

BAY BUZZ

2023
JULY
+AUGUST

Education reforms

Teachers frustrated by political whim

Fire in the belly

Black Barn back from the ashes

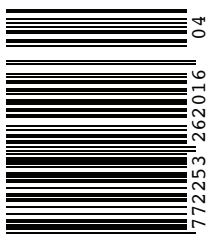
Oldies are golden

Our old people 'just do it'!

HB nurses are sick & tired

Why you
should
care

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OF HAWKE'S BAY

MOHS MICROGRAPHIC SURGERY - A FIRST FOR HAWKE'S BAY

Dermatology Hawke's Bay is the region's only provider of Mohs micrographic surgery, a highly specialised surgical technique for removing certain types of skin cancer. Mohs surgery is considered to be the 'gold standard' treatment for non-melanoma skin cancer as it ensures complete clearance of a cancer with minimal removal of healthy tissue and thereby minimising scarring.

Only dermatologists with advanced surgical training can perform Mohs micrographic surgery. Dermatology Hawke's Bay's Dr Juber Hafiji completed his international fellowship surgical training in Mohs micrographic surgery, dermatopathology, and complex facial reconstruction. He is only one of a handful of American College of Mohs Surgery-accredited surgeons in New Zealand.

"Mohs micrographic surgery is incredibly effective as it evaluates the tissue surrounding the cancer more thoroughly than traditional skin cancer surgery techniques," explains Dr Juber. "The procedure takes place on one day, so there are no long waits for results, giving my patients greater peace of mind."

Mohs micrographic surgery is carried out under local anaesthetic. Unlike standard surgery, the skin cancer is removed one thin layer at a time, along with a very small margin of healthy tissue around it. Each section is then analysed, layer by layer, under the microscope by Dr Juber

in his onsite laboratory, whilst patients rest in their comfortable patient lounge. If necessary, further layers of tissue are taken until the skin cancer has been fully removed. This allows for minimal removal of healthy tissue, whilst keeping the wound as small and as shallow as possible. Dr Juber then completes the surgical reconstruction to provide his patients the best functional and cosmetic result.

Ministry of Health statistics show that Hawke's Bay is a known 'hot spot' for skin cancer - the most common form of cancer in New Zealand. The chances of cure however are high if detected and treated early. Dr Juber and his team are thrilled to offer Mohs micrographic surgery to the people of Hawke's Bay, and make their service accessible for patients further afield with the luxury Porters Boutique apartments on the same level as the Dermatology Hawke's Bay clinic.



Dr Juber Hafiji,
SPECIALIST DERMATOLOGIST AND
MOHS SURGEON MB CHB, FRACP, FRCP
(UK), FACMS, FNZDSI

Are you worried about the appearance of a mole or changes to your skin?

The first sign of skin cancer is either a new growth or a change in the size, shape or colour of an existing mole or lesion. If you have any concerns, don't delay - book a skin check today.

Dermatology Hawke's Bay, led by internationally-qualified specialist dermatologist and dermatologic surgeon Dr Juber Hafiji, offers a comprehensive skin check service. Regular skin checks are the most effective way of ensuring early diagnosis and timely treatment for skin cancer. We also provide a range of skin cancer treatments, Mohs micrographic surgery, general dermatology and skin appearance services.

Our state-of-the-art clinic is located in the heart of Havelock North Village. With dedicated underground parking and discreet internal access, you'll be able to access our clinic with ease and privacy.

Call today to book your appointment. GP referral not required.

Contact us:

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42
Poles apart:
Sports Park Trusts flex
muscle on merger deal
Photo: Florence Charvin

71

BayBuzz July + August 2023

Hiding from HB nursing crisis. Teachers challenged by ‘reforms’. Some ‘big ideas’ to shape the Bay. Future of damaged homes getting sorted. Making the Sports Park and Fitness Centre assets even better. Celebrating Chantal. Canned success at Pacific Aerosol. Carbon pricing must get realistic. Food waste and you! Black Barn Bistro is fired up. Meet local novelist Cristina Sanders and winemakers Ollie & Rebecca Powrie. How to stay calm. Mysterious food labels. Our ‘old people’ role models.



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About the cover

Our local nurses are burning out and our hospital doesn't want to talk about it. Tess Redgrave describes the situation in *A nursing crisis in Hawke's Bay and no Cavalry to the rescue*, p18.

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The Buzz

6 From the editor
9 BayBuzz hero
Craig McDougall

9 The Buzz
Lizzie Russell

14 Hastings 150th
Tess Redgrave

32 Big ideas:
beyond recovery
Tom Belford
'Recovery' is just the first step toward meeting region's needs.

38 Red zone blues
Bonnie Flaws
Damaged housing categories anguishing, but beginning to work.

42 Balls in the air while Sports Park trusts decide to merge
Damon Harvey
Sports Park and Fitness Centre, terrific assets, need to merge.

Features

18 A nursing crisis in Hawke's Bay and no Cavalry to the rescue
Tess Redgrave
And our hospital 'leaders' don't want to talk about it.

26 Education reforms: who wins and who loses?
Abby Beswick
Teachers frustrated by the politics of 'reform'.



70
Fire in the belly

BayBiz

50 Organic opportunities

50 Organic opportunities: the Chantal story

Brenda Newth

Growing an inter-generational business ... organically.

58 Business success: in the can

Fiona Fraser

Aerosols propel Hastings business.

62 Meeting New Zealand's decarbonisation targets

Nigel Brunel

Emissions credits can help decarbonise if market driven.

Ideas + opinion

64 Food waste – into the great unknown

Dominic Salmon

We can all affect this 4% of NZ emissions.

66 Vote for a minor party

Paul Paynter

The centre parties have little to offer.



82 Garage days revisited



Life

70 Fire in the belly

Michal McKay

Black Barn Bistro has emerged from the ashes.

78 Looking to the past to understand the present

Rosheen FitzGerald

Inside novelist Cristina Sanders' love of books and writing.

82 Garage days revisited

Yvonne Lorkin

Meet winemakers Ollie and Rebecca Powrie of Château Garage.

88 Keeping your calm amidst chaos

Kate McLeay

Two mindfulness hacks to navigate chaos!

90 Is shaved ham pork?

Ian Thomas

Perplexing, deceptive food labels.

96 Oldies are golden

Jess Soutar Barron

Our 'old people' embarrass & inspire us.

All photos: Florence Charvin



From the editor Tom Belford

The core mission of the 'Fourth Estate' is to hold power accountable.

Yes, journalism across its various print and digital platforms should keep you on top of rubbish pick-up rules, community events, new eateries, closed roads, deaths, achievements of local individuals, sport teams and businesses, etc.

All of that is useful, necessary information conveyed in the public interest. Moreover, beyond informing, it connects people to each other and their community. It depends upon good radar, sensitive antennae, proper grammar.

A step up from there, more demanding, is clarification and education around important community issues. This requires research and analysis, insightful weighing of facts and arguments, and an understanding of how issues have evolved over time and any broader context in which they sit.

But most demanding is the real challenge of journalism - ensuring accountability from the institutions, organisations and people (public and private) who hold the kind of power that affects public wellbeing, including trust.

This requires probing behind the curtain, under the covers, investigating how decisions are being made (or not made), by whom or what interests, for what reasons, with what integrity and competence (or not), and how those decisions are playing out - for better or worse. And especially, for worse or where motivations seem not in the public interest.

Institutions (like councils and businesses) and public figures tend to react - on a scale - nervously, or

defensively, or deceptively or with outright hostility to such media scrutiny. When faced with it, rarely do they see transparency as a positive ... or opportunity.

So, they employ 'Comms' teams to man the barricades and manage their 'messaging'.

If they have a good story to tell, they're all over it. But if they're being challenged as to a possible problem to overcome, questionable performance, dubious motive or striking loss of common sense, they clam up. This doesn't make 'Comms' people evil; they're simply providing the protection they understand their bosses to want.

Hospital stonewalling

One of the articles in this edition illustrates the problem - Tess Redgrave's story, *A nursing crisis in Hawke's Bay*.

Tess addresses an issue adversely affecting health care delivery throughout New Zealand, not just Hawke's Bay. Our well-read, well-informed reporter is quite aware of that as she tries to examine the situation here in the region, particularly at the hospital. So, she's **not** investigating why only our hospital is uniquely failing when every other hospital in NZ is bursting at the seams with heaps of relaxed nurses working in luxurious circumstances.

What she is (or was) trying to investigate, for the benefit of everyone in the community that might soon depend on hospital care (i.e. every one of us) is: What is the actual situation in our own back yard ... what steps are being taken today to cope, given resources available ... and what further

measures are needed?

Those don't seem like unfair questions in the public interest. And even if 'fixing' the problem is beyond the capacity of our local team (perhaps thwarted by too little money, too few nurses NZ-wide, dastardly recruiters from Australia, a decrepit hospital), this is an election year and voters aroused by such an article might rally to demand more investment and action as opposed to posturing by the contending parties.

'Using' our reporter to get their needs and story across to you, our readers, would be an intelligent response from hospital voices.

Instead, their Comms team, backed by the hospital's top administrator (who, as it turns out, resigned a few days before this mag went to bed), refused to allow any interviews on this subject. After insisting on advance written questions (itself an affront to journalism when used as a device to censor inquiry), which Tess provided and were focused on our local situation, *BayBuzz* was denied interviews and told to take our questions to the Health Ministry.

We have other stories like this we could relate. But we are undeterred. I believe our readers expect *BayBuzz* to get behind the curtain, even when our findings might be embarrassing or uncomfortable to the powers that be. So, as long as we have subscribers, that's what we'll try to do.

Can we count on your support?

Tom Belford

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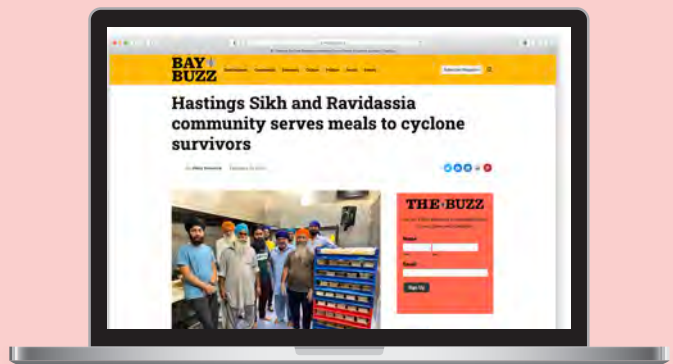
Sponsors commit

Our Foundation Sponsors provide year-long support to our magazine and online service, helping to ensure *BayBuzz* can deliver quality journalism to Hawke's Bay readers, connecting and informing our community.

BayBuzz commits

With that support, at a time when local journalism has never been more important, we commit to bringing Hawke's Bay in print and online:

- The most in-depth insight into the major environmental, economic and social issues challenging the region.
- The most comprehensive window into our region's arts and culture and community achievements.
- The most provocative and inspiring views and opinions on where Hawke's Bay should head and why.



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The logo for Summerset Retirement Villages features a red swoosh above the word "Summerset" in a white serif font, with "RETIREMENT VILLAGES" in a smaller, white sans-serif font below it.



BayBuzz Hero Craig McDougall

Craig McDougall is the perfect person to have in your corner of the ring.

A father of three boys, Craig has made a giant contribution to developing youth in Hawke's Bay for well over a decade through boxing and sport academies.

His purpose is simple.

"I love people and have a passion for excellence, learning and development of youth. I believe that no matter your talent nor your adversity it's your attitude that determines your altitude. I always strive to better myself and those around me, no matter the hurdles."

A New Zealand boxing champion in his twenties, Craig moved with wife Vicki from Wellington in 2010, first helping establish the Flaxmere Boxing Club before founding the Hastings Giants, Havelock North Saints and Napier Dodgers Boxing Academies.

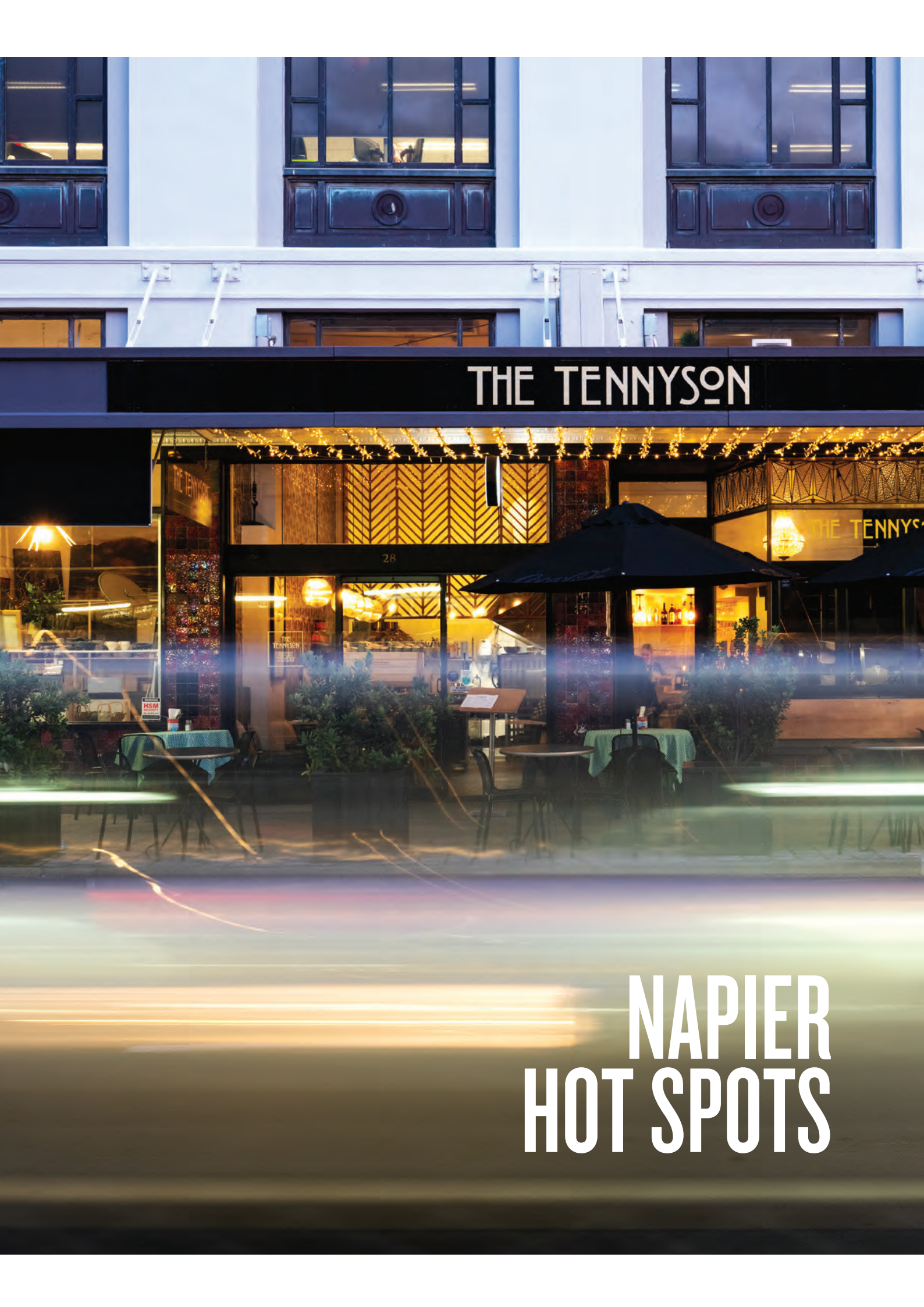
Hundreds of youth, many from tough backgrounds, have walked into the gym for the first time lacking confidence, to be turned into leaders amongst their peers.

The boxing academy has a long-held motto – 'Belong, Believe, Become' – that has been part of the drive for the new purpose-built gym that will officially open at the Mitre10 Regional Sports Park in August.

Thanks to the great management of the academy trustees and local sponsors such as Tumu Group and many more, over \$125,000 was raised for the new gym as the contribution to a \$2.5 million facility to share with Central Stags Cricket.

"It's great that we have developed our own purpose-built club with an environment that brings out the best of everyone – whether that be a competitive boxer, a teenager that wants to just come and enjoy the space and train, as well as our coaches and supporters."

Words: Damon Harvey
Photo: Florence Charvin



THE TENNYSON

28

THE TENNYSON

NAPIER HOT SPOTS

The Buzz

Lizzie Russell



The weather may be chilly, but there are hot spots doing great things all over the Bay.

Show your local cafes, bars and restaurants some love this winter where you can. A drink after work. Coffee meeting instead of a zoom call. Vouchers as gifts. Locals supporting local is what's going to keep our fabulous hospitality scene going during these quieter times.

Winifred's Bar & Kitchen

Next door to pretty-in-pink coffee spot Uncle at the Bluewater end of West Quay in Ahuriri, Winifred's has opened. It's going to be a lovely sunny spot come the summer season, but in the meantime, the indoor-outdoor flow is great, it's warm inside the slick interior, the service is friendly, and the menu is flavour-packed, elegant and fun. Kick your visit off with the white anchovy soldiers and don't skip the black treacle kingfish. Winifred's is open Thursdays to Mondays. What a welcome addition to the seaside neighbourhood.

Pacifica

Marine Parade restaurant Pacifica is one of the true icons of the HB food scene. And great news – they're here for a decent while longer! With the sweet blue bungalow sporting a 'for sale' sign, and talk of Jeremy Rameka and Natalie Bulman's future plans swirling, there

has been a bit of misunderstanding out there.

Here's the skinny: The landlord is selling the building but Pacifica is set to remain until at least the end of August 2025. So there are loads of gorgeous opportunities to treat someone special, or better still, a group of food lovers to degustation delight at Pacifica. The restaurant is closed this August while Jeremy and Natalie are overseas but apart from that, it's exquisite business as usual. Lucky us!

The Tennyson

Brightening and lightening up the street, The Tennyson is now open evenings. The impressive Italian pizza oven tucked into the kitchen has helped add a whole new element – and the Napoli-style pizzas are delicious! Try the Diavola for a spicy wee kick. Pop in for pizza, pasta and drinks in the Tuesday to Saturday evenings either out under the twinkly lights, or inside with those lovely aromas.

Owners Trevor and Valérie have assembled a top-notch team and adapted one of the city's favourite cafes into a really warm, welcoming, dinner spot to complement their consistently great daytime offering. Plus, the cocktails are ON.

SMITH & SHETH Sommelier Sidebar



As winter settles in, the cooler temperatures signal it's time to switch up your wine repertoire. Indulge in the comforting embrace of rich reds like Cabernet blends and spicy Syrah, or relax fireside with a structured and mouth-wrapping Chardonnay. At Smith & Sheth, we have the perfect trio to warm up your winter – the Grand Cru collection, released on July 1.

Chardonnay - a cool weather classic

Summer's refreshing whites might not hit the spot when temperatures plunge to single digits, but don't discount white wines altogether. Chardonnay with a kiss of oak provides a perfect companion for a belly warming dish. Our CRU Vineyard Chardonnay is sure to exceed expectations whether paired with pork or chicken roasts, or grilled fish with béchamel.



Winter warming reds

A robust red or velvety Syrah can be just what the doctor ordered during the winter months. Our Grand Cru reds are perfectly crafted for hearty dishes such as Osso Bucco or a whole roast leg of lamb, making them ideal for any mid-winter Christmas celebration.



Our Omahu Syrah is amazingly fragrant with a lovely creamy texture, finishing gracefully with fine, long tannins. The Omahu Cantera is a delicious blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, and Tempranillo, showcasing its Spanish soul with ripe blackcurrant, cedar and vanilla from beautiful oak. These are plush, delicious wines great for early drinking this winter or holding for those building a cellar.



Keen to try? Call into the wine bar for a tasting or chat and we'll find your perfect seasonal match. Jason 🍷

www.smithandsheth.com



Photo: Kirsten Simcox

TOP FIVE WINTER WARMERS

I hear people saying the best thing about winter is getting out of here for a week or two. Bali and Fiji are lovely. Noosa provides a welcome, warm relief. But for those of us sticking close to home, here's a handful of Hawke's Bay Winter Warmers:

1. Clamber out of the Netflix-Neon vortex and get into some live music. Dance yourself warm. Getting out of the house of an evening and supporting local is good for the soul and great for the local entertainment economy. We've got lots of options - **The Small Hall Sessions, Urban Winery, Cabana, Common Room, Paisley**. Check out their social platforms for the details.
2. Hawke's Bay's Catherine Robertson has a gorgeous new book out, and it won't take a weekend to read. **Pearl in a Whirl**, illustrated by Fifi Colston tells the sweet story of a fluffy cat's challenges and rescue during the February floods.
3. **Pecha Kucha** is back! In early June, 280 people piled into the MTG Century Theatre for the first PK Night in two years. Clearly it had been missed. The 20 slide – 20 second format speaking events have been popular in the Bay for over a decade now, and are a great way to learn about the many treasures in our community. The next PK Night is back at the Century on August 1st. Doors open at 5:30pm, speakers start at 6pm.
4. **Ocean Spa** on Napier's Marine Parade is open again after repairs and refurbishment. What's better than soaking your tired muscles in hot water against the brisk wintry air?!
5. **Happy Bay News**. This youth-led local publishing project brings the sunshine. Onto their third edition, *Happy Bay News* covers good news stories for and from young people across the region. Keep an eye out for the printed version in cafes, follow them on Facebook or see happybaynews.co.nz – no doom or gloom here!



MATARIKI HUNGA NUI HASTINGS



 Te Wānanga o Aotearoa

WHAT'S ON JUNE – JULY 2023

Matariki is the Māori tradition that marks the rising of the star cluster Matariki Pleiades. Matariki signals the start of the Māori new year and is a time of commemorating the passing of loved ones, making plans for the upcoming year, feasting, celebrating and giving thanks for the harvest.

**TUESDAY, 20TH JUNE
– THURSDAY, 22ND JUNE**

NGĀ TOHU O TE TAU HOU

Ātea a Rangi, Waitangi
Regional Park. 6am.

Kōrero by local waka
navigators, sighting Matariki,
stars and planets.

FREE

**TUE 20 TO SAT 24 JUNE
FRI 30 JUNE & SAT 1 JULY
FRI 7 & SAT 8 JULY
THU 13 TO SAT 15 JULY**

WHĀNAU MARAMA – LIGHT SHOW

Ātea a Rangi, Waitangi Regional
Park. 6.30pm, 7pm, 7.30pm, 8pm,
8.30pm. Under 3 free.

Learn about Whānau
Marama – Family of
Light and the traditional
star compass used by navigators
for wayfinding across the Pacific
Ocean. The only Matariki dark
skies sensory experience in the
world on an estuary facing the
Pacific Ocean.

\$10

THURSDAY, 6TH JULY

HE WAKA MAIMAI AROA – VESSEL OF AFFECTION

The Pond, Flaxmere Park,
Swansea Rd, Hastings.
5.30pm–9pm.

Write a message of remembrance,
reflection and gratitude on a
lantern and then float it in the
waters of the pond and reflect
on this special occasion. (Lanterns
are biodegradable, one free
lantern per family). Live music
and kai trucks onsite.

FREE

**THURSDAY, 13RD JULY
– SATURDAY, 15TH JULY**

MATARIKI DIGITAL LIGHT SHOW

Civic Square, Eastbourne
Street, Hastings.
6pm–10pm.

Wrap up warm and come along to
Civic Square to watch the digital
light and sound show that brings
the stars of Matariki to life.

FREE

FRIDAY, 14TH JULY

HĀKARI MATARIKI – CELEBRATE MATARIKI HASTINGS

Tōmoana Showgrounds,
Kenilworth Road,
Hastings. 6pm–9pm.

