 21st century. But due to uncertainty over ice sheets, scientists cannot rule out a total rise of two metres by 2100 in a worst-case emissions scenario.

[Here in Hawke's Bay, our local governments have agreed to place all policy, funding and implementation responsibility for mitigating sea rise impacts with the Regional Council. Read more here: baybuzz.co.nz/how-to-manage-coastal-hazards/]

Global warming stays below 2° during this century only under scenarios where CO2 emissions reach net-zero around or after 2050.

And globally, we are not on a path to achieve that goal.

There is so much to the report. If you're interested in a deep dive into the 3,900 pages, you can find the whole thing at www.ipcc.ch/assessment-report/ar6/

Europe's plan

In July the European Union unveiled sweeping new legislation aimed to meet its pledge to cut emissions of the gases that cause global warming by 55% over this decade.

The plan, known as 'Fit for 55', encompasses a list of around a dozen major initiatives including a revamp of the EU's emissions trading scheme (ETS), a phasing out of petrol and diesel cars, the introduction of taxes on shipping and aviation fuels for the first time.

Probably the most controversial aspect of the plan is the 'Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism' – taxing foreign companies in an attempt to keep European manufacturers competitive with importers that don't have the same environmental standards.

"The principle is simple: emission of CO2 must have a price, a price on CO2 that incentivizes consumers, producers and innovators to choose the clean technologies, to go toward the clean and sustainable products," European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said.

NZ coal use

Concerned about all the recent chatter about climbing coal usage in New Zealand? While it is true that coal power generation increased more than 50% in the March quarter, taking it to the highest level since mid-2012, this is still just 10% of the country's electricity. Even at that

level, 80% of our power comes from renewable sources. (Compared to 21% in Australia, a Europe average of 36% and a world average of 29%.)

So why the surge in coal now? Basically it's down to the low levels in the hydro lakes. They've been sitting at around one third lower than average and usually the shortfall created in dry seasons is covered with gas, but, a 'perfect storm' has been raging with gas production down due to outages and maintenance on the major gas fields.

NZ's Climate Change Commission has recommended banning coal boilers (tops on its 'to do' list). Food processing facilities, such as the factories using coal to dry milk into powder, would phase out coal by 2040. Buildings would stop burning coal for heat by 2030.

Emissions cost lives

The cost of carbon emissions can be measured in terms of lives lost. In a recent study, R. Daniel Bressler, a researcher at Columbia University's Earth Institute, calculated heat-related deaths to come up with the 'social cost' of carbon. The study shows 0.000226 excess deaths through 2100 per metric ton of carbon dioxide emitted. While this looks tiny, Bressler extrapolated that out, revealing that for every 4,434 metric tons of CO² added to the atmosphere in 2020, there is one death (through to 2100). This CO² output is equal to the lifetime emissions of 3.5 average Americans. ●



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Rise

Lizzie Russell muses
on the morning.

We greet the day by venturing into its most elemental – the water or the land.

Breathing in deeply that gorgeous organic underfoot mess on the trail up Te Mata Peak. On these spring mornings the smell is somehow sweeter, the air lightens, buds are starting to unpack themselves and our feet keep rhythm with the birdsong harmonies. Emerging light dances, dappling through these trees. The dog pants and tugs, eager on the lead.

At the top, the Tukituki valley opens below us. Stretching gracefully to the coast.

On another morning, on another side of the Bay, the ground is stony, the air still with fog. The world hasn't yet cranked up, except for those assertive, productive port noises in the middle distance. These are the moments of thought and breath, as we pick our way along the pebbly beach towards the brave ones – the swimmers.





In they go, one after another. Nimble figures dipping elegantly in, stretched hands and arms, then their swim-capped heads, then under and away.

The mist lifts, the sun gradually appears, setting the water to glow. And the swimmers slip through the water like tiny scythes, slitting the day open.

Some years ago, a dear and wise friend told me that getting something good done in the morning was what kept her sane. Something good for the body and good for the mind.

“Even when the rest of the day turns to custard, somehow it feels less bad if I know that early on I moved my body, saw the sun come up, had some moments that were clean and just mine.”

Worth remembering when things cloud over. To rise with a morning reset. To rise for daily commune with the wild world.

Photos by
Florence Charvin



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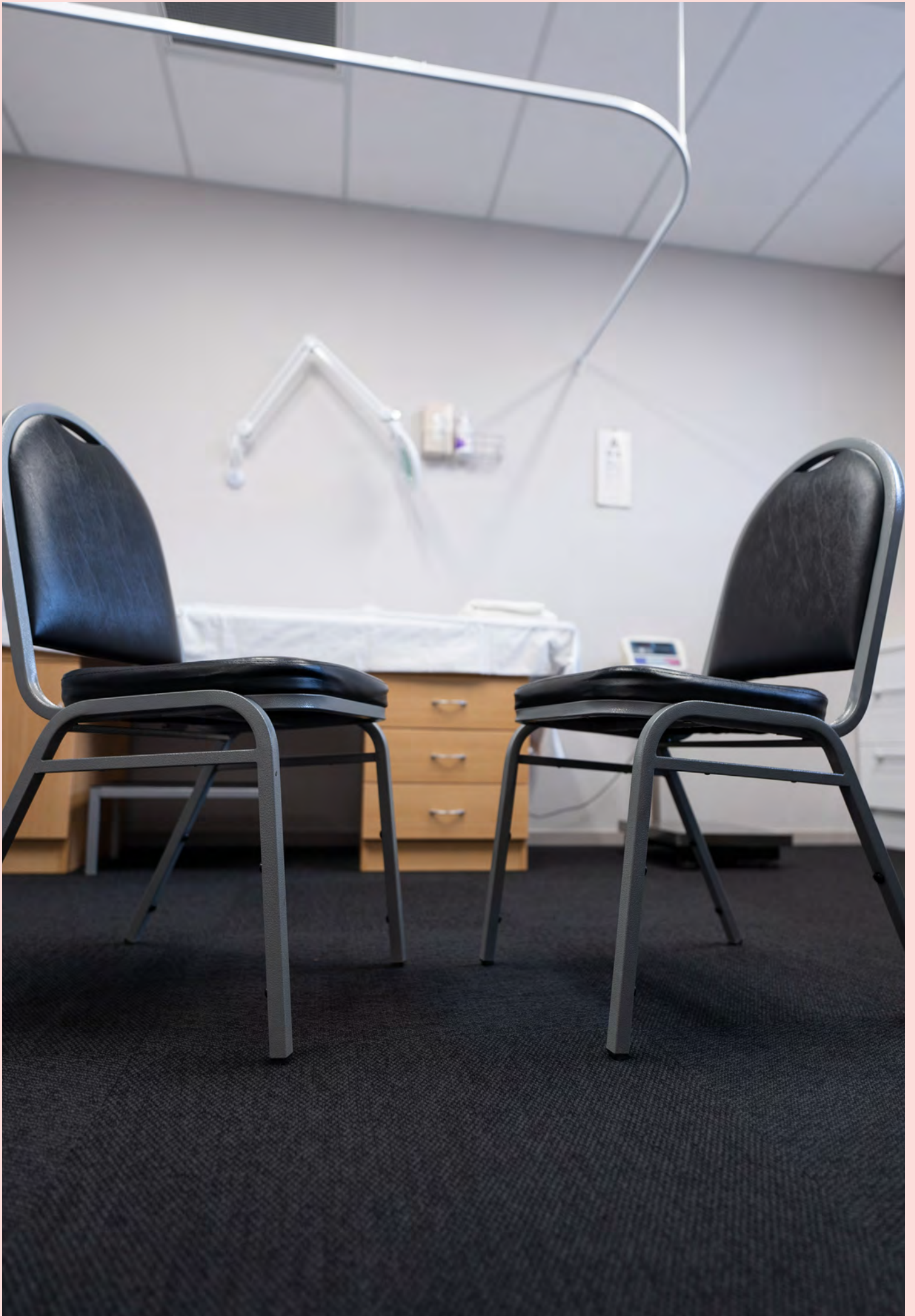
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Improving HB mental health care ... “a candle in the dark”

Story by Bridget Freeman-Rock
Photos by Tom Allan

In my *BayBuzz* article last November, ‘Must move on mental health’, I explored the systemic issues in our mental health system and the 2018 He Ara Oranga Inquiry’s recommendations for a radical overhaul, shifting attention from the apex of acute need to the flaxroots of prevention and wellbeing.

Or in other metaphors, moving the ambulance from the bottom of the cliff to the top.

While systemic transformation, clearly, will take more than 10 months, has there been any movement?

The government has still to draw up a plan.

Meanwhile, levels of distress and demand for services continue rising, seemingly unabated.

The Mental Health Foundation’s study published this February, found a quarter of New Zealanders have poor levels of mental health and emotional wellbeing, including nearly a third of women. And an RNZ investigation corroborates what everyone knows, that national wait-times for non-urgent mental health and addiction services over the last two years have risen across all age groups.

There’s just not enough available for the mild-moderately unwell, who end up funnelling into more acute services. The increase in access to mental health and addiction services (MHA) over the last decade has risen by 73%; funding by only 40% (*Stuff*, Jan 2021).

A major challenge is the fact that we simply don’t have enough

qualified clinicians – New Zealand is short some 940 psychologists in the public health sector alone, and psychiatrists are rare as hens’ teeth, I’m told. Professions that take years of training, with not enough being trained annually to fill the void. It’s been called by *Stuff*’s Helen Harvey, “a psychological crisis”, as wait times for psychologists in the public system edge up to four months.

Working in social services, supporting the socially distressed is stressful; there’s a massive turnover of staff. You only have to follow *Seek*’s stream of job vacancies in the mental health and addictions sector to see this first hand.

“Burn out happens when you don’t feel like you have what it takes to meet expectations,” a community-based, family social worker, tells me. And the expectations and pressures are huge. Compounding, “intense” social issues, dwindling resources, not enough support. “We’re over-worked and under-funded, and the government has not stepped up.” At the beginning of the year, the agency they work for had a double-digit exodus of staff.

Troy Wathey, clinical social worker and MHA therapist, works both in private practice and in emergency mental health services. Over the years he’s seen the increasing “volume of people” coming through the doors, against a backdrop of increasing societal work and life pressures, which manifest in stress, anxiety, depression, addictions and relationship issues. It’s the same with the healthcare workers he

supervises as it is for his clients.

“I always ask, ‘How’s your base?’ Your base is always your number one thing: good home, good sleep, good eating, good connection.” Invariably, for those who’re struggling, the base is insecure or rocky.

“Most people have 10, 15 years’ of stuff and then they come to us. The idea that the DHB’s going to work that all through ... sometimes it can be done in a short time but mostly it takes a good year or two to change someone’s situation. We have to start addressing the earlier stuff, and that often goes right back to mum and dad, to the whānau, and the pressures they’re under.”

So where has that \$450 million budgeted in 2019 for expanding access to services gone? And is it making any difference?

In Hawke’s Bay, some of that funding’s been channelled through the region’s primary health organisation, Health Hawke’s Bay, into a new integrated primary mental health programme.

Free, timely, accessible

The PHO is six months into rolling out their ‘HIPs and health coaches’ model as part of their integrated primary mental health and addiction service (IPMHAS). Health improvement practitioners (HIPs) are registered health practitioners (such as social workers, nurses) or DAPANZ (drug & alcohol)-registered counsellors, who undergo “rigorous” six-month training before being placed within



“It’s going back to fundamentals, good home, good food, good sleep, but the main thing is connection. Disconnection is often at the root of the issues I see.”

TORY WATHEY, CLINICAL SOCIAL WORKER AND MHA THERAPIST

through expressions of interest.

Space is the challenge, practice readiness, and an already over-stretched workforce. Contract-wise, Health Hawke’s Bay has had the go-ahead and funding for a year, but it proved challenging to recruit practitioners.

[See list of participating practices at end.]

The government’s ambition is to have HIPs and health coaches in all general practices by 2023.

An obvious catch is the fact that Hawke’s Bay has a shortage of general practitioners (GPs) and most practices have had to close their books to new patients, meaning not all can find a GP to enrol with.

Health Hawke’s Bay CEO, Phillipa Blakely, says the PHO is developing plans with the College of GPs to plug some of the gaps - “it is a major issue” - and looking to enable more direct access to primary mental health support through another programme.

“We’re very aware that we need to open this up and make sure it’s accessible to our communities and where they need it. We’ve talked about marae-based clinics, community-based clinics in places that may not have a practice or that kind of connection to primary care. But at the moment the ministry guidelines is for enrolled patients, and that’s what we’re working to.”

Any age, any stage, any problem

After eight years as an inpatient mental health nurse, Veronica Luckman was feeling a little jaded with “the conveyor belt, revolving door” nature of the mental health system and didn’t feel she was making much difference in the lives of those she cared for.

Since January, she’s been working as a HIP across several Napier medical centres and is excited about the holistic approach of her new role, and what working at the top of the cliff, rather than at the bottom, can mean for her patients.

general practices to provide free, brief interventions.

It’s a ‘shoulder tap, book-them-straight-in, no forms’ approach, and it’s discrete - no one in the waiting room knows if you’re there for anxiety or endometriosis, for a HIP or a jab. Half of the appointment slots are kept available for immediate on-day referral, often made through a ‘warm handover’ by the GP or triage nurse in person.

The HIPs work alongside health coaches (who work closely, encouragingly with patients and whānau on behavioural changes to do with health, such as managing their diabetes) and community support workers (CSWs, who help patients get through doors and navigate services). The CSWs sit within the NGO space, under a contract with the PHO, and provide the third tier of collaboration.

“This whole programme is about integrating care across the sectors, breaking down those barriers,” says HIP team leader, Samara Kelly. The service has “flex” - if the HIP is not available the health coach can step in, and vice versa. For those with higher-end

needs, HIPs and health coaches can help “straddle wait-times or access to secondary services,” engaging them, meantime, in doing something towards their wellness.

“It’s super positive and we’re getting really good feedback. This is about establishing strength and connection before anything else; having someone in your local community that you can come in and talk to.”

The Ministry of Health’s funding model allocates 1 FTE HIP and 1 FTE health coach per 10,000 enrolled patients in a general practice. So, Hastings Health Centre, with a patient roll of 35,000, for example, will eventually be entitled to 3.5 full-time HIPs and 3.5 full-time health coaches.

The PHO currently employs 7 HIPs across 6 general practice groups, 12 locations, and is recruiting for 4 FTE positions starting in September. As part of Tranch 1, it’s been prioritising practices with high enrolments of Māori, Pasifika and youth. Tranch 2 (starting August) is about reaching full implementation in those practices, before slowly expanding it out to others

“In the unit you’d see somebody, who, if they’d just learnt a few little skills back then to deal with the stress or to manage their anxiety, it wouldn’t have escalated into something more acute.” This is particularly the case with teens who “we’re seeing a lot of” as HIPs, and to this end, some good gains: “I can count at least half a dozen teens we’ve been able to keep out of secondary services so far.”

“In our HIP sessions we try to be really proactive - yip, life’s really hard but what can we do right now that’s going to help improve it, what are the action-focused steps we can take? It’s quite a different way of working.”

The half-hour, targeted sessions draw on Te Whare Tapa Wha (physical, mental, spiritual and whānau cornerstones) and ACT (Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, a behavioural-cognitive approach with a focus on mindfulness), looking not only at what’s happening in the person’s life but what’s important to them (values), what ‘fills their cup’, and ‘what’s sitting on top’ today (the problem that’s most pressing). The HIP will work with that person on creating a manageable plan focused on achievable actions, connecting them in to other services and resources as required, with the option of follow-up

“It’s super positive. While there’s massive shortages of staff in our secondary services, massive wait-times for any secondary service, and that’s a huge barrier to come up against, on the day-to-day in primary health we’re seeing people with real issues and being able to help them.”

SAMARA KELLY, HEALTH HAWKE’S BAY’S
HIP TEAM LEAD

sessions and contact.

Working as a HIP has shifted Veronica’s own perspective on mental wellbeing and what it means: “It’s not big, grand gestures but what we do every day that makes or breaks mental wellbeing. It’s about those small steps that we do, and habits.”

Checking in with someone about your mental wellbeing, she says, should be seen as routine as getting your blood pressure checked. And to this end we need more awareness and education in Aotearoa, “just normalising things, reducing that stigma. It’s ok to not be ok. It’s normal to have ups and downs.”

“In New Zealand our mental health message has been ‘get help, get professional help’. But if we’re not

professionally equipped with the resources to deliver that, we should be using the air time to say: ‘Here are some steps you could take today, some techniques you could try; this is what mental wellbeing looks like; here’s what you should be looking out for; these are some conversations you could be having with your kids, and tips on how to start them, etc.’”

HIP consults, clearly, are not going to help everyone. Those with trauma issues or even more moderate needs require psychological therapy rather than strategies, and it’s not going to heal suicidality or severe illness. As Veronica is quick to point out, the HIP is not a substitute for appropriate mental health care. But it can lead to some

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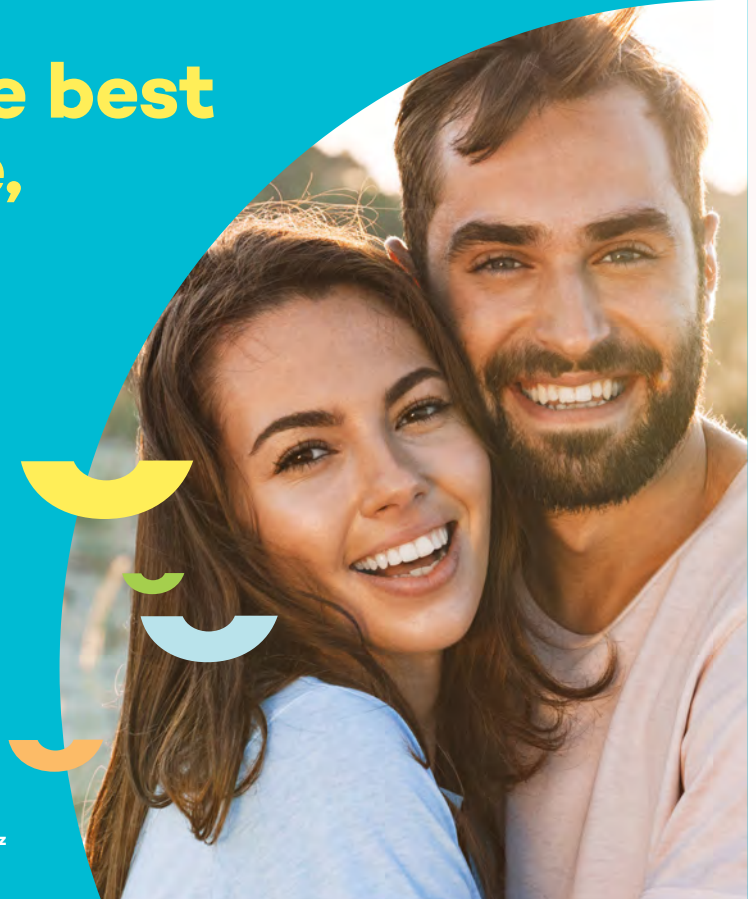
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Extended care team in action

Three examples:

- The GP sees a young woman who's struggling with sleep issues and getting to work as a result of anxiety, which is negatively affecting her mood. Rather than simply prescribing anxiolytic/antidepressant medication and sleeping pills, the GP introduces her to the health improvement practitioner (HIP). During the 30-minute consult, the HIP provides some psychoeducation about what anxiety is, talks through some basic anxiety management techniques, such as diaphragmatic breathing, and strategies to manage anxious thinking patterns, along with sleep hygiene skills. The tools prove effective, thus avoiding the need for medication.
- The GP sees a patient, prescribes some medication for his presenting issue and observing there's something else going on, makes a 'warm handover' directly to the HIP. The HIP has a mental health specialty and picks up during the follow-on consult that the patient appears to be suffering a bipolar illness that is creeping up into mania, which the new meds could be counter-aligned with. She feeds this back to the GP, who promptly reviews the prescription and what other referrals may be required.
- A woman with a trauma background and pre-diabetes sees the HIP in conjunction with the health coach; she's been given a Greenscript (subsidised group sport and exercise) by her GP. But although she's keen, she is extremely anxious about going. They bring in the CSW who is able to literally walk that journey with her, connecting her in with the community service in a way that overcomes the psychological hurdle, leading to "good wins" for the patient on several fronts.



