



# FYI

MARCH 2024

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NEURODIVERSITY AT WORK

# Realising the potential of DIFFERENT



**GREAT PEOPLE ARE** the employees who show up every day using their skills and talents to contribute to the innovation, productivity, and the success of the company.

When the right individuals are hired, there is an alignment between their abilities, the job requirements, and the business's needs. This alignment means employees will perform at their best – resulting in enhanced efficiency and effectiveness in their roles.

## Hiring the right people

Investing time and resources into hiring the right people has several advantages. Firstly, it minimises turnover rates since employees are more likely to remain in positions that align with their skills and career aspirations. As a result, reduced turnover rates can help



a company save time and resources, training and onboarding costs. Additionally, having a balanced team comprised of individuals with the right skills and values creates a positive work environment. A positive work environment promotes collaboration among team members who can leverage skill sets to solve problems and drive innovation.

## Employee engagement and satisfaction

Employing great people means you want to make sure they stay. The key to retention is to focus on keeping employees engaged, satisfied, and productive. When employees feel a sense of purpose and connection to their work, they are more likely to remain with you. Here are some retention strategies that are easy to implement.

1. Create an environment where communication is open, transparent, and frequent.
2. Keep employees informed about company goals, changes, and expectations.
3. Invest in employee growth by providing training, workshops, and opportunities for skill development.
4. Implement programmes that acknowledge and reward employees.
5. Build a workplace culture that prioritises employee wellbeing, inclusivity, and a healthy work-life balance.

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Managing Director



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[eclipserecruitment.co.nz/good-for-business](http://eclipserecruitment.co.nz/good-for-business)





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# Welcome from the GM



AS I WRITE this, the government is swiftly working through its 100-day plan. The end of that time period is just a few days off, but the long-standing economic challenges for members look like they could be around for even longer. Following the announcement of the latest unemployment figures, standing at 4 per cent (a little lower than the 4.3 per cent predicted), there is now uncertainty about whether the Reserve Bank of New Zealand (RBNZ) will decide to increase the Official Cash Rate (OCR) in February and/or April.

The RBNZ could view the lower unemployment figure as a sign that the economy is doing better than expected, increasing pressure to hold interest rates at their current levels for longer, dispelling the hope that we may see a reduction in these rates later this year. Additionally, should the RBNZ decide to increase the OCR (about which economists' opinions are divided) to continue to drive inflation down towards its 1-3 per cent target, it could push interest rates even higher. Either way, it's not good news for members whose cashflow is already diminished as the high cost of business loans and mortgages, which may increase even further, look set to remain in place until early next year before any respite can be expected.

I sincerely hope the resilience that many organisations have had to develop in recent years stands them in good stead to overcome these ongoing economic challenges and any others that may lie ahead.

In this issue of *FYI*, we take a look at neurodiversity. It's estimated that one in seven Kiwis is neurodivergent, but what does that term actually mean? Our cover story demystifies this subject with real-life perspectives and insights to help business owners realise the mutual benefits of attracting and retaining neurodiverse employees who make up a significant proportion of the workforce.

Our Community page takes a step back from the workplace, as we look at the work of Acorn Charitable Trust. The organisation provides specialist services for neurodiverse children and young people, with a particular focus on early intervention /psychology and speech therapy. The aim is to help each child recognise their strengths so that they can go on to thrive in their community.

The BNH team and I wish you a happy, healthy, and prosperous 2024, and we look forward to engaging with you and your team as you enjoy the many benefits of our various programmes and services.

Kia kaha

**Kevin O'Leary**  
General Manager, Business  
North Harbour

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## Enjoy a free musical treat at Albany Lakes



**ALBANY CIVIC LAKES** is once again hosting Music in Parks, showcasing some of Auckland's best musical talent: Jaz Paterson, Midwave Breaks, and local brothers and sisters act Rumpus Machine. The youngsters came third in last year's national Battle of Bands, and their videos have amassed more than 25 million views online. They write original compositions, too!

**WHEN:** Sunday, 17 March 1.00 pm-4.00 pm

**WHERE:** Albany Lakes Civic Park, Civic Crescent

**MORE INFO:** Go to Facebook and search Events for Music in Parks: Albany

## Tackling period poverty one Poppy Pack at a time

**AUT MILLENNIUM'S BE The Best She Can Be** initiative aims to help remove barriers for young women to participate in sport, health, and fitness opportunities.

As part of this, the organisation began funding Poppy Packs late last year. Each pack includes a sanitary pad and tampon in a discreet envelope and is available free of charge.

"We called them Poppy Packs to remove any embarrassment or shame. Anyone can go to our various receptions around the facility to ask for a package for Poppy, and they will be given an envelope by our friendly team, no questions asked," explains AUT's Louise Rich. "Our team are all very proud that we're providing these products free to the community and have been so supportive of the initiative, even helping to prepare the Poppy Packs."

## Are you and your whānau prepared for flooding?

**AUCKLAND COUNCIL'S (AC'S) Be Prepared** campaign reminds Aucklanders that their homes, whānau, and businesses could be affected by heavy rain and storms, even if they haven't seen flood waters near their properties before.

With the changing climate, Tāmaki Makaurau is experiencing more extreme weather events. To help people understand their flood risk, the council has added a series of videos and guides to the Be Prepared page on Flood Viewer, a free, easy-to-use site accessible on a phone, tablet or computer. Flood Viewer features an interactive map showing flood risk data for the whole region, as well as practical advice on how to prepare for floods.

AC's Healthy Waters head of planning, Nick Vigar, says it's essential people are prepared for the possibility of floods and understand their flood risks. "We see people using our Flood Viewer not just to understand their home's flood risk but also to make informed decisions when looking at somewhere new to buy or rent."



"Auckland Council has made increasing community resilience to floods a priority, and part of this is giving people the tools to make smart decisions to prepare themselves and their homes."

The Be Prepared page on Flood Viewer has useful information and resources about what to do before, during, and after a storm. This includes how to make an emergency plan,

prepare your home for the possibility of flooding, stay safe during a flood, and the actions you can take to protect your home or business from flooding. It also explains your responsibilities if you have a stream or creek on or near your property.