Dress up warm to re-energise the
soul and warm the senses in the
chill of winter at the second public
holiday to celebrate Matariki. Enjoy
a live entertainment showcase of
singers, bands, kapa haka, pacific
dance, fashion, remembrance & pahū
ahi – fireworks for a spectacular finale.
Kai trucks onsite.

FREE

SATURDAY, 15TH JULY

MATARIKI PŪRĀKAU – STORYTELLING AROUND THE FIRE

Civic Square, Eastbourne
Street, Hastings.
6pm–9pm.

Join the circle around communal
fires as storytellers ignite our
imaginings and illuminate
our minds as they did for our
forebears. Whānau will share the
history of Ngā Pou o Heretaunga
as they bring to life eighteen
large pou carvings representing
an ancestor from marae around
Hastings District. Kai trucks on site.

FREE



hawkesbaynz.com/matariki

Hastings 150th Tess Redgrave



Heretaunga St. looking West from Railway line Princess Theatre in left distance

189

WHO WAS THE FOUNDER OF HASTINGS?

As Hastings celebrates its 150th birthday, a mystery surrounds its earliest beginnings. Who was the township's founder?

Some sources claim pastoral runholder and entrepreneur Thomas Tanner who saw the Heretaunga Plain's agricultural potential in the 1860s.

The huge, open plain had first been settled by Māori between 1250 -1300 AD and was considered a rich food source with its fertile soils and plentiful waterways. Yet European settlers were wary of its "endless shingle deposits and swamps" until Tanner gained a legal lease to a large amount of it in 1867 and set out to sell some of the leases off.

"HOT PROSPECT," he advertised,



"... 5 SECTIONS (100 acres each) on the Karamu Plains, about three miles from Havelock, two miles from the Karamu Pa, and three miles from Pakowai" [Pakowhai]. Interestingly, he added, "the land is well situated, beyond the reach of any flood..."

Tanner sold six leases and, including himself, the lease holders came to be known as the Twelve Apostles controlling 12 sections of land on the Heretaunga block. In 1870/71 they were then able to buy the entire block of 19,365 acres, which is the footprint

Hastings is settled on today, and in large part is why Tanner is often cited as the town's founder.

But enter Francis Hicks. A Cornish immigrant who left home aged 20 and worked on farms and goldfields in NSW and Otago, before arriving in Heretaunga in the 1860s. He bought his 100-acre block from Tanner in 1871 and had his nephew Tobias Hicks begin building a two-room general store on the corner site now occupied by the ANZ Bank at the intersection of Karamu and Heretaunga Streets.



Francis Hicks



Thomas Tanner



Two years later, when the government wanted to run a railway through the plains to the south, Hicks with “some perspicacity”, says historian Russell Orr, cleverly gifted 150 acres (60 hectares) of his land for the rail tracks and for a railway station at Karamu junction.

A township was now destined to sprout around the railway line and on the 7 June, 1873, the *Hawke’s Bay Herald* announced, “The name of the new town is to be Hastings. We hear it now for the first time...”

Hicks quickly subdivided the rest of his land into town and suburban sections and the first were sold on 8 July, with his overall profit an average of £50 per acre. Intriguingly, two thirds of the buyers in the new Hastings township were speculators from Napier.

Hicks made a small fortune with his land sales and left Hawke’s Bay in December 1875. He eventually bought 800 acres at Pukekura, near Cambridge, and reportedly only returned to Hawke’s Bay once after that.

By contrast Thomas Tanner became a dominant figure in Hawke’s Bay

affairs. His 5,332 acre portion of the Heretaunga block was Riverslea, and he built a 22-roomed mansion there. At various times Tanner was a member of the Hastings Town Board, Hastings Borough Council, and a Hawke’s Bay county councillor. He served on the Hawke’s Bay Provincial Council and was a member of the House of Representatives for Waipawa from 1887 to 1890. He was a keen Church of England man and the pin oak outside the St Lukes Church in Havelock North is known as Tanner’s Oak.

Depending on who you source, it was either Thomas Tanner or Francis Hicks or both, who named Hastings after Warren Hastings, a British colonial administrator, and the first Governor-General of Bengal in the British Raj in India.

Apparently Tanner claimed publicly, including in a *Hawke’s Bay Herald* report in February 1884, that he chose the name and was the “Father of Hastings”.

But head to the Hastings District Library, as I did, and in the stacks there is a laminated file “Hicks, F. (1994).

The “Father of Hastings” Francis Hicks:

letters by his daughters.”

This includes newspaper cuttings, hand-written letters and one written to the then Town Clerk on 21 February, 1967, by F.G. Claridge. “I cannot imagine why the Hastings people do not want to recognise my father (the Father of Hastings) do you?”

F.G. Claridge went on to claim that Francis Hicks was the “Father of Hastings” and asked that the Hicks family be invited to the Hastings 100 year celebrations.

F.G. Claridge also referred to a Letter to the Editor, published in the *Hawke’s Bay Herald Tribune* in 1920 and in the Library file, from the first Mayor of Hastings 1886 -87, Robert Wellwood.

“...There is no doubt,” wrote Wellwood, “that the late Thomas Tanner was the ‘father’ of the Heretaunga plains. He leased the greatest part of the plains from the natives in the sixties and afterwards acquired freehold.neither the late Mr Tanner nor myself was the ‘father of Hastings’, the honour belongs to the late M.J. Hicks who bought 100 acres on the north side of what is now known as Heretaunga Street... Mr Hicks soon after cut his lot up for a township, giving it the name of Hastings. I presume after the renowned Warren Hastings.

“I take it that the man who owned the land and formed the township and gave it a name was the “father” of Hastings. I suppose I must be the Godfather having been the first mayor.....I am etc R. Wellwood. Hastings Dec 7th 1920.”

Undoubtedly Francis Hicks and Thomas Tanner both had pivotal roles to play in the founding of Hastings and could be equally honoured, along with the earlier Māori of the Heretaunga Block - but let’s not keep any of their stories tucked away in books, archives, oral histories and stacks.

Let’s have plaques, pictorial boards, monuments, regular historic festivities to alert passers-by to the stories of our past and to the people who have walked here before us. ●

Hastings officially celebrates its 150th with a Council-organised commemorative weekend, July 7-9, and then ongoing events ending with the Blossom Festival in September. For more details see: www.hastingsdc.govt.nz/150-years

Photos courtesy of the Knowledge Bank and MTG Hawke’s Bay, collection of Hawke’s Bay Museums Trust, Ruawhoro Tā-ū-rangi.



A NURSING CRISIS IN HAWKE'S BAY

AND NO CAVALRY TO THE RESCUE

Story by Tess Redgrave

"I love my job, but I am feeling sad right now because I can't provide the nursing care I want to. I don't have time to tend to patients, checking in to see if they need a cup of tea, or if they're warm enough.

"We would always go above and beyond when I started in this job. But now we're so worried about the emergency bells going off, about the patients waiting 6-plus hours to see specialists.

"This hospital just hasn't grown with the HB population. There are shortages right across it."

This is the impassioned voice of a senior nurse who has worked for more than 10 years in Hawke's Bay hospital's emergency department (ED).

"I feel terrified about what's going to happen as we go into winter," she continues. "We start each day in ED with a lack of space and a lack of nursing staff.

"We are meant to be part of an 'escalation plan', so when we are not coping we can move into Code Red, signalling we need help. But we're always in Code Red and no one comes to help. We're left to drown.

"Management talk about safe staff patient ratios. For us in ED that's 1 nurse to 3 patients. But I can't remember the last time I was able to work to a 1:3 ratio, it's usually 1:4 and having to keep an eye on people in the corridors as well.

"I do 12-hour shifts 7pm-7am pretty much all the time to cover the gaps. I do get paid more for it yes ... but 12 hours is not recommended, that's when fatigue sets in and mistakes happen ... Every night one or two nurses are having to do 12-hour shifts.

"A lot of nurses from ED [there's a staff of about 70] have gone to Aussie recently. We're losing such valuable skills all the time.

"I am weighing up whether to move my family to Aussie. We would be a lot better off financially. But I get upset at the thought of leaving. We have such a great team and we prop each other up.

"We want to provide good care, but we can't and I see nurses in tears daily. ED nurses are strong and hold it together very well but more recently nurses have been breaking down. We're suffering from abuse too: physical and verbal. People get sick of waiting. They don't understand why someone is triaged ahead of them, so they lash out.

"It is what it is. There's nothing we can do! It's rough and nurses are scared to speak out.

"We feel like numbers in a system."

The numbers

The nurse above is one of 2,300 Hawke's Bay nurses (working in both primary and secondary health care) who are members of the New Zealand Nurses Organisation *Tōpūtanga Tapuhi Kaitiaki o Aotearoa* (NZNO) Union. She was one of 340-odd who attended a well-subscribed union stopwork meeting in Hastings on 30th May. A few days later votes from that meeting and thousands from 55 meetings around the country (a 98% majority) voted to reject Te Whatu Ora Health NZ's latest employer offer of

"A lot of nurses from ED [there's a staff of about 70] have gone to Aussie recently. We're losing such valuable skills all the time."

a \$4,000 pay rise this year across all rates and a further 3% next year.

"We haven't had a new contract since bargaining began last September," a Hawke's Bay Union delegate told me soon after the meeting. "This is as much about staff retention as anything. We're all concerned about the staff shortages."

The delegate told me the Union's view is that a pay rise to equal inflation is an important effort to retain and recruit nurses by offering conditions and pay on a par with Australia - "so our nurses are not jumping over there".

Since early 2022, the NZNO has been running the 'Maranga Mai' Rise Up campaign calling for its members, whatever sector they work in, to come together and take united action to win the political and resourcing commitments needed to address the nursing shortage crisis permanently - and across the whole health sector.

"We know nurses, midwives, health care assistants and kaimahi hauora are facing increasing demands and significant shortages in workforce supply," says chief executive Paul Goulter. "We all know, too, that Māori have relatively very poor health outcomes due to systemic racism and failures to honour Te Tiriti in Health."

The NZNO bargaining, which has



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"People are tired, morale is low and we're sick of fighting for everything from health & safety to our collective agreements and pay equity."
Sue Revell, nurse practitioner

been continuing as I write, also aims to address unresolved, historic issues around pay equity, promised back pay and pay relativity for Senior nurses. There are also issues around Health & Safety and how to measure, retain and enforce safe patient/staff ratios.

I will come back to the above, but for now, let's start with the bald fact that there are as many as 5,000 vacancies for nursing staff right across the country - not just in hospitals but in primary care such as private doctor's surgeries, Māori and other independent providers and NGOs including aged care facilities.

As we go into the General Election, shortages across the whole health sector will be targeted over and over in the media and thrashed out by politicians.

In Hawke's Bay, nurses across all settings make up one of our single biggest workforces. I have heard anecdotally that it is getting harder to attract nurses and other health staff to Hawke's Bay because of our accommodation shortage, highlighted in the aftermath of Cyclone Gabrielle. Specialist roles including nurse management roles are apparently also getting harder to fill as are vacancies in the Hawke's Bay Fallen Soldiers Memorial Hospital and private Aged Care facilities.

Getting to the truth

I was brought up on stories of Florence Nightingale, 'The lady with the lamp', and on the many colourful memories of a mother who had trained as a nurse in the early 1950s, then worked at Kawakawa Hospital in the Bay of Islands, overseas at the private London Clinic, and as a Ward Sister at Napier Hospital.

So, I have an innate respect and interest in nursing and hoped to write a positive story in HB in cooperation with Te Whatu Ora Te Matau a Māui (Health NZ, HB) media and nursing management. I wanted to focus on and spend time with three nurses working in different roles under Te Whatu Ora's umbrella, and I wanted to hear about 'creative initiatives' underway to recruit more nurses.

I also wanted to look at nursing today and how much it differs from my mother's day, in particular the role of nurse practitioners who have completed a Master's degree and are authorised to prescribe medicines to the same level as GPs, and registered nurses who have undertaken postgraduate study and can prescribe as nurses working within primary care and specialty teams settings.

Last year the Nursing Council of New Zealand endorsed Te Whatu Ora - Te Matau a Māui to run a programme, piloted in Counties Manukau, to get nurses prescribing as they worked in the community. This equips and trains nurses across many settings to prescribe from a list of about 80 medications including for contraception and sexual health, infections (ear, throat, skin etc.), eczema, headlice, rheumatic fever and other conditions.

As the plan for my story unfolded, additional questions presented themselves. Just how many nurse vacancies do we have here in Hawke's Bay? And what is the local official response to the 30th May stop-work meeting that by chance coincided with my research on this story.

But when I sent a list of questions via the media team, I received a quick return email from Regional Communications & Engagement Lead/ Executive Director Communications Emma Horsley: "... Your original intent was to steer clear of 'strikes and shortages' to instead focus on nursing as a whole and what makes nurses do their jobs and the different aspects and opportunities of nursing.

"As the angle has now obviously changed we have made the decision to respectfully decline the offer to take part. The questions highlighted can be answered by the national office h.nzmedia@health.co.nz"

If the hospital authorities have a 'stay calm' story to tell, why refuse to discuss it?

"We're being gagged because it is election year," one nurse manager told me.



About 300 New Zealand Nurses Organisation Tōpūtanga Tapuhi Kaitiaki o Aotearoa (NZNO) Union members attended a stopwork meeting in Hastings on 30th May.



“There were already staffing, and health & safety issues before Covid. Covid just exposed a broken health system.”
Sue Revell, nurse practitioner

BayBuzz sent an Official Information Request (OIA) to Te Whatu Ora Health NZ asking how many nursing vacancies there are within Hawke’s Bay, among other questions. We are still awaiting the standard 20-day response.

In the meantime I contacted Labour MP for Tuketuki (and ex Hawke’s Bay DHB member) Anna Lorck.

“HB Hospital is the region’s largest employer with over 3,280 staff and more than half are nurses,” she replied. “Nursing numbers have been increasing with at least another 30 more recently employed I understand and there is more budget provided to keep employing more and there is an active recruitment drive.

“We need more nurses, we need to

also train more. I have full admiration for the work they do, I am always hearing praise from people about the professional and high quality they provide in HB. They work incredibly hard in a health system that has been under significant pressure, especially during and after Covid.”

But on this point, Sue Revell, a Nurse Practitioner, who has worked for Te Whatu Ora at the hospital since 2005 and been the Union co-convenor for the last four years, has a different view.

“There were already staffing and health & safety issues before Covid,” she says. “Covid just exposed a broken health system.” Before we go on, let’s note that nurses, many returning from retirement especially, have played a

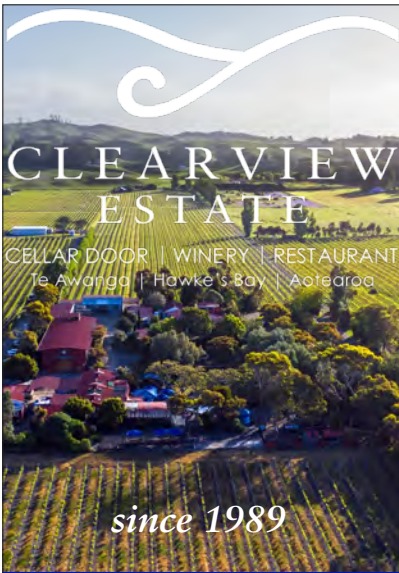
key and leading role, and continue to do so, in HB’s Covid and vaccination response. And that nurses too have been at the frontline during and after Cyclone Gabrielle providing emergency care in cut-off rural communities.

In fact Te Whatu Ora Te Matau a Māui Hawke’s Bay has produced a booklet *Celebrating our Nurses and Midwives in honour of the International Day of the Nurse and Midwife 2023* which tells many great stories of nurses and midwives.

Inspiring, but not the full story.

Unsafe conditions

Sue Revell counters that despite having very skilled and dedicated nursing staff within Hawke’s Bay hospital,



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"The old disrespect for nursing still exists. We're seen historically as a female caring workforce of mostly women, underpaid, and not as important as doctors. This disrespect bleeds everywhere."
Sue Revell, nurse practitioner



"The risks of doing harm are increased everyday, due to trying to provide care within a system that is under pressure and working in facilities that are old and inadequate."



In April, the *NZ Herald* published a report titled, 'NZ hospital workers file 23,000 reports warning of unsafe staffing.' **Full article here.**

Figures obtained under the Official Information Act (OIA) revealed that some New Zealand hospital wards and departments had racked up hundreds of unsafe staffing reports as workers repeatedly alerted their bosses to critical shortages.

In the *Herald* article, the incidents of "Unsafe Staffing" reported in Hawke's Bay from 2019 - November 2021 were high with 1,655 incidents reported, close behind the five biggest former DHBs in the country. There was no reporting in HB for the 21-22 period because of "staffing issues", though apparently these are now being collated.

"As a delegate we know these are under-reported," says Sue Revell. "After finishing an understaffed shift all nurses want to do is go home, not sit down and spend half an hour writing a report."

"There are unsafe incidents virtually every shift in ED," the nurse in my opening paragraphs told me. "But the reporting of them is so much lower than it should be."

Back in April, I had sent the *NZ Herald* report to Te Whatu Ora HB

media and asked what was being done about the high levels of "incidents relating to unsafe staffing" in Hawke's Bay hospital. Karyn Bousfield-Black, Chief Nursing Officer and Director Patient Safety & Quality replied: "With Care Capacity Demand Management (CCDM) for nursing and Allied Health, Hawke's Bay uses Variance Response Management to move resources where they are most needed. Escalation processes are also in place to manage resourcing to any increased demand. (Remember what my source said above about 'Escalation'.) We also continue to actively recruit to vacancies."

As I understand it, CCDM is about better matching staff resources to patient demand. The system allocates resources based on patients' needs, not according to raw patient numbers. CCDM is an acuity tool. This identifies the amount of nursing care needed for each patient on a unit based on the level of intensity, nursing care and tasks needed for each patient.

Revell says CCDM works well in identifying the required nursing numbers per shift and has led to uplifts in budgeted staffing levels (FTE) in many areas where it is in place. "However, due to daily gaps in the roster, safe nurse to patient ratios are exceeded every day. When we try to escalate there are no extras.

"We can't call the Cavalry in because there is no Cavalry.

"Many staff are burnt out," she says. "They are picking up extra shifts to help their colleagues out, but also because there is a cost of living crisis.

“People are tired, morale is low and we’re sick of fighting for everything from health & safety, to our collective agreements and pay equity.”

Back in 2018 the Minister of Health Andrew Little started the Equal Pay Review promising completion by the end of 2019. When it took longer than a year to complete, he then promised that any agreed pay uplift for nurses would be backdated to Dec 31st 2019.

But it didn’t work out like that. The Equal Pay Review resulted in a 19-20% uplift in wages for many nurses, midwives and healthcare assistants based on proven historic sex-based underpayment. But designated Senior Nurses only received a 7% uplift resulting in loss of relativity with their junior colleagues and Little’s promise of backpay was reneged on. Both these issues are currently before the ERA and Employment Court.

“The old disrespect for nursing still exists,” says Revell. “We’re seen historically as a female caring workforce of mostly women, underpaid, and not as important as doctors. This disrespect bleeds everywhere.

“Look at Kiwisaver for example, Te Whatu Ora employer contributions are 6% percent for doctors and 3%

(same employer) for nurses, midwives and healthcare assistants.”

So what needs to happen?” I ask Sue Revell.

“We need the government and Te Whatu Ora to acknowledge the seriousness of these issues,” she says.

“To not say: ‘It’s not a crisis.’” Because it clearly is!

It gets worse

And while *BayBuzz* has focused on the hospital for this story, a quick scan of Seek NZ online shows there are currently about 30 vacancies for registered nurses across its site for Hawke’s Bay. In particular our 28-plus Aged Care facilities are suffering.

“It’s an ongoing challenge for us to get registered nurses,” says the region’s representative from the National Aged Care Association, Greg Pritchard. He hasn’t done a tally of vacancies since the cyclone. But when we spoke to him last year, he estimated at that time there were 50-60 vacancies for registered nurses across HB Aged Care facilities.

State of the art medical centres such as the new Kaweka private hospital, as well as some primary care practices, are offering nurses good pay and conditions and are undoubtedly benefitting

from nurses wanting to leave the public hospital, but not the region.

CEO of Kaweka Hospital Colin Hutchison says Kaweka didn’t have any trouble getting nursing staff (they employ about 70) and that while their pay rates are within range of the general hospital staff, conditions offered are likely better.

Likewise Dr KJ Patel of Te Mata Peak Practice says, “My nurse head of department is excellent so we’ve been able to get fantastic and motivated nurses, some of whom have left the hospital.

“I suspect we’ve been attractive due to the culture we’ve fostered at the practice.”

All the more reason to be mighty appreciative of the hospital nurses we have, who clearly deserve better conditions! ●



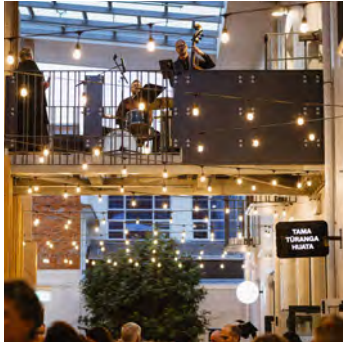
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Where to find fun after 5 in **HASTINGS CBD**

Written by Zoe Barnes for Hastings City Business Association

We get it, come 5pm the countdown is on to get home and re-introduce yourself to the couch - the urge to hibernate over winter is really real. Do you know what else it is though? Boring. Really boring. So we are on a mission to get you out of the house this winter.

Whether you are looking to be entertained, to find a new hobby, to catch up with friends or to maybe meet some new people entirely - Hastings City has a lot going on once the sun goes down (which according to google is at 5.02pm currently).

To make it easy, we have compiled a list of activities and events happening in and around town to keep you entertained and enthused throughout the colder months and beyond.

Of course, this list is not exhaustive, if you know of other great things happening in Hastings City, simply email us at events@hastingscity.co.nz and we'll promote it to the masses.

FOOD & WINE

'Hump Day' (Wednesday) is a day to be celebrated weekly. Grab some mates, do some team bonding, or bring the kids in for an early dinner at Brave Brewing Co - serving their Hump Day Humbledogs for \$7 every Wednesday from 3-8pm.



Join Decibel Wines and 11 other guests at the big table for their monthly supper club. A celebration of food, wine, and friendship, the evening includes a three course set menu designed by local chef Ben Cruse, paired with wines from the Decibel collection. Also meet winemaker Daniel Brennan, who will be on hand to discuss the winemaking, vineyards, and why the wine works so well with the dishes.

Swap the small screen for the biggest screen and best sound system in town at Focal Point Cinema & Cafe. Snuggle into their plush seating and make the most of their \$25 movie, cake and coffee deal – available after 5pm.

Join Cellar 495 for some amazing wine and food experiences, rub shoulders with great winemakers and chefs and hear their stories in a relaxed setting. With several events throughout Winter and wine tastings planned for every Wednesday in July there is ample opportunity to learn from the owner, and the world's 495th Master of Wine, Michael Henley – what he doesn't know about wine is not worth knowing.

Make the most of the beautiful early evenings by grabbing a slice to go from Spooky's Pizzeria and sitting in Albert Square watching the world go by.

ARTS & CULTURE

On the last Wednesday of every month from 7.30pm, The Common Room hosts the Common

Poet's Society. Whether you are a writer, reader, listener or poetry enthusiast, head along to share your words, or just sit back and let them wash over you. Free entry.

Join the Massive Music School open mic night on the last Thursday of every month at The Common Room. If you have talent to share and have always wanted to perform, head along to the open mic night and give it a whirl! 7pm until late.

If you are looking for something a little MORE, ToiToi have a calendar of concerts, workshops and general merriment that will get your toes tapping and put a smile on your face.