"It's not big grand gestures but what we do every day that makes or breaks our mental wellbeing."

VERONICA LUCKMAN, HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PRACTITIONER

immediate relief and provide a pathway forward for those who've become stuck, overwhelmed, don't know what to do.

Step in the right direction

"Accessibility and trust is everything for our clients. If it's not within walking distance it's not going to happen."

Dr Almarie Van der Walt has been working at Maraenui Medical Centre for 27 years, along with her husband (also a GP), and has a special interest in mental health. Because of the centre's high-needs, priority-population demographic (65% Māori, 10% Pasifika, 80-90% in the 'deprived' socio-economic bracket), they were among the earliest candidates for the IPMHAS, making space in a very busy practice for the new extended care team.

Previously, Almarie says, mental health services were rolled out as equal access for everyone, for example, with the packages of care (4x counselling sessions), a limited number of which could be allocated each month. "Counselling is expensive for anyone but for our patients it is totally unaffordable. Giving the same number of packages of care to those who could possibly afford it as to those who are struggling to put food on the table did not seem fair - now with the HIP system this is taken into account."

And there were large failures with the external referral process, in contrast to the personal recommendation and warm handover with the in-house model. "It is much easier to encourage a patient to see a counsellor/ HIP," she explains, "if they meet them, they work in the practice building, or you, as their trusted GP, can vouch for them."

"Now, by October we will have a HIP on site 2.5 days per week and a counsellor for 1.5 days (for those who need therapy), plus the health coach. It's still capped (by time) but it's a whole lot more, it's transparent, it's more equitable, and having these services under one roof is a gamechanger. There's real collegiality and team-work, and that's hugely different.

"Previously I would write a half-page referral letter to a counsellor. Now, the HIP can access the patient's notes as needed and we can speak in person."

"The hope is that if you catch the issues earlier, they won't escalate - we believe in it, but it's hard to see when you're working in the trenches. Will we ever know if it takes the load off the severe end? We have to try; we can't *not* do anything."

Currently, "Approaching secondary services, you feel like *Oliver Twist* with your bowl out asking for more. I don't cry 'Wolf!', I ring only when I think

someone is going to kill themselves, but they tell me they have no capacity. The police used to take psychotic or suicidal patients in the past, but don't anymore. We've had our receptionist drive patients to the emergency department."

In March, the government announced funding for a stand-alone mental health crisis hub in Hawke's Bay, which will provide integrated services at secondary level for people in acute need, in conjunction with government agencies, community groups, iwi, the PHO. It was hoped Te Tāwharau would be operational mid-year, but the logistics of relocating services to free the earmarked facility for refurbishment has meant delay. The DHB assures me, they are busy working on this, with a plan of how the hub will operate, and aim to be up and running by the end of this year.

There is much still unanswered in that middle space between health improvement and mental crisis, where necessary professional support remains difficult to access. That's where we need a roadmap from the government as to how they plan to implement the full suite of *He Ara Oranga* recommendations they agreed to. As commentators fear, without one it will be a piecemeal job rather than the transformative, systemic change needed.

But from Dr Almarie Van der Walt's point of view from the ground level of primary health, four months in, the new integrated model that's unfolding is "definitely helping."

"Mental health has felt hopeless for a long time, and this is a bit like a candle in the dark." ●

Where to turn for help

Need to talk? Free 24/7 helplines

- Call or text **1737** anytime to talk with a counsellor or to connect with other mental health and addiction helplines.
- **Lifeline:** 0800 LIFELINE (0800 543354) or free text HELP (4357)
- **Youthline:** 0800 376 633

Local services

- **Emergency Mental Health Service**, Hawke's Bay: 0800 112 334
- **Your GP** – if you're enrolled at any of the following general practices, you can also book in with a health improvement practitioner free of charge:
 - Hastings Health Centre
 - Te Taiwhenua o Heretaunga
 - Hauroa Heretaunga
 - Totara Health (Hastings & Flaxmere) – from October
 - The Doctors (Hastings, Napier, Greenmeadows)
 - Tamatea Consortium (Carlyle, Shakespeare, Maraenui & Tamatea medical centres)
 - Wairoa Queen St Practice
- **Awhina Whānau Services** (free kaupapa Māori counselling services and education programmes for individuals and their families, open to all): awhinawhanauservice.org.nz, 06 878-4827
- **Directions Youth Health Centre** (one-stop shop in Hastings for youth health and social support): 0800 967742

Free e-therapy tools

- There's a raft of interactive online tools, programmes and apps to help with depression, anxiety, stress and support wellbeing. See the 'E-therapy handout' under 'Mental health resources' at healthhb.co.nz



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Behind the curtain of mental unwellness

Story by Jess Soutar Barron

Everybody seems to be talking about mental health...and yet, when it comes to the personal, no one wants to talk about mental health. It's our loudest taboo.

For that reason all the people profiled here are anonymous, but each represents a group profoundly affected by gaps in our mental health system: young mums, teenagers, young men struggling to settle into employment or education, and - in an entirely contrary way - white, educated, middle-class women, who can get 'help'...but it'll cost them.

Pete

Pete works with men entering training and employment through a programme that takes into account their holistic wellbeing needs, not just their acquisition of skills. Many of them have struggled with mental health, which has played out in various forms: violence, homelessness, disengagement, addiction.

"It all goes back to making a connection with wairua, something bigger than us, this power that can take care of you if you wish to plug into it," Pete explains. The panacea that's needed is creating authentic connections to community and culture.

"These young fellas have connection to gang culture but they don't really know about kaupapa marae. We all need to make real connection, back to

whenua, back to being kaitiaki, back to being in our community. To be well we need to keep connections alive."

Pete isn't just talking theory, he's got experience.

"I'd been inside, I'd been through rehab, I was facing charges, I didn't want to be fighting over my shoes and blankets again," he explains. "I'd got away with shit but it caught up with me, I was pimping myself out to have somewhere to sleep. I was a manipulative little pirate."

It took a car accident to wake him up enough to seek help. Now he's 17 years clean, a mentor and teacher. But hitting rock bottom isn't a once-only, silver-bullet catalyst for getting help. "You get thrown about by the surf at the bottom for a while before something hits you and you look for help," he says.

That 'help' is a knotty problem in itself, with most 'solutions' themselves having those same addictive qualities for many people. Pete's view is 'talk is good' but warns: "With counselling, you are paying for a special, best friend, and it's just like another drug."

And there's more work to do past that initial decision to take up therapy or a prescription.

"Admitting you're an addict can give you an excuse to still be a prick, but you're living in denial, ticking a box with medication and counselling. They are just tools, to take yourself more

seriously, to make connections.

Getting the tools is almost impossible until you've completely bottomed out...hurt someone, hurt yourself. Then being strong enough to take on board what's on offer is challenging when you've already lost so much. The last thing to go is often a sense of self, of pride, mana.

Pete believes that for men there's an additional stressor around traditional roles as primary breadwinner. There's a feeling that you should be providing, for yourself but more importantly for your family, he says.

"You feel shame. And guilt creeps in. You don't want to be judged by peers and generally men don't want to know ... Men portray a sense of confidence. And when you don't know what to do anymore desperation kicks in...you'll do whatever it takes. For me I became manic."

Pete's own journey has been empowered by the gifting on of experience and knowledge to the young men he works with. The real power for change is the action that happens in his classroom beyond learning the skills of a trade. "It's men making connections with men that are healthy and positive. There's a lot of angry, desperate men who don't realise there are other ways of operating. But gentleness is not weakness, it's powerful. You can choose to be gentle."

Angela

From the outside, she's got it all. A nice house full of art, a getaway by the lake. A network of friends. Close family. But keeping it together and turning up to work every day takes everything she's got ... mentally, physically and financially.

"I spend more than what I make being well," Angela explains.

Therapy once a week is \$150, weekly massage, gym membership (she goes 4 times a week when she's well, 8 times when she's manic). There are props and crutches like retail therapy, and self-medication like drinks out with friends ... or drinks at home without them.

"Not coping looks like withdrawing or it looks like over-socialising. I either pull back completely and hide under a rock or I tear around like a crazy butterfly and squish a manic amount into every day."

Learning to live with mental illness has got Angela to her late 30s. But recently putting her emotions in a box caught up with her, she spun out of control, had a "meltdown" and it forced her to seek professional help.

Now she's on a hard road through therapy, unpicking years of trauma and its aftereffects.

"Sometimes I can ride a high and get some shit done. Two or three days is useful, three or four is not nice: I get brittle, tired and wired." "Tired and wired" she can still turn up to work but she can't make real connections to people. She feels like a husk, it's stopped her forming robust relationships. That in itself works against her when she's at her most raw.

"What exacerbates it is not having a person who notices if you're absent," says Angela. It was only when she brought a therapist on board that she made real headway. Although even that wasn't easy. If you can pay for a therapist finding one is still not easy, with a national shortage and waiting lists. Then finding the *right* therapist for this very sensitive and intimate work can come down to luck rather than availability.

"Sometimes it feels like there's just not enough stability to go around, that's clinical care and my cohort."

The first step is opening up (or breaking down) at the doctor.

"You get a red mark against your whole future. If you have a meltdown you could get carted away by police and end up in the unit for six weeks. You can't unwrite that... You lose agency over your own journey and there are not a lot of winners coming out of that situation."

ANGELA

"But it's difficult to go to your GP and fess up," says Angela, especially when the feeling of privilege pervades ... that 'don't sweat the small stuff' mentality.

"On paper everything looks good. I am articulate, educated, I can advocate for myself in the health system, but this can happen to anyone," she explains. Concern over the implications of seeking medical help for mental illness can leave the already vulnerable feeling desperate. The stigma that's still firmly attached to mental health can be the very thing that stops people getting well.

"You get a red mark against your whole future. If you have a meltdown you could get carted away by police and end up in the unit for six weeks. You can't unwrite that," Angela explains once that happens you go from a person who needs some help to a "patient in crisis". "You lose agency over your own journey and there are not a lot of winners coming out of that situation."

Part of the change that needs to happen is a shift in perception. Talking about mental health openly and

candidly, normalises it.

"It has taken me a while to accept that I'm not just being overly 'woke'. We are learning to take this stuff more seriously."

Having opportunities to seek help is many miles from what's available to the majority of the population. Just having the time and money to see a GP in the first place is out of reach for many. Healthy ways to combat mental illness need time, resource, energy, support, professional help, including careful use of medication ... Accessing all that is a privilege for most.

"The privilege is getting well," says Angela. 'Getting well' by taking shortcuts, she explains, can look like hurting others, drinking, over-exercising, over-eating, being "just a little bit stoned" all day ... "They're all coping mechanisms." And, they are more affordable and more available than the counselling Angela has every Thursday.

Lou

School counsellor at a large secondary school in Hawke's Bay, Lou sees students in crisis every day. A large portion are Māori or Pasifika. Although the school is better resourced than many to provide mental health help there are still gaps, with time and money being the main constraints, but also a lack of awareness in many homes as to the scale, severity and repercussions of mental illness in adolescents.

"They make themselves visible through erratic behaviour, showing signs of self-harm, openly cutting themselves - that's a huge one - disengagement, behaviour that's out of character."

These are all signals to Lou, her colleagues, teachers. They should also come as warning signs for parents.

At the school Lou works in she's helped develop a "culture of 'it's ok'" ... but once a teen asks for help the journey through getting them what they need can be an almost insurmountable challenge. Lou works with every student who needs her, initially to listen and make a safe space for them to share openly, then funnel them into appointments with GPs, then potentially therapists, working with parents to investigate the best use of any medications.

Lou's team is overwhelmed by the volume of students needing their help, the sharp increase in high needs students, and the lack of support from the DHB and PHO in Hawke's Bay.

"CAFS (the HBDHB's Child, Adolescent and Family Services) is a broken system. We just feel the top 2% are being seen by them, and they're the most at risk of hurting themselves or others ... suicide attempts who end up in the emergency department," Lou explains. There's an iceberg of students hiding under the surface who need help but can't access it.

The first issue often appears during that first step: seeing a GP. "That's a barrier in itself," says Lou. "Parents are working so they can't take them or they don't have the money, or they don't want their parents to know."

Public health nurses and school counsellors who have established relationships are not able to refer on to therapy. Only GPs can do that. "For me, this is our daily bread, we know our students, but it's only when we really make a noise can we send them on to get help. I feel patronised."

Many students - and this often depends on their home culture - are not comfortable or able to speak with their parents about mental health.

"There's a stigma (around mental illness) and it might have taken a lot to share with me, let alone with their parents," Lou says. She explains that in many homes - especially the homes of her Pasifika students - mental illness is a taboo subject, as is speaking to people outside the family about personal things. And there is a rise in Pasifika students openly cutting themselves.

An added stressor in what Lou sees in her students is the rise of children born with addictions.

"We suspect this is the first generation of meth-affected babies. The issues now are greater than last year's intake," says Lou. She explains the complex multiple issues in the background of many of her students: poverty, family violence, gangs, homelessness or being housed in emergency and transitional housing.

"They don't know who they are. Their boundaries are loose. There are so many layers to work through before they even come to school." Add to that learning challenges and study loads, and stress levels are "through the roof".

"It's very hard to get a counsellor, many at the DHB have set up privately, CAFS has lost many and we're all scrambling," says Lou. There's a two-month waiting list just to secure an initial consult. "(HB's youth health centre) Directions is swamped, the PHO is swamped, everyone is swamped."

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“I think as a younger mother, it was more not knowing where to reach out for help to explain the feelings I was having as I thought I was supposed to just be so happy all the time.”

NAT

Nat

Nat had her first baby at 23. And now with Number Three on the way her life centres around her small children and her circle of friends, most of whom are young mums themselves.

Nat’s partner works away from Hawke’s Bay; she’s well supported, but left to carry most of the domestic duties and childcare on her own.

She’d experienced depression as a teenager. She never considered it would come back during what society often brands “the happiest time of your life”.

“I feel that all new mothers experience some sort of post-partum depression or anxiety whether it be in pregnancy or after birth,” Nat explains. “I think as a younger mother, it was more not knowing where to reach out for help to explain the feelings I was having as I thought I was supposed to just be so happy all the time.”

Nat is well versed in connecting with her community and in return is a ‘rock’ and a ‘shoulder to cry on’ for her friends. Her openness means friends feel comfortable to share their mental health journeys with her, while she wrestles with her own. In past generations mental illness was kept well hidden, now it’s often the subject of conversation. That doesn’t mean finding help is any easier.

“‘Not coping’ doesn’t always look

the same,” Nat says. For some it might mean they stop caring for themselves, don’t find time to shower, wear the same clothes every day. For others it’s the opposite.

“We spend so much time trying to hide the fact we’re miserable, so we dress up, our house is cleaner than ever, we plaster on a smile and say, ‘Yes baby sleeps amazing’, ‘They feed like a dream’ when the reality is after you leave we struggle to pick up the pieces to keep going.”

For some in her circle self-medication is the easiest, most accessible and affordable remedy.

“Recently two friends had shocking advice in their post-care after the birth of their new baby. One turned to drinking heavily, which in turn made her mental health worse. The other struggled with breast feeding so was told by a professional to ‘give it up because clearly you’re not wanting to do the best for your child’ ... once she stopped (breast) feeding she started drinking during the day to keep her calm enough to settle her baby”.

What’s needed, in Nat’s view, is wrap-around care that lasts in some form from before baby arrives to well after.

“I’d love there to be streamlined assistance from the minute your baby is born,” she says. “I’d love it to be an open topic where you know before your child arrives that there are

protocols in place so you know you aren’t alone and there will be a way through.”

From those struggling on no sleep to those who have reached “the edge”, Nat sees a blanket, holistic and proactive service for all new mothers as the best way to combat the overwhelming cases of mental illness in her demographic. Free and accessible counselling is a must.

“I truly believe the mental health system for post-partum care is shocking and needs a massive overhaul,” says Nat. “After my second, I did get two free sessions and was recommended some anti-anxiety medication, which did help, but I needed to understand why I needed it in the first instance.”

“All I wanted was to understand why I was feeling this way and how to work towards overcoming it, and not to instantly have a quick fix of medication.”

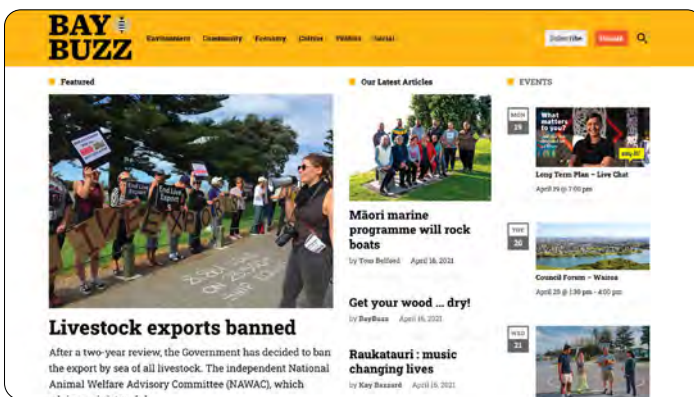
Nat sees mental health issues in all the young mums she knows, in varying forms, and believes getting Mum well benefits baby, family unit and wider whānau.

“From the very worst cases of depression and anxiety to the people who are just having a rough start with no sleep, there needs to be a place where we can go that offers a varied level of help and assistance.” ●

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Kristyl Neho.

Confidence makes the difference



Story by Abby Beswick
Photos by Florence Charvin

Kristyl Neho is a woman on a mission.

The mother, performer, director, drama teacher and now turned founder of a self-empowerment programme for young people has the kind of energy most of us only dream about. A whirlwind of passion, positive energy and enthusiasm, Neho has set her sights on inspiring the next generation to work through challenges and follow their dreams.

The biggest of those challenges? The relentless pressure to be someone other than themselves. “Our children are in crisis, with the increase of mental health, high suicide rates and more than 15,000 young people prescribed anti-depressants nationally. These statistics are increasing, so there is a huge need for preventative programmes,” says Neho.

Through her previous roles teaching and working with young people, Neho recognised an urgent need for building their confidence and self-worth. So, 12 years ago she started developing a programme called Confident Me, which she launched in Hawke’s Bay in 2015. It aims to empower students by equipping them with tools and strategies for dealing with whatever life throws at them.

Over time, the programme has evolved to meet the changing needs of our young people who face very different struggles from previous generations. Lives are busier, fractured families have become commonplace, behavioural needs have grown and unrealistic expectations of beauty constantly surround them. On top of this, today’s children are navigating the powerful online world, which invites strangers, pervasive social media, an invasion of privacy and cyberbullying into their lives.



“That’s been eroded by what they’re seeing and reading in a darkened room, after they’re supposed to have gone to bed. It’s relentless, confusing and muddled, so it’s very hard for them to find a way through that.”

GERALDINE TRAVERS

Neho tackles it all through her programme, as she fights to turn around what has been described by health experts as “the silent pandemic of psychological distress” among youth.

Growing need

Statistics from 2017 show 15,000 children aged between five and 18 are prescribed anti-depressants. That figure is estimated now to be more than 30,000. Post Covid, it is set to potentially double yet again as young people struggle to cope with the ongoing effects of the pandemic on their lives.

For most of us these figures are confronting, but perhaps what’s most shocking is Neho isn’t surprised at all. “I wasn’t shocked in some ways ... I don’t think we should be putting children on such a heavy drug.” There has to be a better way of helping children who need support, she says.

The National Mental Health

Commission’s recent review of mental health programmes and services backs up her view. It identified a critical gap in early prevention resources, support and services for children from birth to 12 years old. Investing in this area will go a long way towards preventing mental health conditions later in life, says Neho. “We really want to be part of the solution.” Confident Me has predominantly worked with children within this age group and we continue to see a huge need, she says.

The children who come through Neho’s programme often suffer from social anxiety and behavioural problems. Many don’t talk at first, won’t look anyone in the eye, and struggle to concentrate or work as part of a group. During their time in the programme she’s watched children gain the confidence to lift their heads, look others in the eye, talk to adults and even step on stage to perform. For some these might

seem like minor changes, but it’s these small steps that are the true measure of success, Neho says. For the children and their families, this progress is life changing.