**To learn more, go to**  
**[aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/floodviewer](https://aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/floodviewer)**





“We are also preparing to launch an addition to our swimwear shop of period swimwear and period underwear to again remove barriers by providing products that support young women in their sport.”

AUT held its sold-out inaugural Be The Best She Can Be event in December 2023, where experts and athletes shared evidence-based research, information, insights and stories about nutrition, training during their menstrual cycle, and how to understand their bodies better. “We received so much positive feedback that we felt it was important to continue with these events, sharing relevant information to young girls, parents, sport clubs and the community,” affirms Louise.

“AUT Millennium is excited to continue the speaker series in 2024 with planning underway for three events, and we are actively seeking sponsors to support this important korero.”

## A ‘triple win’ with Albany Rotary’s annual fundraiser

**ASK ANY ALBANY** Rotarian, and they will tell you they live to support the local community. This support often comes in the form of funding, and the club’s annual raffle, now in its third year, is a significant part of this. Not only is there the chance to win some great prizes, but local schools and youth groups can sell tickets to fundraise for their own projects.

Raffle tickets cost \$5 each, and the youth group keeps 50 per cent of the price for every one they sell. That’s \$2.50 per ticket without having to arrange sponsorship, printing, or prizes. The remaining proceeds are divvied up to support Rotary community, educational, and health initiatives.

“It’s a win-win for everyone involved. And a win-win-win if you count the lucky raffle winners!”

The raffle runs for the next couple of months, with winners being drawn on 17 May.

**If you know of a school, club, or young person looking to fundraise, please ask them to contact Rebecca Stilton to discuss being part of this fun project.**

**Call 021 611 874 or email [rebecca@sla.net.nz](mailto:rebecca@sla.net.nz)**



## Zoos’ shopping app empowers consumers to protect wildlife

**AUCKLAND ZOO IS** calling on Kiwis to use their purchasing power to help protect rainforests and critically endangered wildlife like orangutans by shopping with PalmOil Scan - a free smartphone app.

The global app is the initiative of the World Association of Zoos & Aquariums (WAZA) in partnership with palm oil experts from Cheyenne Mountain Zoo (USA), Chester Zoo (UK), and Auckland Zoo. It is a tool zoos

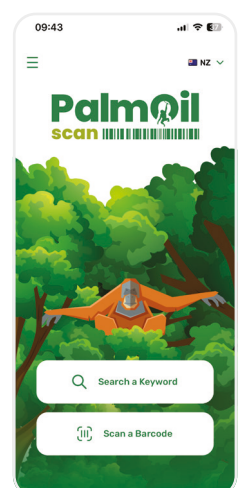
hope will help transform the palm oil industry.

The app was officially launched during Orangutan Caring Week. “... [T]hese extraordinary arboreal great apes, renowned for their role as gardeners of the forest ... live in the heart of the biodiverse hotspots of Indonesia and Malaysia where 85 per cent of the world’s palm oil is grown,” says Auckland Zoo deputy curator of mammals and primate expert, Amy Robbins.

Also grown in Africa and Latin America, palm oil is the world’s most versatile, highest-yielding and widely consumed vegetable oil. It is found in over half of all packaged supermarket products - from chocolates to toilet paper. Currently, just 20 per cent of the 8 billion tonnes produced annually is Certified Sustainable Palm Oil (CSPO) – palm oil certified by the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO).

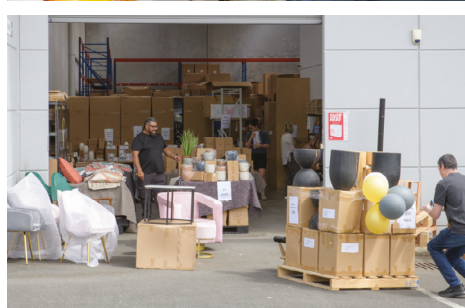
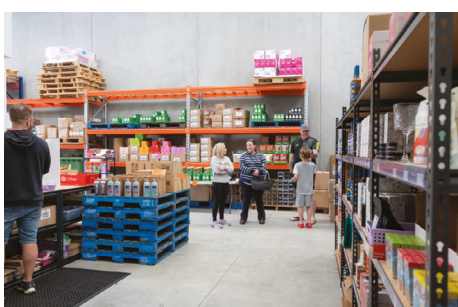
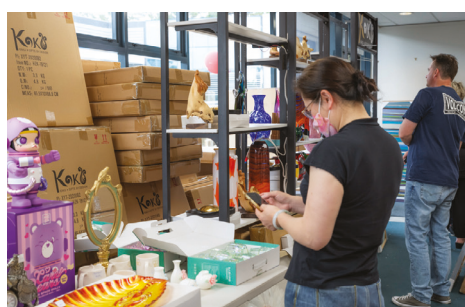
“Given our escalating human population’s ever-increasing demand for affordable food, and the even more environmentally harmful alternatives, palm oil remains our best vegetable oil option, when it’s grown sustainably without destroying forests,” says Amy.

**PalmOil Scan is available for download from the Apple and Google app store.**





2 December 2023  
Across the North Harbour BID  
(Business Improvement District)





## Women in Business: Natalie Tolhopf - Become Unstoppable!

7 December 2023 | North Shore Golf Club

Women in Business, supported by



## Business After 5: Network & Nibbles, hosted by North Harbour Hyundai

7 February 2024





# Upcoming Events

## MARCH

### 14 Business Luncheon: Leadership in Business with Laurie Sharp

12.00 pm-2.00 pm

National Hockey Stadium, 159 Bush Road, Rosedale (entry via Gate A)

#### What is the difference between an effective leader and a manager?

In this session, we look at research exploring what winning companies' leaders are doing to close the gap between their top and bottom performers. We share two or three actions that may be implemented tomorrow to enrich development conversations with your team. We also look at what people want from leaders, and how to get people to 'take action' without being constantly told what to do!

### 20 Business After 5: Networking and Business Showcase

5.30 pm-8.00 pm

North Shore Golf Club, 51 Appleby Road, Albany

This is an excellent opportunity to showcase your business and connect with other organisations and associate members in the BID. This event will provide you with a unique platform to showcase your products, services, or expertise - and get to know your fellow BNH members. Each business will have a designated tabletop where you can display your business and interact with others. You will also have the chance to exchange business cards, discuss potential collaborations, and build valuable relationships with fellow business owners and managers. By participating in this event, you will have the opportunity to expand your network and increase your business' visibility in the region.