CLUBS & SOCS

Do you like wine? Do you like books? Do you like wine AND books? If you answered yes to any of those then head along to the Hastings Library on the third Tuesday of every month 530-630pm for their Wine, Books & More Book Club. A book club with a difference – there is no need to read a set book, just come along ready to discuss books you read and liked, or otherwise! Free admission. R18 (because...wine)

Also at the Hastings Library, every Thursday from 5-7pm you can join a community of crafters at the Late Night Which Craft. No matter what your crafting passion is, expert or beginner, head along and have some fun. Free admission. R18

If you've ever wanted to give Latin dancing a literal whirl, the Hawke's Bay Salsa Club holds a weekly Salsa Party every Friday at Level One from 8.30pm. Head along and do the merengue with a group of passionate dancers of all skill levels. Cover charges may apply.

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Get active and learn Taekwon-Do at NZ ITF. Bring a friend, a family member or just head along by yourself and learn self defence, confidence, coordination and discipline – while getting a great work out! NZ ITF offers an inclusive, supportive and family friendly environment, offering classes from ages starting at 2 years old. Classes run Mon-Sat, 9am-7pm.

Find your zen with some yoga. The Yoga Space is a collaborative of local yoga and meditation teachers offering a variety of styles of yoga including Yin, Hatha and Vinyasa in the evenings, along with a weekly meditation class every Wednesday at 730pm. Keep an eye out on their socials for special events such as cacao ceremonies and sound healing sessions.

EDUCATION REFORMS



WHO WINS AND WHO LOSES?

Ask any teacher about education reforms and it's likely they'll shake their head in frustration. And they're not the only ones. Parents are also concerned about the quality of their children's education in a country where our educational standards are constantly being renegotiated and restructured to reflect political ideals.

The result is a tension between the school system and the government, while students face the consequences. On the face of it there may be compelling reasons for education reforms, but should our schooling be vulnerable to a changing political context?

Educators are screaming out for less interference, disruption, and change. Yet reforms and targets are getting in the way of teachers' ability to do their job. Every child deserves an education where their needs are met meaningfully and now more than ever, our education system must produce well-rounded people who can succeed in an ever-evolving world. Our education system is failing our students, so what needs to change?

Changes underway

The Ministry of Education is two years into a six-year programme being rolled out to secondary schools in what is the most significant change to the curriculum in 20 years. The refreshed curriculum is being developed and released in phases, with the first stage taking effect this year.

As part of this, New Zealand history is required to be taught in all high

On the face of it there may be compelling reasons for education reforms, but should our schooling be vulnerable to a changing political context?

schools, in addition to a number of other curriculum changes that provide a stronger focus on wellbeing, identity, language and culture. Updated learning materials will make it easier for teachers to design and deliver a local curriculum that includes national curriculum content.

At the same time, changes are also taking place for NCEA. New standards will be introduced in all subjects at NCEA Level 1, as well as new controversial literacy and numeracy tests. Schools will be required to implement the new NCEA Level 1 next year but will not have to start using Level 2 until 2026 and Level 3 until 2027, after the mandatory introduction of these was pushed back a year. The new reading, writing and numeracy tests, which students must pass before they are awarded any NCEA qualification, will be brought in next year.

The refresh aims to make the New Zealand curriculum "more relevant, easier to use and more explicit about what learners need to understand, know and do," Minister of Education Jan Tinetti said in a statement. She said educators will be supported throughout the refresh and provided with guidance to help plan and deliver engaging learning experiences.

Story by Abby Beswick

Three Hawke's Bay principals share their viewpoints on what's working, what's not, and their vision for our future education system.

The Opposition's plan

National Party leader Christopher Luxon has highlighted concerns about the standard of our education system and a decline in basic skills, which is a key target of their proposed reforms, unveiled this year.

National's plans include a requirement for primary and intermediate schools to teach students at least one hour a day on each of the topics of maths, reading and writing. Children would also be tested on these subjects at least twice a year in a new version of the National Standards.

Luxon said National would target 80% of Year 8 students achieving at or above the expected curriculum level for their age in reading, writing, maths, and science, and to return NZ to the top 10 of the OECD's PISA rankings by 2033. PISA is the OECD's Programme for International Assessment - measuring 15-year-old students' ability across reading, maths and science. Of the 79 participating countries, New Zealand is currently 11th equal for reading, 12th for science and 27th for maths.

Luxon says a decline in basic maths, reading and writing are the symptoms of an education system that is failing to prepare children for success in the real world.

"Two-thirds of secondary school students failed to meet the minimum standard in reading, writing and maths, while 98 per cent of decile one Year 10 students failed a basic writing test. This is utterly unacceptable," he said in a statement.



“At times the political powers-that-be have pushed agendas and scored an own goal. However, those that are responsible have moved on. The effects are long lasting, and this approach lacks professional accountability.”

Nigel Messervy, Principal
Havelock North Intermediate

To support teachers under the reforms, National has proposed providing additional classroom tools and lesson plans to help teach reading, writing, maths, and science more effectively.

What the principals say

While there is much to celebrate in New Zealand’s education system, there are also many concerns that need to be urgently addressed for our children to get the education they deserve.

Three Hawke’s Bay principals, across primary, intermediate, and high schools share their viewpoints on what’s working, what’s not, and their vision for our future education system.

The curriculum refresh, which is already underway, places stronger emphasis on the Treaty of Waitangi, giving students a better understanding of New Zealand history, says principal of Napier Central School, Ross McLeod. This promotes a strong sense of self - helping children relate to others and the world around them - and reinforces the school’s strong value system, says McLeod. “Those values of respect, integrity, what they mean and look like and for young children, that’s an ongoing conversation that we have with them.” Encouraging these things helps kids become confident and connected, “so that when they finish with us they’re ready for those next challenges and opportunities,” he says.

At Havelock North Intermediate there is also support and genuine excitement about teaching the Treaty of Waitangi and the use of Te Reo Māori under the new refreshed curriculum. “The commonality throughout the refresh of ‘understand, know, do’ offers innovative approaches and new

methods for effective teaching practice,” says principal Nigel Messervy.

Hastings Girls’ High School principal Catherine Bentley is also complimentary of the curriculum refresh, but acknowledges it’s only one aspect, and there is more work to do. “It’s a stunning document but in order for that to breathe life and in order to give effect to that it’s going to take a lot of resourcing and it’s going to take time. It needs to be handled right, it needs to be led right for it to really come to its potential,” she says.

In spite of several high points, there are a number of concerns for schools, including a drop in students’ performance, poor attendance, and increased use of digital technology. Schools face an increasing number of issues that they are dealing with, says McLeod. “There are a lot of challenges in society. We can only control what happens during our school day.”

Furthermore, some of the proposed reforms don’t translate into the classroom, say the principals. Setting a one-hour timestamp on individual subjects as National has proposed does not make sense or reflect how education works, says Messervy. Literacy and maths for example, is integrated across most subjects giving students multiple learning opportunities. The curriculum refresh aligns learning with rich contexts, so the processes of learning are as important as the outcome.

Bentley is also critical of National’s proposal to have one hour each of maths, English and science. Educators need to instead be experts at teaching literacy and numeracy, and to capitalise on opportunities to develop that knowledge with students through other avenues, rather than having a single focus.

Measuring and weighing across schools and reporting their success is also a dangerous approach, says Bentley. League tables take the focus away from what’s best for the individual student and it becomes what’s best for the institution. “What we’ve got to be looking at is the value that we add to individual students. It’s not a broad-brush thing.”

Major changes to what is taught in schools and then how it is assessed for the National Certificate of Educational Achievement qualifications is an ongoing concern to educators and parents. Schools have criticised the changes to NCEA as poorly implemented and have raised concerns about how they will impact student outcomes - so much so that some are choosing to abandon NCEA in favour of alternative qualifications that are globally recognised by top universities.

A political football

However, it is the political context - how education policy is formed and led - that is the biggest concern. Teachers and students face ongoing uncertainty and disruption to our education system due to political influence. Any changes made to the curriculum call for staff to fully understand new requirements and to embed new learning into planning, preparation, and classroom programmes - all of which are time consuming.

For everyone who works in education, it’s unrelenting and exhausting. “As educators we do our best to wear our professional hats and remain politically neutral,” says Messervy. But it can sometimes be challenging, he admits. “At times the political powers-that-be have pushed agendas and scored an own goal. However,

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"You're having to train and retrain people and that's no way to build a rock-solid education system."

Catherine Bentley, Principal
Hastings Girls' High School

those that are responsible have moved on. The effects are long lasting, and this approach lacks professional accountability."

Bentley agrees, saying it's unfair on everyone in the education sector to face changes every time there's an election. "You're having to train and retrain people and that's no way to build a rock-solid education system."

Tinetti, a former principal, has called for the Opposition to find common ground on education so the sector doesn't suffer through reforms that differ from government to government.

Kids chronically absent

Even the highest-quality education system won't have any impact however, if our classrooms are empty. Poor attendance rates have reached critical levels in this country, with an astounding 100,000 kids habitually absent from school.

Absenteeism is a complex issue affecting many of our high schools, with no easy fix. Schools that draw from a lower socio-economic group face barriers that are harder to overcome. Some kids don't show up because they're not engaged enough at school, for others the cost of a uniform or lunch can be a barrier to school. Covid has put financial pressure on families, forcing some high school students to choose to go out and work to bring in extra money rather than attend school.

Havelock North Intermediate has undertaken a number of measures to support students coming to school. When it's too cold to walk in winter, they run a school van to pick up students. Through local community organisations, lunches are provided every day to students who need them.

When families need specialist support services, they advocate for the children. Effective relationships and trust are a key factor in having students attend regularly, he says.

At Hastings Girls' High School a strategic team collects attendance data each week, communicates with families, works to "make school irresistible", and removes barriers to attendance such as uniforms, lunch and transport. "Every day matters," says Bentley. And they're seeing results, with a 10% improvement in attendance in Term one this year compared to the same time last year.

New ways forward

Among the teaching community there's a strong consensus that education should be independent from politics. The current model leaves teachers and students vulnerable to constant change, based on who's in government. "Depending on which party is leading the country, the values shift and as an education sector we have to align with those values and I think it has to be away from being party driven," says Bentley. "It has to be more sustainable and bigger than the flavour of the month party," adds McLeod.

Principals advocate having educators, not politicians, leading decisions around the education system. "You've got to have experts making the decisions," says Bentley. "You can't have Joe Blogs who just happened to stumble their way into parliament deciding that they're an expert on education."

A key function of education is providing students with the knowledge and skills they need for an ever-changing workforce. This requires dynamic and innovative

"There are a lot of challenges in society. We can only control what happens during our school day."

Ross McLeod, Principal
Napier Central School

approaches. At Hastings Girls' High School students are not streamed. Instead, the curriculum is arranged around areas of interest and skills, and students choose where they belong from a series of options including, visual arts, the great outdoors, path to podium, design and innovation. Students are taught the curriculum through the lens of their chosen area - an approach that means they are engaged, connected, and surrounded by like-minded kids from the moment they enter the classroom.

The teaching and learning landscape has changed. Covid and Cyclone Gabrielle are just two examples that have impacted our education system and the shifting needs of students. "PISA results do not reflect the true dynamic nature of schools in Aotearoa and the increasingly complex needs of our young people," says Messervy.

The curriculum refresh is a great starting point, but there is still a lot of work to be done to hone and shape our education system. The basics for one child might be different for another. We need to move forward with a view to understanding what students need, and delivering a balanced and integrated New Zealand curriculum that meets the needs of all children.

New Zealanders continue to punch above our weight in a global context. We possess the required attributes - including our ability to adapt, resilience with change, thinking skills and innovation - to be regarded highly and in turn, sought after across the world," says Messervy.

If we're to continue to do so and to keep improving, students and schools deserve the consistency of an independent sector, so our kids get the education they need to succeed. ●



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BIG IDEAS: BEYOND RECOVERY



From health services to long-term economic development to environmental sustainability, Hawke's Bay faces huge challenges ... and opportunities.

Story by Tom Belford

Appropriately, minds are focused these cyclone recovery days - especially at our councils - on infrastructure repair and resilience.

Plus, there are tough relocation choices ahead for some homeowners and businesses in the face of future flood risk. And a horticulture and pastoral farming sector that wants to get re-established as soon as possible.

But those near-term needs don't exhaust the long-term planning and re-thinking that's required for our region, especially when additional factors like population and climate change must be addressed.

From health services to long-term economic development to environmental sustainability, Hawke's Bay faces huge challenges ... and opportunities.

And in that context there are some 'big ideas' floating around that deserve consideration. Fortunately, some of them seem to offer win/win possibilities, helping economic, social *and* environmental bottom lines to be met.

Here are a few I'm curious about. What would you add (or subtract) from this list?

Modern hospital

No one really disputes that the hospital we have is well past its use-by date - already overcrowded, deteriorating, even unsafe in some respects. And facing escalating demand as our ageing population places heavier burdens on in-hospital care - older patients presenting more frequently, with multiple, complex needs and requiring more bed days.



As Dr Tim Frendin has written in *BayBuzz*, "Population ageing is climate change for healthcare."

Full article here.

Already back in 2020 elective surgery at the hospital was increasing 3% per year, with a shortfall in surgical theatre hours estimated at 2,721 hours, which meant around 1,500 procedures

not performed. Our Emergency Department (ED), designed to care for 37,000 presentations per year, was then seeing 45,000. And that number had increased 34% over the past ten years. Experts consider an 85% occupancy rate as the maximum for safety (patients and staff), while our hospital often reaches and even exceeds 100%. "Hospital wards consistently operate with occupancy at or close to 100% exhibiting a lack of resilience when demand surges." (Sapere Report). Hence beds in corridors, etc. Of course Covid has not helped.

Apparently, a new clinical review is underway - to be released soon for public consultation - that will officially establish current and projected demand for hospital services. The review is certain to identify a widening gap between demand and capacity.

The Ministry of Health establishes the pecking order in which the country's hospitals are renewed and rebuilt. And also, how - patch up the facility's wounds or rebuild from scratch? And, if the latter, on what site?

Recently, noise has intensified about prospects for the Hawke's Bay Hospital getting a makeover. Tukituki MP Anna Lorck (a former DHB Board member) claimed plans were afoot at the Ministry, our mayors fretted that they were unaware and out of the loop, and local businessman, corporate director (and former DHB Board member) Dan Druzianic proposed building a brand-new hospital modeled on illustrative plans from a current Australian build (Tweed Valley, NSW).

Druzianic has identified a site at York Road and the Expressway (near Flaxmere) that is well-suited for a 'greenfields' new build. Accessible and on solid ground (ie. non-liquefaction and non-flood prone ... a major factor in any health location). He argues for a new build on grounds that space is too limited at the present location for the expansion needed, the existing structure is too unfit to patch up, and the congestion/disruption caused by

refurbishing on a major scale at the current site while concurrently providing health services would simply be unmanageable.

A case on its face deserving of careful consideration.

All of this has caused the Ministry of Health to publicly comment: yes, we are looking at this, but it ain't going to happen quickly. Sort of, 'Cool your jets Hawke's Bay'. That said, *BayBuzz* is told our region's 'ask' has been working its way up the list.

With no DHB Board (and articulate chair like Kevin Atkinson) to champion our cause, and no leadership from our resident hospital bureaucracy, it falls to voices outside the sector - like Druzianic, our MPs and ideally our mayors (who are pre-occupied at present with other political/budget priorities) to lead the charge for a modern hospital for Hawke's Bay.

Once the public has the opportunity - via the pending clinical review - to see just how bleak our hospital capabilities are, and will worsen, hopefully that charge will begin with broad-based community support.

It's hard to imagine an asset that would affect and bring more benefit to more people in our region.

Film industry

On a faster track, hopefully, is the building of a state-of-the-art \$60 million film studio complex in Te Awanga, to be called Parkhill Studios. The facility will be totally off the grid, solar powered with its own sewage and storm water systems.

Industry entrepreneur Derek Slade has previously told *BayBuzz* the studio would bring in between US\$4-5 million per week and require a wide range of service providers, from film-making technicians to carpenters and caterers ... to say nothing of aspiring local on-screen talent! Approximately 70 staff would occupy the site permanently. During the filming of a production there could be over 350 additional people (actors and support crew) involved.

The point that the studio would drive *ongoing* need for film production skills and, importantly, thereby provide a platform of consistent work that enabled a permanent creative base to produce other film projects, including more locally-focused.

As I write, the last obstacle to overcome for the studio to proceed is an appeal by one party against the consent awarded by a HDC-appointed hearing commissioner. The Environment Court ordered mediation to be undertaken between the studio (applicant) and that party, which has now occurred. The objections relate to disturbance of the rural amenity state of the Te Awanga area. Hopefully all will be resolved, with construction beginning soon.

Like the hospital, a film studio is more the 'hub' than a complete answer. There are many other services, venues and facilities involved in meeting the region's healthcare needs. Similarly, the studio should be the hub that draws upon and encourages a range of associated services and activities. The sponsors have talked with EIT about creating relevant training programmes.

Local film entrepreneur Daniel Betty underscores the point that the studio would drive *ongoing* need for film production skills and, importantly, thereby provide a platform of consistent work that enabled a permanent creative base to produce other film projects, including more locally-focused. Is there a BayFlix on the horizon?

So, the potential here is an industry, not just a studio, with well-paying, permanent, non-weather dependent jobs. Hopefully, the job training possibilities of this might catch the eye and encouragement of our new Regional Economic Development Agency, one of whose directors happens also to be chair of the Arts Council of NZ.

Another spin-off I would personally lobby for would be an IMAX film facility. How about releasing all the marine critters and converting the Aquarium into a science/nature-focused IMAX theatre and virtual reality experience. Conversion to IMAX is affordable these days and the experience delivered beats anything the Aquarium will otherwise offer.

Resilient environment

The cyclone aftermath and, longer term, the likelihood of an increasingly disruptive climate force a reconsideration of how we treat our land and the waste we create from it - be that slash or greenhouse gas emissions. Two opportunities in Hawke's Bay involve waste and two involve land use.

Waste to energy

Next to silt, slash (woody waste, more accurately) is the most visible environmental remnant of Cyclone Gabrielle. Some of our wood debris is from poorly-managed plantation logging, but it appears even more has come from water-logged hillsides simply collapsing into waterways, no matter what the ground cover, including riparian planting, might have been.

As a result of the government review conducted post-cyclone, it is highly likely that logging practices will be

more rigorously regulated, perhaps to the point of 'no slash' allowed - all logging waste picked up and disposed of.

In any event, piles of wood debris across HB have re-surfaced interest in producing energy from biomass. The recovery plans submitted to the HB Regional Recovery Agency include a \$500,000 request to investigate this proposition. As presented in the HDC Locality Plan, "This project would determine feasible options for organic waste materials (e.g., woody biomass and organic feedstock) with a view to creating a pathway for sustainable local energy generation."

Hawke's Bay presently sports two versions of biomass co-generation - at Pan Pac and at the Ōmarunui Landfill, jointly operated by HDC and NCC.

Pan Pac

According to its 2022 Sustainability Report, Pan Pac plans to, "Reduce GHG emissions from our production activities by improving the efficiency of energy consumption and increasing the use of renewable energy." They are targeting at least a 70% reduction in GHG by 2030 as compared to 2018.

The company reports that 12% of its electricity needs are met by its biofuel boilers, capable of producing 36 MW. They use 50 tonnes of biomass per hour. The fuel comprises coarse green wood residues sourced from Pan Pac's forestry operation and dry shavings, a by-product from their sawmilling operation - consuming 320,000 tonnes per year.

Additionally, in 2021, 30,500 tonnes of community waste from HB, including treated timber, was diverted from landfill and converted to energy in Pan

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In 2021, 30,500 tonnes of community waste from Hawke's Bay, including treated timber, was diverted from landfill and converted to energy in Pan Pac's biomass boiler. 100% of the drying energy at its Otago site is generated by bioenergy.

Pac's biomass boiler. One hundred percent of the drying energy at its Otago site is generated by bioenergy.

Apart from expanding its own biomass use, arguably going forward Pan Pac (presently closed due to cyclone damage, with lumber operations set to restart in August) can serve as a supplier and expert technical advisor to any additional biomass-to-energy initiative the region undertakes.

Liquid biofuels made from wood residues would be a valuable substitute for this region's use of diesel in the primary sector. Crown research arm Scion's Biofuels Roadmap projects that if 30% of NZ's future liquid fuels were made from plants or forests grown on non-arable land, this could reduce GHG emissions by 5 million tonnes per year by 2050. We currently have around 145,000 diesel-powered heavy vehicles, along with 650,000 light diesel vehicles, guzzling over 630 million litres annually and growing each year.

The government, like 60-odd other countries, has in place a biofuels mandate. From 2023, fuel wholesalers must cut their total greenhouse gas emissions by selling biofuels as part of their fuel mix. But last year Z Energy shut

down its high profile trial production plant as uneconomic (due to sharply rising feedstock prices, like tallow). Instead it imports biofuels.

Ōmarunui Landfill

The Ōmarunui Landfill, operating since 2015 but also damaged by cyclone flooding, offers other biomass opportunities. There, current partner LMS Energy produces landfill gas (55% methane) that generates 0.9MW feeding into the Unison grid and capable of powering 1,000 homes. A modest upgrade is planned that would lift output to 1.1MW. An additional engine is also likely to be established at the site once the newly consented Area B is open and receiving waste.

As Dom Salmon of 3R has written in this edition, ideally our goal is to reduce the sheer volume of waste, especially organic food waste (methane-producing) going to the landfill. Nationally, 4% of our total GHG emissions arise from landfills. Moreover, here in Hawke's Bay, the Ōmarunui Landfill will require a \$20 million expansion to keep taking rubbish another thirty years; the main site will be full in three years at present rate of use.

Meantime, however, converting some of that waste to biogas is indeed useful.

Dom cites the example of Auckland's EcoGas in Reporoa. That plant, "uses organic waste in the country's first anaerobic digestion system. It creates biogas, which is used to generate electricity, heat water for local glasshouses, make biomethane which is fed into New Zealand's natural gas network, and create fertiliser for over 3,000 hectares of crop production. The plant

also makes bottled, food-grade carbon dioxide which is needed by our food producers and is currently imported into New Zealand."

A lot of boxes ticked there. Time for LMS Energy, or someone, to help us lift our biogas game?

I should note these are not the only biomass players in HB. Both Napier Pine and AFFCO are installing biogas boilers with 'Decarbonising' funding support from the Energy Efficiency & Conservation Authority.

Land use initiatives

Other than protecting water quality, the two biggest environmental challenges Hawke's Bay's primary sector faces are sequestering carbon (better still, reducing farming emissions) and averting soil erosion. Here are two initiatives aimed at those challenges.

For years we've been hearing the 'right tree, right place' mantra from afforestation advocates, including the HB Regional Council. Combatting hill country soil erosion is HBRC's primary aim - around 252,000 hectares of HB land is highly erodible, with around 6.8 million tonnes of sediment entering our waterways every year; while the lure of earning carbon credits carries additional appeal for many farmers.

A huge Scion-led project, Forest Flows, is measuring the water retention capacity of forests throughout NZ. Data just released indicates that of all the torrential rainwater that fell in the Mahurangi Forest near Auckland during the Anniversary Weekend floods and Cyclone Gabrielle, nearly 60% was captured in the forest, which

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BAYBUZZ
HAWKE'S BAY UP CLOSE, IN DEPTH

acted as a sponge, rather than flowing immediately into waterways. Trees = flood + erosion control. Planting heaps in hill country is a no-brainer.

With Government funding available to match its own resources, HBRC initially - during my tenure as a councillor - invited hill country farmers to apply on generous terms to embark upon tree planting. Early response was good.

However, backlash from some in the pastoral farming community over mounting conversions of sheep & beef production to pine plantations, and from others alarmed that mono-culture pine forests would supplant native restoration, has seemed to put a damper on tree-planting enthusiasm.