Learning strategies for life

Confident Me is delivered to up to 600 children each year through a number of Hawke’s Bay schools and as part of collaborations with the Aumangea Project and Inspire in Education. Since it started, more than 5,000 students have benefitted from Confident Me, gaining increased resilience, confidence and self-assurance.

So far, the programme has been or is currently being delivered to students at Peterhead School, Irongate School, Camberley School, Ebbett Park, Bridge Pa School, Mangateretere School, Kimiora School, Havelock North intermediate, Otane School, Pukehou School, Hastings Central School and



Flaxmere Primary. Neho hopes she can continue to extend its reach so more children can benefit.

Neho and co-facilitator Sarah Tawhai deliver the programme, focusing on three areas: tikanga Māori, performing arts and personal development. However, each programme is adapted to meet the specific needs of the group.

The nine tikanga Māori values emphasised are: whanaungatanga (relationship, kinship and family connection, manaakitanga (extending aroha), kotahitanga (oneness), rangatiratanga (self governance), mohiotanga (sharing information), maramatanga (understanding), wairua (spiritual well-being), tikanga (putting into practice what is correct) and mauri (individual uniqueness).

Performing arts offer a number of benefits, particularly for those who are shy or lack confidence. Instead of only gaining knowledge about the world around them, they gain knowledge about who they are, says Neho.

This includes learning how to stand, use their bodies and voice, engaging with an audience, articulating their thoughts and sharing their own stories. "It is also important to remember that the arts build cultural bridges, bring greater understanding and communication in our diverse society." Throughout the programme students create a short act which they perform for their peers, schools and parents. Many students also have the opportunity to take part in local festivals and events.

Personal development techniques aim to improve students' interactions with themselves and the world and can

"Our children are in crisis, with the increase of mental health, high suicide rates and more than 15,000 young people prescribed anti-depressants nationally. These statistics are increasing, so there is a huge need for preventative programmes"

KRISTYL NEHO

be easily implemented into their lives. Areas of learning include: mirror work (looking in a mirror and saying positive affirmations), reading body language, learning to filter thoughts, and intentional direction. These help students take responsibility for their thoughts, feelings and emotions and through this, to take ownership of their lives, says Neho.

A new online programme called Confident Mini Me, will also be launched later this year so more children and families can access the tools.

Covid and other challenges

The pandemic has had a profound impact on young people, which extends far beyond physical health, says Neho. Children's mental health, social development, safety, privacy, and economic security are just some of the ways they are continuing to suffer as a direct result of Covid.

Like their children, parents have also struggled with the impact of the pandemic which has thrown up stressful living conditions, financial hardship and emotional suffering. "There's a lot



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of anxiety and parents didn't have the tools to navigate through that," says Neho. When participating children returned to the Confident Me programme after lockdown, Neho could see the toll it had taken on their confidence and self-esteem. It took 6-7 sessions to get them back to where they were. The pandemic has highlighted the importance of their role, she says. "We see the need for programmes like Confident Me and that's why I am excited to also be a part of other collaborations similar to this work."

Covid isn't the only significant challenge this generation is facing, says former principal of Hastings Girls' High School for 19 years, Geraldine Travers.

Now a Hastings District Councillor, Travers previously held various roles in education. Compared to previous generations, many young people now inhabit a "staggering number of worlds", including home, school, church, sport, cultural, work and often the biggest – the cyber world, says Travers. Each world has its own set of rules and pressures, all of which young people are trying to navigate. It's conflicted, difficult and exhausting.

School and home used to be normalised and regulating environments, but they no longer provide

the protection to young people that they used to, says Travers. "That's been eroded by what they're seeing and reading in a darkened room, after they're supposed to have gone to bed. It's relentless, confusing and muddled, so it's very hard for them to find a way through that." During Covid, almost everything stopped for young people except the cyber world, thrusting them into unpredictable and risky territory.

Role models for young people have also changed significantly. These used to be people who were worthy and had achieved something, says Travers. Many of the role models children look up to now, are famous for being famous or influential. Women are often famous for who they've married and how they look rather than what they've achieved, says Travers. Role models like Marie Curie and Jean Batten have been replaced with the Kardashians and Katie Price. This shift has had a detrimental effect on self-esteem. "Girls particularly are subjected to this because there's a 'desirable' standard that we're trying to achieve."

Seeing results

Confident Me fights these unrealistic standards and the expectation is children leave the programme feeling

more confident, resilient and self-assured. Most importantly, Neho wants them to understand they are the boss of their own emotions and can choose how they think, feel and ultimately, act. This is the foundation for creating a positive future for themselves.

Watching children's progress throughout the programme, supported by parent and teacher feedback, show Neho is achieving what she has set out to do. The programme is having a direct impact on enhancing children's interpersonal, problem solving and cognitive competences, relations with adults and peers, school achievement, and reducing problem behaviour.

Testimonials from teachers say they have noticed more positive interactions with other children, are more settled in class and willing to take part in activities like standing up in front of others. Parents say their children have come out of their shell, are excited to go to school and there's been a change in academic performance. "Her confidence has grown so much since being in Confident Me," says one parent. "You wouldn't think she was the little shy girl who wouldn't even say 'yes' when her name got called in the roll when she first started."



How can parents help?

Our children are a reflection of how we've raised them and this has the most significant impact from birth until the age of seven, says Neho. After this age, it can take some behavioural reprogramming to shift negative habits.

The overriding message from Neho, however, is society needs to change how it treats young people. "Parents need to be more hands on and they need to be fully engaged." Putting down your phone and having positive, consistent interaction with your children should be a priority, says Neho. This will have a huge impact on their emotional and social wellbeing.

It's a sentiment shared by Travers. "Be there, listen, make them feel important and that they're worth listening to," she says. Face-to-face contact and giving them the message that you're interested in what they have to say will speak volumes to your children, she says. Children face relentless pressures. The family unit and the way we interact with our children will have the greatest impact of their sense of self belief and confidence, says Travers. If we can make these changes, everyone will benefit.

Case study

Katrina Briscoe can't believe the difference in her daughter Emma, since she started the Confident Me programme three years ago, aged 10.

Back then, Emma suffered from social anxiety and lacked confidence. She didn't like going out, talking to people or even looking anyone in the eye.

"This was a kid who walked into a room, dropped her head and would barely lift her head to say hello," says Briscoe. Emma's quiet, shy, withdrawn and unsociable nature was a cause of concern for her mum, who worried about how it would affect her in the long term and didn't know how to help.

Yet it was Emma who was the driving force for change. After learning about the programme being held at school, Emma accompanied a friend one day and hasn't looked back since.

Her mum still can't quite believe the "drastic change" she's seen since then. Now 13, Emma faces the world in a completely different way, says Briscoe. "The Confident Me programme has brought Emma out of her shell and made her realise she can be her own person. She's a different kid now."

Emma now ranks taking part in productions as one of her favourite things to do — something the

"If more kids had access to this programme I think we'd be raising a whole different generation."

EMMA BRISCOE

chronically shy teen would previously never have even considered trying. "I like performing now. I never used to be able to get on stage," she tells me.

"To see my daughter stand in front of a crowd and talk into a microphone as clear as day. It's a magical feeling," says Briscoe.

The programme has been a significant turning point for Emma, by giving her the tools she needs for coping with life, whatever happens. Briscoe only wishes it was available to all children. "If more kids had access to this programme I think we'd be raising a whole different generation." ●



NGOs a path to mental wellness?

You've been living under a rock if you haven't heard about Mike King and Gumboot Friday, but what about Lifeline, or Surfing for Farmers?

I'm a firm believer that the government isn't always the best at everything, and I can confidently say it's not the best or even the fastest at mental health support, but what about the NGO?

A Non-Government Organisation (NGO) is a non-profit service set up to offer support that the health system either does not offer or has insufficient capacity to meet the demand. As a result, the NGO will often become a member of a network that receives government funding annually, effectively becoming a partner of, or supplier to, the Ministry of Health. But not always.

When an NGO is funded by the government, it then works like any other public health service, where you go to your doctor and then get referred. The trouble is, you have to go to the doctor first, or in many cases with mental health, the hospital. Obviously, the referral system always creates delays and bottlenecks, which is the last thing you want in a mental health environment.

In New Zealand, we group together 'Mental Health' and 'Addiction' (MHA), and according to Platform Trust, together there are 240 MHA NGO's. Seems like a lot but they're not all big, and the funding isn't increasing either. What is increasing, is the number of Kiwis needing MHA support (showing no sign of slowing), along with the wait time.

So, if it's not always quick (funded) and not always cheap (unfunded), then why is an NGO good? They respond to demand. As with anything started privately, they exist to meet a need, and will evolve or grow with the changing environment, something the public health system doesn't do.

Statistically, up to 50% of our MHA NGOs exist to serve the Māori and Pasifika communities, which is good given our suicide statistics suggest that Māori, specifically young male Māori, are more likely to commit suicide than any other age, gender, or ethnicity. That statistic doesn't include those who attempt to take their own lives either.

Our funded NGOs don't just service the public through a GP referral, they also reach us through secondary care like Oranga Tamariki, Corrections, and Ministry of Social Development. The delivery of MHA support should be happening more in our community and less in our hospitals.

A Non-Government Organisation (NGO) is a non-profit service set up to offer support that the health system either does not offer or has insufficient capacity to meet the demand.

Unfortunately for all New Zealanders dealing with MHA, the NGO system operates in an overcomplicated environment. There's a major lack of funding; if they are funded, the contracts are all short term, the system is fragmented, the demand is increasing, making the referral bottleneck worse, and on top of all that, the elephant in the room, the contract/funding environment is competitive.

Enter Gumboot Friday, who is just a non-profit, standing in front of a government, asking them for funding.

Gumboot Friday is one donation away from not being able to provide support from one day to the next, support that is crucial to Kiwis and their

families. While government funding can be the vital ingredient to being able to provide a reliable service to a community that needs it, it can also stand in the way of it delivering timely help to those in need.

The problem is, when you need professional support or simply just support, it's usually pretty hard to find. The system isn't designed to come to us; it's designed for us to come to it. And most of the time, we keep our troubles to ourselves until it's too late. We don't talk about our mental health enough, and we definitely don't talk about the best counsellors, or the best place to go when times are tough, our 'tough guy' approach means we barely talk to our friends.

Let's focus for a moment on a key difference between our NGOs - proactive and reactive.

I AM HOPE, better known as Gumboot Friday, is a charity that focuses on the mental health of youth aged 5 to 24 years old. The service aims to provide free weekly counselling sessions for those in need. Most importantly, Mike King and his team reach out. They visit schools, they talk about mental health, and they share stories. Last year they reached 250,000 students.

Proactive organisations like Gumboot Friday and Surfing for Farmers use a preventative approach. Surfing for Farmers is pretty simple. They get farmers out of the paddock and into the ocean. The entire idea behind it is to de-stress, have some saltwater therapy, and enjoy life outside the farm. Our farming community has statistically poor mental health and suicide rate comparative to other industries. That comes down to isolation and the fact that your work is your life, and there is little balance. A charity that aims to get people off the farm and de-stressed, can be just as good as offering a counselling



Surfing for Farmers CHB at Pourerere Beach

session, especially if it helps keep farmers in good mental health rather than just supporting them when they have bad mental health.

Let's look at the reactive approach. We have a health system that is focused on curing illness, not maintaining health. So many of our NGOs are the ambulance at the bottom of the cliff, offering a place of refuge or a crisis helpline. Lifeline is literally just that. While it's important to have a place to go or a person to call in our darkest times, we also need to work harder to ensure less people get that far.

What if we turned our system upside down, and spent more of our funding on preventing illness, be it physical or mental? Educating Kiwis about where to go and how to get help, so they don't think taking their life is the only way out of how they're feeling. Better yet, talk about how to keep ourselves well, and look after our mental health. We typically look for help when we have no other options. If we looked for mental wellbeing classes like we look for yoga classes, we might be as fit in mind as we are in body.

Finding help

Before I started looking into mental health services, I thought I had a good idea of who was out there. Privately, I knew that you could look up professional services and book an appointment. Here, the user pays, and the biggest challenge seems to be finding the

The thing is, mental health isn't just suicide prevention, and we're only just starting to understand the breadth of mental health and wellness.

right fit, or the right price. The public system, like anything public, I thought would be dependent on seeing a GP or doctor, being referred, and potentially waiting a long time, I wasn't wrong.

The third path was where I thought the NGOs sat. Somewhere in the middle. Possibly publicly funded, but privately accessible, and always available. Not quite true. Unfortunately, most of our NGOs, if you can find them, are as hard to access as a university scholarship.

Let's talk about how to find help, which is where things get tricky and might need a diagram.

If you're a university or polytech student, it's likely you can get free counselling through student services. I used this option when I was studying, and not enough people talk about it.

If you're not a student, but you're employed, talk to your employer, it's likely they'll have an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) service, where you can be referred to a counsellor.

If you're not employed, or your employer doesn't have an EAP service,

you have two options. If you're prepared to wait, you can talk to your GP and get a referral - this will likely be subsidised or free. If you can't wait, and you're under the age of 24, visit iamhope.org.nz. If you're over the age of 24, visit lifeline.org.nz.

The thing is, mental health isn't just suicide prevention, and we're only just starting to understand the breadth of mental health and wellness. I would love to tell you how to find more organisations like Surfing for Farmers. Organisations that prevent the need to seek crisis support are few and far between, and sadly, are more likely found in apps and downloadable PDFs than in gyms or community classes.

So, if anyone feels inspired to start something, what about Knitting for Cops, Jigsaws for Dentists, or Yoga for Builders? Don't wait for illness, let's start with wellness. ●





Rural mental wellbeing

Lockdowns aside, most of us like to think we have a modicum of ‘control’ over the factors that contribute to our mental wellbeing.

And for many, the security that comes from a steady job and income rates highly in that regard, as well as a relative degree of predictability about what lies ahead ... no surprises being ideal. Also high on the wellbeing list would be supportive social interaction with workmates and peers, and time to enjoy extra-curricular activities.

For farmers (and their families), all of these pre-conditions of mental wellbeing are challenging.

Often Mother Nature declares the lockdowns! The weather is uncontrollable, capable of erasing production and income at any time (e.g., a single hailstorm).

Other external factors - lack of farm labour, changing and more demanding regulation, supply chain disruptions - can toss predictability out the window. The sheer weight of what needs to get done - when it *must* get done in the growing cycle - and not postponed can become overwhelming. More demanding community expectations add pressure. And often farmers and growers contend with all this in isolation - separated from supportive others by physical distance, lack of time, or personal pride and reticence.

Here in Hawke’s Bay, drought has been stressful and the labour shortage has taken its toll as well. One grower commented to *BayBuzz*:

“Usually the season is traumatic but this year particularly so. People seemed to cope while the battle raged but they have been affected by it. I’ve lost two managers and now quite a few staff are leaving. They are fearful of more of the same and life is too short. My managers have gone to jobs in the sector for less money but less hours

and stress. There are lot of mental health issues in the industry at present and I understand why.”

Various reports and statistics document the consequences.

The *State of the Rural Nation Survey* (2018) found around 70% of rural New Zealanders said they have felt increased stress over the last five years: 54% attributed financial pressures as the main reason. Environmental factors affecting work and livelihoods came second at 49%.

Thirty-seven percent reported experiencing more personal stress from “pressures on my work/livelihood due to environmental factors (i.e. drought, floods, hail)”.

DairyNZ’s survey of its farmers (*View from the Cowshed*) found that 62% said “they or someone on their farm had experienced mental health issues over the last year”. The causes: regulation changes, financial concerns, public perceptions of dairying.

The Government Inquiry into Mental Health and Addiction (2020) said this about the mental health of rural communities:

“While the prevalence of mental health conditions is similar in urban and rural settings, people in rural settings are less likely to access mental health care. In addition, while numbers are relatively small, data suggests that suicide rates are slightly higher for people in rural areas than in urban areas. Young farm labourers are at highest risk of suicide among the rural population, with isolation, alcohol use and availability of firearms considered to be contributing factors.

“Sparsely populated regions present challenges geographically as people may have to travel long distances to receive or deliver mental health and addiction services. Slow or no internet connection, limited cell phone

coverage and poor roads can also make it difficult to access services and support. Recruiting staff to work in rural areas is also challenging. Often only crisis services are provided, with limited opportunity to undertake preventative work.”

Resources

Fortunately, these issues are getting better recognised and more resources are available to farmers. But one thing that needs to be overcome is farmer reticence. The Rural Nation Survey found that people living rurally are significantly less likely than urban dwellers to consider talking to health professional if they are experiencing stress or anxiety (32% vs 54%).

One of the most active support organisations is Farmstrong (www.farmstrong.co.nz). Its website provides a treasury of practical advice for coping and maintaining mental and physical wellbeing.

Farmstrong reports that the percentage of farmers who had ever engaged with the organisation is now 31%. This equates with approximately 20,600 farmers and farm workers who have ever participated and 18,100 in the last year (2020). Interest and need is illustrated by the fact that the number of Farmstrong videos viewed in the last 12 months jumped from 108,216 to 328,454.

But among the worrisome year-over-year trends noted in Farmstrong’s most recent survey, 14% of respondents reported their ‘ability to cope with the ups and downs of farming’ had worsened (68% the same), 26% had a worsening of ‘balance between my work and leisure’, 36% had less ‘contact with my friends’, and 24% reported less sleep.

Another key support organisation is Rural Support and its local Rural Support Trusts (RSTs). (0800 787 254, and www.rural-support.org.nz). RSTs cover all aspects of rural agribusiness:



Scene from mental health documentary *The Monkeys on Our Backs* by Hunter Williams. hunterwilliams.net

dry stock, dairy, cropping, horticulture, forestry, poultry, and rural contracting. And all rural people: owners, managers, staff, and contractors. Help can range from personal mental wellbeing counselling to coping with extreme weather events.

Hawke's Bay is served by the East Coast RST and the HB regional coordinator is Lon Anderson (027 249 5713 or lonanderson32@gmail.com). Farther up the coast the coordinator for Wairoa/Gisborne is David Scott (0272 119 941 or treescapfarm@xtra.co.nz). ●

Information and support

Rural Support Trusts:

0800 787 254 (0800 RURAL HELP)

MPI adverse events:

www.mpi.govt.nz/protection-and-response/responding/adverse-events/

Federated Farmers:

www.fedfarm.org.nz, 0800 327 646

Rural Women New Zealand:

0800 256 467

Farmstrong:

<http://farmstrong.co.nz>

National Depression Initiative:

www.depression.org.nz

Lifeline:

www.lifeline.co.nz
Free 24-hour service 0800 543 354

DairyNZ:

0800 4 324 7969

HORTNZ:

0508 467 869

Beef+Lamb NZ:

0800 733 466

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Brain food

Albert Einstein sets the perfect theme for this article with his famous remark: *Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.*

We are all to a degree guilty of this.

I don't want to make light of mental health, since it will have touched all of our lives personally or indirectly in some shape or form. It can be devastating for families and individuals.

What I would like you to consider, is that how you feel and think is impacted by what you eat. I didn't really appreciate that the right food could improve your mood, emotional stability and keep your mind young. As a nutritionist, I now have a much deeper understanding of how nutrition and lifestyle can impact one's mental health.

You may be surprised to learn that not only depression, but fatigue and some gut issues can be related to poor brain health. There is a link between the nervous and digestive systems. The brain and the gut communicate via the vagus nerve. Poor brain function can impair how the vagus nerve functions, which in turn can contribute to constipation and poor digestive function.

Another consequence of the vagus nerve not working properly is intestinal permeability, also referred to by some as 'leaky gut'. This allows undigested proteins, bacteria, fungi and other nasties to enter the blood stream. This activates the immune system, which causes inflammation. Symptoms may include food sensitivities, rashes, mental health issues and other imbalances. Since inflammation contributes to leaky gut, it keeps fuelling the fire and a self-perpetuating cycle is created between the two.

Conversely, if your gut isn't working well, it could be a sign that your brain isn't functioning optimally. The good news is that the vagus nerve can be improved through exercises, similarly

to how you would work to improve your muscular strength.