*Please note: this is predominantly a B2B event. However, we welcome all members to attend.*

To stay up to date and make your bookings, go to [businessnh.org.nz/whats-on](https://businessnh.org.nz/whats-on)



Natasha Bourke

## APRIL

### 10 Women in Business: Natasha Bourke

10.00 am-12.00 pm

North Shore Golf Club, 51 Appleby Road, Albany

Step into a world of empowerment and elegance! We are thrilled to present Natasha Bourke, CEO of 200 Doors (Dermalogica & Skintopia New Zealand), a dynamic business leader and exceptional presenter who will share her inspiring journey and insights into success, succession planning, and rethinking business strategy. Join us for an enriching session that goes beyond the boardroom, as we introduce a unique twist to our event: "Business and Beauty".

Supported by



### 11 Business After 5: Unlock Global Opportunities – Importers and Exporters Information Evening

5.30 pm-7.30 pm

BNH offices, Level 1, 322 Rosedale Road, Rosedale

BNH is committed to seeing our members succeed, so we have gathered together a team of experts ready to guide you through the complexities of international trade. You are therefore invited to an exclusive evening dedicated to unlocking the vast potential of importing and exporting goods. Navigating the

realm of global commerce presents unparalleled opportunities for businesses looking to expand their reach and venture into new markets. However, with these opportunities come unique challenges. Whether you're a newcomer to exporting or already navigating the global market, this event will offer valuable insights, and access to information and support to meet your specific needs.

## MAY

### 2 Not-For-Profit Morning Tea

10.00 am-11.30 am

BNH offices, Level 1, 322 Rosedale Road, Rosedale

Are you a registered non-profit or charitable organisation? BNH would love to connect with you! Please email [comms@businessnh.org.nz](mailto:comms@businessnh.org.nz) for more information about this event.

## And there's more!

### Details TBC:

- |            |   |
|------------|---|
| 2 May      | Business After 5 Networking                                       |
| 8 May      | Business Capability Workshop supported by Bolster Risk Management |
| 15 May     | CEO Luncheon  |
| 29 /30 May | North Shore Commercial Property Group                             |



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# Have your say

There have been no opportunities recently for BNH to make formal submissions to Auckland Council (AC). However, an extremely important topic is looming large: consultation on AC's Long-Term Plan 2024-2034 (10-Year Budget) opened on 28 February. Council is still facing substantial budgetary challenges, which will be even more challenging following the abolition of the Regional Fuel Tax on 30 June.

Some of the items in Auckland Mayor Wayne Brown's proposal are:

- Set the average rates increases for residential ratepayers to 7.5%, 3.5%, and 8%, respectively, in the first three years of the LTP and then no more than 3.5% a year after that
- Doing away with the Long-Term Business Differential Strategy

- Fully fund the council's share of road renewals and other targeted transport spending to get Auckland moving, with a total transport capital spend of \$14 billion over 10 years
- Strengthen the council's resilience by investing in the Making Space for Water programme over 10 years
- Establishing the Auckland Future Fund to be capitalised with remaining AIAL (Auckland International Airport) shares and any proceeds from an operating lease of the POAL (Ports of Auckland) land and assets
- Work with central government to deliver the Auckland Deal, including progressing time-of-use charging, bed night visitor levy, share of GST revenue on rates, funding for growth, and balance sheet separation for Watercare

**There are also several other proposals that will affect you and your property or business, so please make sure you have your say before consultation closes on 28 March.**



BNH will be making a joint submission with some of the other Business Improvement Districts across the city, as well as an individual submission on behalf of our members. But it is imperative that as many members as possible also make their own submissions.

Please go to AC's website to ensure that you make the most of the opportunity to voice your opinion.

[aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/have-your-say/Pages/home.aspx](https://aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/have-your-say/Pages/home.aspx)

**Kevin O'Leary**  
GM, Business North Harbour

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\*Terms and conditions: Offers cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer. To qualify for the offer, the vehicle must be in stock at the dealership. Vehicle prices may exclude on road costs. Savings are off the RRP price from Hyundai NZ. Offer ends March 31st 2024.



# Minimum wage set for 'cautious increase' on 1 April

**THE ADULT MINIMUM** wage will go up by 2 per cent to \$23.15 per hour, an increase of 45 cents per hour from the current rate of \$22.70.

The training and starting-out minimum wages will also increase to \$18.52 per hour, remaining at 80 per cent of the adult minimum wage, up from the current \$18.16 per hour.

MBIE's website confirms that, for an employee working 40 hours a week, the minimum wage increase to \$23.15 per hour means they'll earn an extra \$18.00 each week before tax.

Workplace Relations and Safety Minister Brooke van Velden said: "An

increase to \$23.15 will benefit between 80,000 and 145,000 workers and will give our lowest paid workers more money in their pockets, without hindering job growth or imposing unreasonable costs on businesses."

Retail NZ chief executive Carolyn Young expressed "relief" that the increase had been limited to 2 per cent. "During these challenging economic times, every cost increase has to be passed on to consumers [...] We are pleased that Minister van Velden has listened to us and recognised the pressures that retailers are under."



## Brave in Business e-learning series

**IN ASSOCIATION WITH** Spark Business Lab, the Institute of Organisational Psychology, and The Wellbeing Works, business.govt.nz has created an e-learning series to support business owners' mental health and wellbeing.

The series is divided into four broad sections:

- Being mentally flexible to achieve better
- Performing under pressure
- Getting into the right headspace for success
- Making the most of your time

There's a focus on the true meanings of wellbeing and resilience, and why they matter. There's also advice about overcoming negativity bias using the "control, accept, and now act" method and avoiding common thinking habits that drain energy and can lead to poor decisions.

The courses are a mix of short videos and downloadable guides and templates and can be completed at the participant's own pace.

**To sign up or for more information, visit [business.govt.nz/wellbeing-support/brave-in-business-e-learning](https://business.govt.nz/wellbeing-support/brave-in-business-e-learning)**

## 90-day trial periods

**A REMINDER THAT** all employers in New Zealand, no matter their size, are now able to use 90-day trial periods. Previously, these only applied to employers with 19 employees or fewer.