By 2021, HBRC's ambition had narrowed to a new programme with a pilot of up to five farms. And now HBRC has launched 'Land For Life' - another trial with thirteen farms, offering a loan to landowners to plant trees on their erodible land, with the expectation of delivering a return to farmer partners on this investment through manuka honey or timber production, and carbon credits. HBRC has committed \$4.8 million over three years to this initiative.

'Land for Life' has attracted the interest of the international heavy-weight environment group, The Nature Conservancy, who is said to be looking at a \$50-\$100 million scale-up of the programme to 50-100 farms across Hawke's Bay ... \$1 million per farm?

Wow! From big government co-funded programme to tiny trial to small trial to \$100 million roll-out. Could this be for real? Afforestation on steroids.

Indeed, HBRC has upped the ante,

as a response to Cyclone Gabrielle, proposing to move from a 50 farm pilot to approximately 600 farms in a multi-region programme. As a staff paper explains: "Council, TNC and MPI have identified the opportunity to reposition the project to contribute to recovery and long-term resilience of pastoral farms in Hawke's Bay." The multi-region feature presumably needed to meet the nationwide ambitions of potential partners MPI and The Nature Conservancy.

HBRC's big picture: "In the context of the primary sector recovery framework led by HBRC and MPI, the project has the opportunity to be a cornerstone component of rural recovery ... At scale, the project provides a mechanism to have real impact on the future resilience of Hawke's Bay's farmland, waterways, environment and biodiversity, climate change, communities and wider regional economy. The opportunity to re-imagine a more resilient farm landscape and Hawke's Bay's productive base."

A key element of this ambitious programme is: "Supporting improvements in pastoral farm systems and regenerative farming practices that are good for farmers' bottom lines and the environment."

And that's the reason I hope Land For Life is not simply HBRC hyperbole.

Carbon Farming

Trees are not the only way to store carbon (or hold soil or water or nutrients) on farmland.

The soil itself can be managed to do that, especially through practices generally referred to as 'regenerative farming'.

The Hawke's Bay Future Farming Trust is a strong advocate of such practices. It's involved in a \$3 million (largely MPI-funded), six-year project at the Hastings LandWISE micro-farm to test whether soil carbon can be regenerated - and to what extent - in soils used for intensive field cropping.

But more to the point here, in view of the Land For Life initiative, the Trust has already demonstrated on dairy farms in HB (Patoka) that regenerative practices can appreciably increase soil carbon ... in fact, on a scale comparable (or better) to a pine forest. Says Paul Smith, one of the soil scientists involved: "The great thing with soil carbon, compared to forestry, is that you can claim the GHG benefit, keep the carbon in the ground where is improving the water holding and nutrient holding ability of the soil, and keep growing low GHG food on the land - there aren't too many downsides."

Given that potential, the Trust is proposing a wider project aimed at pastoral farms, similar in scale to the LandWISE project, to establish more comprehensively that soil carbon can indeed be 'grown' on HB farms, generating that full complement of environmental benefits - GHG mitigation and offsets, less synthetic inputs, nutrient retention, and significantly better soil and water retention. Again, a lot of boxes ticked.

So, it appears Hawke's Bay doesn't lack for big, inspiring ideas that can carry our region well beyond recovery. These are a few on *BayBuzz's* radar. Any more out there hiding in the bushes? ●

Mark Hutchinson

Labour candidate for Napier

Napier is my home. This is where I grew up, where I've chosen to raise my three kids, and where I've built a successful business from scratch.

In my career I've worked closely with many of New Zealand's most senior leaders on the challenges they face. This has taught me how to get things done, across the public and private sectors.

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Labour

Authorised by Rob Salmond, 187 Featherston Street, Wellington.





Story by Bonnie Flaws
Photos by Florence Charvin

“Hurry up and wait”, was how one person described the government’s announcement about the voluntary buyback scheme for those with properties designated as Category 2 and 3 – a little bit of assurance, but not nearly enough for those most impacted by the February floods.

While we now know that these properties will be bought out if owners choose to go that route, that’s all we know. At the time of writing, we don’t know how properties will be valued for any buyout, where the owners will go, or even if their properties will stay in their initial Category. Only properties in Category 1 are definitive, while Categories 2 and 3 are provisional decisions.

By mid-June, these properties will have either been moved into a lesser category or made definite, depending on the results of two peer-reviews being undertaken by engineering firms on behalf of the region’s councils. The categories were decided by a group comprised of insurance companies, regional council flood mitigation and protection experts, and inspectors who initially stickered the properties. This means that some property owners sitting in Category 2 could be moved into Category 1, and that properties in Category 3 could move into Category 2.

At the same time, councils are now ready to begin negotiations with the Crown for the region-wide recovery, which will include what councils can contribute to the buy-back scheme, which is a funding arrangement with Wellington.

Hastings District Council Mayor Sandra Hazlehurst says the district faces enormous financial constraints.

“We have just spent nearly \$100 million on safe drinking water and we don’t have the balance sheet to contribute a great deal. So this is what the conversation needs to be about, a holistic view about what our recovery looks like and how we afford it.”

OPPOSITE: Glenn Bond and his family outside their home in Esk Valley which was luckily unscathed.

RED ZONE BLUES

She points out that out of the total amount the public pay for taxes and rates, the lion’s share is tax at 98%, while just 2% are rates.

“We have got our negotiators ready to go,” she says.

Hazlehurst says the chief executives of HBRC, NCC and HDC are about to commence a round of 23 meetings with local communities for people in the various categories so they can be brought up to speed on all the information, starting with Esk Valley and Pakowhai. One-on-one meetings with Category 3 property owners are also being scheduled.

“The community feedback is that they are pleased that they have more certainty for their futures, and a sense that despite what the outcome is that they are ready to move on with their lives. And because this is very much a preliminary category there is an opportunity to get in front of our community and see whether they are in the right category or not,” Hazlehurst says.

Not everyone affected feels the same either. Some people will settle and move on happily after what was an extremely traumatic event, while others with intergenerational connection to properties may feel more conflicted. “Some will want to stay put,” she says.

Napier City Council Mayor Kirsten Wise says money spent on repairing stop banks had run into the hundreds of millions, but since they form part of the mitigation plans for Category 2 properties, this will probably allow 173 of Napier’s 179 Category 2 properties to move into Category 1. Certainty will only arrive between late June and mid-July when geotech evaluations of stop bank repairs are due back, she says.

Esk Valley nuances

An Esk Valley resident whose home was not flooded while parts of their land were, says being put into Category 3 has been stressful. She has no intention of moving on from the area, and there are well over 10 properties in the same situation.

Speaking anonymously due to concerns about the impact on her business – she doesn’t want anyone to think they aren’t trading – she says the whole of Esk Valley was put in the red zone, regardless of whether their homes were flooded.

“We are upset because there were lots of people in the valley where it was black and white. We are putting our properties back to normal and don’t have to rebuild because our homes weren’t touched, but we might be told to go anyway.

“Our next concern is that [after Categories have been confirmed], are they just going to leave this valley to be one of the last ones they address because there aren’t going to be many of us left?”

While the buybacks are voluntary and people can’t be forced off their land, the Insurance Council has made it clear that it’s very unlikely they would be able to be insured. This is because Category 3 designations are in places deemed to carry an intolerable risk to life and safety.

But the Esk Valley resident has already spent a lot of money getting the property back into shape.

“We are so passionate, we are going to get it back to a beautiful valley,” she says.

The sentiment is widely shared by neighbours in the same position, none of whom would leave without a fight, she says. “It would definitely go to



ABOVE: The lower section of the Bonds' lifestyle property before and after Cyclone Gabrielle.

court. People whose houses were not anywhere near the flood but their land was. Anyone I've talked to would fight."

Mayor Hazelhurst says being in Category 3 and choosing to stay carries risk beyond insurance, however. The likelihood of building consents and bank loans to rebuild being granted would need to be considered too. Risky business.

Glenn Bond and his family, who own a lifestyle block in the Esk Valley, don't want to leave either. They were provisionally zoned Category 3, but their property is over several topographic levels - lower parts are in the orange zone and the house itself was out of the flood waters in Gabrielle.

"The question is whether or not you can have a dual-zone property. What we think would be a reasonable position on the part of the council, is to say that if your property is over more than one geographic level, that it is reasonable to have a part of your property on which you agree not to build any residential dwellings. But if you have a house up in the green zone, then you can live there. That's what we are pursuing."

However, he says it's not clear from the communication whether that is the way decisions are being made.

"We are putting all our eggs in that basket that we will be able to stay, because we have an old villa that has

"We are putting all our eggs in that basket that we will be able to stay, because we have an old villa that has survived the quake, survived the 1938 floods and survived Gabrielle intact and in good shape."

Glenn Bond

survived the quake, survived the 1938 floods and survived Gabrielle intact and in good shape. It's preposterous to us that we would not be able to live here, given that we were safe right through Gabrielle in our house even though the lower parts of our property were anything but safe," Bond says.

The first community meeting in Esk Valley with the region's chief executives that took place on June 6 appeared to suggest that the intention was to be sensitive to those nuances, and that planning permits and zoning arrangements might allow them to keep living there, he says.

"We took some confidence from that, in our particular situation. Obviously, that doesn't help people who were completely in the flood zone.

More recently Bond, tells *BayBuzz*

that HDC staff have visited his property and at least now have a more informed firsthand view of his situation. Council officials have always said that such individual reviews would be taken of Category 3 properties.

"It's been a strange feature of this experience for people in our position. We don't know whether to feel really lucky or really unlucky. We have experienced our own loss and anguish, but we don't want to ask for help at the expense of those who have lost more or been through greater trauma than ourselves."

Good policy?

Auckland University of Technology associate head of the School of Future Environments, Professor John Tookey, says there are always grey areas in situations like this, and appeals are inevitable.

Was the buyback scheme a good policy?

"Absolutely. It's rare for me to say a government policy makes a lot of sense but in this instance it does. The second question is does it go far enough? There are going to be further conversations about the borderline cases and what constitutes each one. It becomes extremely nuanced.

"I think it's likely to be expanded in the future, the scope of it. Because

of the grey area aspect of what we are talking about here, parties will have taken an initial estimate of what the cost of dealing with it is going to be and will have expected a level of inflation to be added to that value. And that is presupposing that there are no subsequent events over winter, considering the saturated ground. Any severe weather could be consequential.”

After that, it will be time for “big bad decisions” to be made about what kind of development takes place, what they constitute and where they go, Tookey says.

Engineering and design features will need to be considered. For example, requirements could include redevelopments to build two-storey high homes on piles with blow out walls designed to cope with future weather events, or the installation of grey water run-off tanks to attenuate storm water pulses.

But there had been no decisions yet about where people will go, Mayor Hazlehurst says. There are about 2,000 sections across the region at various stages of availability and readiness, she says.

“Housing has been a big focus through our place-based housing plan, and we will have our first inner city living apartments starting construction soon. And so there will be various options for our community. Not everybody is going to be ready at the same time. Some people are still renting or staying with friends and family. Some have already bought a new house while they are waiting. No two people’s situations are the same.”

Tookey says historically, an agreed market valuation is made based on mean house valuations, rates and QV values.

“They’ll take a swatch of those. In those areas what is the actual valuation? In some cases, zero. So, it’s an historical exercise to come up with a solution. Some people will be happy and say thank you very much and others will be hacked off. Inevitably with the level of debate and discussion that will take place, there will be a significant number of claims.”

I asked him how the funding arrangement between Central Government and councils was likely to fall for the buyback scheme. While there would be a lot of pencil sharpening going on, he suspected the bigger percentage would be taken by Wellington. Councils did not have sufficiently deep pockets to cope with the numbers and furthermore, the ratepayer base had already been heavily depleted and their ability to generate revenues for the future was diminished. “It doesn’t pass the smell test,” he says.

“On one hand, government has to show that local groups are taking initiative. But at the same time, I can absolutely imagine them realising that this is a non-starter and giving them a quid pro quo - additional funding for various projects. The government has many different pots of money. And then you’ve got the wider agencies like Waka Kotahi [that can contribute]. So are we going to see a significant expansion of funding around roading solutions in the region - an invisible subsidy?

“There’s political positioning and showmanship and a whole bunch of things [that will go on]. My suspicion is that the decision has been taken with relative haste and in this particular set

of circumstances - and I usually have very cynical positions in regard to the motivations of our representatives - this seems to have been done rapidly and for the right reasons, a bit of a shock to the system.”

Glenn Bond reached out to *BayBuzz* again just before the magazine was due to go to print with some good news. After his one-on-one meeting with the council, the family home had been downgraded to Category 1.

“We are obviously really pleased with the re-categorisation. After the uncertainty of the last few months, and the more intense fear we have lived with since our provisional red-zoning, it’s a great relief to be able to once again plan a future in our home. I can feel my back straightening.”

Bond said in the last few weeks all three councils had stepped up and done what they said they would: work promptly on pragmatic solutions so that landowners could remain where they were, where safety could be demonstrated.

“Casting our eyes ahead, we are trying to imagine a time where the community has recovered.

“At present it is still pretty bleak. Upturned cars and broken buildings still litter the valley floor. We are consciously trying to look past that to see the valley how it once was and how it will hopefully be again.

“Right now, though, our thoughts are with all the families and businesses that cannot safely remain in the flood zone. We recognise the clean-up needs to wait until those people have been supported to move on with their lives.” ●

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BALLS IN THE AIR WHILE SPORTS PARK TRUSTS DECIDE TO MERGE

The Regional Sports Park in Hastings is graced with some of the best sport facilities in the country, but for some codes, such as the two founding tenant codes – Netball and Athletics – delays in finishing a park spatial plan and a stalled Trust merger are causing unwanted headaches.

Story by Damon Harvey

Photos by Florence Charvin

Most users of the netball courts, hockey turfs, running track, 50 metre indoor swimming pool or canoe polo, that are part of nearly \$100 million in community and high performance sport assets would think that Mitre 10 Sports Park is council owned and operated by the council or some form of council-controlled entity.

However, there are two trusts involved. The original, the Regional Sports Park Trust, was formed after the Hastings District Council sold Nelson Park – the home of athletics and club rugby – to large retail (Big Box) developers for \$18m and used \$11m to purchase the Percival Road greenfields site to relocate athletics and netball.

The other – the Hawke’s Bay Community Fitness Centre Trust – was founded by Sir Graeme Avery and Bruce MacTaggart to create a community and high performance centre.

Back in 2007 former Hastings Mayor Lawrence Yule established the Regional Sports Park Trust to raise the additional funds to build a vastly enhanced track and field facility for the Hastings Athletics Association and a regional hub for netball.

It was an instant success, seeing the

OPPOSITE: Heidi Oliver, chair of Hawke’s Bay Netball, the day before Saturday morning games were cancelled for the second week in a row due to unsafe playing conditions.

athletics club attract new members and host major national events, while at the same time creating a platform for the amalgamation of the region’s netball associations to become Hawke’s Bay Netball.

Today, the sports park has evolved to be the home of a wide range of sports and sport clubs. As well as those mentioned earlier, the park is home to Central District Cricket, Giants Boxing, Hawke’s Bay Rugby League, Maycenvale Football Club, among others.

As more sport codes have relocated to the Sports Park, cracks have started to appear with concerns about car parking, ongoing construction of new sport facilities, poor placement of new facilities and lack of cohesion between the two trusts and council.

There have also been concerns that the world class sport facilities developed by Sir Graeme and Bruce Mactaggart could become a future ratepayer financial burden, despite a recent \$1m funding package from Pak’nSave Hastings and the trust having a greater focus on revenue generating prospects.

When the dynamic duo joined forces to establish the Hawke’s Bay Community Fitness Centre Trust (HBCFCT), their vision was to create a regional version of the AUT Millennium Institute of Sport, the home of New Zealand’s High Performance Sport.

Sir Graeme, a track and field enthusiast, had successfully fundraised the

As more sport codes have been relocated to the Sports Park, cracks have started to appear with concerns about car parking, ongoing construction of new sport facilities, poor placement of new facilities and lack of cohesion between the two trusts and council.

development of the AUT Millennium facility based on Auckland’s North Shore and could see an opportunity to create regional hubs, with Hawke’s Bay an ideal venue.

Both he and Bruce were recent arrivals to the region and shared a common vision of unearthing world class sport talent in the Bay, as well as attracting major sports events.

Graeme stated in 2021, before the opening of the \$32 million Regional Aquatic Centre, that the new facilities will complement the current investments and cement Hawke’s Bay as unrivalled in New Zealand for the scope of its sport and recreation facilities for the community.

Already Sir Graeme and Bruce have pulled off a major coup by signing a five year deal with Swimming New Zealand to host major national swimming events in the FINA Olympic-rated aquatic centre.

Their other contribution has been a 70 bed Sir Graeme S Avery hostel, which is close to being permanently



fully booked with athletes and volunteers making use of the Trust's high performance gym and health science facilities through to the sports park's other outdoor facilities.

The Regional Sports Park Trust (RSP) has also been active in supporting the establishment of the canoe polo facility and most recently the new indoor training facilities for Central Districts Cricket and the new Giants boxing facility.

However the trust is facing some big replacement costs, with the athletics track at end of life, as are the netball courts.

The RSP trust, which oversees the operations and maintenance of most of the park, deals with most of the user complaints - from car parking, frustration due to ongoing construction of new facilities and maintenance upkeep.

Netball unhappy

Late last year, long-ignored netball administrators decided to take matters into their own hands. Although the sports park spatial plan had started (but had come to a halt), netball decided to undertake a review of the netball sites it operates from

- the Pak'nSave Hastings Centre at the sports park as well as netball centres in Waipukurau and Napier.

Hawke's Bay Netball chair Heidi Oliver says that after 12 years at the Sports Park and on the back of some of the challenges that had occurred due to the sport's own growth as well as growth of the sports park, it was time to undertake a netball facility strategy.

She says the strategy, funded by Lotteries New Zealand Ltd and undertaken by Visitor Solutions, was to look at future proofing the sport and its centres.

"We wanted to understand what, in an ideal world, needs to be done to bring them up to standard for the next 10-15 years."

She admits that a catalyst to the survey was the issues the netball community faced most Saturdays.

"All users of the sports park have issues with car parking and it is a bugbear of ours which was highlighted during the construction of the aquatic centre where we lost car parks, as well as issues with pedestrian access to our courts. This really did agitate the netball community to say 'this isn't good enough'."

The Hastings Athletics club has focussed on investing in track and field assets such as throwing cages and pole vault equipment, which has helped secure hosting of national events such as the Colgate New Zealand Secondary School Games.

Heidi says it was time for netball to be a strong user voice at the park, especially since the Sports Park Trust has used the impressive 4,000 player numbers to attract potential funders for new park amenities.

"I guess that's been another frustration (for netball) because when entities apply for funding in regards to the sports park they use the entire sports park user numbers." Heidi says these are largely accredited to netball.

She says a couple of years ago Hawke's Bay Netball met with former RSP chief executive Jock Macintosh and chair Tania Kerr asking for a fair share of any funds secured for the park. Little has changed since that meeting, which prompted the decision for netball to undertake its own facility survey.

"We said 'you are leveraging off netball, yet netball is not being considered in this development', which is more evident now when we don't have any visibility."

"It very much looks like netball has been forgotten about."

She says today, the Pak'nSave Hastings netball centre is hidden from public view by the Institute of Sport and Regional Aquatic facility as well as the cricket and boxing facilities. A once highly visible facility, can now hardly be seen and is difficult to find.

Another concern is that little design thought has been put into connecting the facilities to each other.

Heidi says the completed survey is an attempt to protect and futureproof netball facilities at the park, whether that be on the current location or elsewhere at the park.

When netball moved to the park in 2011, the surface of the courts was seen as a short term solution. Twelve years on the courts are in poor condition and for the first time ever HB Netball cancelled Saturday games - not just because of poor weather, announcing the cancellation on social media "due to weather, court surfacing, parking situation and ultimately players safety".

"At the moment the courts are slippery, the line markings and court



"It's great for Hawke's Bay to have the Sports Park but it's sort of been 'we will plonk it here and deal with long term maintenance later!'"

Heidi Oliver, Hawke's Bay Netball chair

signage have faded and there are health and safety issues. Although we have had good dialogue with the Trust, little has eventuated."

Netballers pay to use the courts, but Heidi doubts much of the \$32,500 user fee goes into maintenance, which is a responsibility of the sports park trust.

"In an ideal world a portion of the fee we pay would be put aside year on year for repairs and maintenance to help fund the line markings, improve toilets and changing areas."

Heidi says it's also difficult for

the netball association to fund any improvements and is reluctant to increase player fees.

"We don't have deep pockets- we are reliant on member affiliation fees, grants and sponsorship funding to sustain the organisation.

"Our research has confirmed that 32% of those who use the park consider the facilities could be a deterrent to their participation."

Heidi says it's not too late to ensure the sports park is highly regarded by all users, particularly regular community users, but there needs to be a more

cohesive approach to facility development and more investment in ongoing maintenance to ensure existing facilities are looked after.

"That is all lacking and feels like it is very ad hoc. It's great for Hawke's Bay to have (the Sports Park) but it's sort of been 'we will plonk it here and deal with long term maintenance later!'"

Going forward as the two trusts negotiate a merger, Heidi is unsure whether this will provide better outcomes for netball.

"I do wonder that netball may have had greater traction if we were able to



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“The impasse needs to be resolved and I know there’s a lot of people working behind the scenes but until it is resolved I think we are going to be in a hiatus, and some of these decisions are crucial.”

go to council and lobby directly, rather than via the sports park trust. If we had gone through this process again, I think that’s what we would have done - asked to deal directly with council.”

Other voices

Another suggestion is to create a user forum to ensure the voice of each user group is heard.

Hastings Athletics Club chair Sharee Jones is hoping the RSP Trust can quickly find between \$700,000 and \$1.4 million over the next few months to replace the athletics track as well as install lighting.

She admits it’s a lot of money, but they are not the only users of the facilities. The grandstand, track and inner field have hosted rugby, football, music festivals and New Zealand’s largest Māori culture event, Te Matatini.

Sharee says the small club has little financially to contribute and any increase in user fees would have a big impact on participation. She says the bigger picture of the wider use of the track and field facilities needs to be considered.

The club has focussed on investing in track and field assets such as throwing cages and pole vault equipment, which has helped to secure hosting national events such as the Colgate New Zealand Secondary School Games. It is also the preferred facility for national sprint groups and pole vaulters.

She says the RSP Trust says it is confident it will find the funds, at least for the replacement track, which will help it maintain its reputation with athletes and administrators.

“A new track comes at a huge cost that we certainly can’t fund. We hope that the sports park trust can get the funding shortly and we will have at least a new track by early 2024.”

The lights would add a new dimension that supports twilight events and the potential to try and attract events such as the Oceania Track and Field Championships, but are a nice to have.

She adds the extra facilities such as the Avery hostel, and the fitness and

high performance gym facilities at the sports park provide additional appeal to attract major events.

“The hostel in particular has been a great new asset as athletics requires a lot of volunteers, so they can stay in affordable accommodation onsite, while it can also host training squads.

Like other user groups, Sharee highlights parking as an issue, although not to the same level as winter codes, due to it being a predominantly summer sport. The bigger issue is having to share the track and the field area with larger community events such as festivals.

Sharee is also lukewarm on a merger of the two trusts with concerns that they presently have a difference in focus, saying the Sports Park Trust is focussed on grass roots sport and HBCFCT more focussed on high performance sport.

“They need to ensure there’s balance between community sport and high performance, and there needs to be some form of representation of voice for the users.

Merger?

Time is ticking for the formation of a new trust and it has become more complicated due to both trusts presently without permanent chair executives. The Regional Sports Park chief executive Jock Macintosh resigned last year and is now a Hawke’s Bay Regional Councillor while HBCFCT’s general manager David Nancarrow finished more recently.