One cannot look at the brain, our gut or bodies separately. They work in synergy with each other. Nutrition, together with lifestyle changes, counselling and the right support can help to improve mental health and physical wellbeing. We are complex beings after all.

Nutrition is one of the components that can be overlooked. If you are fuelling your body with coffee, energy drinks, take outs and processed foods, it's likely that your brain won't be working as well as it should. This will have an impact on your emotions and your gut.

You can change what you put into your mouth. The right foods can make you feel happy, and the wrong foods can make you feel anxious and depressed.

Let's look at ways you can keep your gut and brain working optimally.

Don't skip breakfast! Many of my clients start this habit because they are time poor, trying to cut their calories or don't feel hungry. But after fasting eight to ten hours, we do need to refuel our body. Hence the name break...fast. This will help to improve your concentration and memory throughout the day. It has the added benefit of reducing the need to reach for sugary foods and caffeine to falsely fuel you through the day.

We also need to make sure that we balance our blood sugar. This is a whole topic on its own, but I'll try and keep it as simple as possible. The brain is fuelled by glucose, so we need to eat carbohydrates. The trick is to eat those that best boost the body's energy needs.

The other part of the equation is to ensure that you don't have any dips in your blood sugar levels. You need to choose carbohydrates that are slow releasing. As a rule, whole unprocessed foods release sugar slowly into the blood stream.

You can also use a measure called glycaemic load (GL). This describes how much carbohydrate a food contains and how quickly it releases sugar into the blood stream. If you are having cornflakes, which have a high GL score, your blood sugar levels are going to spike quickly and then plummet, leaving you tired and cranky. A better option would be oats with chopped apple, which are both slow releasing.

Some ideas you might want to try to keep your blood sugar balanced. Choose whole grain bread over white bread. Replace spreads such as jam and honey with baked beans (no sugar added), sardines or seed and nut butters. Try brown rice and wholemeal pasta. Instead of chocolate, choose vegetable crudites with hummus or low GL fruit with a small handful of nuts.

The biggie is to start letting go of sugar in your diet. Honey is pure sugar, so go easy on it. Choose wholefoods such as lentils, beans, nuts, seeds, fresh fruit and vegetables. Aim to have two servings of fruit and five portions of vegetables per day. Bananas have a high GL, so eat them in moderation. Eat small amounts of dried fruit occasionally. Drink fruit juices sparingly and dilute with filtered water.

Try and combine your carbohydrates with protein and fibre to slow down their release outlined below:

- Fruit with seeds or nuts (small amount).
- Add seed and nuts to cereals.
- Serve salmon, chicken or tofu with brown rice.
- Add beans to pasta sauces with wholemeal pasta.
- Use cottage cheese or hummus as topping on oatcakes or rye bread.

The brain also needs good fats to keep it functioning well. Choose from nuts and seeds. Seeds can be ground



and kept in the fridge to get all their goodness. Sprinkle onto cereal, soups and salads. Aim to have a tablespoon a day. Eat cold water fish such as wild salmon, mackerel, herring or sardines, two to three times a week. Use cold-pressed oils such as olive, hemp, avocado or flaxseed. Avoid canola and other processed oils. If you are

not eating sufficient fish take a good quality fish oil. Supplements are not created equally, so get professional advice.

Aim to eat three servings of protein-rich foods a day such as quinoa, brown rice, lentils, beans, fish, nuts and seeds, eggs, yogurt, cottage cheese, broccoli and spinach.

Vegetables contain protein too!

My mantra to my clients is to have variety to help them get sufficient amounts of vitamins and minerals.

Each of us can make changes to our lives or those of our children. Food is a great place to start to work on your brain health. Start making small changes over time, to make them sustainable and manageable.

Exercise too, its free and we live in one of the most beautiful places in the world. It will boost your happy hormones and your mood. You can change your life for the better. Doing things differently will bring different results. ●

Hazel Thomas is a registered clinical nutritionist with a special interest in gut health, food sensitivities and children's health.



Royston Hospital is pleased to sponsor robust examination of health issues in Hawke's Bay. This reporting is prepared by BayBuzz. Any editorial views expressed are those of the BayBuzz team.

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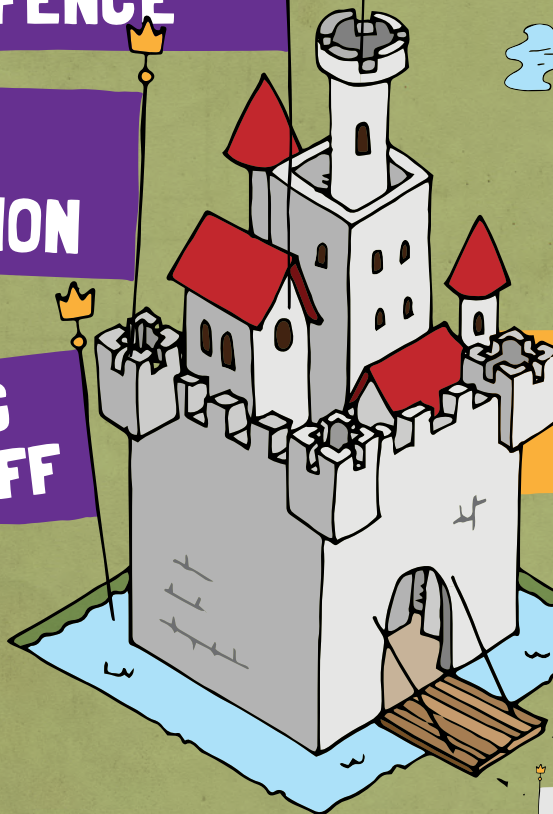
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**HAWKE'S BAY
REGIONAL
COUNCIL**

HASTINGS

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a Map of yon fiefdoms in
Hawke's Bay



Labour lights another fuse

Political update
by Tom Belford

In area after area, the Labour Government seems determined to be a disruptor.

Health care reorganisation. Jettisoning the Resource Management Act that currently guides so much environmental and land use regulation. Major toughening of water quality standards and centralisation of water safety authority. Rattling the home ownership and rental markets. Accelerating into the electric vehicle future, with presumably more action to come on climate change. Consolidating the delivery '3 Waters' services. Redefining 'hate speech'. A major uplifting of Māori participation and power in numerous settings.

So far, what it has done mostly in these instances is announce major policies. That's enough to spark more than the usual volume of National and ACT Party invective and erode Labour's standing in the polls. And that's before anyone sees how well (or not) the Government will actually *implement* these fundamental changes.

Change in any of these areas significantly affects how we go about our personal, business and political affairs here in Hawke's Bay.

And there's potentially even more direct upheaval on the local political horizon.

The Government has launched a review of the very purpose of local government, modestly called: Ministerial Review into the Future of Local Government.

Fairly or not, this Government doesn't seem to have much regard for ineffective little councils (and DHBs) and backward local officials who can't seem to get anything done, even in the

most critical local matters, like water safety, let alone self-governance.

The review is under the watch of Minister of Local Government Nanaia Mahuta – she of '3 Waters' consolidation and dedicated Māori seats.

Here's the crux of the mission in the minister's words:

"Local government plays an important role in our democratic system, giving people a voice in the leadership of their communities and in the governance of services and publicly owned assets.

"Local councils are essential to maintaining and improving our wellbeing and we need to get the right settings for them to continue delivering their important mahi.

"They are now facing a wave of reforms that will significantly affect their traditional roles and functions. They have told us the timing is right to determine what our system of local democracy should look like to make sure it is fit for the future, and I agree.

"This also offers an important opportunity to explore how we can embody the Treaty partnership through the role and representation of iwi/Māori in local government.

"I have asked the review panel to consider what local government does, how it does it, and how it pays for it. From there, they will explore what local government's future looks like, including:

- roles, functions and partnerships
- representation and governance
- funding and financing.

In short, it's all up for grabs folks. I'm expecting amalgamation in spades!



"Local government plays an important role in our democratic system, giving people a voice in the leadership of their communities and in the governance of services and publicly owned assets."

NANAIA MAHUTA, MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

This review has a slow-burning fuse – officially underway from 3 May 2021, Minister Mahuta has given the review panel until 30 April 2023 to report back. However, an interim report this September will signal the probable direction of the review, and a draft report for public consultation is due by 30 September 2022.

That timing guarantees that local incumbent elected officials and candidates will be on the grill when they stand for election in October 2022.

Who will be the staunchest protectors of local democracy (i.e. the maximum number of local councils

One might think they'd be aghast at the prospect of rationalisation of local services. Certainly no review is going to recommend that the country needs more councils because these might somehow provide more democracy.

and councillors possible)? Will they be the champions of the electorate? Or will the acknowledgement that small is not always beautiful prevail?

Elsewhere in this BayBuzz edition the future structure for advancing the region's economic development is discussed. The term 'fiefdoms' is used to describe the unsurprising dysfunctionality of four territorial authorities competing with each other in this space. A competition moderated only when the four mayors and chief executives (plus the Regional Council chair and chief executive) happen to get along. Where the typical negotiation is "I'll support your (dumb) idea if you support mine."

So, what does the institutional voice of local government – Local Government New Zealand – think of the impending review?

One might think they'd be aghast at the prospect of rationalisation of local services. Certainly no review is going to recommend that the country needs more councils because these might somehow provide more democracy.

Here is their artful website statement:

"A review of how and what local government does is timely and welcomed. The current local government framework is 30 years old. *It's not fit for today, let alone the future.* [Editor's italics] We will work closely with communities, through our Councils, to ensure the recommendations delivered in 2023 are robust, impactful, and right for you and future generations. Communities are, after all, at the grassroots of prosperity, wellbeing and sustainability for Aotearoa and its people."

LGNZ President Stuart Crosby commented: "The operational realities for local government are huge urban growth and tourism pressures, greater focus on environmental protections and climate change pressures, all matched to outdated funding tools.

"The review panel must deliver a bold response that is in tune with the needs of our diverse communities and our treaty partnership, and which considers how our future generations are afforded a voice and a choice in their towns, cities and regions, and how their local initiatives are funded."

No doubt within the local government establishment there will be differing views as to what future structure is most fit for purpose – you might recall the strenuously argued opposing views of Mayors Yule and Dalton during the region's amalgamation debate.

So Mr Crosby will have no easy task fashioning a unified local government perspective if he even attempts to do so.

In his media release, Crosby concludes: "Deep engagement with all communities, not just local government, will be the cornerstone of recommendations that we can all work towards, so we encourage the panel to work with iwi, community groups and beyond."

"We encourage all New Zealanders to engage with the Future for Local Government programme – this is your opportunity to shape local democracy, the closest form of government to the people."

Translated: Local government will bind itself to the mast in the name of protecting local democracy.

A major theme identified for the review involves iwi/Māori engagement in the process, with the implication of greater empowerment in future local

governance. The terms of reference for the review state that recommendations must address:

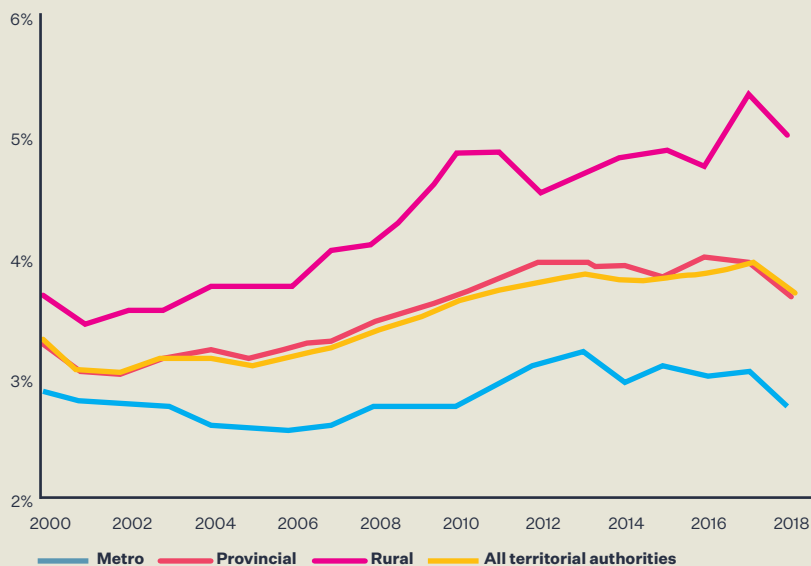
- effective partnerships between mana whenua, and central and local government in order to better provide for the social, environmental, cultural, and economic wellbeing of communities; and
- a local government system that actively embodies the Treaty partnership, through the role and representation of iwi/Māori in local government, and seeks to uphold the Treaty of Waitangi (Te Tiriti o Waitangi) and its principles through its functions and processes ...

"The role and representation of iwi/Māori in the local government system should be across all aspects of the review's consideration of this matter."

One might have reasoned that this review should have preceded this same minister's decision to promote dedicated Māori seats on local and regional councils. As a result of that decision, the Hastings District and Regional Councils have already committed to adding Māori wards (with representation reviews underway to sort the details) and the Napier City Council is pre-consulting on this option.

One precursor to this review is the Productivity Commission's 2019 review of local government funding and financing. Its conclusions were anything but radical; indeed, it underscored

Small, rural & low-income councils are under particular pressure
Rates per capita as a % median adult income



that point, writing: “Radical reform is not required”. It blessed the current property-based rates system as the mainstay of local government funding.

The Commission did suggest that central government would need to fund councils’ programmes to protect council infrastructure at-risk from climate change, which it estimated would cost about \$150 million a year for 20 years. In music to local government ears, the Commission recommended: “An agreed protocol would help end the practice of central government imposing responsibilities on local government, without appropriate funding.” Wairoa mayor Craig Little is passionate on this subject. And finally, the Commission noted in particular the financial stress rural councils were enduring.

The Productivity Commission did not address structural governance issues; this new review is far more encompassing, digging into the very purposes of local government.

Here in Hawke’s Bay

As the review unfolds, it might be useful to note that an interesting trend seems to be unfolding in Hawke’s Bay’s local government circles.

The ‘big’ issues are more and more

The kumbaya approach is fine, an improvement over direct competition and patch protection, until there are patches to protect. At that point, the comradery evaporates and councils throw last minute grenades against one another’s plans – which had seemed to enjoy consensus – or descend into months of inter-council negotiation ... all at ratepayers’ expense.

recognised as *regional* issues – from the environment to housing to water management, from crime to civil defence to coastal protection and climate change.

In the face of this reality, our current cast of mayors and chiefs has adopted a two-pathway response.

The first – and usually preferred – path is the kumbaya approach. A linking of arms, a smiling group photo, a press release with a quote from each – ‘we’re in this together for the greater

good of the Hawke’s Bay community’. This works OK on the smaller no-brainer stuff like consolidating procurement of minor supplies and jointly operating a landfill.

And it’s generally the path first attempted so as to protect the possibility of opting out if the choices become too distasteful. So our leaders parcel out ‘lead’ assignments, maybe CHBDC to drive an economic development review, or HBRC to project our future water demand. This is also the path chosen when our councils think their best strategic option might be to sink or swim together, as is currently the case for responding to the Government’s threat to strip them of authority for water services. Soon our councils will be pleading ... “Yes, we’ve really mucked it up, but at least we’re the devil you know.”

The kumbaya approach is fine, an improvement over direct competition and patch protection, until there are patches to protect. At that point, the comradery evaporates and councils throw last minute grenades against one another’s plans – which had seemed to enjoy consensus – or descend into months of inter-council negotiation ... all at ratepayers’ expense.

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At that point, our councils have three options:

Each going their own way (as they have until now on economic development), or,

Setting up a joint council committee of some kind (e.g. coastal hazards, transportation), or,

Giving the responsibility to the only regional governance enterprise we have ... fittingly called the Regional Council.

Interestingly, this last option seems to be gaining currency in Hawke's Bay. So ...

- Visitor attraction, pre-Covid our region's second-biggest industry, became the oversight and funding responsibility of HBRC.
- HBRC carries the lead on transportation planning.
- Civil defence direction and funding has gone to HBRC.
- Coastal protection policymaking, funding and implementation has recently gone to HBRC.
- Broader responsibility for climate change adaptation and mitigation will inevitably flow to HBRC as well.
- HBRC will allocate our precious water resource.
- HBRC, to protect the environment, will regulate farming in Hawke's Bay, our most precious land use, and/or enforce the nationally-supplied standards that farming must meet.

These are issues that go to the core of Hawke's Bay sustainable future prospects.

By comparison, our four local authorities – once stripped of water service responsibility – will decide where we pay to park, which trees to sacrifice in which reserve, which footpaths to fix or bike trails to authorise, what local speed limits should apply, which days to pick up the trash in what colour/size bags.

But these of course are the most important day-to-day concerns for most of our urban population, so our local territorial authorities will still have a deep reservoir of loyalty to draw upon when the Local Government Review Panel comes knocking at the door to take the local pulse.

Amalgamation by stealth?

Even a die-hard amalgamation advocate like me must admit that we got our butts kicked in the fierce debate and referendum of 2015.



Overall the vote was 66% against, 34% for. Only the HDC district, with Lawrence Yule leading the charge, was enlightened enough to support amalgamation, but only by a 51% to 48% margin.

Overall the vote was 66% against, 34% for. Only the HDC district, with Lawrence Yule leading the charge, was enlightened enough to support amalgamation, but only by a 51% to 48% margin.

At the time, I speculated in *BayBuzz* about what might happen next: "Will there be an effort to identify specific local government activities that are indeed regional in scope, importance and execution – like tourism promotion, economic development, major infrastructure/facility investment, coastal protection – and actually pursue and fund agreed priorities on a regional basis?"

Some of that has occurred, with more in the pipeline. Elsewhere in this edition, Sarah Cameron writes of the possibility of a genuine Regional Economic Development Agency (EDA) being created, like every other region.

Her article notes that over the past five years capital investment in Hawke's Bay from the DHB, the Regional Council, the Port and Hastings District Council tallied well over \$1 billion. Alasdair MacLeod, chair of Napier Port comments: "One of the actions proposed in the (Matariki Regional Development) strategy was to take a coordinated approach to this

capital investment and give preference to contractors who would hire, train and promote local labour. Sadly, none of this, which would cost nothing, has been carried out".

Which reminded me that Mayor Yule on occasion had called for a more innovative approach to prioritise, coordinate and allocate the nearly \$1 billion in central government funding that then entered the region through various disconnected silos to address social, employment and income support needs.

While that's not come to pass, there has been greater effort made to coordinate councils' pitching to Government for funding support. And as noted above, HBRC, which now employs a 'regional recovery manager' to help our five councils keep track of the Government's millions in PGF and 'shovel ready funding HB is receiving, seems to be on steroids in terms of its growing pan-regional portfolio.

So maybe Hawke's Bay will turn out to be at the leading edge of local government reform – ahead of the Ministerial Review into the Future of Local Government!

After amalgamation was defeated, *BayBuzz* asked twenty community leaders what they would like to see happen next for Hawke's Bay. Six years later it's a fascinating read; some were more prescient than others! [www.baybuzz.co.nz/with-amalgamation-sorted-what-next/]

Here's some of what Claire Vogtherr, proprietor of Holly Bacon had to say:

"We may or may not have a unified governance structure post vote, but all in power, whatever that might look like, must work together with an understanding of the absolute necessity to achieve consistency of goals and planning as Hawke's Bay – not Napier, Hastings, Wairoa or Central Hawke's Bay.

"One vision, one agreed plan, so that all collective resources can be put into achieving the growth and recognition our beautiful region both deserves and requires.

"Those working to unite Hawke's Bay behind a shared vision and purpose do not need the dissenters to agree with them, they simply need to continue to move forward making every decision as one Hawke's Bay until it simply becomes reality."

I interpret that as achieving amalgamation by stealth. And I hope this latest ministerial review helps smooth the path. ●

LIVE HERE GIVE HERE



HAWKE'S BAY
FOUNDATION



Hawke's Bay Foundation's Amy Bowkett driving the plug-in hybrid Mitsubishi Outlander generously donated by Bay European's Tim and Stephanie Murphy and signwritten by Sign Central.

Applications for Hawke's Bay Foundation's 2021 Funding Round have closed for another year with the team busy processing calls for support from 74 worthy local charities.