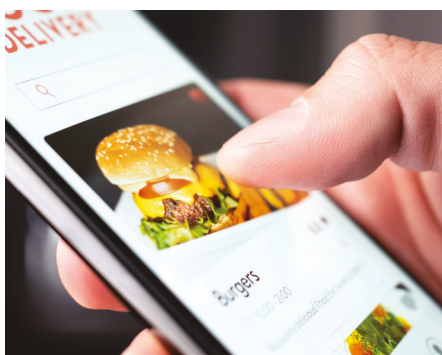
The employer and the employee must agree to the trial period in writing, and in good faith, before the employee starts work as part of their employment agreement.

The extension of 90-day trials does not affect other aspects of employment relations, such as the requirement to act in good faith, or worker protections regarding pay, conditions, leave, and health and safety.

Businesses hiring people on certain work visas will also need to consider any immigration requirements relating to the use of trial periods.



**Read more about trial periods at [employment.govt.nz/starting-employment/trial-and-probationary-periods/trial-periods](https://employment.govt.nz/starting-employment/trial-and-probationary-periods/trial-periods)**  
**For step-by-step guidance on creating tailored employment agreements, go to [eab.business.govt.nz/employmentagreementbuilder/startscreen](https://eab.business.govt.nz/employmentagreementbuilder/startscreen)**



## Reversal of 'app tax' reversed

**AS A RESULT** of coalition negotiations, the policy to cancel the so-called "app tax" was itself cancelled. The services affected are:

- Short-stay and visitor accommodation
- Ride-sharing and ride-hailing
- Food and beverage delivery

From 1 April, app-based providers of these services – for example, through Uber, Airbnb or Deliveroo – must collect and return GST, even if their annual revenue is less than \$60,000.





## Celebrating 35 years!

**TAKING A MOMENT** to acknowledge this impressive anniversary and the contribution of all our staff, customers, suppliers, and partners on this journey.

### Reminiscing: Parkland over the years

To celebrate, we've compiled some of the most notable moments in our 35-year history. Over the years, we've expanded our products, brands, team, and presence in the local and wider global community.

### A history of innovation

Parkland was founded in 1988 with a mission to provide high-quality irri-

gation and turf maintenance products and services to New Zealanders. Over the years, the company has evolved to become one of the leading suppliers of these products in the country. Parkland has a long history of innovation; we're constantly developing new products and services to meet our customers' needs.

### A few of the achievements that make us proud

- **Developing a wide range of innovative products sourced from the best brands.** We believe part of our success lies in the partners we've had along the way and the brands we supply. We always look to incorporate

the latest technology, making many jobs easier and more efficient.

- **Delivering exceptional customer service.** Our experienced, diverse and knowledgeable staff are dedicated to helping customers find the right products and services. The company also offers a variety of financing and leasing options to make it easy for customers to afford their purchases.
- **Sponsoring local golf courses and events** to continue fostering a growing golf community across New Zealand.
- **Our commitment to staff** – supporting growth, recognising contributions, and providing opportunities. This ethos is reciprocated by our staff, with many celebrating 10 to 25 years with us.

### Looking to the future

Parkland remains focused on providing our customers with top-notch products and services. We're also committed to giving back to the community and supporting environmental sustainability.

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investment - great  
value opportunity



# Neurodiversity at work

How businesses can – and why they should – embrace the power of different.

By Lizzie Brandon

IN 1997, AUSTRALIAN sociologist Judy Singer coined the term *neurodiversity* to try and destigmatise medical conditions like autism, ADHD, dyslexia, dyscalculia, and dyspraxia. Ms Singer, who is herself autistic, regarded neurodiversity as a social justice movement to promote equality for people whom she called “neurological minorities” – those whose brains work atypically or a little differently.

Approximately one in seven Kiwis is neurodivergent. Whilst awareness of neurodiversity has undoubtedly increased over recent years, some engrained behaviours and perceptions have not – and neurodivergent people have far higher unemployment rates than their “typical brain” counterparts.

However, forward-thinking companies are increasingly recognising the many mutual benefits of a neurodiverse team.

“I want an inclusive, diverse workplace because I want the best people for the job. From an employment perspective,



“I want an inclusive, diverse workplace because I want the best people for the job. ...as a CEO, it would be ridiculous for me to rule out 15 per cent of the workforce!”

Darryl Bishop, group chief executive of Ember Korowai Takitini

as a CEO, it would be ridiculous for me to rule out 15 per cent of the workforce!” says Darryl Bishop, group chief executive of Ember Korowai Takitini.

“If a business owner follows a rigid idea about excluding certain people, they could be missing out on someone who could transform their organisation. I can give you examples of people who’ve changed my business and changed me because they made me think differently.”

Unfortunately, however, not only are neurodivergent people more likely to be unemployed, they also have higher rates of poor mental health. “One of the things we hear about is ‘loss of citizenship’. Feeling that you’re not part of



U.S. software company SAP reported that one of their neurodivergent employees helped develop a technical fix worth an estimated \$40 million in savings. (Harvard Business Review)

‘If you can find their superpowers, they’ll be your best employee.’

PETER THORBURN HAS lived experience of neurodivergence and addiction. It wasn’t until he was aged 31 that a clinical psychologist at Auckland Correctional Remand Prison diagnosed his ADHD. Peter has overcome extraordinary challenges to turn his life around and now helps others do the same as a director at MESS (Meth Education and Solution Services) and an AOD clinician.

“In those very early years, it didn’t really matter that I was slightly different. It was when I went to high





Research suggests that teams with neurodivergent professionals in some roles can be 30% more productive. (Deloitte Insights)

### Can language help to overcome bias?

Stark medical diagnoses like ADHD, ASD, and ODD refer to *deficit* or *disorder*. Perhaps te reo Māori can help shift perception to something more respectful and mana-enhancing? For example, taonga takiwātanga (“in their own time and space”) describes autistic people as gifted, and reflects that aroreretini (“attention goes to many things”) with an ADHD diagnosis.



society because of discrimination or not having a job. At Ember we are committed to building resilient communities, so we actively enable these people to work for us. They're productive and helpful, and their loyalty and retention are brilliant. They're committed to our vision and mission because we're committed to them. We don't see them as the label; we see them for who they are.”