Acting RSP chair and Napier city councillor Graeme Taylor hopes this will be resolved with a willing counterpart in HBCFCT chair Iain Taylor, as well as strong council influence, although at a Hastings council meeting in May, he said there is a current impasse and he was unsure of when this would be resolved.

At the meeting Graeme said the sports park trust had been more than open with its due diligence information and that the hold up was due to HBCFCT.

“The regional sports park trust is more than open and has conceded and agreed to many of the requests of the community fitness trust, however the matters within their trust are for them to resolve.”

He added as well as the spatial plan being held up, so too is any future appointment of a senior manager to manage the park and the combined facilities.

“The impasse needs to be resolved and I know there’s a lot of people

working behind the scenes but until it is resolved I think we are going to be in a hiatus, and some of these decisions are crucial.”

Council’s view, according to deputy chief executive Bruce Allen, is that a transitional arrangement is put in place reflecting representation from both trusts. Bruce says this could be three trustees from each trust along with Tangata Whenua representation.

Bruce has been working with the two trusts on the merger with a heads of agreement signed in September 2022, enabling the trusts to work through a due diligence process.

Initial work included financial forecasting for a combined trust, a draft trust deed which included a set of objectives as well as representation and trustee appointments.

That work went on hold in late 2022. However Bruce won’t go as far as saying there is an impasse between the trusts, but that it has taken longer than hoped.

“Good progress is being made, although it is taking time to work through.

“It is a complex situation with the foundation trust and another that came to council with huge opportunities with the Sports Hall and future plans, which included an Aquatic Facility which came to fruition. It is just taking some time to work through.

“Trustees need to ensure they are undertaking thorough due diligence and acting in the best interest of their respective trusts.”

Council has been working hard to reignite the merger, so as to complete the spatial plan. It also has set aside \$1.5 million in the draft annual plan to upgrade parking and access at the sports park and is also keen to purchase additional land for future extension of the sports park.

As existing sports codes nurture their talent, community participation continues to rise, new sports such as water polo exceed all expectations and high performance athletes are developed into Olympians, it is hoped that the emergence of a new modern trust, not overburdened in political interference, takes the park to the next level.

There’s too much to lose. ●

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

PAK'nSAVE Hastings making a big splash to support community and high performance sport

PAK'nSAVE Hastings has been a major contributor to the development of sport facilities at the Hawke's Bay Regional Sports Park since the beginning.

As a local family, employing many local people, supporting the community and investing in sport and recreation facilities that enhance health and wellbeing, has always been important for the Smiths.

The partnership at the sports park first began when former Mayor Lawrence Yule pitched the idea of a multi-sport park to David and Pam Smith over a decade ago with PAK'nSAVE Hastings taking on the naming rights of the regional netball centre.

Now son and current owner-operator Brendon Smith has partnered with the Hawke's Bay Community Fitness Centre Trust with a generous \$1 million contribution to the world class facility now known as Hawke's Bay Regional Aquatic Centre Powered by PAK'nSAVE Hastings.

The enormous support ensures affordable and increased access to the Aquatic Centre. However Brendon didn't stop there, making a further \$50,000

commitment to Swimming NZ which will see major national swimming meets hosted here for the next five years.

"Our support is two-fold. We want to provide affordable access for the community to a world class facility and we also want to expose the community to top swimming talent that inspires our local youth to reach for sporting success."

"It's also vitally important that our young children are confident in water and if we can make this amazing facility more accessible, then it will go some way to improving wellbeing outcomes as well as save lives," said Brendon.

"The PAK'nSAVE Hastings team is committed to supporting the community we live in and see many positive outcomes from supporting the aquatic centre and the other sport facilities at the regional sports centre."

HBCFCT commercial manager Greg Howie praised the financial commitment of The Smith family who have contributed over \$2 million to the Mitre10 Regional Sports Park over the years.

"We can't underestimate the significance of this latest \$1 million five-year sponsorship contribution by Brendon Smith.



Greg Howie (left) and Brendon Smith at the aquatic centre.

"It helps us to keep our facility costs down, which in turn keeps user prices down and greatly supports water safety in our community, and we will see future Olympic swimming stars being developed from this incredible facility," Greg says. ●








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ORGANIC OPPORTUNITIES: THE CHANTAL STORY



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In 1979 teacher Maureen Ward Alexander and chartered accountant Peter Alexander returned from their Big OE to Hawke's Bay. Maureen was a farmer's daughter from a place on the Taihape Road. Peter hailed from a small town south of Auckland called Pukekawa made infamous just a few years earlier by the Crewe murders.

Both became vegetarian while living in Dunedin. Returning to Hawke's Bay the couple found it hard to buy the whole foods, such as lentils, that were easily obtained when they lived in London. Luckily there was a local vegetarian co-op called Chantal offering access to the foods they sought.

Over time, the co-op grew. Eventually there was enough momentum and business potential that Peter and Maureen, together with Carol and Alan Burke opened a small shop - also called Chantal - in Napier's Hastings Street. It was 1983.

Forty years later Chantal is still on Hastings Street, albeit a few metres away from the original store and with a much bigger footprint. In that time it has become a trusted focal point for the vegetarian and organic communities.

Every step in the Chantal story has been organic. Original partners Peter and Maureen and Carol and Alan did not start their enterprise with the goal of creating a multi-million dollar business. At its peak under Ward Alexander ownership Chantal grew, and grew, and grew to become a vertically integrated operation incorporating a store and café, organic gardens, and a wholesale business carrying around 1,000 stock lines and supplying other organic shops all around the country, with a total workforce of around 80.

It wasn't intentional per se, it just happened. A case of seeing opportunities and taking them.



“When we first started it was really hard to get any organic product, and we had no concept of what the potential opportunities were.”

Peter Alexander

Generations in the making - the Chantal Family. Peter and Maureen Ward Alexander, their daughters Mara and Tess, son-in-laws Ben and Tim, and grandkids Chloe, Elodie, Archie and Obi. Photo Florence Charvin

Maureen talks about how the Chantal range expanded into supplements in the early 80s. “A woman with a supplement shop in the mall was closing down. We weren’t going to have supplements, but she wanted to ensure ongoing supply for her customers and asked if we would take the products on.”

Going wholesale

The wholesale business had a similar low key beginning, founded on a surplus of carrots, explains Peter.

“One of our growers had more carrots than we could sell. So I rang up some of the Auckland shops and said, do you want some organic carrots? And they all said yes. So that was how we actually started.”

The wholesale organic range expanded into dry goods from an experience Peter had with a raisin supplier, after comparing prices and estimated margins.

“I considered he was making too much, so we started selling raisins and made a fair profit.”

Chantal Wholesale - supplying other organic stores - was run from the back of the shop, until it got too big, says Maureen.

“In 1999 we moved the wholesale business to North Street.”

Chantal has always been about community. At its heart it’s about nourishing families. It’s a business that holds true to its original principles and ethos, and is the life’s work of Peter and Maureen. Over the years their daughters, Tess and Marla, and many cousins have worked at Chantal. And today, as adults with their own young families

Tess and her partner Tim, and Marla and her husband Ben are all associated with the business. Tess and Tim run the Chantal store as part owners, and Marla and Ben operate Petit Jardin, a small market garden run on organic principles that supplies Chantal with seedlings and vegetables.

In truth, all of the developments in Chantal wholesale over the years have stemmed from the retail store. “The driving point was to wholesale anything that we could sell in our own shop. That was the test,” Peter says.

“And it kept mushrooming.” Soon Chantal was wholesaling products from all over the world.

“When we first started it was really hard to get any organic product, and we had no concept of what the potential opportunities were,” says Peter.

Peter and Maureen travelled widely and researched to find new products for Chantal. They kept an eye on trends, and sourced what people asked for - in the days before the internet.

Not a hippy shop

Maureen says that she and Peter took particular care when setting up the shop, designing the logo, and getting the shop fit out right, so that people would feel comfortable coming into the store.

“It couldn’t be seen as a hippy sort of shop,” she says. “So that’s why we got the designer to make it look more mainstream and accessible. And people did come.” That half sunflower logo is still the brand identity four decades later.

Reflecting on her time in the business, Maureen says the shop was different from the wholesale arm. “It was

always fun, somehow. I felt I was doing something for the community.”

Peter says that he enjoyed the establishment phase.

“In a lot of ways I enjoyed establishing the business and the early days, a lot more than the later days. I enjoy the creation, but running a creation - that’s not me.”

Maureen adds: “He likes new projects and starting things.”

Peter says that when you’re growing a business, the financial side of things is always pushed. “We never had sufficient capital to do what we wanted, and you always underestimate what the demand for capital probably is.”

“The potential for expansion was always there,” says Maureen, “but you had to have the capital.”

Peter says that small-to-medium business owners need to drive things. “You’ve got to be the one driving it and making it all happen. But at the same time, don’t get overloaded. Put structures and processes in place and make yourself dispensable.”

The gardens

In 2009 Chantal expanded into market gardening, growing vegetables to supply their own store and others. “We couldn’t get enough organic veggies. It was all about supply lines, and our belief that the heart and soul of organic stores is the produce,” says Peter.

Son-in-law Ben Duclercq joined the Chantal vegetable operation on his arrival in New Zealand in 2013.

In October 2020, Ben established Petit Jardin, a 0.8 acre smallholding in Bay View, where he grows vegetables and seedlings for Chantal, supplies one



**"It's about
growing better,
not bigger."**

Ben Duclercq,
Petit Jardin

"It couldn't be seen as a hippy sort of shop. .. that's why we got the designer to make it look more mainstream, and accessible. And people did come."

Maureen Alexander Ward

of the smartest restaurants in the Bay, and sells mixed fruit and veggie boxes to local customers.

Ben follows organic principles and grows using a no-till method. He says that his growing methods offer "better yields and fewer weeds, with the added advantage of not turning the soil into mud".

Unashamedly, Ben's philosophy is to keep it small. "It's about growing better, not bigger," he says. A tour of the garden shows row upon row of plants in rude health, and a good variety, even in early winter.

Chantal 2.0

By 2016, Peter and Maureen had been at the helm of Chantal for more than 30 years. They "had run out of puff", and didn't have a firm exit plan in place.

"In a lot of ways we were holding the businesses back," says Peter.

Daughter Tess and partner Tim were planning to relocate to Hawke's Bay from Auckland.

"We thought we might work in the business," explains Tim. "But then Peter got approached with an offer."

That approach gave Tim and Tess the opportunity to buy into Chantal, originally in partnership with the new owner. These days, Tim and Tess have exited Chantal wholesale, and have full operational control of the Chantal retail operation, in co-ownership with the new owners of Chantal.

Since taking over the shop, there's been a few changes.

Tess says that one of the biggest differences was bringing in a point of sale system.

"Prior to that everything was paper based. Mum and Dad wanted to bring it in earlier, but it's quite a lot of work, if you look at how many products we have (4000-5000 SKUs). That's a lot for a shop our size.

Another big change was outsourcing the café to an independent operator,



Hapi. "We didn't have any experience in running a café," explains Tim. "We just thought that Hapi would be a much better fit.

"All the best independent hospitality businesses generally have the owner working either front of house or in the kitchen," says Tim.

"And neither of us has the desire or skill set," adds Tess.

As for the product range, it's come a long way since the early days. Of the trends and development in vegetarianism and organics and how it influences Chantal's range, Tim says that Peter and Maureen jumped on them before they came along.

"But there's more fads now, and they come faster. People are more conscious of what they're eating. All of a sudden you'll start selling more of something. And then you have to follow up. Why are these people buying this?"

Tim says deciding what new stock to range is a mix of what people ask for, "but also sticking with our kaupapa. We try to keep things organic and local as a point of difference. We can't be jumping on the fad that doesn't fit with Chantal. We just try to put that simple frame on it."

Other than the challenge of the

pandemic years, maintaining supply line connections is a major challenge.

"There are more and more challenges for small producers and smaller growers. It's not just about finding markets for what we sell, it's actually finding people to supply it.

"The cyclone really highlighted that, showing that local food security is very important," says Tim.

As for where to next, Tim and Tess say the past couple of years hasn't allowed the space for grand plans, and that will be the case for the next 12 months too. They see a clear role for Chantal as part of the community.

Tess sees Chantal's competitive advantage as being somewhere where people want to go, as a place to keep connections with the local community.

"The people that come here, do feel connected with everyone else around them. It just increases the sense that this is more than just a place to shop for food."

These days, Chantal is a seven-day retail operation, employing around 20 people. Tess can often be found on the shop floor, and has a thing for fully stocked, tidy shelves. Tim's more likely to be out back, loading new products and specials into the POS system.

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“The people that come here, do feel connected with everyone else around them. It just increases the sense that this is more than a place just to shop for food.”
Tess Alexander Ward, Chantal store

CHANTAL TIMELINE

- 1978 Chantal co-op established
- 1979 Ward Alexanders return to Hawke's Bay, join co-op
- 1983 Chantal shop opens
- 1987 Ward Alexanders become sole owners
- 1999 Wholesale business moves to new premises
- 2009 Started organic gardens, growing to 45 acres
- 2012 Chantal café opens
- 2013 Ben Duclercq joins organic garden business
- 2014 Purchased Norton Rd orchard
- 2016 Sold Chantal to third party
- 2016 Tess and Tim buy into Chantal
- 2019 Hapī becomes Chantal café operator
- 2020 Orchard sold
- 2020 Ben Duclercq starts Petit Jardin
- 2020 Poppa Pete's juices launched

Insights into the Chantal shop range

- Fresh and local produce dominate the top-sellers
- 8 of the top 10 sellers are locally sourced
- Petane salvaged wine has entered Top 10 sellers post cyclone
- Key bulk products – pumpkin seeds, Otago slab apricots, Chia seeds, Brazil nuts, oats are nudging the Top 10
- Niche products: powders such as maca, ashwagandha, moringa, ceremonial cacao
- Seaweeds are on the up, wild-harvested horopito, black salt for those wanting a vegan egg taste.
- Wide range of products in the herbal dispensary, such as licorice root, slippery elm, valerian, and Siberian ginseng.

As to whether they've got another 40 years ahead of them, Tess says some days she can see her and Tim running Chantal until they retire. Tim says he's hoping for a slightly earlier retirement than his in-laws.

Retirement? Really?

When Peter and Maureen sold Chantal in 2016, it was supposed to be time for retirement. They had worked very hard, working full time in other careers alongside a growing Chantal. But instead, after Chantal came a 28 acre organic apple orchard in Norton Road, Hastings.

“And we started growing veggies, and doing a whole lot of things out there,” says Peter.

“But it got to a stage where it was wearing me out again ... if I was a 25 year-old, I would've taken on the

“We try to keep things organic and local as a point of difference. We can't be jumping on that fad that doesn't fit with Chantal. We just try to put that simple frame on it.”

Tim Stevens, Chantal store

challenge. So we decided we would sell up and did so during the COVID lockdown.”

Peter's latest venture is a small organic juice business called Poppa Pete's. Started during the Norton Road orchard days under a different name, Poppa Pete's is a one litre glass bottle range of organic apple and organic blended juices. The juice is clean, crisp and true to the varieties contained within. Peter sells his juices from

his farm gate stall in Scarrott Road Bay View, through Chantal, directly to some stores, and through the connection with Chantal Wholesale to other organic stockists throughout New Zealand.

By the end of the interview it was time for the legacy discussion. Maureen was doing grandparent stuff, leaving Peter to wrap things up. Too humble to be drawn on whether he feels proud of what he and Maureen created, instead he flips to talking about family and the achievement of others. “When I look out there and see what Ben is doing, what Tess and Tim are doing, and Greta at Hapī, that makes me feel really good.”

Which, if you think about it, is exactly how it should be. Thanks Chantal. Here's to the next 40 years. ●

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BUSINESS SUCCESS ... IN THE CAN



BayBiz Innovators Fiona Fraser



Fly spray was probably the very last thing on Marcus Berry's mind when he arrived in the UK to attend a family wedding. But, after a well-timed tip-off, he returned to Hawke's Bay with a solid business idea, and a very large piece of kit.

Laid back doesn't even begin to describe Marcus Berry.

The equanimous founder of Pacific Aerosol in Whakatū keeps a cool head and a low profile - just the way he likes it. Motivated less by market share and courting media than he is to responsive customer service and supporting his team's lifestyle choices, he's built a successful business that, while niche, has probably touched every Kiwi home in some way.

At the company HQ, borer bombs sit on a shelving unit alongside lubricants, degreasing solutions and hand sanitiser. Pacific Aerosol produces them all, and it's entirely likely one of their products is in your cupboard, garden shed or office, right now.

Just don't expect to see a big shiny Pacific Aerosol logo on your can of fly spray. They're contract manufacturers - under the radar, and happy to be. Even participating in an article with *BayBuzz* is well out of Marcus's comfort zone, he confides. "I don't like talking about myself. I mean, I've been to some of those business mentor lunches and bits and pieces, but they weren't for me."

This type of candour is typical of Marcus, who says he never really intended to start an aerosol business. But his dad's company, Chemz, which wholesales automotive and electrical spray products, as well as spray paints and primers and an array of cleaning and sanitising formulations, was having a problem getting its cans filled. "While at the wedding, we were discussing this with my English father-in-law, and he started browsing through auction sites. He found an aerosol line for sale that was being

decommissioned by a pharmaceuticals company moving its operation to Poland. We went to have a look, and it fit the bill."

Armed with a chemistry degree and enough experience in pulp and paper manufacturing - where he'd spent the lion's share of his career - to understand how filling cans with propane might work, Marcus placed a bid. It was not a competitive process. "There weren't any other offers, so it was ours," he says, adding "We paid next to nothing for it."

A few weeks later, a couple of tonnes of metal turned up in a container at Napier Port, then sat in storage for over a year while Marcus worked out his next steps.

The business - one of only four aerosol filling companies in the country - was established first at rented space in Awatoto, before the Berrys purchased a site in Hastings, building a fit-for-purpose factory. Chemz was, naturally, Marcus's first customer (accounting for a quarter of business to this day), but it wasn't long before word spread - Pacific Aerosol was the new kid on the block, filling small runs (or larger ones) of cans at a competitive price. If your product needed propellant, this was the business to help.

Paul Hindmarsh came on board five years ago as Chief Operating Officer. He laughs when asked what the client attraction strategy is. "Do we have one?" he quips, eyeing his boss. "We don't put a great deal of effort into the website, or write detailed strategic plans. We don't have a sales function, but somehow people find us, and by the time they do, they're a long way through the buying process and ready to act."

The aerosols of 2023 are a far cry from the fluorocarbons of the 1980s - the ones that led to a complete ban on this type of propellant in an effort to save the ozone. The LPG-based propellants of today are deemed safe, with the aerosol sector an ever-growing one as convenience products become increasingly mainstream. Pacific Aerosol uses pressure, and a variety of different propellants to create its spray or trigger items for customers. It stores

about 2,000 different ingredients onsite, producing 400-500 individual products.

That piece of kit from England is the same one that fills cans to this day, although Marcus admits it's at a more leisurely pace than some of his competitors. "They're filling 200 cans a minute - we do 20," he laughs. "And we run Monday to Friday, 8am until 5pm, depending on the weather, because if the sun is shining and the wind is low, I want to get out fishing."

Although delivered with a wink, there's a kernel of truth in the statement. Marcus and Paul allow their staff to choose their own shifts - albeit by consensus, as a core team is required to run the plant. Marcus says the women and men overseeing his factory usually decide to start at dawn and finish by 2pm during summer, so they can get the barbecue fired up or hit the surf. It works well, and it's all those aforementioned business lunches that are to thank for the initiative.

Marcus says it was meeting other entrepreneurs that made him see more clearly something he'd always suspected about business. "That you can set your own company up however you like - that you get to choose how it works," he explains. "There are far too many people in this world complaining about having to work 70 hours a week to meet demand at their business. Why not set it up so that your demand is lower, and you work 40 hours a week? So you leave at five o'clock and don't have to answer emails when you get home? That's how I view life, and how it intersects with business."

Marcus is also proudly local. Although some of the cans are imported from overseas, depending on type, many are manufactured just around the corner at a can-rolling plant in Hastings. His clients are mostly New Zealand based too (he won't name names for commercially sensitive reasons, but you'll likely find a few of them at your nearest Bunnings). That doesn't prevent them working with the occasional out of town, though.

"We get the odd order from Kenya, or Canada, and we're hoping to get over to Trinidad and Tobago soon," says Marcus.

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LEFT TO RIGHT: Marcus Berry, Natasha Saunders, Paul Hindmarsh, Tracey Webb, Brian Forbes and Navjinder Singh.
Photo: Florence Charvin

“There’s a guy out there wanting some natural insecticide and for all intents and purposes he seems genuine.”

Good fishing there too, one suspects.

They’ve had approaches from the big guys - the ones making popular brands of spray deodorant. “But they were talking hundreds of thousands of cans, and it’s not what we do. We’d have had to start up a separate line just for that, and then we’d have worried that we wouldn’t be able to meet the needs of our regular local customers. Being small means we’re nimble and we can turn orders around pretty quickly.”

Tech certainly makes some parts of the business run more smoothly and Marcus has added additional automation over the years, but says it’s a lot of faff for little reward when it comes to aerosols, mainly due to safety and compliance. “Greater automation would work if we were doing just one thing - like this skinny can here ...” (he hoists a can off his desk by way of demonstration) “for hours on end. But because you have to change the parameters like height and diameter when automating a line, it wouldn’t work so well for a business like ours, running six different products across a day.”

Yes, automation might free up capacity, “but capacity isn’t a constraint for us at the moment. We’re a small team, so if one person is off sick, we are definitely impacted, but generally we do ok.”

Marcus isn’t one to puff his chest and reel off a long list of achievements,

but concedes he does have some proud moments. “It’s the little things for me,” he says. “It’s our unblemished safety record when we’re working in a chemical environment every day. It’s satisfying when we know we’ve delivered good service, that we pay everyone a decent wage, that we’re keeping manufacturing here in New Zealand rather than sending it offshore. And that we’re all working towards a common goal of making aerosol manufacturing better, safer and more profitable.”

Adds Paul, “Marcus often tells the staff that Pacific Aerosol exists as a tool for all of us to get what we want out of our lives. He’s very generous with his time, and the way he treats us - I know all our staff would agree with that sentiment. Each one of us benefits from the growth of the business.”

That growth has come steadily since Marcus unpacked that English aerosol line in 2008. Despite the challenges of the GFC, and latterly, Covid 19, he says revenue is up 1000% since those early days, and there’s still plenty of scope. Pacific Aerosol’s future growth is almost a given.

Who would have thought he’d have a wedding, and his eagle-eyed father-in-law, to thank for his success?

“Yeah, it was pretty much a spur of the moment decision,” reflects Marcus, “but it’s worked out alright.” ●

www.pacificaerosol.co.nz

Fiona Fraser is the director of Contentment PR & Communications. Nominate a savvy entrepreneur to feature in an upcoming column by contacting fiona@contentment.co.nz

2023

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Meeting New Zealand's decarbonisation targets

The New Zealand Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) is a key tool for meeting New Zealand's domestic and international climate change targets. It establishes a trading market of New Zealand Units (NZU). NZUs can be traded by participating businesses through the scheme.

Under the New Zealand ETS one tonne of carbon dioxide equates to an NZU. Therefore, when we talk about the carbon price in New Zealand, we are in fact referring to the price of an NZU.

The carbon price in New Zealand is, at the time of writing, \$62.50 per tonne of carbon dioxide. We believe that a much higher carbon price is needed to shift our economy from its reliance on fossil fuels.

Where does that price need to be? The OECD, in its annual report on Effective Carbon Rates, suggests we need to be well north of \$150/tonne of carbon dioxide by 2030 if net carbon emissions are to be zero by 2050.