Recent Round Table discussions were once again well attended by charities that received funding last year, and continue to be a valuable opportunity to hear how the allocated funds were spent. From funding for: more mental health counsellors and youth mentors, to vital van transport enabling cancer patients to receive treatment, healthier homes and Women's Refuge safe houses to thermals for needy school children, Hawke's Bay Foundation continues to make positive differences at our community's coalface.

One charity singing the praises of the foundation's funding is Project Prima Volta - founded eight years ago and run by internationally acclaimed Napier Soprano Anna Pierard and husband Jose Aparicio. Over four thousand dollars in funding last year has seen PPV's Lab extended to take 30 teens per year from schools spanning students from Iona to Flaxmere College. Anna Pierard says for young people of diverse backgrounds, the PPV experience has helped build their confidence and given them a sense of purpose and meaning as they grow into adulthood.

"Music is life's soulfood and can

improve mental health. Since its conception, we now see students more focused on a pathway once their school life is complete.

"I've been pleasantly surprised to see one of our biggest areas of impact is employment, with several alumni each year going on to study music at tertiary level. The impacts this programme is making are proving really powerful."

IN OTHER NEWS

Hawke's Bay Foundation has hit the streets with its first donated sponsored electric vehicle. The colourful Mitsubishi Outlander - a plug-in hybrid vehicle - was generously donated to the foundation by Bay European's Tim and Stephanie Murphy and signwritten by Sign Central.

Chairman Giles Pearson says as the foundation funds local environmental projects and charities every year, it is a steer in the right direction.

"A smart mobile billboard will increase our visibility and add to the understanding that the Hawke's Bay Foundation is a proven and growing vehicle for donors to pull together to help Hawke's Bay charities deliver for our community."

Bay European director Tim Murphy says the foundation's goals align with their own and supporting local is key for them.

"As the mantra goes, 'Live Here, Give Here'. We are passionate about

Hawke's Bay and our commitment to the Hawke's Bay Foundation extends beyond the supply and running costs of an electric vehicle, our shareholders have also donated to the foundation, ensuring a long-term, lasting legacy."

Hawke's Bay Foundation executive officer Amy Bowkett is loving being behind the wheel in her role out and about visiting supporters, making presentations and visiting the charities the foundation funds.

"Hybrid and electric vehicles are clearly the way forward and I hope more organisations around Hawke's Bay will follow suit."

HAWKE'S BAY FOUNDATION:

A better and more lasting way to give. Hawke's Bay Foundation provides a simple way for you to support your local community for generations to come. We receive gifts and bequests from individuals, families and businesses - these are pooled and invested forever, with the income used to support local charities.

Words by Alisha Neilson
hawkesbayfoundation.co.nz

BAY BUZZ

BayBuzz is pleased to support the
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Gus Charteris

Fiefdoms impede our regional economic development

Story by Sarah Cameron

An Economic Development Agency. Every region in New Zealand has one ... except Hawke's Bay.

There's Northland Inc., Venture Taranaki, RED in Rotorua, Great South in Invercargill and Grow Wellington to name but a few. EDAs are a 'bang for buck' model - where the private sector can partner with local government in a region to drive and support economic and social wellbeing.

Up until late 2020, Business Hawke's Bay (BHB) was our proxy regional EDA. BHB's remit was to "leverage the economic growth opportunities in the region", to support existing business and to attract complementary business and investment to Hawke's Bay. Many Hawke's Bay businesses valued the intellectual property for its people and the programmes the organisation created for start-ups, and the food and fibre and tech sectors.

However, with four territorial councils (Napier, Hastings, Wairoa and Central Hawke's Bay) and one regional council trying to protect their fiefdoms and with their own economic development agendas, Business Hawke's Bay was never formally considered as the Bay's EDA. In June this year, BHB shut up shop when the Hawke's Bay councils declined a request for additional ratepayer funding.

So, what will take its place and how will it be funded?

Economic development can appear

to be a crowded space with lots of people and organisations doing related things. In Hawke's Bay we have each council playing a role, there's the Chamber of Commerce, the Regional Business Partner Programme, business hubs in the cities, business hives and no end of groups and brands demanding a slice of the pie including Hawke's Bay NZ, Great Things Grow Here, and Be in the Bay.

All this means that the economic development space can appear fragmented, unfocused and not particularly well coordinated. The reality is that effective economic development is a team game played over the long-term. This requires many hands doing hard mahi, and effective and targeted collaboration and partnerships are needed between business, local and central government, hapū/iwi/Māori, and the not-for-profit sector in order to achieve community objectives.

Effective economic development also requires capability and the capacity to plan, collaborate, align, execute, monitor and evaluate. This capability and capacity must be built over time as progress is made and scarce funding and investment is justified. There also needs to be an effective mechanism or mechanisms that bring the different parties together regularly to prioritise, coordinate and align activity.

Review finds "unhelpful behaviours"

In Hawke's Bay there seems to be genuine appetite to work through this and create an enduring delivery platform that supports and guides economic development activity in the region.

In early 2020, the five Hawke's Bay councils (Central Hawke's Bay, Hastings, Napier, Wairoa and the Hawke's Bay Regional Council)

"There is no one perfect way to deliver economic development activities in the region and we genuinely have options. An EDA is definitely an option, but it's only one of many on the table."

GUS CHARTERIS

commissioned a review of "rate-payer investment in business and industry support activities". This was undertaken in light of BHB's request for additional council funding. A review of this type is quite routine.

In commissioning the review, which looked at support for business and industry development exclusively (as opposed to areas like infrastructure, housing, and planning rules), the five council chief executives recognised that there "might be opportunities to improve regional coherence of economic development investments", particularly with their Long Term Plan planning about to kick off in October 2021. What they were very clear about was that they wanted a fit-for-purpose organisation and funding that would set Hawke's Bay up for success.

The review was conducted by the Giblin Group, with Gus Charteris at the helm. The resulting review document identified several key areas needing improvement and said although there were "no major gaps" in the types of services or activities being delivered, they were often "not well co-ordinated" and delivered at a "sub-scale" level. That translated: often a part-time person is responsible for delivering significant programmes, limiting the potential value of business, industry

and sector development investment in the Bay, and impinging the ability to leverage resources from both private investors and central government.

The review observed: “There is concern that there are unhelpful and competitive behaviours in the system and that this is constraining more effective collaboration. This is feeding a perception in the business community that the economic development system is fragmented and not particularly transparent.”

The overarching result of the review was clear. There was a need for Hawke’s Bay’s current economic development landscape to change - to improve clarity over roles and functions, to increase collaboration and coordination, and to invest in increased capability and capacity to deliver services that support business and industry development.

The shining light in the review is Hawke’s Bay Tourism (HBT).

“Hawke’s Bay Tourism is the exception to these concerns as it currently has the mandate, focus and funding to lead destination marketing activities for the region effectively,” says Gus.

“Hawke’s Bay has done a good job with HBT. It’s a highly functioning organisation with a high rate of return on investment. BHB tried to work to the same model, but in reality, businesses have struggled to understand the benefit BHB has brought to them, unlike HBT whose membership see a direct impact of their activities on their bottom line.”

Now what?

Discussions around whether or not the dis-establishment of BHB leaves the door open for the establishment of a regional EDA - and what such an EDA might look like - are currently being held in cafés and boardrooms across the Bay.

Councils have now had time to digest the findings of review and have endorsed moving to a second stage, to further explore the recommendations, with a particular focus on the importance of hapū and iwi collaboration.

“We will co-design the next step and identify where we’re heading with our Māori partners and our business partners. There is a desire to move forward and that is positive,” adds Gus.

“The key question councils are seeking more information on (and a survey for businesses will be coming out soon), is what type of business and industry support activities and

services are going to be most useful for Hawke’s Bay business, and is there a clear role for ratepayer funding?” says Gus. “There is no one perfect way to deliver economic development activities in the region and we genuinely have options. An EDA is definitely an option, but it’s only one of many on the table.”

Councils could decide to provide funding to a range of organisations with relevant capability to deliver particular activities and services; have a small team closer to councils which would focus on areas of priority; or a mix of options. The councils will work through the options with iwi/hapū and business once a clearer view is formed on the economic development activities and services that Hawke’s Bay businesses most value. The plan is that the form of delivery will follow need and function.

“One thing is clear, historically ratepayer-funded business support hasn’t really delivered for Māori or been developed with a Māori perspective or world view. This is a good time to have a different conversation and this is taking place across the country. Let’s talk about what kind of services are needed and then talk about the best way to deliver them.”

Identified in the review is the need for any new economic development activity to support Hawke’s Bay’s Matariki Regional Development Strategy and Action Plan. Matariki is unique amongst regional economic development strategies. It was launched by then economic development minister Steven Joyce in 2016, and is one of the first regional strategies to integrate social and economic aspects in order to support overall region wellbeing.

Gus says Matariki’s role is often misunderstood.

“There is a common misconception that Matariki is an economic development delivery agency. It’s not - Matariki is the region’s overarching regional development strategy.

“It serves a critical role in helping to identify a shared view of what success looks like for the region and our people; establishing the priority areas of work (particularly where collective action is required) in order to take us from where we are now to where we want to be; and providing a mechanism for bringing key people and organisations together on a regular basis to build the strong

“One thing is clear, historically ratepayer-funded business support hasn’t really delivered for Māori or been developed with a Māori perspective or world view.”

GUS CHARTERIS

relationships needed for collaborative work, and to connect, align and guide the elements of work needed to support Hawke’s Bay and the Strategy.”

What this next stage of the review is considering in terms of business and industry support is just one aspect of the broader Matariki strategy that encompasses economic and social wellbeing.

Alasdair MacLeod is a well-connected and vital cog in Hawke’s Bay’s economic development process. He has run economic development strategies across sectors during his time at Deloitte, is the board chair of Napier Port, former chair of Hawke’s Bay’s chapter of ExportNZ and was involved in authoring the Matariki strategy. He says the fragmented approach to the establishment of an EDA is frustrating.

“When I was asked to get involved in the development of a regional economic development strategy, I realised that the process was being run as an academic exercise by well-meaning people with PhDs. We managed to change that approach and get active engagement with Māori across the region. The resulting strategy is unashamedly focused on building from the bottom-up, rather than a top-down approach. The household and whānau are central, and the strategy had a strong focus on developing pathways into employment.

“However, with four local authorities and one regional council there are both physical and metaphorical boundaries, and this has undoubtedly plagued the implementation efforts.”

Over the past five years, capital investment in Hawke’s Bay from the DHB, the Regional Council, the Port and Hastings District Council tallies up to well over \$1 billion. “One of the actions proposed in the strategy was to take a coordinated approach to this capital investment and give preference to contractors who would hire, train and promote local labour. Sadly, none of this (which would cost nothing) has

been carried out,” he says.

Alasdair notes it’s a significant challenge to get local businesses’ buy-in for something like a regional EDA unless it has really clear mandate, vision and has the “teeth to get stuff done”.

“Funding follows success. We need to get more support from central government and more practical involvement from a collaborative group if we are to set up a successful EDA.”

As to the possibility of a government-supported EDA for Hawke’s Bay, Minister for Economic and Regional Development, Hon Stuart Nash pointed *BayBuzz* back to the five councils saying the “ball is in their court”, as any new EDA will be creature of the councils, not of government.

With all other regions having an EDA competing for government attention, one might surmise Hawke’s Bay would be disadvantaged in its dealings with central government on these matters without one.

“From 20 years working in economic development in central government, from their perspective it is important they have assurance that the regions have mechanisms to develop and set priorities, coordinate and align activity in areas of priority, and measure, track and evaluate progress. A regional EDA is one way to this, but only if it is truly regional and collaborative,” says Gus.

“There is no perfect model and there are a range of ways to provide confidence to government that Hawke’s Bay is clear about its priorities and has the collective support, work programme and funding (acknowledging that local funding can only go so far) to back up this important work.”

Working on the basis that there is a strong case and an appetite for change, if the recommendations in Giblin Group’s review are ultimately implemented, we will see the region’s councils working with Treaty partners and the wider community to develop a new non-tourism regional economic development entity, in the form of a joint Council Controlled Organisation (COO).

The COO would have enough investment to ensure it has both the scale and the mandate to fulfil and deliver economic development to the region. The review says “the COO will pick up current functions of BHB including retaining the operation of the Hawke’s Bay Business Hub and operate a ‘hub and spoke’ model across the region. Embedding a focus on Māori economic development within the entity is recommended, hence the need for co-design with Treaty partners”.

All that being said, these are recommendations only, and the writing is on the wall for at least one of the services mentioned. The Hastings Business Hub will meet its fate on 30 October when the Hastings District Council will “reassess” its future. So maybe it’s not too much of a stretch after all for Hastings-based businesses to travel to Napier to access NZTE, Callaghan Innovation, the Chamber of Commerce and other support services.

A clear view of where the process of establishing a new agency or organisation is heading will need to be clearer before October, when councils go into planning mode for their annual plans and set their budgets.

Whether or not a new entity comes to fruition, there is a real desire to



Referring to the Matariki regional economic strategy: “...with four local authorities and one regional council there are both physical and metaphorical boundaries, and this has undoubtedly plagued the implementation efforts.”

ALASDAIR MACLEOD

see change happen in our region and acknowledgement that central government is not well understood by the business sector. There will always be companies here who won’t need to access the services of an EDA and who are sophisticated enough to deal with central government on their own.

But for the rest, a conduit between local and government support is needed, as are business services that organisations like the Chamber provide.

Forget fiefdoms, it’s time to act collaboratively for the good of business and for the future of the region. ●



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**Is EV-erybody
ready for our
low carbon
future?**



Story Brenda Newth
Photos Tom Allan

With time called on petrol and diesel vehicles, New Zealand's drivers are facing a clean energy future.

What does it mean for Hawke's Bay drivers, addicted to their SUVs and utes? How prepared is the electricity sector, and what do consumers need to know and do?

In this article we talk to some of the players in the EV sector, profile two Hawke's Bay EV drivers, to find out where we are now, and what the road-map to an EV future looks like.

Electric vehicles are a hot topic and have sparked the interest and ire of many in the *BayBuzz* online community with a huge number of comments on articles.

Mark Gilbert, chair of Drive Electric, an advocacy group with members from across the EV ecosystem, says that July was a massive month for EV registration.

"To get 2,000 registrations (off the back of the increased subsidy) was huge. There's no reason for the growth not to continue, and for EVs to eat into petrol vehicle registrations on a monthly basis."

He warns that pricing, especially of second-hand EVs has gone up, due to supply shortages and demand growth.

"In reality, the rebate for used EVs, won't make them cheaper, but will help to keep prices at the same level. As for new cars, there's new models of retailing and not a lot of wriggle room on price as there has been for fossil cars. I expect that prices will come down over time; 2025 could be the year of price parity between EVs and fossil cars."

Touching on some of the myths of EVs, Gilbert says:

"Our charging infrastructure is developing, but needs more focus. In Europe there's a rapid charger for every 10 EVs. On that basis, we'd need 3,000 and probably don't have anywhere near that. As for range anxiety, the average daily distance that people travel is very low. Even the smallest EV with a 120km range can easily manage three or four days running. Newer models have greater range, with some Teslas close to 500km and new Mercedes around 1,000km."

Electric vehicles will create a new era of demand on the electricity network. The question on everyone's lips is can our electricity system cope? Can all the players plan effectively, working together to serve a fully electric vehicle fleet? It's hard to be confident that our electricity sector, found sorely wanting recently, has the smarts, the will, and the communication skills to deliver in a way that is good for consumers.

Sustainable electricity voice

Without bold leadership from government and regulators, paving the way for our clean energy future, New Zealand runs the risk of making the same mistakes as Australia and other jurisdictions, with regulation and policy failing to keep up with changes to the technology and consumer landscape.

SEANZ, the Sustainable Electricity Association of New Zealand - made up of energy generators, retailers, lines companies and solar and wind power specialists - says New Zealand needs

"To get 2,000 registrations (off the back of the increased subsidy) was huge. There's no reason for the growth not to continue, and for EVs to eat into petrol vehicle registrations on a monthly basis."

MARK GILBERT, CHAIR OF
DRIVE ELECTRIC

to be more ambitious when it comes to our electric vehicle targets.

Brendan Winitana, SEANZ chairman says: "Planning for New Zealand's electricity networks is designed around what will be needed in 10, 15, 20 years' time. But electric vehicles could completely change the mix in a (potentially) much shorter timeframe.

"Our members are already at work on this challenge, building smart energy solutions for Kiwi households and business owners and are at the nexus of this EV uprising. But if the smart home is going to be able to be effective we also need a smart network, and this is where the current problems lie."

A smarter grid would support increased competition and give consumers the opportunity to buy and sell power from their home systems, with potentially multiple trading relationships. But so far, there's little coordination, and Winitana is concerned that network planning is not keeping pace to solve a problem that is economically and technically complex.

"There is a distinct lack of process and integrated planning for building a more flexible electricity market and system which accommodates electrification and much more distributed energy resources (DER), where energy enters the grid from multiple sources,



including people's homes, not just the transmission network.

"If New Zealand got it right, the solution could be a world first. We need a process to engage a diverse set of stakeholders, including innovators, aggregators, technology developers and market participants. SEANZ and others from the DER sector need to be at the table," says Winitana.

Unison

In 2012, Hawke's Bay electricity lines company Unison Networks purchased one of the first electric vehicles in New Zealand, and has led the roll out of charging stations in its catchment to support early EV adopters.

BayBuzz sat down with two Unison execs recently, Nathan Strong (general manager commercial) and Nigel Purdy (group development manager, growth and innovation) to find out how the company is preparing for Hawke's Bay's EV future.

Unison is at the start of the journey to prepare for the mainstreaming of electric vehicles. And for those wondering, the company's EV demand scenario modelling shows that it doesn't face any significant challenges.

Nathan Strong explains: "The modelling that we've done showed that in 2035 with the EV uptake rates from the Climate Change Commission there is a small amount of additional investment

"As an EV driver, you can cop a bit of flak from the uninitiated (especially those who haven't driven an EV or even had a ride in one). But those are opportunities to educate others and breakdown the inevitable myths that come with the emergence of new and better technologies."

NIGEL PURDY

that we need to make in the network. In 2050 at 100% EVs ... even if we see a lot of that charging happening at peak time, there is a modest amount of additional investment required to support that. Doing nothing is not an option, but it (our modelling) is not saying that we'll be having problems that we can't take care of."

Getting people to charge overnight and away from the evening peak, avoids new investment in generation to meet the demand from EVs.

Controllability is key, explains Strong. "The more that we can build controllability into the system, the better we can manage a more renewable

generation fleet in terms of managing intermittent wind and solar. There's actually a rich opportunity with controlled EV charging to be able to support a higher level of intermittent generation coming into the system."

But it is very early days, in terms of EV adoption and the understanding of how things will work.

Purdy adds: "Broader understanding of the drivers that come together from both sides of the market - demand and supply - is a really important aspect. People want transport at least cost. We want best use of the electricity system and these drivers and incentives will come together, over time."

Pricing is one part of the equation, with a number of retailers already offering EV specific price plans to give owners the reward for charging outside of peak time.

Purdy gives the example of discount days used by petrol retailers: "As word gets around that (off peak) is cheaper... I am sure that will increase demand for off peak EV price packages. And that signal will come through to retailers."

"The entire market is interested and motivated to see off peak charging, it's just that we (as network operators) probably have a stronger interest," says Strong.

As well as encouraging consumers to charge off peak, Unison says it will need to take an active role in educating



“We’re living in a disruptive world, where old thinking no longer applies. We have to move on from the paradigm that every house has two or three cars in the garage. In the years to come, it won’t be necessary to own a depreciating asset like a car. There will be more car share programmes and new services for people that need to use an EV car, bike or scooter.”

MARK GILBERT

consumers ... and particularly electricians who are probably going to be involved in choosing the right kind of smart charger. On that note, most EVs can charge with just a regular plug, smart chargers are optional and facilitate faster charging.

Purdy says: “There’s lots of education to go on at the electrician level, and at the car sales level. Anecdotally, it can be difficult to get that advice.

“It’s just an additional amount of extra knowledge that we have because we’ve come in supporting things like public charging quite early, a few of us have EVs and quite a lot of us are electrical engineers and understand the basics of what’s needed, and we can help with that part of the uptake of these new electrical appliances.