Darryl says one of the biggest misconceptions is that creating an inclusive workplace is too hard – that it takes more effort to set up than the work and worth of neurodivergent employees. “I would

“I have real examples of people who've changed my business and changed me, because they made me think differently.”

argue that we have a moral imperative. But, if you're serious about running a business, you should see the value in who you can employ. There's plenty of evidence that having an inclusive workplace gives you a competitive advantage. That wonderful 15 per cent can open doors for you, and give you better sales, better admin, better frontline workers.”

As well as boosting productivity and morale, a neurodiverse team can help

enhance client relationships. One reason is that as the company more accurately reflects its customer base, internal and external communications improve. Darryl comments. “We're all about lived experience being central to what we do. You need to communicate in ways that work for everyone, not just a long weekly email from the CEO. Have different options. Offer meetings, face-to-face chats, or do some videos.”

school that I stood out. In the 80s, when you didn't sit well in class or called a spade a spade, it could negatively impact how you learned. I was caned for things that others weren't getting caned for, and bullied for my inability to manage what I was saying.

“That changed the whole course of my life.”

When considering what makes an inclusive workplace, Peter echoes Darryl Bishop's central messages around communication and flexibility, adding his personal insights. “For an induction, don't give me 10 books to read. But give me a day to watch someone in their role, and I'll pick it up – and probably start to find some

improvements on how they can do it more effectively!

“Some of our autistic whanau struggle around emotional connection but are some of the most intelligent people you'll ever meet. So, listen to understand, and not just to the language. Be mindful of mannerisms and body language. Many neurodivergent people feel frustrated when they're not heard or respected. Their mana is diminished.”

But, when you find what your neurodivergent employee is passionate about, it will drive and empower them, he says. “If you can find their superpowers, they'll be your best employee.

“We're the high-en-

ergy, intuitive ones who will chuck in ideas, bring problem-solving skills, and always support the underdog. And we're generally good leaders, not paperwork-wise but entrepreneurial and willing to take risks.

“Most of all, we are loyal. If you give us an opportunity, we will stand by you.”

He also encourages neurodivergent people to be bold and upfront about their status. “When a manager understands that you might be slightly different in your responses, it gives them the opportunity to react accordingly and provide that extra level of support.

“Sometimes we don't share our neurodivergence



Peter Thorburn

because we're worried about being judged or viewed in a negative light. But my experience is that people are intrigued and actually want to understand. They'll ask questions about how you work and manage that and what they can do to help.”



## Creating an inclusive workplace – the first steps

Darryl encourages business owners to think of just a few key areas, and stresses that it needn't be rocket science. Indeed, modern successful businesses are probably already following many of these practices.

### Culture and policies

"Foster a culture where all sorts of people can come and work for you.

"Profile your diversity. Have clear policies centred on education and support so that everyone understands what's going on and your team can respond to neurodivergent colleagues appropriately. There should be zero tolerance for bullying."

### HR and recruitment

"At Ember, we don't do this quietly. We publicly say we're a rainbow organisation because we want to be somewhere people feel they belong. We state clearly that we're inclusive of neurodivergence; we encourage those applicants. We see Ember as a movement driving systemic change. When it comes to things like this, we're all in.



Members of the transgender and non-binary community are up to six times more likely to be autistic. (Spectrum News | Autistic Research News)

"Look at your hiring process. An overly traditional HR and recruitment format can exclude so many. Think about how you advertise roles and how people should apply. Then, in the interview, move away from abstracts to specifics. Try to avoid saying: 'Imagine a situation...'. Instead, ask: 'When you were in that job and had that experience, how did you solve that problem?'"

### Flexibility

"To support productivity and retention, match someone's way of working

to their job. What time of day are they most effective, early morning or late afternoon?

"And think about the layout of your office. Some people can't sit in a shared workspace, so offer choices like stand-up desks and breakout rooms."

As part of its supported employment services, Ember helps neurodiverse people find and retain work and assists the companies employing them.

[Read more at ember.org.nz/services/vocational-services](https://ember.org.nz/services/vocational-services)

## 'I'll be hyper-focused. If I'm in, I'm all in.'

**BAYLEY GARNHAM WAS** a 2021 Exercise New Zealand Up and Coming PT of the Year finalist and runner-up for the McCore Group Young Businessperson of the Year at last year's Purple Ink BNH Business Excellence Awards. A former Olympic Weightlifter, he's a personal trainer at AUT Millennium Gym, with a bachelor's degree in sport and recre-

It wasn't until he was 12 that he was diagnosed with dyspraxia and dysgraphia. "I think an earlier diagnosis would've helped mum and dad more than me. They were really supportive, but knowing what we were dealing with would've helped them focus their time and efforts and advise others how to support me better."

Dyspraxia affects motor

someone else to get it across the line. Likewise, I have to allocate much more time to admin, and my written work needs checking. So, let me verbalise my thoughts rather than produce a long, detailed email."

Bayley's experiences have positively impacted his professional life. He's learned to be patient and has, he says, an appreciation of delayed gratification. "I know it's going to take me double the time of most other people to learn something. I'm also open-minded; I recognise that there's more than one way of achieving something, and my way isn't necessarily the best.

"I'll be hyper-focused. If I'm in, I'm all in. And once I've grasped that task, it's absolutely engrained. If I don't do something for five years, I can still pick it up again immediately."

There are also direct benefits for his clients at the gym.

"I have a very varied client base, from some teenage lads, who are themselves neurodivergent, through to people in their late fifties who've had surgeries or deal with mobility limitations."

ation, with a major in sport and exercise science. It's not been an easy path, though.

"I struggled at school. Learning something new or completing a task always took me twice as long. And it was hard to adapt to any kind of change," he recalls.

skills, coordination, and balance, and can impact how someone takes on new information. "It's like a gap or disconnect between what forms in my brain and the output," Bayley explains.

"I have ideas; I can be creative. But I need



Bayley Garnham

"I have a very varied client base, from some teenage lads, who are themselves neurodivergent, through to people in their late fifties who've had surgeries or deal with mobility limitations."