Consequently, it's puzzling why the Government did not accept the advice from the Climate Change Commission (CCC) last year calling for a much higher carbon price and a reduction in the volume of carbon units it provides.

We are of the opinion, the reason for this is simple; based on Treasury analysis the Government was concerned about the impact a higher carbon price might have on inflation, which remains stubbornly high.

Climate Change Commission advice

The CCC, in its latest report titled "NZ (ETS) unit limits and price control settings for 2024-2028" hasn't stepped away from its 2022 advice to the Government and has recommended more decisive action from 2026.

They have been quite explicit since 2021 that the current ETS structure may hinder the country's ability to achieve our carbon emission targets in the years ahead – namely, the ETS

budgets, the Paris Agreement goal and the Net Zero 2050 goal.

If the ETS is to be a significant contributor to that goal and remain the country's central mechanism for dealing with climate change, then it needs to be given room.

Why wait until 2026 to bring in these significant changes? The annual advice the CCC gives the Government about NZU limits, and NZU price control settings is a rolling 5-year outlook. Under the Climate Change Response Act they cannot recommend changes to the first two years unless extenuating circumstances exist.

This is why, in our opinion the CCC wants New Zealand to take an aggressive trajectory from 2026 onwards to meet its objective. Currently, the floor on NZU auction prices is around

\$36, whereas the Cost Containment Reserve (CCR), where the government provides extra NZUs if needed, is around \$91.

Starting in 2026, the CCC has recommended a significant reduction in the auction volume of NZUs it supplies to the market, raising the NZU auction reserve price to \$72 and having a split CCR starting at \$205 and then \$256.

Carbon farming

Another problem the Government faces is potentially having too many NZUs generated by carbon farming, the planting of forests for the sole purpose of generating NZUs.

This has been well signalled in recent years. The agricultural community had expressed concerns that too much productive farmland was

Climate Change Commission's recommendation for 2024-2028

Million NZUs	Fixed and cannot be changed		Updated recommendation		
	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Limit on the NZUs available by auction	24.8	22.5	15	13	10.6
Limit on the approved overseas carbon units used	0	0	0	0	0
Overall limit	31.1	28.8	21.2	19.1	16.6
Cost containment reserve					
Tier 1					
Trigger price, including inflation	\$91.61	\$103.24	\$205.00	\$215.00	\$226.00
Reserve volume (million NZUs)	7.7	7.1	2.3	2.1	1.9
Tier 2					
Trigger price, including inflation	NA	NA	\$256.00	\$269.00	\$282.00
Reserve volume (million NZUs)	NA	NA	4.2	3.8	3.4
Total reserve volume	7.7	7.1	6.5	5.9	5.3
Auction reserve price					
NZU price	\$35.90	\$38.67	\$72.00	\$75.00	\$79.00

Source: Climate Change Commission

being changed to forestry, negatively impacting rural communities.

The reason for the change to forestry is purely economic – the return per hectare on land planted with pine to produce NZUs is multiple times what beef and sheep farming could earn from the same land.

Farmers are not alone in that concern. The CCC noted there has been a 69% increase of post-1989 forestry registered in the ETS. This creates a risk of NZU oversupply and a risk that emitters within the ETS buy NZUs to account for their carbon emissions rather than reduce carbon emissions, which is the end goal. We must reduce emissions, not offset them.

The Government has announced a review of the ETS so that it can cut gross carbon emissions while not incentivising more tree planting. That won't be easy, but they may restrict the amount of forestry going into the ETS or restrict the amount of NZU's forestry carbon emitters can buy versus the NZUs supplied by the government. In any event we expect changes to the ETS and higher carbon prices.

NZU price collapse – An opportunity?
Since the Government did not accept

the CCC advice in December last year, the NZU price had its most significant price fall in its 15-year history, falling 40% from its \$88 top to a low of \$53.

This fall was exacerbated by the annual seasonal selling from small forest owners who receive NZUs in the March quarter and typically sell them immediately. In previous years, demand from carbon emitters has absorbed that supply, but this year that demand failed to materialise.

However, recently the NZU price has recovered and, at the time of writing, had rallied almost 20% to \$62.50 following the Government announcement on the ETS review and the recent CCC advice.

The reality is in the future a shortfall in the supply of NZUs needed to meet these new emission budgets is likely. New Zealand's carbon emissions are stubbornly high and have not reduced materially. This needs to change to meet our domestic and international targets.

NZUs appear cheap, being nowhere near where they need to be for the economy to decarbonise.

Investors can get exposure to the NZU price by investing in the Carbon Fund (CO2) which is listed on the New Zealand stock exchange. ●

Nigel Brunel is Head of Commodities at Jarden. The information and commentary in this article are provided for general information purposes only. It reflects views and research available at the time of publication, using external sources, systems and other data and information we believe to be accurate, complete and reliable at the time of preparation. We make no representation or warranty as to the accuracy, correctness and completeness of that information, and will not be liable or responsible for any error or omission. It is not to be relied upon as a basis for making any investment decision. Please seek specific investment advice before making any investment decision or taking any action. Jarden Securities Limited is an NZX Firm. A financial advice provider disclosure statement is available free of charge at <https://www.jarden.co.nz/our-services/wealthmanagement/financial-advice-provider-disclosure-statement>



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Food waste – into the great unknown



Photo: Jack Warren

The waste New Zealanders send to landfill every year presents something of a blurry image. We know how much ends up there, but there isn't good data on what it's made up of.

Food waste and other organic waste is not only part of this problem, but is the main reason waste to landfill contributes 4% of New Zealand's total emissions – over 3.1 million tonnes worth. This is because when it breaks down in landfill it produces the potent greenhouse gas ... methane.

Reducing food waste does present some low hanging fruit though (if you'll excuse the pun) for businesses and individuals to tackle waste and reduce emissions. It's a waste stream we are all a part of and can all have a positive impact on.

By the numbers – how much is wasted?

Research from the Kantar New Zealand Food Waste Survey in April 2022 puts the amount of food ending up in household bins at a staggering

100,000 tonnes a year.

To put a dollar figure on it, the Kantar survey quantifies the cost to households at \$3.1 billion – a staggering figure considering the current cost of living crisis and high food prices.

Research by Love Food Hate Waste New Zealand in 2018 puts the figure higher still, at 157,000 tonnes.

This doesn't even include food lost on the commercial side of the supply chain – during harvest, manufacture, transport and storage – a figure for which there is little data. Professor Miranda Miroso of the University of Otago's Department of Food Science says, "The publicly available New Zealand retail data shows supermarkets create 60,500 tonnes of unsold food annually."

This is just one dataset from one sector. She also notes New Zealand is still "woefully short" of properly understanding what is wasted in the food supply chain.

Another figure which gives us a glimpse of this loss, but from a local

Having a separate bin for food waste is a potent behaviour change tool as it makes households more aware of how much food is being lost.

perspective, comes from Hawke's Bay food rescue organisation Nourished 4 Nil. They report having received 139 tonnes of donated food in May of this year alone. This food is mostly donated by producers, supermarkets and retailers for reasons such as damaged packaging or being close to 'best before' dates, but is still fit for human consumption.

Where to start?

Comprehending a problem is the first step to tackling it and as Miranda points out, New Zealand has little understanding of our level of food waste. This, she says, is because we haven't had a national definition for it, and no one has done a whole supply chain investigation.

Things are set to change though, with a technical definition for food waste due to be announced soon by government, she says. Work can then begin to properly measure it.

Miranda's university research group is about to start a project, commissioned by the Ministry for the Environ-

We're fortunate in Hawke's Bay to have a commercial composter, BioRich, on our doorstep. Cyclone Gabrielle had a severe impact on their operations in Awatoto, but they were awarded \$1 million from the government's Waste Minimisation Fund to help get the business back up and running.

ment, to establish a baseline measure of food loss in Aotearoa. The results are expected early next year.

I, for one, am very interested to see what their work uncovers.

Legislative work has also been happening at the other end of the food waste pipeline. In March government announced that by 2030 all district and city councils must provide food scrap collections to households in urban areas.

This will not only keep this food waste out of landfill, but also means it can be repurposed into fertiliser or other high-value products. I would also argue having a separate bin for food waste is a potent behaviour change tool as it makes households more aware of how much food is being lost.

Auckland is in the process of rolling out their collection system, and Western Bay of Plenty has already rolled out theirs.

Alternatives to landfill

We're fortunate in Hawke's Bay to have a commercial composter, BioRich, on our doorstep. Cyclone Gabrielle had a severe impact on their operations in Awatoto, but they were awarded \$1 million from the government's Waste Minimisation Fund to help get the business back up and running.

The destination for Auckland's food scraps collection is EcoGas, based in Reporoa, which uses organic waste in the country's first anaerobic digestion system. It creates biogas, which is used to generate electricity, heat water for local glasshouses, make biomethane which is fed into New Zealand's natural gas network, and create fertiliser for over 3,000 hectares of crop production.

The plant also makes bottled, food-grade carbon dioxide which is needed by our food producers and is currently

imported into New Zealand.

EcoGas was also instrumental in diverting close to 500 tonnes of spoiled food from landfill after Hawke's Bay was devastated by the cyclone. Managing Director Andrew Fisher says they worked with Napier City Council to collect spoiled food from residents. They also collected from manufacturing facilities and supermarkets, with all the material being transported via Palmerston North due to SH5 being closed at the time.

EcoGas has the automated mechanical facilities to unpack packaged food and treat meat to international standards before it is fed into their digester, Andrew says.

From food rescue to production

Some food waste comes from production being out of kilter with demand, produce not meeting supermarket standards, or is a byproduct of food production. There are businesses and organisations aiming to change this.

One startup, EatKinda, is aiming to create ice-cream out of imperfect cauliflower that doesn't make the grade for sale in supermarkets. During their initial trial in 2022, they diverted 468 kilograms from food waste – approximately 310 cauliflower florets that would otherwise have gone unpicked.

Although their recent sellout promotion with Hell Pizza ended up using commercial cauliflower due to crop loss in the Auckland floods, this is still their aim going forward.

Recently NZ-grown fast food chain Burger Fuel partnered with food rescue organization Citizen Collective to make cherry cola from rescued cherries and a byproduct of rum making. Citizen Collective also makes beer from rescued bread.

Here in Hawke's Bay, interns based with us at 3R worked over the summer on the Sustainable is Attainable project, looking at creating high value products out of byproducts from corn and oat milk production.

The good thing about food waste is it's something everyone can tackle, from producers through to consumers. Pass the cauliflower ice-cream. ●

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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Labour



Authorised by Anna Lorck MP, 125 Queen St East Hastings



Vote for a minor party

"New Zealand voters are very angry with the two main parties," said Matthew Hooton in a recent *Newshub Nation* interview. "New Zealand people, voters, perceive they have been fed a whole lot of bullshit, by Jacinda Ardern ... by John Key."

That's what I'm hearing too. Ardern had to go because 'let's do this' and 'kindness' are great slogans, but did nothing for performance in key portfolios. Similarly, Chris Luxon appears to be branding himself as John Key II, which was brilliant in 2008 but is now well short of our expectations.

The upcoming 2023 election is compelling, as here and around the world the public have lost confidence in the centrist parties to actually deliver competent government. I've never come across so many people who are unsure of who to vote for. So let's consider the options.

National

National are presenting themselves as the government-in-waiting and any credible alternative to Labour should win at a canter. To date the public seems unconvinced. Luxon is a corporate high-flier, but seems almost entirely devoid of political nous. When he speaks it sounds like he's been schooled in corporate 'nothing to see here' PR.

Politicians are expected to be fast on their feet and incisive with their rhetoric. Most of all the public want to sense a genuine passion for the task at hand. Over the last 40 years the master of this art has been Winston Peters. Love him or loath him, he's the most talented politician of our generation.

National's other key failing has been policy. 'Just wait until closer to the election' we're told, and I have

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waited with much expectation. When they have been announced they've often been terrible policies. I'll give you three.

- The doubling of the RSE numbers by 2025 – we don't need double, just the *right* amount and that will depend on unemployment and the needs of various industries.
- Any new regulation will require the removal of two previous regulations – what we need is good regulation, not arbitrary nonsense.
- An increase in judicial sentences where the defendant has gang affiliations – these aspects can already be considered by the sentencing judge. It's another vacuous political soundbite.

National are the worst political party out there. I can see how Labour are repositioning themselves and I know exactly what I'll get from Te Pati Māori, the Greens, ACT and NZ First. I don't need to read their manifesto as I understand their DNA. With National I'm not sure what I'll get.

In Luxon's defence, he's a first term MP, up against career politicians. It should also be noted that getting to the top of the corporate ladder is brutally competitive. You need to be very smart, hard working, durable and able

to build a team around you – a good skillset for a PM.

We've even seen some surprisingly edgy policies of late. The change in approach to genetic modification is courageous. Right or wrong we need to have the discussion. The gene-editing CRISPR technology is untraceable. If there is no pathway for legal use in NZ, there will be illegal use. GM was once the exclusive province of elite laboratories, but as technology advances, it becomes accessible.

Labour

My word limit prevents an adequate shredding of the current Labour Government.

Let's forget for a moment that Education, Healthcare, Transport and Law and Order have deteriorated markedly over the past six years. Let's also put aside their failure to meaningfully address the housing crisis, child poverty, wealth inequality and the other social factors on which they talked big. Let's overlook the litany of ministerial incompetence we've seen of late. Here are three more minor failings:

Labour have betrayed their working class supporters. Teachers, nurses and the police are cornerstone Labour voters and they all feel royally screwed over by this government while it pranced about with race, gender and other matters of social engineering.

I'm not dismissing those issues. But in his song, 'Ideology', lifelong socialist Billy Bragg distilled the expectations of ordinary citizens as 'school books, beds in hospital and peace in our bloody time'. Labour voters are working class battlers for whom I have a lot of sympathy – not the academic ideologues and

champagne socialists this lot seem beholden to.

Secondly, I was infuriated by the goings on around the tangi of a local Mongrel Mob leader in Opotiki recently. Chris Hipkins talks tough on gangs, but his administration seems very accommodating in practice. I can assure you that the police wouldn't tolerate you driving on both sides of the road, doing burnouts, hanging out the window of moving vehicles and offering a finger or a 'siege heil' to all and sundry. On the next occasion you wish to attend a funeral, they would also not inconvenience the law abiding public by shutting down a state highway, public transport and schools based on 'safety concerns'.

The truth is that it's likely there are more gang members now than police. If you look around our community there are a lot of young men with freshly minted patches. Likely they didn't get much of an education and very probably had some troubles at home.

They had a choice between being a 'loser with a nowhere job' or having money, power and respect by joining a gang. That's money from crime, and power and respect through fear. Many of these young men are riding nice new Harley Davidsons and look pretty cool to their peers. Who wouldn't take that deal? It's not until we make gang membership really unattractive that this trend will change. In the meantime, they'll be trying to recruit your son or sell P to your daughter.

Finally, absolute power corrupts absolutely. Labour have pushed forward an agenda well beyond their

Labour have betrayed their working class supporters. Teachers, nurses and the police are cornerstone Labour voters and they all feel royally screwed over by this government while it pranced about with race, gender and other matters of social engineering.

mandate – because they could. A recent example came into force on 15 June 2023 allowing gender to be self-selected for the purpose of updating your birth certificate. The problem in society currently is that we're delivered these types of changes without much public discourse. I'm open to the discussion and think it's vital that it occurs.

Curia Research undertook a poll asking the question: Do you approve of the law change (known as sex self-ID) to allow anyone to change the sex on their birth certificate with no medical or surgical changes?

The results were: *Approve* – 20%, *Disapprove* – 56%, and *Unsure* – 24%. Now, only 20% support doesn't mean the policy is wrong, just that they haven't taken the public with them. I am reminded of Ardern's Covid comment that they are the 'single source of truth' and I think that view is widely held in this Government. They know best and we should just leave the decisions to them. It's a good reminder of why we adopted MMP, where a

range of views result in discussion and compromise both inside and outside of parliament.

Minor parties

Which brings us to the minor parties who will decide the next government. One curious development is the tension building between Labour and Te Pati Māori as they fight it out for the Māori electorates. They will be friends after election day, but there will be some battle scars.

Similarly, National is aware that ACT is stealing their base. This isn't surprising as ACT have their ideological position, their policies and their PR running better than any other political party. If National were this organised they would have won already. Those at most risk for National are those who are relying on party list seats.

My pick is that there will be a change of government. The interesting thing will be how ACT perform with actual power, rather than just ideas. They have a very smart, young team but the hubris of the campaign trail is a poor indication of competent government. If we are to have a National government then ACT could be helpful in making actual change, rather than just talking about it.

Like many, I can feel my radical-self emerging. I just don't believe in Labour or National as they currently are. So vote, for a minor party if you fancy and let's bring back MMP. ●

Paul Paynter is our resident iconoclast and cider maker. Weather permitting, he grows stuff at Yummyfruit.

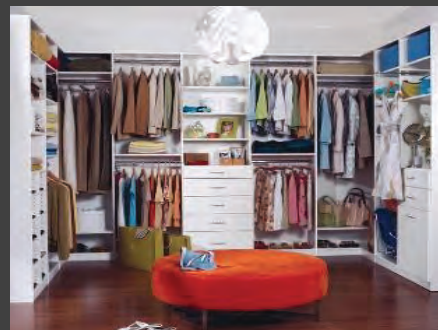


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Life

Cooking is like painting or writing a song – just as there are only so many notes or colours, there are only so many flavours – the trick is how you combine them that sets you apart. Chef Regnar Christensen and vintner Ollie Powrie with partner Rebecca Moses have got a few of those tricks up their sleeves.

Savour the flavours of their food and wine – they've undoubtedly developed some winning combinations.

FIRE IN THE BELLY





Story by Michal McKay
Photos by Florence Charvin

On the eve of 5 February 2022, the skies of Havelock North were washed with a fire wall erupting from Black Barn Bistro. An icon in these parts was burning down. By morning, it was a skeleton of its former self.

But its spirit remained.

“AND there was never any question that we would not rebuild,” says Kim Thorp, who along with his business partner Andy Coltart, owns Black Barn.

Black Barn originated over twenty years ago, when Andy Coltart approached Kim Thorp about planting some land he had been planning to subdivide. Objections led instead to the area becoming a ‘special character zone’. Consequently, Andy was left with some 22 acres of land - land needing a *raison d’être*.

Andy and Kim both come from Hawke’s Bay and knew each other from earlier days. “But it was more a connection than a close friendship,” explains Kim. At the time they were more interested in learning about wine through their venture leasing the Lombardi winery than planting vines. But the timing was ideal.

The land became theirs - and a faint friendship flourished into a deep camaraderie, “with never a cross word spoken in those 20 years,” comments Kim.

Kim had returned to Hawke’s Bay with his family after a star-studded career in advertising. As one of the top team at Saatchi and Saatchi he travelled the world continually. He wanted a calmer life.

But Kim’s brilliance in branding was not to be foiled. The idea of planting vines turned into reality in the mid to late 1990s. Rush Cottage, sitting in the middle of those vines, was dusted down and polished up to become a rental ‘home-away-from-home’ in 1994 - at a time when the B & B

business was booming as ‘the’ thing to do. The Black Barn Retreat followed in 1997. And the name Black Barn finally became a brand in 2003 for wine.

Like the Pied Piper, Kim has drawn friends and family to this part of the world. Hawke’s Bay Tourism has bequeathed him their Legend Award for his crafting of food, wine and accommodation as one brand. Previously known as ‘the guy from Saatchi’ Kim is now ‘the guy who brought New Zealand to Hawke’s Bay’. It also explains why there was never a question about the rebuild.

“Andy and I now own the bistro in partnership with Chef Regnar Christensen and as such we have reassessed our requirements for it,” he explains. With his usual ‘glass half full’ attitude he views the fire as an opportunity. The bistro also plays a big role in the purse-strings of the winery. “Two thirds of our volume we sell directly from our premises and that’s one of the key reasons why we have a bistro.” The winery obviously also gives the bistro a substantial base. “We don’t want to scale up, we don’t want to be in the middle ground, and that philosophy of ‘growing the business without growing its size’ is a good thing,” says Kim.

Black Barn, the restaurant, also opened in 2003. The same time as Sileni and Craggy Range. “These two big boys allowed us to duck between them and be very New Zealand. They also put Hawke’s Bay on the map and helped us define our identity as a region. I have nothing but praise for the arrival of those larger wineries like Elephant Hill, Craggy Range, and Sileni - they broke the ground that helped us to recently become the 12th Wine Capital of the world.”

“From planting to branding took us nearly ten years. It took a while because Andy and I both had day-jobs and we wanted to create a whole lot more than a vineyard.”

The bistro

He reflects on his partnership with Andy with warmth. “Andy and I are such an unlikely pair to be business partners. We have completely different skill sets but we both totally trust each other’s abilities. He is the expert on architecture, landscaping and all things wood - where we do come together is with an almost intuitive agreement on an aesthetic and style - we know in a nano-second what is Black Barn and what is not.”

Commenting on the architectural style of the bistro, “It’s all very well thinking we have a very New Zealand feel but there is no doubt an aura of Italy and France inspires the look and atmosphere of the sunken courtyard at the front.” And on the layout of the land which surrounds the bistro he says, “We knew we had to step down from the building at some point into the courtyard; we needed elevation for the bistro to give it the views. Planting the canopy of the courtyard at the same level as the surrounding grapes has allowed that. It has been one of the best things we did.”

Before 1997 when the Black Barn Retreat opened, Andy had cast his eye on an old fruit siding shed alongside the railway line which runs through Hastings - the HDC wanted to get rid of it. He got it, cut it in two, turned most of it into the olive shed which still sits on the property and used the remaining native timbers and beams to put into the build of the Retreat.

The feeling of it was how he could see the future look and feel of Black Barn - not necessarily rustic but a bit of a collision of classic rural and urban cool. And that in simple terms relates to the very high ceilings, the barn-like massive doors with cross beams, the simplicity of the clean lines of the building which are almost as if drawn with a protractor’s precision.

Commenting on the development of the bistro following the fire, Kim says, “You know, we probably never would have refreshed the bistro as a major redo, but because we had no alternative, we went for it.”

“One of the great things about the original design of the bistro was the size of the kitchen. As Sam and Mary Orton ran the bistro much of their catering business was from there as well, so the kitchen was vast. And fortunately, we had that footprint to work with for the complete rebuild of that area.”

“The other plus was Regnar, our executive chef, being able to have a big input - the kitchen was built for purpose, but with Regnar’s eye we have very workable spaces - a wood-fired grill, which is absolutely amazing in itself, but as well it has allowed us to apply that focus to the food; to have that wood-fired philosophy throughout the menu.”

“Regnar is a partner and a shareholder - there is no between layer, and we are keen for him to create his own fame through his work at the bistro.” He is also passionate about local

produce. Soon a substantial garden is to be created across the road from the bistro specifically for it. Frayne Dyke-Walker is a part of that process, and we all know her skills,” Kim comments. (See *BayBuzz* Issue 68.)

“And of course, the other important factor is the wine. David McKee, our winemaker, worked alongside Regnar to create a stunning wine list for the bistro. Apart from a couple of mandatory champagnes it is entirely and proudly all Hawke’s Bay. Dave and Regnar liaised with a number of smaller winemakers in the region - often without their own cellar doors - to pioneer a really innovative and original list - complete obviously with all the Black Barn classics.

“This is our 20th year and I think we have grown up. In a good way.” Perhaps interpret that as “let us be youthful and not get old.”

A wood nutter

Andy Coltart has farming in his blood. And originally it was his life.

But lurking in his hands and his head was a passion for design. And wood. Buildings. Structures. Objects. A contract to work on an outback property in Northwest Queensland allowed it to thrive - he learned just about every skill needed for outback life - house building, welding, horse breaking, butchering cattle, building cattle yards, long distance trucking, maintaining water bores, building dams - and making do with little or no back-up, living three hours’ drive from town. (Thanks to *Black Barn*, the book - for that description.)