“It’s about driving consumer

behaviour and making sure that the investments consumers might make today in higher capacity chargers are the right ones. We want to make sure that we send the signals right up front, so that people make the right decisions,” he concludes.

Consumers

The message is clear: the electricity sector needs to do its bit, and so do consumers. “There’s lots of spare capacity at night to charge electric vehicles,” says Strong.

Charging EVs off peak avoids stressing the network, and costly upgrades which could unnecessarily affect consumers. But do consumers understand this, or even care?

There is hope that consumers will do the right thing, with the right carrots

and sticks in place. A recent pilot by Wellington Electricity showed in return for a price reward, customers responded favourably to EV price incentives (cheaper off peak) and were willing to give up some degree of control of EV charging to their network company.

Looking at EV charging infrastructure across the Bay, there are eight public charging stations between Wairoa and Waipukurau, according to NZTA. There are also eight ChargeNet, one Chargefox and 11 Tesla destination chargers in the region.

Unison has seven public fast charging stations (located in Hastings, Napier, Taupō and Rotorua, as well as on the Napier-Taupō highway and in conjunction with Eastland Group on the Napier-Gisborne highway), that hosted nearly 8,000 charging sessions in 20/21 for just

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EV driver profiles



Emily Dobson

- Purchased first ever EV-hybrid July 2021 with used car EV rebate
- Proud owner of a Prius plug-in
- Other family members have EVs
- Getting twice as much mileage than before
- Usually charges: afternoon, via a standard power point
- Time to charge: 1.5 hours
- Would love to go fully electric

“I’m a keen environmentalist. I would love to go fully electric. For the price this car was a good option for us in both range and cost.”



Nigel Purdy

- Nissan Leaf owner since 2017, EV driver from 1992
- The driving experience is quiet and smooth with power-a-plenty
- Driven 60,000km in 4 years
- Saved around \$12k so far in fuel/maintenance
- Weekly “fuel” around \$10, compared to \$70 with fossil fuel
- Planning required for longer trips to incorporate charging
- Cheaper off peak rates for charging are easy to access and set up

“As an electrical engineer, the technology appealed, but so did the environmental aspect as an excellent way to ‘do our bit’ in terms of significantly reducing emissions.”

over 1,600 unique users.

The company has fulfilled its initial objectives for the EV charging network, Strong says: “We are now taking a supporting role, assisting others such as ChargeNet, DriveEV and other businesses who are adding to the public fast-charging infrastructure throughout the region.”

Looking to the future, Drive Electric’s Mark Gilbert says: “We’re living in a disruptive world, where old thinking no longer applies. We have to move on from the paradigm that every house has two or three cars in the garage.

“In the years to come, it won’t be necessary to own a depreciating asset like a car. There will be more car share programmes and other new services for people that need to use an EV car, bike or scooter.”

It will take time to change New Zealand’s 4.1 million vehicle fleet from fossil fuel to electric. Leadership and innovation from regulators and the electricity industry will be required, as well as consumers playing their part to ensure that the Government’s electric dream doesn’t turn into an electric shock. ●

For further information:

- www.driveelectric.org.nz
- www.unison.co.nz
- www.welectricity.co.nz/disclosures/pricing/evtrial/
- www.electriceaven.nz/NZ-Electric-Car-Guide-13June2021.pdf
- www.journeys.nzta.govt.nz/ev-chargers/



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Your sustainability choices

Increasingly investors are interested in how they can make their views about climate change and environmental sustainability align with their investment decisions.

This can make for some interesting governance discussions with the next generation and if applicable, any beneficiaries of trusts. A good first step in making decisions, or before you embark on any change, is to define your goals.

For example, our business has decided to sell our internal combustion vehicles in favour of EVs, install solar power and EV charging stations. We're motivated primarily by reducing our use of fossil fuel-derived energy sources, but also have the goal of ultimately reducing our energy bills.

Councils are frequently seeking feedback from residents on proposed large scale urban developments. We all understand the need for medium-density housing to reduce urban sprawl, but we're also concerned about the resulting rise in noise, traffic and a reduction of green space.

As consumers and as citizens, we're constantly faced with such trade-offs in making decisions around sustainability. In investment, it's no different. We want to do the right thing by the planet, but we also want to meet our long-term wealth goals.

Finding the balance

The good news is that it is now possible to build an effective investment solution that maximises your chances of getting to where you want to be financially, while reducing the carbon footprint of your portfolio and focusing on a host of other environmental and social variables.

The key to this approach to investment is to focus *first* on sticking to core principles, such as building your portfolio around the long-term drivers

of higher expected return, diversifying broadly to manage risk, and keeping your costs low.

Once those elements are in place, you can go about reducing your exposure to the companies with the highest level of greenhouse gas emissions 'intensity'. This refers to a way of measuring emissions relative to the size of the company in terms of its revenue. Obviously, a bigger company will often generate more emissions than a smaller company so you have to account for that.

You can go a long way to meeting your goals if you supplement your choices as an investor with your choices as a consumer and as a citizen.

At the same time, you can *overweight* those companies that have *lower* greenhouse gas emissions intensity. But that's not the end of it. What about all that coal and gas in the ground? We also want to account for the *supply* side of emissions, companies with large amounts of fossil fuel reserves which can be viewed as *potential* emissions to be generated once these reserves are harvested and consumed.

Alongside emissions and potential emissions, you can take account of other environmental issues like land use, biodiversity, toxic spills, operational waste and water management. And you can consider social issues like child labour, alcohol, tobacco, gambling and firearms.

It's important to understand that no single investment solution will ever tick every box for every person. But you can go a long way to meeting your goals if you supplement your choices

as an investor with your choices as a consumer and as a citizen.

For instance, while there may not be an option in your investment portfolio to invest in recycled plastic and paper, you could decide as a consumer to insulate your home with such products. No wind or solar farms in your portfolio? Why not switch to an electricity provider that relies solely on renewable energy?

Seeking advice

Of course, decisions around sustainability can often be made more complicated for an individual by the sheer volume of jargon involved. What does ESG mean, for instance? Socially responsible investing? Impact investing?

This is where a professional financial advisor can be valuable, helping you to navigate the technical jargon and all these choices to arrive at a diversified solution that meets both your personal values and your financial goals.

Ultimately, the job of your advisor is to help you achieve the dual goal of efficiently taking into account sustainability and social considerations while building robust investment solutions aimed at growing savings for future consumption.

The advisor will focus first on choosing an investment methodology that emphasises the sources of higher expected returns while minimising turnover and trading costs. Once this framework is in place, you can get to work on the other part.

Evaluating the companies

That second phase starts with evaluating companies on a broad array of sustainability measures across all industries. That means looking at companies across the whole portfolio and within individual sectors, with a

view to incorporating sustainability preferences while maintaining as much of the characteristics of the original strategy as possible.

Specifically, the worst carbon polluters across all industries are kicked out of the portfolio altogether.

Within each industry, the least sustainable companies are excluded, while the rest are overweighted or underweighted based on how well they rank among their industry peers. By using this scoring system, rather than an in-or-out screening process, we can preserve diversification while encouraging good behaviour.

Just as a weight loss program makes no sense without a set of scales, if you want to invest sustainability you need to be able measure the impact you're having! In a global sustainability portfolio, for instance, emissions intensity can be cut by 80% or more and up to 100% for potential emissions from reserves.

With social screens, we can take more of a black-and-white approach. So companies that draw a significant proportion of their revenues from tobacco, gambling, or one of the other proscribed activities can be excluded altogether.

Importantly, this process of screening and exclusions can be applied to fixed interest component of a portfolio as well as to the equity (shares) component. The principles and the approach are broadly the same.

Taking a global approach

A further consideration for investors in Australia and New Zealand is to be mindful of the impact of sustainability and social screens in markets that are already, by global standards, small and highly concentrated.

For instance, excluding large carbon-intensive companies like BHP Billiton or AGL Energy from an Australian share portfolio over the 28 years from 1990 would have led to a portfolio that looked significantly different to the market at times.

The less your bias to domestic stocks, the less likely you are of straying a long way from the index as large local companies become a smaller part of your total portfolio. And given the higher emissions intensity of Australia, shifting the weight to global equities also leads to a lower carbon footprint for your portfolio. Win-win in other words!

The key point to take away is that

investing well and sticking to your values around sustainability need not be incompatible concepts. But as always you have to take a systematic approach, one that observes the principles of diversification and targets the sources of higher expected return.

As we've seen, this process is made a lot easier by having an advisor who understands your goals, risk appetites and values.

Whoever said it's not easy being green? ●

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Circular economy begins with design

I'll hazard a guess that the last time a kettle, toaster or other electrical appliance in your house broke, you thought to yourself ... this should be repairable. However, I'm fairly sure you couldn't easily get it repaired or the repair was going to cost the same or more than a new model.

'Right to repair' – it's a term you'll hear more and more in the coming months and years. In Australia, the Productivity Commission recently released a draft report on the Right to Repair, looking at consumers' ability to repair faulty goods and to access repair services at a competitive price.

The EU passed the right to repair into law in March, meaning manufacturers of electronic goods must make their products repairable for at least 10 years. With our Waste Minimisation Act 2008 (WMA) one of the many things under review by the Government, perhaps it's our turn to get this right enshrined in law.

When we look at design, right to repair is one of the many ways to tackle our rubbish record on waste right from the get-go. Where recycling is largely the ambulance at the bottom of the cliff, further up the waste hierarchy – a much modified but still dominant guiding principle created by former Dutch politician Ad Lansink in the 1970's – we often see repair near the top. It is also a key piece of the circular economy puzzle.

Design anchors the circular economy

The circular economy sits in direct contrast to the wholly unsustainable concept of infinite economic growth from finite resources, which is the basis of our current 'take, make, waste' linear economy.

Where we need to get to is a circular economy – an economic model where there is no waste, resources

'Right to repair' – it's a term you'll hear more and more in the coming months and years.

are fully utilised, and the maximum value of those resources is then extracted before being fed back into the supply chain. Where a circular economy maintains or increases the value of resources, recycling (with some exceptions) seldom achieves this. It certainly has a place in keeping resources out of landfill, but recycling cannot be our focus moving forward.

Product design needs to lead the charge to this new model. We need to aim to design products to last longer, be repairable, enable products to be easily dismantled for both end of life and refurbishment, and ensure all components are labelled with internationally recognised material identification codes.

Repair not the only solution

Of course, not all products can be repaired or refurbished which means we must look to other parts of the waste hierarchy. Refusal is the ideal but that's not always practical and certainly not an option where products are mandated for safety reasons. Through our child car seat recycling programme, SeatSmart, we experience the frustration of a lack of design-led thinking at end of life.

The ideal for child car seats would be the ability to test whether we could safely extend its use once a seat reached its certified end of life – under current safety standards this is around six to 10 years depending on make and model. Unfortunately, to the best of our knowledge there is no capability to test seats in this way.

Without this, design is critical to

help this product be more circular, by improving the design of seats for dismantling and by ensuring all components are labelled. Up to 90% of a child car seat by weight is recyclable plastic and metal; however, poorly labelled plastic components mean around 15% of the seat can't be recycled for fear of contamination.

Identification technology is expensive and often unworkable for these largely dark coloured plastics. On the dismantling front, poor end-of-life design makes the separation of seat components difficult, time consuming, and costly with some seats taking over an hour to dismantle fully. Design-led thinking could both increase recovery rates and reduce cost.

Even the humble plastic bottle is an example of design not fully taking the product's end-of-life into account. While the average clear bottle made of PET is highly recyclable it often has a plastic sleeve around it which must be removed, otherwise (being a different kind of plastic) it contaminates the PET recycling stream. The lid is also a different kind of plastic and must be removed as is the ring which is left behind after the bottle is opened.

However, governments and business are making changes.

Forcing design change

In June the New Zealand Government announced the phase-out of difficult-to-recycle plastics and some single-use plastic items as part of its waste reduction and circular economy goals. Banning difficult-to-recycle plastics forces a shift to new materials or innovation at the design stage.

These bans are part of the tools available in the WMA but there is a strong desire from many within the industry to see the Act strengthened to include options such as the right to repair, minimum recycled content,



Wishbone Deign Studio are a family business in Wellington. The Wishbone Bike RE2 turns waste plastic into an award-winning bike for toddlers. It is made from recycled bottles and carpet, and is longer lasting, lighter weight and has lower carbon emissions than a steel bike. RE2 "Raw" colour components contain zero additives for outstanding recyclability. You can even send it back when you're done for reprocessing into more Wishbone Bikes!

minimum standards for longevity (useful for products such as a certain not-fit-for-purpose blender which recently went viral), mandatory labelling, decreasing toxicity and reducing mixed materials.

The opportunity provided by the review, and other changes already being implemented under the Act (like increasing the Waste Levy and bans), plus recommendations such as standardisation of kerbside recycling, will certainly push change back up the supply chain to producers and their designers where it belongs, rather than with consumers, councils and the environment.

Ahead of the game

Some companies have already started to think more circularly and are redesigning products, packaging and creating new revenue streams, while a raft of new entrepreneurs are taking advantage of the opportunities for new business models based on the circular economy.

There are commercial flooring companies like Auckland-based Inzide Commercial which combines the use of tiles and patterns to allow for easy replacement to extend the life of flooring, while also using recycled materials and stewarding used product back to the factory to be remade into new carpet tiles.

Global technology giants like Ricoh, Sharp and Fuji Xerox have long incorporated repair and refurbishment into their business models at a local level

which then naturally lends itself to easier dismantling at end of life.

Wishbone Design Studio in Wellington create iconic wooden and recycled plastic bikes which are engineered to grow with their young rider, while parts are easily available. What this small sample shows is that it can be done, it just requires the right mindset.

And that mindset is a product stewardship mindset: instead of designing a product simply to be sold, externalising the costs of its life cycle, these businesses consider the whole life cycle, internalise the costs and design their products to minimise their impact on the environment and communities.

Where that mindset is lacking, legislation is combining with consumer demand to drive the change.

At 3R we are busy working with many different stakeholders to create a circular economy driven by product stewardship and design-led thinking. I'm hopefully that in the years to come we will see an ever-growing shift to a better, more circular way of doing things. ●

Dominic works on sustainable solutions at 3R Group. 3R design, implement and manage 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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Demography matters

New Zealand does not have a good record when it comes to anticipating population growth. The country added another million residents to reach 5 million in March 2020, 11 years before the original forecasts.

The difficulty is that there are so many factors in play. Essentially, the core components are fertility, deaths and migration, both international and domestic. That is why StatsNZ talks about “projections”, not “predictions”.

The Long Terms Plans (LTPs) for the local authorities in Hawke’s Bay (which cover the period 2021 to 2031) are upbeat about future population growth.

How realistic are these forecasts?

Perhaps misleading is that New Zealand has just ended an extraordinary period of population growth. In 2011-12, as the Global Financial Crisis came to an end, New Zealand and its regions experienced very low growth as thousands left the country to live permanently in another country. In 2012 alone, 53,800 New Zealanders went to live in Australia.

Since then, the country’s annual population growth climbed and reached an annual gain of 2.1% through the 2013-20 period, compared to an OECD average which declined from 0.6% to 0.4% per annum in the same period.

What’s happening?

In 2013, births per women for New Zealand was still at a replacement level of 2.1; but by 2021, this had dropped to 1.6, meaning that the birth rate per woman was at a level that does not replace the existing population. I fully anticipate that this rate will decline even further as a result of Covid.

The second factor was ageing as the Baby Boomers arrived at the age of 65 from 2010 onwards. We’ll see a growing proportion of communities aged over 65. In the next decade, a

tipping point will be reached and there will be more over the age of 65 than under the age of 14.

But the key factor in driving population growth between 2013-20 has been the very high rate of immigration. Since 2013, the numbers of migrants arriving as permanent residents has grown significantly while the temporary migrant worker population in New Zealand has doubled.

When New Zealand went into lockdown in March 2020, New Zealand had just recorded an annual net gain of over 79,000 migrants, the highest ever in New Zealand’s migration history. There were also 221,298 migrants here on temporary work visas and another 82,000 on study visas.

In short, the very high population growth rates were a result of the very high levels of immigration.

What about Hawke’s Bay?

The first thing to say is that Hastings and Central Hawke’s Bay grew at the annual national rate of 2.1% during some of these years; Napier was slightly lower at 1.5%. Inevitably, this has put a strain on resources, not to mention having a major impact on local labour supply. But this growth will not continue. Projections anticipate a significant decline in these growth rates over the next two decades.

The Napier LTP is the only one that appears to indicate the likely trajectory from an annual rate of population growth of 1.5% to 0.4% in the late 2020s, and then down to a very modest 0.2% by the 2040s.

Hawke’s Bay, like the rest of New Zealand is now beginning to experience declining fertility. In the period 1996-2001, there were over 11,000 births locally (when the local population was smaller); by 2013-18, the number of births had dropped to 10,600. The population of the region

had grown by 17.5% but births had dropped by 4%. By the late 2030s, the number of local births will have dropped further.

In most centres, those aged under 14 make up about 20% of the local population currently. That will change. By 2038, this younger age group will comprise 17% of the population in Hawke’s Bay. This will be compounded by young adult out-migration from the region. There will be fewer younger people.

This fertility decline is especially true for Pākehā but less so for Māori. A growing proportion of Hawke’s Bay’s population will be Māori; by 2038, 33% of the local population will be Māori (the figure for New Zealand then will be 18.3%) and up from the current situation where 27% of Hawke’s Bay’s population are Māori.

Instead, the region will become old-dominant. Those aged over 65 will grow from 16% of the population to 31% in 2038. The combination of fewer births and more deaths means that natural increase (the number of births versus the number of deaths) will go from adding a 1,000 to the Hawke’s Bay population over each five-year period to only an estimated 200 people – or 40 additional people per year – by the 2030s.

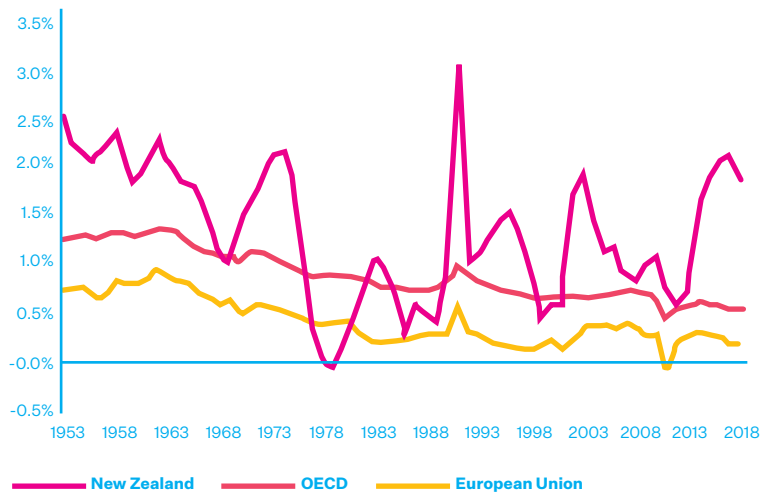
These two projections are solid and unlikely to change, which then leaves migration.

Migration myths

The history of attracting and retaining migrants to Hawke’s Bay is somewhat uneven. In the late 1990s, Hawke’s Bay saw a net loss of almost 1,000 international and domestic migrants each year. This turned into an annual net gain of over 2,000 people per year in the 2013-18 period.

Covid has brought a grinding halt to both permanent and temporary

Annual growth rate in total population, 1953-2018



According to the Productivity Commission on immigration, the three major population growth periods for NZ – 1987-1993, 2001-2007 and post 2013 – are all associated with major surges in international migration.

international migration. It has also reduced the number of returning New Zealanders. More on that soon. Given the extremely high numbers that were involved in the years up to 2020, it is very unlikely that the country – or Hawke’s Bay – will return to these levels anytime soon, if ever.

This is confirmed by the fact that the government has signaled that it is time to review the immigration policy settings and numbers involved. The Productivity Commission has been tasked with this.

Hawke’s Bay has done well in recent years in attracting migrants, especially internal migrants (those arriving from other local authorities). International migrants not so much.