"I can genuinely understand someone's frustration when they can't do something easily, and I recognise that we don't all make sense of things the same. In fact, 10 people might learn in six different ways. I can express things individually and demonstrate different methods.

"And because I know how good it feels finally to achieve that result, I'll celebrate with them too!"



# Expansion and innovation – exciting times at Ultimate Pools

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF** the new site for Ultimate Pools in Dairy Flat is progressing well, with the addition of storage sheds and new infrastructure in place. Ultimate Pools has been rapidly expanding, and as the business has developed and outgrown its local premises in Rosedale, a decision was made to secure new premises for the company. The retail store owned by sister company Poolside North Shore will stay in the Business North Harbour district, with its prime location on Rosedale Road.

When complete, the 11,000m<sup>2</sup> Ultimate Pools site in Dairy Flat will encompass a water testing and product research and development facility, extensive storage facilities, sales and showrooms, product displays, a children's entertainment area and, of course, display swimming pools.

General manager Rainbow Morris says the company has quickly grown and made a name for itself as an industry leader. "We now have 22 staff over our pool building and swimming pool aftercare service businesses, including a retail store and fleet of service vehicles. With this success came the need for expansion, and we quickly recognised the need for a business premises that could allow us to grow and develop many different facets of the business."

One such new facet of the business has been the launch of a new product called Ultimate Minerals. Many pool owners will be familiar with the rise in popularity of pools with added magnesium and other mineral elements, which can have excellent health benefits for swimmers and their families. Many people with health conditions such as psoriasis and eczema use mineral pools with great results.



Ultimate Minerals is available to purchase in Ultimate Pools' Rosedale store.

Ultimate Pools saw a need for a mineral blend that could be used in all types of swimming pools and was compatible with all water sanitation methods and other manufacturers' products. "We were proud to launch our very own high quality and completely New Zealand-made product in time for the summer of 2023/24, and we have had fantastic feedback from everyone who has tried it," Rainbow confirms.

Ultimate Pools is currently working with suppliers from across New Zealand to design and build an industry-leading display centre complex in Dairy Flat, where both trade suppliers and end users will be able to access swimming pool products in a working environment.

"This will be a fantastic opportunity for training, product testing, and sales to be carried out," says Rainbow. "Owners Warren Wright and Steve Westlake had a vision of creating a state-of-the-art centre, which could be a destination venue for families and an event hub. This dream is now becoming a reality as construction has begun on the facility in earnest."



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# How to ensure you're insured for financial resilience

**RESILIENCE IS ABOUT** being able to overcome the unexpected, and in these challenging times, it's important to ensure you have the right insurance cover. It's about identifying the risks that could cause difficulties – such as inflation and extreme weather events - and covering yourself against these risks to give your business the best opportunity to be sustainable.

In 2022 alone, over \$470 million in commercial material damage and business interruption insurance claims were paid out in New Zealand\*. This highlights why it's important to have business insurance to ensure you have the right support if and when you need it.

Rothbury offers a variety of comprehensive business insurance solutions. If you want a second opinion about your insurance, please contact a local insurance expert like the Rothbury Insurance Brokers North Harbour team.

## Protect your commercial property

Commercial property and equipment are significant capital investments for any business. Appropriate insurance cover can help protect the value of these investments should the unexpected happen and enhance your financial resilience and sustainability.

The following economic and environmental factors are driving changes in commercial property insurance, and as such, should be key considerations when reviewing your insurance. A Rothbury broker can discuss what the effects of each factor may mean for you and provide quality advice to help mitigate any potential risks:

- Increased frequency of extreme weather events



- Inflationary pressures
- Rising construction costs

Here are some examples of how these factors may impact your business:

- If your business is impacted by an extreme weather event such as a storm, the damage caused to premises and equipment can have a significant financial and operational impact. In this situation, Business Assets and Business Interruption insurance can aid your recovery by covering physical loss to your buildings and equipment as well as loss of insurable gross profit and fixed expenses (such as staff wages).
- In a high inflationary environment, it's likely that the cost of repairing or replacing property will increase as well. Therefore, it's important to regularly check that the sum insured for your commercial property is up to date (at least annually). A Rothbury broker can discuss your options to help estimate

your sum insured, including contacting a registered valuer.

## Quality advice from locals

It's important that your business has the right insurance cover in place. The Rothbury North Harbour team are committed to providing personal service and quality advice and have a team of five dedicated insurance brokers based in Albany.

With local knowledge and insurance expertise, they can tailor an insurance policy to enhance your financial resilience. If you have any concerns about your current insurance, or want a second opinion about your insurance, contact your local Rothbury North Harbour team today.

**0800 102 002**  
**1 William Pickering Drive, Albany**  
[rothbury.co.nz/branch/north-harbour](https://rothbury.co.nz/branch/north-harbour)

\*Market data, Insurance Council of New Zealand:  
<https://www.icnz.org.nz/media-resources/market-data>



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# Commit to your staff, and they'll commit to you

By Jacqui Cheal, General Manager

**UNDER THE HEALTH** and Safety at Work Act 2015 (HSWA), employers have a 'primary duty of care' to ensure, as far as is reasonably practical, the health and safety of their teams. This applies equally to physical and mental health and wellbeing.

Here at Ramada Albany, we endeavour to go well beyond our legal requirements. And, with the current cost of living foremost in the minds of so many and the stresses that have impacted New Zealand in general, I believe that all employers have a greater responsibility to be connected with their staff.

Building closer relationships and fostering a psychologically safe environment, where people feel confident to speak up, encourages open, honest, two-way dialogue. It means we notice if an employee's work is being affected in some way and gives an opportunity to discuss what's going on. Often, there are factors – stressful situations outside of work.

This is especially true for migrant workers, who may have been dealing with extra challenges. Covid meant that many families were separated for extended periods, on top of the usual financial pressures associated with visas and immigration.

How can business owners support their staff? Here are a few examples of what we've done.



Reunited after six years apart, Ramada Albany's head housekeeper Elisa Phiri Simangaliso and her daughter, Tanaka Phiri Nokutenda, who arrived from Zimbabwe a few months ago.