His venture into property development was a side kick to his farming, but it was that passion for wood which finally took over. “I worked in a sawmill as well as running a small farm when I returned and was contracted to make 1,000 pallets per week for the Milk Board. Then the Milk Board attempted to make a twin-saw machine which I could see had potential so when I moved back to our family farm, I made one. And operated that as well as working the farm.

I was always peddling in property development at the same time. The Black Barn property. Then the Retreats. The Poplars development. Buildings in Joll Rd, Matangi Road, Te Awanga and Tukituki.”

A Coltart build is easy to spot. They have a marvellous sense of space. Wood features strongly. “I’m a wood nutter. The rings, the bark, the curves, the

A welcome letter from Regnar comes with the menu. His message conveys the underlying wish to give recognition to what is being grown, picked, harvested and produced within the region. Those ingredients also provide a measure of the flavours and textures driving the menu.



colour, the lustre, the texture. The size. Every facet." So, his developments are big and demand a feeling of freedom. His superbly sweeping landscapes offer areas of beautiful green undulations with vast views. You could say they are faultless and not be wrong.

The original Black Barn was his - unmistakably so in its design - elevated with a sunken courtyard. There's simplicity in the spaces and the structure. The footprint of the original Black Barn was naturally the inspiration for the new. But inside there is much change.

"Redoing it [the kitchen] was a challenge but a joy. And having Ragnar on site made it perfect. His attitude is really gutsy, and he has very strong opinions which made it far more stimulating and thought-provoking when doing the planning. We also opened it up so diners could see the action and the preparation going on in various parts of the kitchen - particularly the wood-fire grill, which is enormous."

The bistro rebuild is Andy's latest venture and has occupied him well since the fire. His passion for wood is obvious here. "The floor is New Zealand elm as are the dining tables - all milled in Hawke's Bay." Red Cedar plus Redwood (which is from Andy's tree developments) also feature. In regards the rebuilding of the barn, he says, "Basically the plans are the same, but we have taken the time to upgrade the hidden essentials like the IT and sound systems. The acoustics have been very carefully reviewed. So important in a restaurant."

And there is a new lightness.

Rafters interrupt the space up to the vaulted ceilings giving a new proportion to the main dining area "and there are no dead spaces. Also, there's a new modern vernacular with wider passages, the bar has changed and of course there is that wonderful window." The pull to look at that window when entering is insistent - looking as it does straight out to the stunning views of the vineyards.

The other factor that makes the barn, so beguiling is that it faces North - "and that's a treasure," adds Andy. "The whole rebuild has been just hugely enjoyable. Having Kim on side of course makes all the difference."

Both Kim and Andy highlight how different it is to rebuild on a site which has all its surrounds in place. "It has made it so much easier because the views are all there. And the ground is planted with vines and trees. The landscape is laid out. And of course,

in the original build we had none of that - this time we had the positioning perfectly placed so it was easy to see where the windows could play to take maximum advantage of the views."

You could say with ease, the owners knew what they were doing.

Liv Reynolds (née Thorp) **It's not just a business, it's family**

Of the fire Liv says, "I will never forget the images of devastation. And then the outpouring of emotion - and the love. That fire was immense; little was salvageable. But there is always a silver lining. Aside from the original footprint, and much exterior cladding, we had a clean slate meaning we could pretty much start again."

There is no question that Liv (short for Olivia) is part of the family. Her immense enthusiasm for the restoration of Black Barn is compelling. The project - starting as one of sadness, "became fresh and exciting. Things like getting the perfect balance inside the space - where the traffic would be focused to prevent bottlenecks, till and point of sale placements, bar tender access. Plus of course the massive job of recruitment." Something Liv played a pivotal role in.

As an ongoing part of the senior bistro team and with significant hospo experience herself, Liv had already done her Black Barn degree. I've grown up with Black Barn - it's part of my upbringing and part of me."

While getting her Finance degree she worked pretty much across all the evolving components of the Black Barn operation. From waitressing at the bistro, to bed making, to becoming Retreats Manager across Black Barn's renowned luxury retreats (now at 17), to involvement with launching and helping in the Black Barn Gallery - run by Liv's late mother Bronwynne - Black Barn was always part of her adult life.

She remarks with genuine regard, "Dad and Andy are yin and yang but together they have literally helped put Hawke's Bay on the map. Their foresight is extraordinary."

Brigit Christie **Décor and design**

Although she holds a degree in architecture from Auckland University - Andy asked Brigit Christie if she would like to be involved with creating the interior of Black Barn. His instincts were right. Brigit has brought wonderful warmth to the space.

Perhaps it could be put down to the

fact that, "I love restaurants - not so much for the food though that is pretty important - I want to know how people feel when they eat out. What makes them comfortable?"

As anyone who visits eateries on a regular basis knows, designing the interior is vastly different in some ways, yet strangely similar in others, to doing that of a home. The time factor is vital in a restaurant - an understanding of what makes the space immediately enticing is essential.

Brigit was introduced to Andy 23 years ago when on holiday and not only did they form a firm friendship, but she also loved the region. She also loved the architecture of the houses that are in the Black Barn vicinity. But knowing whether she would like living and working in Hawke's Bay was another thing entirely. "I said I would only move if we could find a house in that area."

She did. And as Andy had worked on most of them, giving the area around the Black Barn Road a distinctive look and feel, it was natural that they would enjoy working with each other on the Black Barn project. Since she came to Havelock North nine years ago with her husband and teenage girls, Brigit has worked alongside Andy on many architectural projects.

However, this is the first real interior she has worked on - "that means everything including the loos". The 'loos' are one of her favourite areas. A delightfully fresh tangerine creates a point of difference to the bistro itself which is shaded in both a warm ginger biscuit and a clotted cream. The logo BB has become an overall wallpaper design - note the back wall of the bar. And then there are the many design details which Brigit has introduced.

The blueprint of the tables and their positioning in any restaurant takes considerable thought. "Where they are placed makes such a difference to the traffic flow, the ease with which the wait staff are able to move around - and also the sound effects from other tables. The attention to detail with the acoustics has been minute. The credit goes to Andy for leaping onto the acoustic ceiling panels early. So has the shaping of the table placement. It was essential we create a cosy comfortable atmosphere."

The rounded back chairs are an open rattan weave, immediately inviting and tactile. There is not a lot of difference in the shapes of the tables - round, square and oblong - except for one oval which has a banquette backing. "We call that



"I saw it as an opportunity for us to get back to basics – to what we were originally – a bistro with bistro style food. Accessible but interesting."

Regnar Christensen
Black Barn chef

the 'Top Table', she says laughing.

The high vaulted ceilings have had the air space broken by barn-like beams, giving the bistro its character and also creating an intimacy to the very considerable space. Should

one study the geometric patterns of the seating arrangements, the subtle ways in which traffic is guided through appears simple - only another designer would know the hours and hours spent creating atmosphere and traffic flow in a restaurant. "The subtle glow of the lights comes from orbs which have an almost celestial feel. The highly regarded Tom Dixon has created those. And then there are the bronze side lights from Nightworks Studio which pepper the walls like scattered pieces of jewellery."

The tall, rounded table which greets and farewells guests is also laminated with the same BB design. "It's a bit like

a pulpit," laughs Brigit. It is certainly a spot that's easy to identify for guests going in and out yet creating a place to meet and greet with conviviality.

When the Dick Frizzell drawing that had acted as a backdrop to the bistro was burned to a cinder, it presented what was apparently an insoluble problem. Until Brigit remarked that the view they had been busy covering up with an artwork - stunning and all as it was - should be given space. A full-length paned window now stretches right behind the cellar door. The views are so very typical of Hawke's Bay - vineyards bordered by paddocks filled with sheep. It's hard to believe no-one



Chef Regnar Christensen

noticed what was being hidden by that immense artwork.

Subtle touches bring their own unique appeal. “Everything is soft and curvy,” Brigit explains, “to make guests feel relaxed.” And she proudly notes that everything has been obtained locally - “the paint is by Aalto, the touches of bronze scattered over the walls are lights obtained here, the elm wood for all the tables came from one of Andy’s properties.”

Then there is the kitchen, with its central focus of attention - the wood fired grill which brushes pretty well every meal served, providing its own unique flavour to the bistro.

Regnar Christensen Black Barn chef

The footprint of Black Barn Bistro has been reestablished by a team totally focused on making it succeed. Obviously the chef is a key ingredient.

Regnar Christensen grew up in Hawke’s Bay. He left school early always having been drawn subconsciously, he feels, to catering. “I started as a kitchen hand and even then, I was absorbing the extra things.”

Ultimately, he landed up in Wellington becoming head chef for Ortega Fish Shack (a hugely popular place owned by award-winning maître d’ Davey McDonald and Mark

Limacher, an award-winning chef who has been quietly influential in the food world. That influence, Regnar acknowledges, played a big part in his progress. “The menu changed a lot.”

Winning Apprentice of the Year provided a trip to London working in some of the most famous restaurants in the city - Le Gavroche; the Berkeley Hotel where Marcus Wareing - a Michelin-starred chef and restaurateur, TV personality, judge of Master-Chef and an acclaimed cookbook author held court. Plus, Gordon Ramsay, a chef of similar ilk who needs no further introduction.

“It’s a brutal world,” comments Regnar. “You learn that it’s best to put your head down and do the job as quick as you can. I didn’t get caught up in the detritus. But I did find it overwhelming.”

He returned after four months - to Ortega as sous chef, soon becoming Head Chef. And joined the bistro team in October 2020. “I saw an ad. And was cooking in the bistro kitchen the next week.”

Pretty much left to his own devices he changed the menu, challenging the approach which had been for “deconstructed and foams”, to the food he felt it should be for a restaurant with a winery - naturally with a strong focus on Hawke’s Bay wine. “I saw it as an opportunity for us to get back to basics

- to what we were originally - a bistro with bistro style food. Accessible but interesting.”

The silver lining to the fire disaster was that it allowed Regnar time to bone up on how he wanted the bistro to focus when it reopened. “Everything had to be tasty - that was just yum. No smears. Really good honest food that wasn’t muddled by a mass of ingredients.” He points to a wall in the kitchen - visible to all - lined with jars of pickles, preserves and vinegars. “That is what I am really proud of - every single item there we produce. My menu is inspired by a desire for simplicity, freshness and most of all - flavour.”

Regnar is very proud that the restaurant also uses ingredients provided by a small group of passionate producers and growers in the region. “I believe this is not just desirable; it’s a duty. We can grow extraordinary things here but only if we support the people who are taking the risks and putting in the hard work. We are supplementing this with our own garden, currently being established, plus various plantings around the vineyard.”

The new garden is destined for an area across the road. Regnar is himself an ardent horticulturist and his knowledge is another attribute that separates him from the crowd. Strolling through the grounds he asks, “Do you like oysters?” Receiving an enthusiastic affirmative, he deftly snips a shoot and offers it. “That’s borage,” he explains. Helping him with the planning is Frayne Dyke-Walker - a renowned horticulturalist in these parts whose influence can be seen in the beautifully manicured area that makes the Black Barn domain.

The huge woodfired grill is unique. “This lets us do everything from slow cook to gently smoke to rapidly sear.” Many of the items on the menu will have had at least a brush with the grill. Adding to that, Andy is just in the final stages of building a smoker of cedar wood for Regnar’s kitchen. “Andy’s enthusiasm is catching - and he knows how to turn an idea into a reality,” Regnar remarks with reverence.

A welcome letter from Regnar comes with the menu. His message conveys the underlying wish to give recognition to what is being grown, picked, harvested and produced within the region. Those ingredients also provide a measure of the flavours and textures driving the menu. Listing those who are contributing to the menu is a gesture of generosity. A generosity which infuses the entire Black Barn enterprise. ●

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MRS JEWELL AND THE WRECK OF THE GENERAL GRANT

CRISTINA SANDERS

Mrs Jewell and the wreck of the General Grant

CRISTINA SANDERS

Artists in residence

Our ongoing series exploring the diverse creative talent of Hawke's Bay.

Story by Rosheen FitzGerald

Photo by Florence Charvin

On Havelock North's low rolling slopes, a cosy open plan home turns to face the sweeping vista of the suburban canopy below, bathing blond wood furnishings in abundant sunlight. A vast bookshelf dominates the living room, crammed to bursting, attesting to the passion and profession of the home's owner.

Cristina Sanders has books in her blood. Growing up in Wellington her family owned the Gateway Bookshop, breeding an early love of reading. In an age where attention spans, diminished by the internet, leave many unable to digest much more than a media article, Sanders remains a rare and vociferous reader, finding time not just to read but to review several books a month on her personal blog.

From the family business of bookselling, she moved to publishing, but just a mere five years ago she took up her pen to transition from reader to writer, immortalising her own words in print.

In 2018 she enrolled in a Graduate Diploma in Creative Writing at Whitireia, and credits her tutor, celebrated New Zealand author, Mandy Hager, with teaching her the mechanics of writing. "She was very clear on how to set out a chapter, the curve of what's happening, how to construct a plot ... the dynamics of it, how it's meant to fit together," Sanders recalls with fondness.

From the diploma process, using her new found tools, came *Jerningham*, her debut novel, a lively tale of colonial Wellington seen through the eyes of her eponymous flawed hero. It hit the shelves in June 2020 and was shortlisted for the New Zealand Heritage Literary Awards.

That same year her unpublished young adult manuscript, *Displaced*, exploring the lives of immigrant families in the 1870's, won the Storylines Tessa Duder Award. When it went to press the following year it too made the Heritage Literary Awards shortlist as well as being a finalist for the New Zealand Book Awards for Children and Young Adults.

Last year's *Mrs Jewell and the wreck of the General Grant* was not only shortlisted for the New Zealand Booklovers Awards, but was a finalist for this year's prestigious Ockham prize. Clearly Sanders has tapped into something people want to read.

LOOKING TO THE PAST TO UNDERSTAND THE PRESENT

I wrote Mrs Jewell several times from different characters' points of view then matched it all up together ... it takes me so long. I'm very slow."

Cristina Sanders

Though she mines the past for inspiration, Sanders, "hated history at school. It was all so dull - places and names and dates ... it was all white men in England or the Romans and I thought, 'so what?'" There's certainly a qualitative difference between the dry, dusty, rote learned tomes often associated with history, and the warm-blooded stories filled with drama and intrigue that delight Sanders' legions of readers.

When she debuted, historical fiction was a hard sell with publishers, but today's bestseller list tells a different story. Sanders admits being drawn to the genre, "trying to work out who we are, and what we are, what my place is here, how we mix together." It's a feeling echoed in the zeitgeist, a sense of looking to the past to understand the present and imagine the future. Sanders believes, "The renaissance Māori are having leads people to wonder how it was when the Europeans came over - what did it mean and how did it feel? Historical fiction is less about what happened than how it felt, on the ground. It gives you more of an insight into people's ideas."

Sanders' lifelong love of books gives her a keen nose for a story. Inspiration for her latest publication came when sailing. A regular crew member on the tall ship, *The Spirit of New Zealand*, she was offered the opportunity to man the replica of the Endeavour, "a huge big bellied tub of a thing with square masts."

The reenactment of Cook's landing, met with protests at Gisborne harbour, was already an emotional, exhausting experience, even before the persistent seasickness that plagued her. While unromantically retching over the edge, a fellow lady sailor attempted to entertain her with the tale of the wreck of the *General Grant*, whose gold-loaded hull was London bound when it was dashed against the remote and desolate Auckland Islands.

That one of its few survivors was a woman, existing alongside rough sailors for eighteen months before



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rescue, captivated Sanders' imagination. She had already "done all this research into Victorian women, and that horrible condescending attitude everyone had towards them that they sort of embodied. A lot of them did overcome that, but we don't often hear about them." Looking further into the story of Mrs Jewell, she discovered the all too common erasure of the feminine experience from history, and sought to give her voice.

Sanders is meticulous in her research and deep in her process. Once a story has come to her she finds the crisis point, the exciting part - the shipwreck, the landing, the murder - and uses that as a central anchor for an intricate timeline. She speaks with experts and reads extensively around the topic, time and setting, trawling through first hand historical accounts, archives, photographs and ledgers, not just online but making use of the excellent resources at Wellington's National Library. Her multitude of admittedly "scruffy handwritten notes" are distilled onto her laptop in a series of folders. The parameters of her research spread far outside those of her narrative but the wealth of information gathered informs her writing, immersing her in time and place.

Armed with this literary time machine, Sanders "draws a line through it to trace where I can find the story, then find the people. If I don't have the right people I can invent someone but I prefer to use a real character if I can. Jerningham walked through that whole story. I thought, 'there's my man.' Mrs Jewell obviously was a starter. For my next story I'm going a bit wider. A historical character is more interesting because they're more real."

Compelling characters will make or break a story. Sanders recently shelved a project years in the making because, "It just doesn't sing ... it had a good base and a good place but I couldn't find the characters."

When she does find her cast, again Sanders dives deep into each character's back story, figuring them out individually. "Even if it doesn't make it into the book you need to know who they are so they're behaving in context. I wrote Mrs Jewell several times from different characters' points of view then matched it all up together ... it takes me so long. I'm very slow."

Sanders delves into her characters' experience, making every effort to put herself in their shoes. "I like to walk

"I like to walk it all, the geography of it. If I say they walked from Porirua to Wellington I will walk from Porirua to Wellington and see how that feels. If I say they were on Somes Island looking out, I will go up there and see what they could see."

Cristina Sanders

it all, the geography of it. If I say they walked from Porirua to Wellington I will walk from Porirua to Wellington and see how that feels. If I say they were on Somes Island looking out, I will go up there and see what they could see." Although a trip to the Antarctic was off the cards, she mined members of the sailing community who had visited the Auckland Islands for vital detail.

Characters' mental and emotional states too are scrupulously thought out. For *Mrs Jewell* she extensively researched post-traumatic stress disorder and survivor guilt, each expressing the toll of their experiences in ways congruent with their complex back stories, all layered with pervasive Victorian mores, so unlike today's.

In contrast to structured plot and research, Sanders eschews explicit themes in her planning stages, preferring an intuitive approach. "I don't like books that are trying to be didactic, to teach you something. I find themes develop as I'm writing."

When the drafts are done, Sanders consciously takes space, changes her location and the spacing of the manuscript to view it with fresh eyes. The creative and the editing brain are discrete with different requirements. From there publishers and editors make their tweaks, cutting certain scenes, encouraging a change in tone, but the process is collaborative.

Her current project, brought to her by a fan, examines a colonial Wellington murder, a wealth of character and narrative ripe for the harvest in the court documents and newspaper archives of the day. Here she experiments with several lead characters, changing voice and viewpoint for maximum intrigue.

Eager readers await the latest fruits of her diligent hours of immersion in the past, knowing we will be right there beside her in her latest tale. ●

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Life Wine / Yvonne Lorkin

GARAGE DAYS REVISITED

Photos by Florence Charvin

“Bruno, our schnauzer, may greet you with a bark,” was the text from Ollie Powrie a few minutes before I pulled up for our interview. So I was prepared, as I noodled up the driveway of his 1920s Napier bungalow, for a furry, barky welcome, but instead I received a fat, feathery kind. The chubbiest kererū I’d ever seen whomped past my face and made a wobbly landing on the cover of the tiny, timber hot tub attached to the tiny, brick shed where Ollie and his wife Rebecca Moses of Chateau Garage make their wine.

They say a man’s house is his castle, yet for Ollie his shed is his castle. Mainly because being ancient, being covered in ivy and being topped with actual turrets, it totally looks like one. “I’ve never seen wood pigeons there before,” says Ollie, “they’re always in the trees down the far end.” And the end is indeed far. Their section is a long, lushly overgrown, inner-city oasis clustered with natives, perfectly climbable fruit trees and secret hide and seek spots.

Their house is stacked with original character and oozes charm. The bright, newly-renovated kitchen adds a contemporary injection and there’s Vietnamese furniture and exotic art everywhere you look. It’s calm and relaxing. Yet the family have had a tornado of a time in the lead up to launching their wine brand and I’m here to find out how it all kicked off.

“We moved here in 2007. It was the craziest year because we’d come home after living in Vietnam, I started my job with Villa Maria, then we had a baby in

the middle of harvest and bought this house, all within a few months. It was really fun,” he shakes his head. (Ollie and Rebecca actually had two harvest babies both born in March. Sophia in 2007 and India in 2010.)

Before the mortgage and babies, Rebecca was a primary school teacher and Ollie worked for Sacred Hill. They moved to France where Ollie worked for Gabrielle Meffre wines in the Languedoc before travelling to Vietnam where Rebecca taught at an international school and Ollie went to university in Ho Chi Minh City to learn how to speak Vietnamese. “It was just me and an Aussie guy called Ewan and our teacher, and it was really intensive for 3 months where we’d study every morning then jump on scooters and roar around getting up to mischief.”

The couple came home briefly for a friend’s wedding in 2006 and Ollie saw Emma Taylor, Head Viticulturist from Villa Maria and said “I’m coming home in January 2007 and I’d love to work with you.” She told him to jump on a plane to Auckland to see owner Sir George Fistonich, who interviewed him for 2 hours. Later he was also interviewed by their head winemaker Alastair Maling MW.

Unbeknownst to Ollie, Emma was about to take maternity leave so when Ollie was offered the job of head viticulturist he thought they’d faxed him the wrong job description. He’d only asked about a standard job. “I said to Rebecca, ‘I think they’ve cocked it up’.”

But it was real and the couple raced home to Hawke’s Bay where Ollie based himself at the old Vidal winery. He worked hard to learn everything about their local vineyards and jetted regularly to Marlborough to oversee their southern team. “It was pretty full-on because



The term *garagiste* originated in 1990s Bordeaux, when a group of winemakers rebelled against the exclusivity of winery inheritance (and prohibitive property and vineyard-ownership expenses), by making wines at home, mostly in their garages.

I'd never managed an operation that size. I had to coordinate the Hawke's Bay harvest across five wineries so I had this massive spreadsheet that I'd work on till midnight each night trying to keep on top of everything. So it was a shock, but it was so exciting and the team were amazing and the company was incredible to work for."

What started as a maternity leave contract turned into a 15-year career, which he stepped away from on January 7th 2022, not long after the company changed ownership.

"Rebecca and I had talked about taking our daughters overseas and we decided this'd be a really good time to go and do something for our family. But it was a really nerve-wracking thing to actually make that call to leave the company, I was pacing and anxious before announcing it. But Chateau Garage had been bubbling away in the background as a hobby for a couple of years, just sharing it with family and friends and we'd just had our first sort of celebration release, so the timing to go on a trip, then begin turning this solo wine venture into an actual business just seemed right.

Ollie had attended Colenso High, then after years of work and travel, he began studying at EIT. "In 2000 when I was studying viticulture and winemaking I

did my first 'garage' wine which was a barrel of chardonnay," he explains. "And then, on and off, for the next 20 years, we'd pretty much always make a wine wherever we were living." The idea was that each year he'd try and find fruit (sometimes literally foraging for what was left behind after the harvesters had been through), and then get family and friends over and make a wine.

"It sort of switched in 2020 when Ian Quinn from Two Terraces vineyard in Mangatahi rang me quite late and said, 'I've just hand harvested two tonne of of syrah that I was about to deliver to the Wairarapa but they've closed their winery because of Covid. Do you know anyone who could help out with taking it?' I was super keen to do some syrah here at home so we split it. I drove out to his vineyard and it was pitch black when I arrived; it was the middle of lockdown so I couldn't even get out of the car.