The local LTPs all assume that growth will be driven by attracting migrants. There will certainly be those attracted for lifestyle reasons. But international migrant flows will be small and probably non-existent for some years (2-5?) as a result of Covid.

If Hawke’s Bay local authorities are betting on the attractiveness of the local lifestyle and the role of Covid in encouraging new ways of working, there will be an effect, but it might be rather smaller than anticipated.

Take one example, returning New Zealanders. Reading media stories and the reference in the Hastings LTP to “returning New Zealanders” offsetting the drop in international migrants, you would think that there is a significant increase in New Zealanders coming home. No, that has not happened.

In most years, more New Zealanders leave the country than arrive as

migrants (those who have been away for 12 months or more). But a quick comparison with the year before Covid and the year after lockdown shows that the number of returning New Zealanders has dropped by 48%! A recent MBIE survey of these returning New Zealanders show that they are most are likely to go to Auckland. There has been a major reduction, not an increase as many would think.

The net ‘gain’ in migrants is deceptive – a result of the fact that fewer New Zealanders are leaving (80% fewer). And we have just changed the dynamics of New Zealander arrivals and departures by opening a bubble with Australia with their labour shortages and higher pay. Are we going to see a major outflow over the Tasman?

More thought required

I do not want to dampen the optimism apparent in the local LTPs regarding future population growth, but I would really like to see a much greater emphasis given to:

- What drives a changing population profile;
- The possibility of low population growth (or stagnation); and
- How to attract and retain populations, including immigrants.

Population projections involve a range of assumptions. There is a modest indication of these in the Napier LTP and the Central Hawke’s Bay LTP bases its projections on a report by Squillion Ltd. But is this enough? What happens, for example, if population drives economic growth (labour and skill availability, maintaining demand for health and educational services,

leisure and cultural opportunities), rather than the other way around?

The Hastings LTP says that “increased population growth over recent years ... is expected to continue into the future, due to both lifestyle attractions and economic development opportunities”. I simply do not share this confidence.

Recent population growth is a product of a very unusual period of population history, for the country and the region. The elements that contribute to population growth are changing, and changing rapidly: declining fertility, rapid ageing, and low or modest international migration. There will be some internal migration but not at a rate that will keep population growth at recent levels.

Understanding population trends and drivers has major implications for local authorities as they seek to plan for a future that is going to be significantly changed by the combination of demographic transformation and the impacts of a pandemic – and that is without considering the changing nature of work.

The ageing of communities will have a wide range of impacts, from a reduced ability to afford increased rates because of the proportion who are now on a fixed income (superannuation) through to the need to provide very different facilities and services. An immediate issue is the provision of long-term care beds. Who pays? And where should they be located?

Declining fertility and reduced access to migrant workers will result in ongoing and significant labour shortages. How innovative, or effective, can local authorities be in compensating for such significant labour market issues?

The Economist recently talked about the growing “labour crunch” in the rich world and the need to consider the three”Ps” : “payments” (as in do we pay domestic workers adequately?); “passports” (what will post-Covid migration look like; and “patience” – there are no quick fixes. I would add “population” – the need to better understand and anticipate that the population growth Hawke’s Bay has experienced recently has come to an end. ●

Distinguished Professor Emeritus Paul Spoonley is the author of the *The New New Zealand. Facing Demographic Disruption* (2020, 2nd edition, August 2021).



What have farmers ever done for us?

Farmers are grumpy. Again.

In late July, tractors and big farm rigs rumbled through 57 cities and towns, snarling traffic and spewing diesel and petrol fumes into the atmosphere.

Ever since Shane Ardern's famous "Fart Tax" protest astride his tractor on Parliament's steps, the occasional outburst of agrarian agro has reminded me of the pub scene in Monty Python's religious satire, *Life of Brian*. With anger rising at the Roman oppressors, revolutionary leader John Cleese blurts out "*What have the Romans ever done for us?!*"

To Cleese's growing frustration, his fellow revolutionaries (the other Pythons) reply not with anger but one thoughtful answer after another: First "aqueducts," and then in quick succession "sanitation ... medicine ... education ... wine ... public order ... irrigation ... roads ... fresh water ... public health." Even angrier, Cleese yells "Shut up!"

Fart Taxes and Groundswell protests offer cathartic, Python-esque venting, lots of smoke, but less light. What's the real complaint?

As I understand the protests, farmers are objecting to new or expanding regulations for managing freshwater, protecting indigenous biodiversity, and reducing agricultural contributions — i.e., Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions — that cause climate change. Farmers don't like the burden of regulatory compliance: "I spend more time filling in forms than doing real farm work" is a common complaint.

As an urban New Zealander for the past 39 years, I'm wary of the accuracy of my perceptions of farming and farmers. The latest IPCC report states that humanity now confronts a "Code Red" situation due to climate change. Spending a day off the farm spewing

GHG's into the atmosphere seems a counterproductive way for farmers to endear themselves to a public increasingly concerned about our carbon emissions and climate change.

So, I asked my friend Mike Halliday for his view, informed by decades as a pastoral farmer near Patoka. Mike's heart was with the protestors. In his view, farmers support the Government's environmental goals — clean rivers, restored biodiversity, reducing GHG emissions — but object to regulations being implemented one after another and with little consultation.

As Mike puts it, the problem is not what the Government wants but how to get there. Farmers are being told to change their practices, with little support and a hint of blame.

As Mike puts it, the problem is not what the Government wants but how to get there. Farmers are being told to change their practices, with little support and a hint of blame. In his words, "In the 1980s farmers were told to 'stand on their own two feet', 'get more productive', and 'treat farming like a business'. Farmers responded in spades.....now we are seeing the repercussions!"

Baz Macdonald, a journalist raised in a dairy family, expressed similar views in a recent *Guardian* article. For decades, he writes, the "agricultural sector [fought] off incremental regulation" at a high cost to the environment. Rapid, unregulated expansion was "partly driven by Government" and "now the bill has come due."

The ultimate gift from government to the agricultural community is

exclusion from limitations on GHG. Agriculture contributes almost half of national GHG emissions, yet agriculture is excluded from the regulations until at least 2025. The task of reducing emissions falls to the rest of us until then. In that context, complaints from farmers about a modest 'Ute tax' seem petty.

But ... farmers have a point. Driven by economic imperative and sympathetic government policies, agriculture has achieved all that was asked. Propose a Python-esque question — "What have farmers ever done for us?" — and farmers can fairly and proudly reply: "Food. Drink. Clothing. Economic wealth. National identity. Just exactly what you asked us to do."

However, climate change alters all the rules.

If our country is to remain economically viable amid the stresses of climate change, our legacy of environmental damage has to be addressed. It's a very deep hole we have to dig our way out of, created by all of us.

The agricultural sector is being asked to lead the way to a future worth having. We want farmers to continue creating national wealth AND reduce GHG emissions AND clean up rivers AND restore declining biodiversity ... all in a world that is hotter, drier, far less predictable and more prone to fires, drought, deluge and invasive pests than ever.

The latest report from the Climate Change Commission, *Ināia tonu nei: a low emissions future for Aotearoa*, states the dimensions of the problem clearly:

"Farms are complex biological systems. The mix of animals, plants, soils and feed means that each farm has its own unique emissions profile... What an optimal system looks like will vary considerably between



Got that? Talk about multi-tasking. It's no wonder farmers are stressed. Where from here? I like the CCC report. It is the calm, rational voice answering John Cleese in *Life of Brian*. Is the Government likely to implement such a comprehensive scheme? Their tepid response to climate change thus far limits my optimism. I fear those cadres of advisors won't be seen on farms any time soon.

Nonetheless, we need farmers to lead in addressing the present multiple challenges. They have led before and can do so again, but the tasks are so large that the burdens must be shared by us all. I'm reasonably sure farmers, properly supported, would much prefer to be in their fields rather than on the steps of Parliament. ●

farms. Reducing emissions on-farm requires each farmer to be able to tailor solutions to their specific farm context, including the farm's climate, soil and geography ... Farmers will need advice from expert farm advisers to estimate what their farm emissions are and to identify how they can optimise their farm system

to reduce emissions and address other environmental and business objectives. Developing these plans across the tens of thousands of farms in Aotearoa will take time. It will also take time to upskill farm advisers so they can provide advice on the comprehensive range of issues farmers will need to consider."

Charles Daugherty is Emeritus Professor of Ecology, Victoria University. Awarded an ONZM for his work on tuatara ecology and management. A former trustee of Zealandia, he's involved with Biodiversity Hawke's Bay since retiring to Hawke's Bay, serving as chair of the trust board, but writing in his personal capacity.

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The FiTS team: Wai Tupaea, Bridie Thomson, Sophie Watkins and Cam Lithgow.
Photo: Florence Charvin

Planning a Fringe Binge?

So, you've heard about Fringe in the Stings (FiTS) and not sure what to do next, let me help you plan a Fringe Binge. First, it helps to understand what a Fringe Festival is.

A Fringe festival is literally on the fringe of an arts festival. Traditionally set up by artists that weren't invited to the lead festival (think Edinburgh) who put on performances outside of the main venues and institutions, to complement what was programmed elsewhere. Often the Fringe events were cheaper, independent, experimental, and condensed.

Why do we have a Fringe in the Stings (Hastings for those of you that aren't up with the lingo)? Hawke's Bay Arts Festival was established in 2015, and like clockwork, the Fringe festival popped up the following year. The birth child of Gerard Barron, Lucinda Sherratt and others at Common Room, who, one night were jamming ideas on how to collaborate and activate the city.

If I recall correctly, I might have witnessed a glimmer of inspiration for this, when one Ian Thomas came into the Playhouse Theatre costume hire, where I was volunteering at the time, looking for a gorgeous medieval dress to wear for a Cinderella pantomime, to be performed by friends for friends at the Common Room. Don't quote me, but this feels like the start of what is now FiTS, and ultimately feels like what FiTS still is.

Fast forward six years, and FiTS has a committee, a professional website, and artists coming from across the country.

Why does FiTS work so well? Number one, the Stings is cool. It's the place to be. It's where things happen, things that are a little independent, experimental, and unconventional. It's where people take risks, and they seem to be paying off. Number two, it's organised by cool people, that don't take things too seriously (or just seriously enough). Number three, cool performers. I can't speak for everyone, but

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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Previous FiTS shows. Photos: Floyd Pepper

last FiTS, my sister's hilarious partner (Austin Harrison - a comedy improv performer) performed his show, *Magnus Steele*. I think he's cool too.

To have a successful Fringe in the most Fringe way possible, you need venues that the audience feel at home in; a local haunt, where there is personality in spades. This makes sense for FiTS, as some of the host venues last year were Common Room, Spaceship, Toitoi, Albert Park, and the Hastings Pipe Band Hall. This year, there are a whole swathe of new venues, that will undoubtedly take FiTS to new heights.

Honestly, it's not uncommon for the fringe festival to surpass the lead arts festival in popularity - watch this space.

While I write this, registrations for this year's FiTS have now closed, the programme is being finalised as we speak, and I'm told there are going to be two weekends of pure entertainment. Expect a range of comedy, edgy music, plays, and poetry performances. Expect visual arts married with DJs, and paint shows. Expect a bit of classical music, and hilarious diary sharing's, funky songs with light shows, risqué moments and

quirky monologues. Expect lows and highs. Just experience Fringe in the 'Stings on the 1st, 2nd, 8th and 9th of October.

"Why two weekends?" you ask... I wondered the same myself, and it turns out, two weekends are better than one: more shows, more energy, happier volunteers. So, the second, better question to ask is, why only the weekends? This is where you get into the heart and soul of FiTS - it's about making the performances accessible to the people that bring it to life: the hospo industry.

Given the people are at the heart of FiTS, I decided to talk to some friends who are involved and get their spin on FiTS.

Katie Nimon: Hi Bridie

Bridie Thomson: Hiya, Hello.

KN: What got you involved in - do you call it FiTS?

BT: I just call it Fringe. And if someone requires me to extrapolate, I do.

KN: Ok cool, Fringe sounds cooler, I'm going to call it Fringe. What got you involved in Fringe?

BT: Um, I like the arts, and have always been involved in the arts however I can. My friends were running the show, and I just happened to be at the same place at the same time, with my camera. It was kind of natural really. Bridie, do you want to take photos? Yes.

KN: So, burning question, were you involved in the Hawke's Bay Arts Festival first?

BT: Yes, I've been an artist assistant and an usher --

KN: And a performer, I know this, because we performed together.

BT: We did! In the Spiegel tent!

KN: Would you say most people came to Fringe from the HBAF?

BT: I think it's a pretty comfortable 50/50, some are HBAF ex-pats, and others are locals that have more of a Fringe vibe. It's quite different.

KN: So, what part do you play in Fringe?

BT: At the moment, I'm social media, and a friendly face, and a helping hand if you will.

KN: So, is that kind of what Fringe is? Everyone just mucks in.

BT: Yea. Yea.

KN: Let's say it's the opening night of Fringe. Does it start on a Friday night?

BT: Well, it used to start on a Thursday night, followed by a Friday night, and then a Saturday, Sunday weekend. Because we just had one weekend, Sunday was mostly pack out.

KN: Ok, so how does it look this year?

BT: Because we're ever expanding and increasing and wanting to broaden our horizons, and don't want to burn ourselves out, we're doing two weekends, so more people have more opportunity to come along, say if they're busy one of the weekends.

KN: Will there be a Thursday night this time?

BT: No.

KN: So, where would I find you this Fringe, on opening Friday night?

BT: You won't find me; I have another

show on opening weekend (the burden of being a theatre lover). I'll be online though, posting screeds of content. Still getting amongst the fun, but bringing the festival to life, virtually, from wherever I might be. Weekend two, I will be there in full force. I think I've agreed to several shows...

KN: Oh, so we'll see you on stage.

This is literally by the people for the people.

BT: Yes. Yes.

KN: Do people usually come to more than one show?

BT: Oh yea. It's very unlikely that people only go to one show.

KN: So, people binge on Fringe, so to speak?

(Bridie laughs)

KN: Anything you want people to know?

BT: Yes, we're always looking for more keen faces. You must love the arts.

KN: Are you looking for volunteers then?

BT: We'll always be looking for volunteers, so check out our website and fill out a form or get in touch with our team.

KN: Any final words?

BT: Talk to me, I'm lonely. You can find me on Instagram @fringestings, or Fringe in The Stings on Facebook.

Katie Nimon: Hey Wai,

Wai Tupaea: Kia ora Katie! Thanks for having me and asking me to talk about the Fringe with you.

KN: How did you get involved in Fringe?

WT: I got involved because I was craving something bigger than myself. At the time I had just turned 20 and I had just finished my internship at Council, I was feeling a bit lost. In 2018, the GM of the business association at the time, Kelly Nolan asked me to volunteer, and I was super keen. I had no idea what it was, but I fell in love with it. Gerard Barron and Jess Soutar-Barron had also been quite instrumental in mentoring me prior to my Fringe involvement, and it sort of happened naturally.

KN: So, what part do you play in the Fringe team now?

WT: Over the past three years I have played a number of roles in Fringe in the 'Stings. From being a friendly but firm security dude at the back of Common Room Bar, to volunteer coordinator, then secretary of our governing committee and now chair of the festival. I'm learning as I go but I have a hugely supportive and creative team.

One thing about Fringe is that everyone who wants to participate is given a role. It might not be a paid role or even if it is, in comparison to other events it's not much. We all do it because we want to build up opportunities for people to enjoy the arts in Heretaunga.

KN: Do you think you'll get on stage this year then?

WT: No, no I'm not. Unless someone's doing a show about a 23 year old trying to run a regional fringe festival. I think that would be a laugh. Jokes aside, I think for now I am more than happy to run around in the background, making sure things are happening.

KN: What do you think makes Fringe special?

WT: For me, it's about activating Hastings regardless of how much money we have. We're not a normal festival in that we're run on a very small budget, we span across 4 - 6 venues in the CBD. We're specifically for Heretaunga and the wider Hastings community. We're about activating our place here - that's what makes it special for me.

KN: It's a "locals" event, but will people come from out of town for Fringe this year?

WT: Definitely, looking at the interest from out-of-town applicants this year has been so humbling. We've received over 50 applications this year, many of whom are out of town.

KN: Do you think there was a defining moment that started Fringe in 2016?

WT: For those before me, I believe the moment for them was that Hastings had been missing out on accessible and affordable opportunities for arts activation. Things were happening but regional events had often occurred outside of the Hastings City Business District. The purpose of the Fringe festival was simple: to create a bold, local, affordable and strollable festival for all of Hawke's Bay, but in Hastings.

KN: The artwork for Fringe in The Stings is really cool, who came up with it?

WT: The amazing Joe Rowntree also known as JR The Free. Joe is a great guy with a wonderful gift. We have wonderful people in our community who have contributed loads to the festival including our logo designers in the past (Morag Shaw and Adrian Thornton and many others). We love and appreciate the mahi Joe has done and we will always cherish it.

KN: Where are you going to be on the opening night of Fringe?



Wai Tupaea, Bridie Thomson and Sophie Watkins. Photo: Florence Charvin

We have a wonderful team of volunteers that've come on board and helped build relationships with business owners. Many venue owners have seen what's happened with Fringe and wanted to get involved. It's a festival for all people, and one that is underpinned by the value of community empowerment and activation.

WAI TUPAEA

WT: Opening night of Fringe, I'm going to try to be everywhere. I imagine I'll be a little bit stressed, but excited and filling-in where I'm needed, as well as fighting fires and answering questions. If you see me around, come say hi! I'm always here and available to chat about Fringe, or if you want to support the festival in some way let me know. We'll always be happy to have you on board.

KN: I hear there are some cool new venues this year, how did that come about?

WT: We have a wonderful team of volunteers that've come on board and helped build relationships with business owners. Many venue owners have seen what's happened with Fringe and wanted to get involved. It's a festival for all people, and one that is underpinned by the value of community empowerment and activation.

KN: If someone was planning a Fringe binge, what approach would you recommend?

WT: I would approach it ravenously. If you have a big appetite for performing and visual arts that are a little bit edgy, a little fringe-y we've got four days jam packed with shows. Bring your kids to our day shows at our public spaces, have a look at our tasters and trial out what you might like, then, if you like what you see, try a show at each venue or more than one at each venue.

KN: Is there anything else you want potential Fringe bingers to know?

WT: We're about accessibility. If you're planning a Fringe binge, this is certainly the event for you. Our tickets are no more than \$20 and our venues are in close proximity to each other. Once

you're finished with one show, have a wander down a couple of shops, most likely there'll be another show going or buskers around, or music floating through the air playing off a balcony.

KN: Do you think other regions are noticing Fringe in the Stings now?

WT: Yes. We are building up relationships that have already been established in Wellington. We're members of the New Zealand Association of Fringe Festivals. I am wanting to continue to build relationships with the big fringes but also create a network of regional fringes allowing us to share resources and collaborate with other events. We have a lot of out-of-town interest in our festival and I forecast that this will continue to grow.

KN: Any final words from Wai?

WT: Fringe in the 'Stings' programme will be made available from Blossom Parade weekend onward. All information on how to book tickets, where the venues are, and what shows are on will be on our website: www.fringeinthestings.co.nz and on our facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/Fringeinthestings>. If you're keen to support or donate to our festival, information is also available on our website. ●



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I'll be the judge of that!

Making judgement is a core human behaviour, and undoubtedly a necessity.

This goes right back to the time an early hunter exclaimed: "That woolly mammoth is bigger than I judged it to be from a distance". Followed by: "I hope my judgement is correct and I can jump that ravine to get away from the bloody enormous mammoth". It's tied into the fight or flight choices we make.

The advent of online food reviews combines both flight and fight as we run home from the restaurant to post our fighting talk online.

The restaurant and hospitality industry is an area we're all experts in and feel frequently obliged to comment on. We have in large part gleaned our expertise from the comfort of our own lounge. Watching a series of *Masterchef* puts our knowledge on the same level as a chef with four years' experience. Three series of *Masterchef* and two of Gordon's effing *Kitchen Nightmares* and one's toque is tall and full of pleats.

And let's not be coy about the pleasure of judging restaurant experiences. Many of us really enjoy the judge's seat, myself included. Although I am much less judgy than I was when I knew less about the subject. As the saying goes: A little knowledge is poisonous.