## Excellent customer service happens when staff feel confident and empowered

- Changed rostered days so that employees can attend appointments, such as medical checks and meetings with immigration consultants
- Given paid hours or days to do so
- Covered the cost of employees' children's school stationery
- Created an environment, supported by all levels of staff, where it's easy for parents to ask for time off to attend school events or if their child is unwell

Of course, we also have a strict zero-tolerance policy towards bullying or harassment, which applies equally to staff and guests. It's what we call our 'culture of kindness', where everyone deserves to be treated with dignity and respect.

We also send key staff (including myself!) not just to the St John First on Scene workshop but also its Mental Health First Aid training, which I think further contributes to our culture of kindness. This recently proved beneficial as one employee said she was grateful to understand her own challenges related to 'the black dog' and finally have a name for what she'd experienced.

In a competitive sector with a notoriously high staff turnover, the benefits – for the company, our team, and our guests – of our approach speak for themselves. Most of our staff are long-time employees, staying years rather than weeks or months. Moreover, excellent customer service happens when staff feel confident and empowered. When you create an environment where your employees know they are truly valued, that's when they can flourish. Perhaps that's one of the reasons why Ramada Albany is consistently ranked in the Top 10 Wyndham properties in the Southeast Asia and Pacific region, based on customer feedback.

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# Are you making the most of all your productivity tools?

**THE SPARK BUSINESS** Hub Auckland North team loves helping our clients find smart ways to work more efficiently. One thing we always do is make sure they're getting the most from existing subscriptions to providers like Microsoft or Google. Often, there are useful cloud-based services already included within these, but unless you know they're there, they're easily missed.

In future issues of *FYI*, we'll share a couple of case studies about how we've helped clients unlock these valuable secret digital tools. For now, here are our three top tips to boost your business productivity:

## Optimise your call flows

Modern, cloud-based phone systems provide even micro-businesses with all the features that were previously reserved for larger organisations. Use call queues wisely, advising customers of your operating hours and stalling calls to give your team more time to answer.

Use automated attendants to send callers directly to the person or departments they want to speak with, or



advanced call reporting to understand better when you need your staff to answer the phones.

Cloud-based phone systems also allow your people to work from any location or device, which is both highly convenient and time-effective.

## Digitise manual forms

Microsoft Forms is free with most Microsoft 365 subscriptions. This allows you to digitise many of your standard forms, ensuring you quickly capture accurate, relevant information and pass it swiftly to the people who need it.

With Microsoft Power Automate, you can also use robotic process automa-

tion for the data you collect, removing the manual human step of data entry and having it automatically update your systems.

## Use Microsoft Teams

You probably conduct some of your meetings virtually, saving time and fuel costs. But have you thought about using Teams to share documents securely? It makes it easy to collaborate on projects, inside and outside your organisation.



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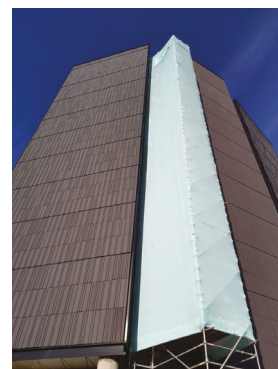
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# Pioneering a greener plastic alternative

## CONSTRUCTION AND DEMOLITION

waste accounts for about 40 per cent of what Auckland sends to landfill, almost 569,000 tonnes every year. Of this, over 25,000 tonnes is plastic waste.

Being involved with the construction industry for more than two decades, Matt Emerson was growing increasingly frustrated and disheartened by the amount of waste to landfill he witnessed every day. At the same time, he realised how even well-intentioned companies struggled to find sustainable waste solutions. "The more I looked into New Zealand's recycling infrastructure, the more I realised there just wasn't enough," he recalls.

So, four years ago, Matt founded Biowrap with the goal of offering a greener alternative to traditional shrink-wrap. Through its partnership with Biogone in Australia, Biowrap has developed plastic wrap products for New Zealand that are recyclable and landfill biodegradable, thanks to a specialised organic additive.

In fact, Biowrap biodegrades more than 90 per cent faster than conven-

tional plastics under typical land-fill conditions. Moreover, the methane released from this accelerated process can be captured while the landfill site is still being managed rather than being released over hundreds of years. This gas can then be repurposed for fuel and energy production.

"Our products are just as durable as traditional plastics; the biodegradation only begins when the plastic is exposed to a microbe-rich environment such as a modern municipal landfill. However, we recommend re-using or recycling as a first option. We've partnered with quite a few recycling companies, which is fantastic.

"Customers don't need to use any special storage conditions, the shelf life isn't compromised, and – perhaps best

of all – there are no micro-plastics," Matt explains. "And our latest innovation is that some of our wraps can now be made from recycled plastic."

Biowrap's products can be used by numerous sectors, from retail to agriculture. Its range includes two world firsts: scaffold wrap and silage wrap. There's also packing tape, blue strapping, and shipment envelopes. Plus, the recently introduced timber wrap promises to open up new markets.

Matt confirms that one of the biggest ongoing challenges is around education and awareness – not only sharing details of Biowrap's products and benefits for its customers and the environment but also countering misinformation. "It's a hell of a mission!

"Sustainable Business Network has been really supportive. They've actually encouraged us to enter their awards, but I feel it's a bit soon. I'd like to get another couple of years under our belts."