"He just hooked up the trailer containing about 800kg of syrah grapes, and I roared home with it. We spent the next 3 days hand-destemming and that was the first time we did something of that scale. Like our other wines, it wasn't for sale or anything, just purely for friends and family." What happened next? "It was a good wine so my confidence was boosted. Most people only knew me as a viticulturist right.

And for years I'd take samples of my wines into the guys in the winery and they'd say 'tell us about the winemaking' and I'd be like 'oh I fermented it in a plastic tub in the shed' and there'd be a bit of eye rolling. But this new syrah captured everyone's imagination."

Ollie and Rebecca then thought it'd be cool to have a label, so they contacted Max Parkes (Unit Design). "Max came over and we were talking about the shed and then he called photographer Richard Brimer and said 'you've gotta check out this cool garage in Napier south'. Richard was doing his *Road Trip* book at the time and he came over and took a photo and all of a sudden I had these creative people around me who were really excited about what we were doing."

So, borrowing from images of castles and manor houses adorning famous wine bottles from France, Chateau Garage was born.

And Ollie's become the very definition of *garagiste*. The term *garagiste* originated in 1990s Bordeaux, when a group of winemakers rebelled against the exclusivity of winery inheritance (and prohibitive property and vineyard-ownership expenses), by making wines at home, mostly in their garages. Today, *garagistes* can be any winemakers who don't own vineyards, but bring



grapes in from elsewhere and make wine on a tiny scale either at home or in other people's wineries. They're an increasingly common breed. California even has a garagiste festival showcasing this small-scale approach.

"Once people try the wines the biggest surprise for them is the quality," says Ollie. "I had them at a charity auction recently, and a man who was a classic Bordeaux buyer asked me to explain how I made them and he was blown away when I said 'in my shed!'" he laughs. Right now he has a bunch of wines on the go, some in barrels, one in a plastic egg and one in a large 300kg clay amphora, both of which were mistakenly delivered to their neighbours who got a hell of a fright when they discovered them in their driveway.

Alongside entertaining the neighbours, Ollie definitely has favourite parts of the process. "I've never experienced something so exciting as driving a truck loaded with two tonne of hand-picked grapes, knowing it's the start of something. I love being able to reach inside my clay fermenter to plunge the bunches with my hands. And I love just being out here in all hours of the day, toiling away. We don't have any pumps or anything, it's all gently done, via gravity and siphoning."

Ollie also has albariño from Bridge Pa quietly sleeping in his little plastic egg. It's the first albariño he's made and like all his other wines, it goes through a 'wild' ferment, meaning he relies only on yeast cells in the atmosphere to kickstart the process, turning the heater on occasionally to keep it ticking over. Sometimes Ollie's ferments take entire seasons to complete. Last year his chardonnay gently fermented right up until they left for 7 months in Italy, then it kicked off again the following Spring. "I don't know how many months it fermented for," he laughs.

Ollie was also able to get his mitts on some very healthy Gimblett Gravels chardonnay from 2023, a season plenty had written off as a disaster. "We were so lucky. So much of what Chateau Garage is about now is trying to hold on to these amazing parcels of fruit. Which is so different to what I thought we'd be doing in the beginning, thinking we'd just get grapes from wherever. But we've had such amazing results recently that it's convinced me that to have that thread of consistency, you've gotta have those relationships with great vineyards."

While Ollie's having fun running solo for the first time, he still keeps his



secateurs sharpened as a viticulture consultant for five companies across Hawke's Bay. And new things are also on the boil.

But right now the couple are working that shoe leather and Rebecca is now officially Global Head of Sales. "I'm taking a break from teaching in order to get Chateau Garage into as many glasses as possible around the motu. I've discovered that my preferred natural habitat is fabulous restaurants and cool bars, so this is a great job for me!" she laughs. In Auckland you'll find Chateau Garage at Paris Butter and Homeland, while in Wellington Noble Rot is their best customer alongside Rita and Hiakai.

It might be a backyard operation but some serious coin has been sunk into buying quality barrels and fermenters. "Every dollar earned has gone

back into exactly that," Ollie explains. "Their potential in terms of the quality of what we produce will be quite significant. Sir George (Fistonich) used to always say to me, if I ever had questions about buying anything or doing anything, 'what will it do for wine quality'. So they're definitely worth it. Plus we only want to bring in the very best fruit. There's no point in doing anything otherwise."

There's an exciting future ahead for the Powrie's a couple of crazy kids who met at a dinner party in London back in 1997. "I was impressed by Ollie's great chat, his sense of humour and easy going nature, and also his total lack of ego," Rebecca muses. "His love of people, travel, adventure, food and wine has meant we've had an insane amount of fun over the last 26 years. Probably should be illegal!" she laughs. ●

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Keeping your calm amidst chaos

We've all experienced times where the situation can get heated. Whether it's a tense family gathering, a stressful workplace dynamic, complex negotiations or a complicated community debate, keeping your cool when others around you are losing theirs can be challenging.

Why is this? Have you heard of the theory of 'Emotional Contagion'?

Wikipedia tells us that it is "a form of social contagion that involves the spontaneous spread of emotions and related behaviours." You don't need to be a psychologist to know this is very real. Imagine walking into a house filled with your favourite people after a super challenging day at work. Happy people laughing and telling funny stories, your favourite tunes playing and great food on the grill. The sights, aromas, sounds and great vibes can have you instantly lifting your spirits and unconsciously packing all your troubles in your old kit bag.

However, the same can also happen in reverse to various degrees. You can be having the best day and BOOM. One underhand comment from a neighbouring pot stirrer with a sly look on their face can instantly dampen your shine - "You look terrible ... are you sick?" Let alone finding yourself in the middle of meltdown central with a colleague impersonating an angry mob fixing for a fight. It's human nature to mirror behaviour so without composure we can find ourselves wishing we could hit the reset button.

Sometimes good people behave badly under pressure. We've all got chapters we don't want to read out loud, and I'm sure I'm not the only one where the wisdom of hindsight would have me wind back the clock and behave differently.

By honing your self-awareness, cultivating effective strategies, and keeping your wellbeing and the big picture at

centre stage you can stay super calm amidst the sound of chaotic voices. Not only will you be doing your own nervous system and immune system a favour, but you will be taking others on the ride with you. Switching up the vibe. Role modelling alternate ways of being. Looking for the win win and inviting the world to be a more peaceful place to inhabit.

These two mindfulness hacks with catchy acronyms can help you navigate such scenarios and so many more. Practice them often when the heat is off. Like an Olympic athlete of life preparing for the next big event. As you are reading this article you may already have these in your tool belt of life or have developed your own. Try systemising and practising them often and then once it's show time you will have the process firmly woven into the fabric of your being ready to roll. You as the best of the best exploring how to get even better.

1. S.T.O.P.

This fundamental mindfulness practice helps you build self-awareness as well as self-management.

- **S = STOP**

When we are faced with a perceived threat (i.e. someone flipping their lid) it is likely that we will move into fight or flight mode. The stop is a pattern interrupt. A chance to consciously stay in your power. Posture of confidence. Essence of a smile. Grounded. Centred. Present with what is.

- **T = TAKE A BREATH**

A series of low slow conscious abdominal breaths has the power to activate the higher brain regions, especially when practiced often. Olympic

Gold swimmer Michael Phelps was rumoured to be able to get his nervous system into the optimum place to win in just three breaths.

- **O = OBSERVE**

Observe to gather information. Notice with curiosity your body, feelings, or your thoughts. Observe with kind, non-judgemental, compassionate noticing of whatever the present moment contains. Observe what is important to you in that moment.

- **P = PROCEED**

Proceed skillfully in presence in your new state of being.

Holocaust survivor and psychiatrist Viktor Frankl wrote, "Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom."

The stop practice cultivates this space bringing growth and freedom. Pause. Breathe. Smile. You may discover once you have STOPped that you have the freedom to choose to remove yourself from the situation. Picking your battles wisely. Not your circus not your monkeys. But if that's not an option, then once practiced this 'SALT Assertive Communication Tool' will stand you in good stead.

2. S.A.L.T. Assertive Communication Tool

This simple yet powerful communication tool was taught to me some years ago by seasoned trainer, Patrick Sherratt, from Hawke's Bay-based education training company Innervate.

Patrick shared, "There is an old expression 'rubbing salt into a wound' referring to making a difficult situation even worse. However, salt water can actually help clean and promote



Ocean Calm. Photo: Florence Charvin

healing by a process known as osmosis.” Here is my take on adding a little SALT in the mix:

- **S = STATE**
State your point of view and experience in terms of observing the events or behaviors. In a mindful mode of kindness to self and others avoid blaming, forming assumptions, telling how it is, accusing, demanding or judging.
- **A = ASK**
Ask the person/people involved for their point of view (gather information).
- **L = LISTEN**
Listen in 100% presence with the intention of understanding the thoughts and feelings of the other person. Without interrupting. For most people this is the hardest part. Without interrupting. Remain neutral or friendly. Maintain eye contact. Posture of confidence. Cycle back to ask more questions if needed once they have finished talking, and

Sometimes good people behave badly under pressure. We’ve all got chapters we don’t want to read out loud, and I’m sure I’m not the only one where the wisdom of hindsight would have me wind back the clock and behave differently.

again listen without interrupting to their response.

- **T = THANK & TAKE ACTION**
Thank the person for sharing their point of view. Take action to finding a solution (e.g. “What is the best way forward now?”, “Can you start a task-force to tackle this?” “Can I take time to mull this over and get back to you?”

Staying calm when others around you are losing their composure is a truly valuable skill. Embedding these mindfulness strategies, cultivating honest and gentle self-awareness, and prioritising your well-being takes

conscious commitment but it’s worth it. It makes us less frustrated and more able to navigate the many adventures of life with more grace and composure.

We know from research that as little as 10 minutes a day of mindfulness subtly changes the actual structure of your brain and in turn the way you respond to everything. Give it a go super nova. Keep exploring the best version of you. Live and let live, don’t take things personally and always look for the best in others. Let me know how you get on! ●

Suggested reading:

- *Notes to Self: The Secrets of Calm* by Rebekah Ballagh
- *Man’s Search for Meaning* by Viktor E. Frankl
- *7 Habits of Highly Effective People* by Dr Stephen R. Covey

Kate McLeay is a mindfulness mentor, yoga teacher and retreat host based at Cape South Country Estate and Wellness Retreat near Waimarama, Hawke’s Bay. www.katemcleay.com



Is shaved ham pork?

I am, and have been for years, a self-appointed food label assessor.

I am always sceptical of multinational manufacturers, distrusting of long lists of ingredients and wary of ingredients that don't sound like food.

Why? Because whether we-are-what-we-eat, or we-are-what-what-we-eat-eats, we should be putting good things in our bodies. For the sake of our health we've got to be interested in our food supply. With 90% of groceries being sold by supermarkets we have to rely on labels rather than a chat over the counter with a knowledgeable grocer or the stall with a market vendor.

My favourite foods are those that require no ingredient list. Primary produce, meat, fish, vegetables and fruit. Followed by those foods that have just a few ingredients, all of which I recognise. I'm talking about delicious things like cheese, chocolate, tinned sardines and chilli sauce. The three musketeers (and D'Artagnan) of delectability.

I read food labels because I like to know what I'm eating, but also I like to see what nifty 'innovations' are being developed. Innovation, or NPd (new product development), is a constant and necessary part of being a food company. New products create excitement and we want excitement from our food.

So I read the ingredients list, the Nutritional Information Panel or NIP, who made it, and the best-before date. All of these label elements are mandatory in New Zealand along with the batch code. Each element of the label gives me information as to what it actually is I am putting in my mouth. It's fascinating reading and the fact that I read the food labels means I often shop alone. I'm on the lookout for the ubiquitous soy and sugar. I avoid these.

The 'Best Before' is just a guide rather than a mandatory date. It's legal to sell goods with expired dates and we all know that soft cheese is better

after the 'best before'. A 'Use-by' date is another matter. This is applied to foods that must not be sold or consumed on or after that date, including fresh meat, seafood, and other items that could be harmful.

The labelling laws are different if you buy goods from the place they were made. When buying bangers from the supermarket the ingredients list won't be printed on the label but it must be available for the consumer to read if requested. I requested the ingredient list for sausages at my local store and they couldn't find it. Tricky if you have allergies.

Allergens must be printed in bold. Often followed by the 'made in a facility that also processes nuts' caveat. Basically, over to the consumer to take responsibility. What!? Personal responsibility for that which you put into your body!? We've come a long way from that idea over the last fifty years.

Usefully, ingredients must be listed in the order in which they are present by weight. Good for checking if water and thickeners dominate.

Once the marketing department starts to colour-in the outlines drawn by law, all kinds of wonderful mental pictures are painted. Quickly a home-made, artisan-harvested, natural, pasture-to-plate, nutritionist approved, restaurant quality, gourmet, family recipe, farmhouse-style, traditional Bolognese-inspired luncheon sausage is ready to take to market. 90% fat-free.

It's baloney! Green-washed, heritage-washed and gourmet-washed.

Talking of processed meat products, this is the category in shops where the inclusion of the most surprising ingredients and the most surprising omission of key ingredients takes place.

Did you know that half of shaved ham contains no pig? Well not quite, but cheaper brands of the sandwich staple are 50% pork. The rest is made of potato, pea, and tapioca starch, water, thickeners, various flavour extracts

and a firming agent. Water adds to the moist texture and the company profits in equal measure.

I don't know if all those additions are bad for us, but Hippocratically they should be good for us rather than just not bad. I think rather it's a case of let your food be our profit.

The question is "How can shaved ham be just 50% pork?". The answer is because that is the rule. Processed meat products must be at least 50% meat, including sausages, apart from vegan sausages. The culturally appropriated non-meat imitation of a banger touts the sausage moniker, whereas the ever popular BBQ kids treat, the Sizzler, can't claim to be a sausage as it contains just 49% meat. It's the wurst of both worlds.

Take note of the food labels I say!

Here's my bossy advisory:

1. Eat mainly primary produce with no ingredient list.
2. Don't buy anything with more than five ingredients. *Chocolate, cheese, crackers and chardonnay qualify, so no real hardship there.*
3. Don't buy highly processed vegan meat alternatives. If you don't want to eat meat then don't, but do not eat pretend meat either.
4. Be sceptical: 'Based on a family recipe' means that it's not a family recipe; Pringles are less than 50% potato. If it's cheap and seems too good to be true ... you know the rest.
5. Shop as close to the source as you can. Butchers, bakers, growers.
6. Break the rules now and again to avoid that superiority complex. ●

Ian Thomas is a caterer and formerly free range egg farmer, cooking demonstrator, and manager of a commercial food production business. He specialises in cooking paella. paellaagogo.com



Photo by Florence Charvin



As you stroll through the picturesque streets of Havelock North Village, prepare to uncover hidden treasures awaiting your discovery. Whether you have a passion for fashion, a love for art, or an appreciation for exquisite craftsmanship, Havelock North has something to cater to your unique tastes. From the finest designer boutiques, showcasing both local talent and international brands, to our skilled artisans and captivating art galleries, Havelock North truly is a haven for those seeking both style and substance.

Join us in celebrating the dynamic spirit of Havelock North Village by shopping local this winter. Your support not only fuels economic growth but also creates job opportunities for locals, helping to sustain our vibrant Village. The revenue generated by shopping local circulates within our community, fostering a thriving environment that benefits all. If you're a fashion enthusiast, an art lover, or a connoisseur of impeccable artistry, Havelock North retailers have something to cater to every want and need.

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Step into Village fashion boutiques and immerse yourself in the latest collections from esteemed designers, as well as emerging brands that are making waves in the industry. Whether you desire an elegant evening gown or stylish everyday wear, our boutiques cater to a wide range of wants and needs. What sets them apart is their unwavering commitment to meticulous attention to detail, ensuring that each piece you find exudes a sense of exceptional artistry. By shopping in the Havelock North, you become a part of the narrative, discovering unique products that tell your story.



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Our specialty stores and artisans take immense pride in offering products that embody the very essence of our region.

Indulge in the delectable delights of locally sourced produce, carefully cultivated in nearby farms, vineyards, and orchards. Each bite and sip bursts with flavours and freshness, providing a truly authentic taste of Hawke's Bay. When you shop local suppliers, you not only acquire exceptional products but, you also take home a piece of food and wine country.

In Havelock North, supporting local transcends the transaction itself. Our village is home to a wealth of talented hairstylists, barbers, and beauty professionals who are dedicated to helping you look and feel your absolute best. Pamper yourself with a stylish haircut, indulge in a luxurious spa treatment, or surrender to the bliss of a rejuvenating massage. Local salons and spas offer a wide array of services designed to uplift your senses and leave you feeling refreshed, rejuvenated, and brimming with confidence. With their meticulous attention to detail, personalized approach, and use of high-quality products, our beauty professionals ensure you receive an experience that is truly exceptional. Embrace the opportunity to enhance your natural beauty and discover the transformative power of local beauty services.

So, step into the Village this winter, explore diverse offerings, and immerse yourself in an unforgettable shopping experience that celebrates our local talents and delights your senses.

@LOVEHAVELOCKNORTH





Havelock North Village is the vibrant heart of Hawke’s Bay. Sip great coffee at the local cafes, discover stunning natural attractions, eat and drink your way around the Village eateries, or wander around stunning boutique retailers and artisan providers; there is something for everyone to love about Havelock North!




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Oldies are golden

I can't stand old people.

Especially at the moment. Coming here and taking all the jobs. Turning up during a crisis and just getting on with it, without complaining ... and often bringing a casserole ... they've made themselves ... from produce they grew themselves.

I hate the way they're so capable, and just get on with the task at hand. I hate how they know stuff, and have the emotional intelligence not to force it down your throat. I hate how they know how to do things like grow potatoes and darn socks and recite John Masefield and score cribbage. I hate how they must have ouchy knees all the time but they still muck in. I hate how chatty they are, even when they don't know you. It's so annoying when they're so nice, and kind, and considerate, and hard working. Everywhere I turn at the moment there's an old person showing me up.

I'm tired just trying to hold down a day job and raise teenagers; I have no energy for shovelling silt. I do my bit by scrolling through social media and giving a thumbs up emoji to people doing the clean-up. And there they are - in the background (because they have well-adjusted egos and don't seek the limelight) - Old People! With spades! And wheelbarrows! One using a digger (and not just for the 'gram).

There's old people doing Meals on Wheels, old people boxing up the yummys at Nourished For Nil, old people helping Neela Neela with her daily cook-a-thon. There's old people driving utes and scrubbing fences. Old people cutting back hedges and filling trailers. Old people lifting heavy things, and SMILING! And they're working for NOTHING. They're volunteers, giving their time for free because they're retired and have plenty of it to spare. I know old people who still have day jobs, and they're way beyond "retirement age". Then after work they do the

They didn't freak out when the cell phone networks went haywire, because they knew how to speak to actual humans face-to-face. Self-reliant know-it-alls with their powdered milk, their transistor radios and their landlines.

Census collection, or run the op-shop, or coach badminton. And on the weekends they marshall at the Flaxmere Park Run or cleanout the cattery at the SPCA. They're just show-offs. And now they're out there with their flannel sleeves rolled up over their psoriasis-encrusted elbows getting stuck in, being useful, making a difference. During the catastrophe itself, they were the ones who knew which cupboard held the candles, where the batteries were kept, and how to wash dishes by hand. They didn't freak out when the cell phone networks went haywire, because they knew how to speak to actual humans face-to-face. Self-reliant know-it-alls with their powdered milk, their transistor radios and their landlines.

Old people are so resourceful too, so frugal, so sensible. They know how to mend things and wear things out, they know how to 'make do or do without'. They're the OG recyclers, not 'cause it's cool', but because there wasn't much to go around 'in their day'. Our consumption and consumerism just looks so much worse lined up alongside their patched pants and preserving skills. Why can't they just open a single-serve, plastic-wrapped, shop-bought fruit'n'jelly-pot and put their feet up?

Why can't they settle down and watch some *Coronation Street*, and complain about sciatica and Prince Harry. Why do they have to be so able and willing and easy to get along with! Their get-up-and-go needs to get up and go!

With all the clean-up needed across

Hawke's Bay, if it wasn't for the over-achieving old eager-beavers we'd be in an even more sorry state. Then the government might take pity on us and see we can't possibly sort things out for ourselves.

But no! All these oldies keep showing up and saving the day! They're making everyone under 65 look lazy and just a little bit useless.

Old people should stick to driving badly and eating mush, not backing trailers and making first-class Thai food for essential workers. It's not fair! They are robbing us of the fantasy that when we get old we can just kick back and be looked after by youngsters.

(Although, to be honest, when I'm ancient I hope I don't have to rely on someone like me to make sure I get through the week!)

Old people need to chill. You've had your chance. You've done the daily grind. You've paid your taxes. You've made things happen. Now back off and give the rest of us a chance.

No wonder our generation (and the one beneath us) is so useless, old people keep stepping up and getting the job done!

Old people - with all their vim and their vigour, and their joie de vivre - make me feel old.

In all seriousness, and with all sarcasm set aside, thank you to every person 'of a certain age' who has lifted a spade, pushed a broom, slogged a mop, baked a cake, driven a digger, backed a trailer, hauled, stirred, stacked, swept, hacked, heaved and helped out in any way. Your service to our community during this difficult time has been noticed, admired and hugely appreciated by all of us. ●



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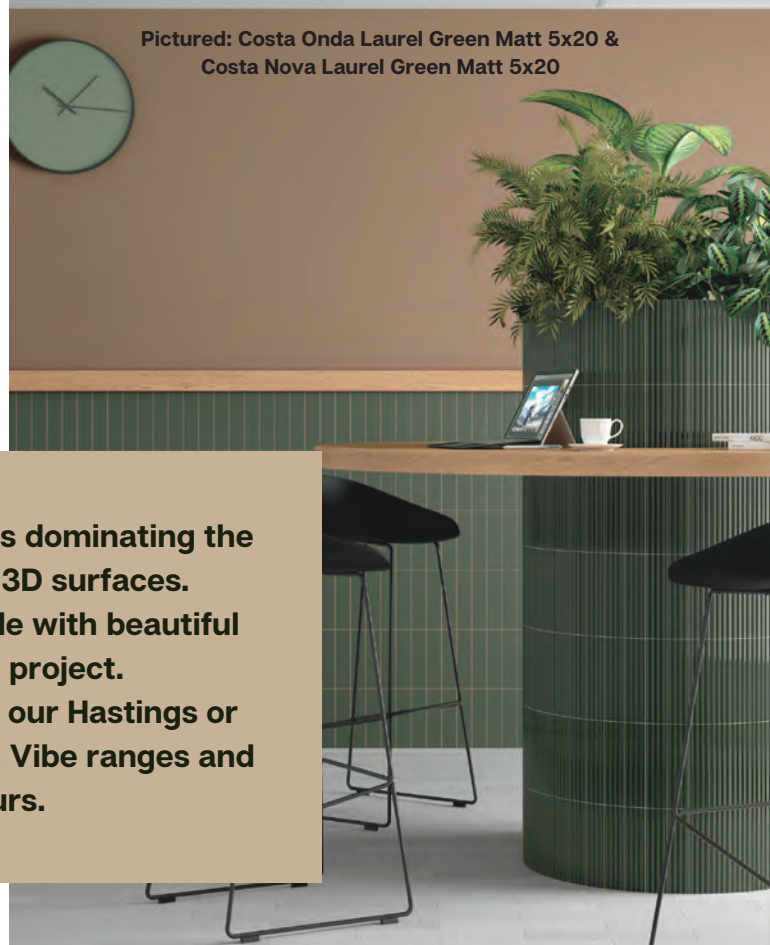


Pictured: Costa Onda Laurel Green Matt 5x20



Tile Shed owner June discusses why tiles are a preferred choice around the world.

Did you know..



Pictured: Costa Onda Laurel Green Matt 5x20 & Costa Nova Laurel Green Matt 5x20

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