Often neglected by the bold budding critic is the truth that your judgement, or point of view, is just that, it's yours, your paradigm, your perspective based on your life's experiences, your state of mind, your mood, and your taste buds. Thus, your judgement is valid. But is it worthy of sharing? Generally not, and certainly never as a definitive review of a dining establishment's performance.

A restaurant experience is a snapshot of a moment that will never repeat in exactly the same way again. Our enjoyment is dependent on many components: dining companions, lighting, the loos, the chair, wait staff,

The advent of online food reviews combines both flight and fight as we run home from the restaurant to post our fighting talk online.

ambiance, noise level, how our day has gone, and lastly, the food. Judging food is dependent on mood and taste buds, and there are so many permutations to consider.

Here's what to consider when judging an eatery. (Just my opinion, of course.)

First judge your mood. If it's a bad one, then why are you going out to dine? Then take note of your palate. If you've scoffed half a packet of bhujia mix and three bacardi breezers you should consider whether you're best placed to write an opinion. If the suggested wine match is a glass of chardonnay then don't be surprised if a jug of Tui doesn't complement the dish. Next, benchmark your views against the chef's vision. If the menu says 'delicate flavour' then expect that and don't complain about it.

And be fair! You don't have to be kind but fairness is crucial. Finding fault then only calling that out online is not fair.

Newsflash! Tell the restaurant manager what you think directly. Good or bad, just say it. Face to face. You don't have to go scurrying off to your keyboard to find an audience for your opinion. Be direct and honest. And never, never, never be two-faced. If you can't muster yourself to be honest at the table then keep quiet. Don't go back on your judgement.

Perhaps you have replied "very nice thank you" to the waiter's inquiry, but during the drive home you have further digested the establishment's offering and decided it wasn't nice at all.

It's often a comment from a peer that leads to a sudden change of view. How quickly your opined satisfaction with a pleasant night out can be crushed by a "You didn't go there did you!?"

We are so quickly undone by rising doubts in our ability to judge the quality of the dining experience. Somehow the disdain of our choice of restaurant has undermined our recollection of enjoyment. Our judgement has been judged! Are we up for that?

Recently The Thirsty Whale in Ahuriri was declared among New Zealand's Top 10 places for 'everyday eats' according to a leading online dumping ground for uneducated judgement. The moment I read this happy news I rushed excitedly to read reviews. Sure enough, there on TripBook or FaceAdvisor, lay the proof of the pudding: diametrically opposed, strongly held views, of the same establishment. Over two hundred comments! Far more than most other posts about the pub.

Many loved the food, others not so much and one declared that they "wouldn't take their dog to eat there".

"Always good food.... Love this place"

"hell no lol"

"What a joke, shittiest place any time of the day"

"Awesome! Love the food here."

It's clear we have our own views, so let's just call them that ... views. We don't really know what we're talking about, but we know what we like.

We judge and are judged. We are hardwired to pass judgement and too thin-skinned to receive it.

I recall the occasion I was awarded a 2 out of 10 for my debut presentation of roasted cauliflower - in my own home! - and, just like my Cro-Magnon ancestor who failed to impress his cave-mates with his first attempt at confit of mammoth, I carried on regardless. ●





Kuru Taonga – Voices of Kahungunu

A Māori perspective on the history of Te Mata-a-Māui

MTG Hawke's Bay Tai Ahuriri reopened on July 23 after many months of closure, during which time some very necessary and welcome changes have occurred.

The water sprinkler system we've all heard about has been upgraded. But in a more significant way, the future security of the Hawke's Bay Museum collections has been secured with the purchase of a new storage building located at 307 Queen Street East, Hastings (the former Briscoes site).

A Lotteries funding grant of \$5.47 million will pay for the conversion into a state-of-the-art museum facility, well away from the tsunami zone of the Napier waterfront! Vivality, the new facility provides room for the collection to grow while allowing greater accessibility by the public for guided tours and research projects.

'Kuru Taonga – Voices of Kahungunu' – a Māori perspective on the history of Te Mata-a-Māui

At MTG, the exhibition space devoted to taonga Māori has been completely made over and presents a freshly designed and curated exhibition telling the stories of people, events and taonga, a permanent exhibition that will over time be revised and refreshed as new objects or themes are introduced and new stories are told.

Leading the curation of *Kuru Taonga* exhibition is Te Hira Henderson (Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti Porou, Ngāti Pākehā). His role is to bring a Māori perspective to our histories, to tell us of the significant events that changed Aotearoa forever.

Pou whakairo, found during excavation work during the draining of the swamp at Ōmaranui pā D31 Poupou, 1860-1888, from whareniui Photo: Tom Allan.

Henderson has engaged extensively with the Māori community during his working life as a Māori broadcaster and is of the Waipatu marae and hapu Ngāti Hinemoa, Ngāti Hori and Ngāti Hawea. He joined the MTG staff in 2018 and will lead *Kuru Taonga* exhibition tours with presentations that may shock and surprise in his unique style of history, humour and blunt truth.

He describes the period of early European settlement of New Zealand as a time of destabilization and confusion for Māori, with the introduction of new technologies such as the musket and its terrible consequences in the intertribal Musket Wars of the early 19th century. Later, from the 1850s, of land loss and injustice of the settlement years that saw them permanently separated from their ancestral lands from which Māori have never culturally or economically recovered.

Kuru Taonga is an oral history of Hawke's Bay from pre-European times - from the beautiful and spiritual Aotearoa-origin stories of Rangī the sky father and Papa the earth mother, of the whakapapa of the ancestor Kahungunu and his descendents, through to our own times.

Within the darkened exhibition space, pou, surfaced with paua shell, stand sentinel, each one fronted with a video presentation by the human taonga - the history holders of the current generation, telling the stories of the significant Māori events and identities alongside a selection of artifacts and objects originating from Hawke's Bay's predominant iwi, Ngāti Kahungunu.

The taonga (photographed) connect to events that in some way shaped Te Mata-a-Māui, Hawke's Bay and come from the collections of taonga Māori held by the MTG Hawke's Bay

"Past practices by museums have created challenges for modern curators, in that the significance and connections to the objects were not always recorded. In times past collectors were looking for curiosities but didn't necessarily collect the stories that went with them."

LAURA VODANOVICH,
MTG HAWKE'S BAY DIRECTOR

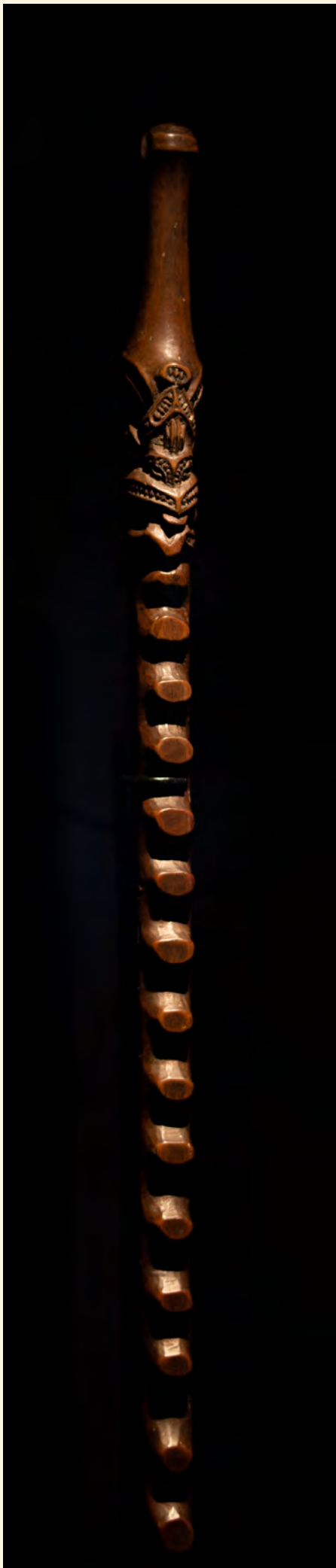
Museum Trust, considered to be one of Aotearoa's most prestigious collections.

The collections will be housed in the new building in Hastings (yet to be named) with the foundation of the collection being those of Sir Donald McLean, Thomas Ebbett and Greacen Black that were gifted or purchased by the Museum Trust.

Sir Donald McLean's collection was acquired over ten years from 1936 to 1945 and contained over 850 valuable objects including taonga Māori and historical archives. Many of the taonga were originally given to Sir Donald by iwi in the 19th century.

Thomas Ebbett's collection was purchased in 1949 and contained over 500 taonga Māori and in 1937 the large collection assembled by Greacen Black of Gisborne over many years was offered to the museum containing both European objects and taonga Māori.

"Past practices by museums have created challenges for modern curators, in that the significance and connections to the objects were not always recorded," says Laura Vodanovich, MTG Hawke's Bay director. "In times past collectors were looking for curiosities but didn't necessarily collect the



Rākau whakapapa / Genealogical staff associated with Te Hāpuku, ariki (paramount chief) of the Ngāti Kahungunu of Heretaunga. Collection of Hawke's Bay Museums Trust, Ruawhāro Tā-ū-rangi
Photo: Tom Allan.

stories that went with them.” Because of this, museums tended to present ‘dead’ displays of curiosities that while visually interesting, provided little insight of their true history or of the person or culture they connected to.

Today museums are more likely to engage visitors by talking to them directly through the medium of story-telling. *Kuru Taonga* has Hawke's Bay's living storytellers as they kōrero directly to us through the medium of video. Sandy Adsett and Jacob Scott, and Mei Whitiri (who was the model for Pania) recalling events within living memory, while Rose Mohi, Patrick Parsons, Ngahiwi Tomoana, Gerry Hapuku and Robert MacDonald (who sadly died the day after he spoke to camera) tell the stories of the ancestors, events and the significance of the taonga.

The stories in *Kuru Taonga* are of tragedy and human interest - it is a walk through our history, so when you visit do give yourself time to be immersed in a fascinating experience. The stories and taonga come out of the time period when Māori were losing their land, when they were being dragged into an economic system they didn't understand, facing land title laws they didn't comprehend, and a European world view of which Māori had no conception.

Pākehā were welcomed here in Hawke's Bay. Relationships between Pākehā and Māori were very good pre-Treaty, the local iwi had enthusiastically embraced Christianity and the ‘one God’ concept, enjoying trusting relationships with the missionaries.

“They believed that the Crown would provide protection and security through its laws from the lawlessness being experienced in this chaotic period,” says Te Hira Henderson.

“Ngāti Kahungunu called out to Pākehā to come and settle here. Māori were excited by the technologies these foreign people brought with them. They could see the potential of the metal tools, the new technologies and they embraced the trade opportunities with the settlers. It was for these reasons that Māori in this area didn't go to war with the settler government.”

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Settlement did not take hold till the 1850's when the floodgates of immigration opened as the New Zealand Company began promoting land for sale to the British public, who responded to the idea of freedom of opportunity, of adventure in a fresh new land, free of class division and rigid traditions.

Today, through education there is a much greater awareness of the true significance of the impact of settlement upon Māori.

Vast amounts of research have been conducted by Māori scholars - the recording of oral histories, Treaty Settlement research to support Treaty claims, and Pākehā historians who have been sifting through the archives and documenting accurate accounts of the events, attitudes and actions of the colonial government.

It is being heard and understood and our minds are being opened to the principles of the Treaty, as this comment suggests.

Te Hira Henderson: “In the 1970s Syd Jackson was saying the same things as we are saying now and he was regarded as a dangerous radical. But the climate is changing and new generations of Pākehā are listening. We have a new breed of Pākehā, a new breed of Māori who are working to bring about these changes in attitude.” ●



Readers and Writers Festival



The Hawke's Bay Arts Festival is upon us and, as chair of the Hawke's Bay Readers and Writers Festival that runs within in, I think we have an absolute cracker of a line up for you.

A good Readers and Writers programme reflects current issues and thinking, gives recognition to a diverse range of people in our community and a voice to the writers representing these groups. It is there to provide food for thought, invite readers into writers' worlds, and above all, to be absolutely, marvellously enthralling and inspiring.

'Identity' is a word that has evolved, the subject of social media conversations, debates and screaming matches. It strikes fear into the hearts of those who fear change and signals emotional and physical liberation for those who have been living a lie.

Lil O'Brien (*Not That I'd Kiss a Girl*) came out as queer and was promptly chucked out by her parents. Beloved children's author Kyle Mewburn (*Faking It*) describes her life pre-transition from male to female as akin to being 'strawberry jam in a spinach can'. We're putting these two on a stage with the sharp, witty, empathetic Tom Sainsbury, and the result can only be greater understanding from those who currently don't 'get it' (and I really hope will come and listen) and relief from those who are living it and want to talk about it.

Family harm is a phrase that evokes gut wrenchingly deep emotions. Guilt, shame, grief, pain - feelings that get buried, and fester. Let's talk about this. Let's talk about how to heal, how to stop the cycle.

At *My Fathers Barbers*, Mataio (Matt) Faafetai Malietoa Brown offers men a haircut with a difference: a safe space to be seen and heard without judgement. As a survivor of family violence he shares his story with his clients as a way to foster vulnerability, healing and connection. Matt and his wife, Sarah, have created the global anti-violence

I'm so excited about this programme and I know you're going to find something that will change your life in it.

movement - *She Is Not Your Rehab* - and have recently released the book of the same name. They will be joining us to tell their story of healing and to get that message out there.

There's a reason we read crime novels and I've obsessed about this before. We meet our fears and our demons in fiction, face them down and survive them. Fiction reflects the concerns of the zeitgeist, and there have been some nasty, high profile cases where the blame has been put on the victim. We've all done it, I reckon. Turned the focus away from the perpetrator and back onto the person who should or shouldn't have been doing this or that.

In *Dead Girls Don't Lie* Jacqueline Bublitz (*Before You Knew My Name*), Becky Manawatu (*Auē*) and Tina Clough (*Folded*) will take us through the process of giving the story back to the victim, and finding the light in the darkness.

In a very special session, *Mana/va*, chaired by Nafanua Kersel, Tusiata Avia and Karlo Mila dig in to some of the thorny issues that need a conversation.

"Va is the space between...not empty space, not space that separates but space that relates, that holds separate entities and things together in the Unity-that-is-All, the space that is context, giving meaning to things. [In Samoan] manava = mana/va = stomach (mana = power, va = space) and manava = breathe." - Albert Wendt.

Tusiata's latest volume is entitled *The Savage Coloniser* and pulls no punches. Karlo's *Goddess Muscle* traces the effects of racism, poverty, violence, climate change and power on Pasifika peoples. Not to be missed.

This issue of *BayBuzz* focuses on

mental health and it's easy to relate pretty much everything back to this theme. Here's a session that will resonate with the many, many people who find solace in their backyard. Kath Irvine is coming to tell us how to create an edible backyard.

Her new book, entitled, you guessed it, *The Edible Backyard*, shares the dream she's dreamed from her 0.4ha garden in Horowhenua - that every Kiwi could potter into their garden, no matter its size, in slippers and nightie and pick something that they grew to chuck in their breakfast. Kath will be in conversation with Lizzie Russell, and she'll be doing a workshop at Green Door. This will be energising stuff.

Our *new normal* is wreaking havoc on trying to plan anything, but we have to give it a crack. We're extremely excited to have two international authors in our programme, and extremely nervous about them actually getting here. The incredible Craig Silvey (*Jasper Jones*, *Honeybee*) is coming to take our breath away with his tales of how hope, and the most wonderful of human natures, get us through the darkest of times. Who could be more inspiring that an author who urges us to "Find out who you are, and live that life."

Somewhere in between filming and jet setting, Graham McTavish is absolutely intending to join us so we can armchair travel with him through time, space and other worlds as we listen to tales of hobbits, *Outlander* and his hilarious trip around Scotland with co-star Sam Heughan, detailed in their book, *Clanlands*.

There's more too - I just don't have the word count to fit it all in. I'm so excited about this programme and I know you're going to find something that will change your life in it. Look out for the Hawke's Bay Arts Festival brochures and hop on to www.hbreadersandwriters.co.nz to browse and book your tickets. ●



Head space

This is personal. And private.

I don't like to talk about it because I think it's a sign of weakness and because I know most of the people around me are worse off and less lucky than I. And I don't like to complain.

Plus it's a bit self-indulgent, not to mention pricey. But it's you, and I trust you, so I'll fess up. Even though we're friends, and friends should be there for friends, and friends should be enough, I've been seeing someone behind your back ... a counsellor. That's right, I'm having my head shrunk by a certified professional.

I'm from one of those 'we don't get sick in this family' families. We are an armour-plated bunch of concrete drinking, cement-pill popping, 'hard-en-up' and 'give-it-a-rub' tough nuts. If you can't cure it with a-cup-of-tea-and-a-sit-down it's obviously all in your head. And that's where it should stay. Moaning was meant for a natter with a neighbour or a chinwag with a gal-pal. Paying someone to listen while you whine? Check your privilege!

I used to lean on my mates when things went pear-shaped. But they had lives to live and their own stuff to deal with. They didn't need my worries on top of their own. Mutual understanding didn't factor because my plate was full. I had no more to give to me and mine let alone take on them and theirs.

Three years ago I saw a counsellor almost by accident. I meant to go as part of a story I was writing for this very rag: deep-dive reporting, immersive gonzo journalism. But then the counsellor in question asked me how I was.

The series of locked gates I was living behind flung open and I told her. Afterwards, I sat in my car for an hour trying to shove everything back inside before picking up the kids from school at 3pm. Us mothers can have full mental breakdowns, as long as they happen between 9 and 3 on a weekday during the school term.

Even though we're friends, and friends should be there for friends, and friends should be enough, I've been seeing someone behind your back ...

To keep the black dog at bay I tried to apply the remedies laid down by my tūpuna: sleep, water, a brisk walk, sensible food. And as much as - in theory - sharing worries halves them, it can also double them. Empathy can amplify, exacerbate and accelerate the issue so the woe you had refuels in the retelling.

Besides, most of my friends have no real idea what they're talking about, and limited actual mental health experience beyond their own. Most of their advice comes from watching *Gilmore Girls*. Only two have studied counselling and neither of them have finished their qualification yet. My mates mean well, but like me they have no expert knowledge to back up their helpful suggestions.

This year I was back in front of the counsellor after one of those friends asked if there was anything useful she could do for me - post a particularly dark patch - then offered to gift me a couple of sessions. I swallowed the last of my pride and said Yes.

It's not that I'm bonkers. I get up in the morning, get dressed, make eye contact, know how to look like I'm smiling, cook dinner for my children, show up for work. But until recently I didn't sleep, I was grinding my teeth, I couldn't digest anything, I struggled to make meaningful connections with most people and avoided those who know me too well. I felt greyscale and muted, anxious and on high alert, sad, lonely and hopeless.

Counselling is expensive. It costs much more than an escapist novel, almost as much as dinner out with a loved one, twice as much as a bottle of Laphroaig, certainly more than most other distractions from worry. And one session isn't enough, you need a decent series, so write off a grand with no promise of a 'cure'. I know only one person who has 'graduated' from counselling. For the rest of us 'doing the work' is a long-term project.

But because I am my project, it's priceless, invaluable and worth every penny of my girlfriend's money.

Mental health is personal and private and it's hard to talk about but we must. Like a recovering alcoholic or a revivalist Christian, now that I've found it I'm a fervent ambassador for its benefits.

My counsellor has helped me translate my world for myself. She has given me ways to decode the signs and micro-gestures particular to the relationships I'm entwined in. She's scolded me for self-indulgence. She's helped me articulate an accurate picture of what's troubling and what's a triumph.

She's never told me what to think, what to feel, what to do. She doesn't project her own experiences onto my narrative; and she doesn't me-too and redirect the spotlight. She's let me explore, rant, grizzle, puzzle, crow about what's been happening around me. Every now and then she's let me off the hook, or called me out when I wallow in worries that are not my own. "Not your circus, not your monkeys," she's said, giving me mini-mantras to live by. She's tooled me up so I can be myself *and* get through the day. She's told me I don't need to be armour plated, that armour is too heavy to carry around, that a shield is enough.

And sometimes she's said that what I really need is a good night's sleep, a decent feed and a quality catch-up with friends. ●

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