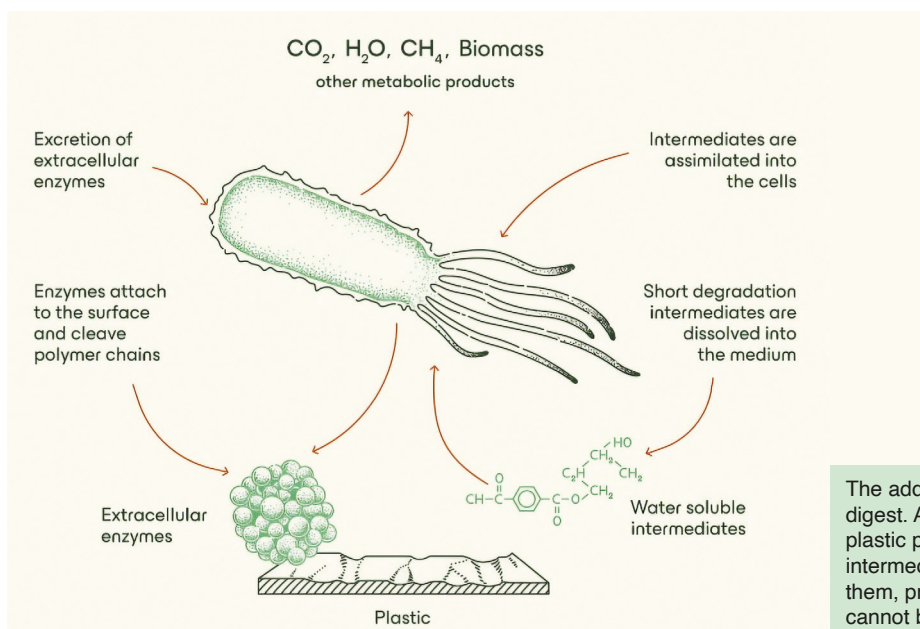
Despite the challenges, Matt is optimistic for 2024. To allow for the company's ongoing expansion, Biowrap recently moved from Lovell Court into larger premises in Tarndale Grove. "It's just as well that we've more space because we've already filled it!

"The North Harbour district is a great location. It's a friendly neighbourhood, and convenient for our transport purposes."

Along with his optimism, Matt is also realistic. "We're years away from a complete and functional circular economy.

"What we're doing with Biowrap may not be the answer to all of the world's soft plastic problems – but it's a start."

"Our goal with Biowrap is to offer a great service with convenient viable option for consumers who are mindful of their impact on the planet."



The additive attracts microbes to the plastic, which they digest. As they do this, the enzymes secreted cause the plastic polymer molecules to break down into non-plastic intermediates. The microbes can then begin to digest them, producing a humus-like material (organic matter that cannot break down any further), a natural plant fertiliser.





## Navigating Neurodiversity at North Shore Golf Club

**ASSIGNED WITH THE** task of exploring neurodiversity in the workplace, we delve into the green realm of North Shore Golf Club, where Jacob Devereaux, one of their greenkeepers, shares his unique journey. It took over three weeks to initiate the conversation with Jacob—a poignant reminder of the nuanced communication challenges posed by ADHD. Through patience and understanding, his narrative emerges.

Initially unbeknownst to him, ADHD silently shaped his early years. "I hadn't been diagnosed with ADHD in the first few years of working at golf courses," Jacob reveals. This revelation provides the backdrop for a story of personal exploration.

The initial years, veiled by the mystery of undiagnosed ADHD, presented formidable challenges. "The first few years were really hard not being medicated and unaware of my ADHD," Jacob reflects, highlighting the unseen struggles that shaped his early career. Yet, amidst the adversity, his love for the job persisted. "I really do love what I do," he affirms.

Once diagnosed and medicated with ADHD, Jacob experienced a profound transformation. "Once I became medicated, my passion and devotion to this career really grew, mainly because it was easier to concentrate" he shares, highlighting the pivotal role of an increased focus when it comes to his career and the daily tasks he is expected to complete.

When asked about North Shore Golf Club's stance on supporting neurodiverse individuals, Jacob expresses gratitude for the solid backing he receives. "Yes, they are very supportive," he confirms. Jacob explains that this support is integral, particularly on days when his medication falters or is forgotten. The support he receives from his team ensures that Jacob can fulfil his responsibilities with precision and care.



As he approaches eight years of service working on golf courses in Auckland, Jacob's journey stands as a testament to the power of determination.

### Rachel Harrison

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## Embracing and Catering to Neurodiversity in Modern Workplaces

IN TODAY'S DYNAMIC work environment, acknowledging and catering to the diverse health needs of employees, including those who are neurodiverse, is not just a matter of inclusivity but a strategic imperative.

The era of "one-size-fits-all" in health and wellness programmes is fading, giving way to more personalised and adaptable approaches. This shift is crucial in recognising and supporting the unique contributions of neurodivergent individuals who bring a wealth of creativity, innovation, and problem-solving skills to the workplace.

HealthNow offers a health and wellness benefits platform that stands at the forefront of this transformative approach. We understand that

neurodiversity – which includes conditions like autism, ADHD, dyslexia, and others – encompasses a spectrum of needs and abilities. Therefore, our platform is designed to be highly customisable, ensuring each employee can access support and resources that resonate with their specific health and wellness journey. As we like to say, "Nobody knows your employees like they do!"

**"Nobody knows your employees like they do!"**

Moreover, this customisation extends beyond neurodiversity. In the modern workplace, employees face a myriad of health challenges and lifestyle choices. From managing chronic conditions to pursuing a holistic wellbeing approach, our platform provides a diverse array

of resources. This flexibility not only empowers employees to take charge of their health and wellness but also signals an organisation's commitment to accommodating the unique needs of its workforce. Ultimately, the control still lies with the organisation to decide which sectors they want their benefits contribution to be enabled in. This could be just primary care or possibly more broad health offerings like massages, gyms, or other therapies.

As we embrace the rich tapestry of human diversity, it becomes increasingly clear that a one-size-fits-all approach is no longer viable. Organisations in 2024 need a health and wellness benefits platform that points to this evolution, offering solutions that cater to the varied and dynamic needs of every employee, including those who are neurodivergent. By doing so, we not only enhance individual wellbeing but also foster a more inclusive, productive, and innovative workplace that is well-documented to benefit the other objectives of the business in the long term.

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## New Zealand to ban 'forever chemicals' in cosmetic products

### THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Authority (EPA) has banned the use of perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in cosmetic products from 31 December 2026.

New Zealand is one of the first countries to take this step on PFAS – often described as 'forever chemicals' – to further protect consumers and the environment. PFAS are sometimes used in products such as nail polish, shaving cream, foundation, lipstick, and mascara. They are added to smooth the skin or to make cosmetic products more durable, spreadable and water-resistant.

"We know these chemicals don't easily break down; they can build up in our bodies, and some can be toxic at high levels," says Dr Shaun Presow, hazardous substances reassessments manager.

International research has linked long-term exposure to PFAS with an increased risk of some cancers, damage to the liver and immune system, and even low birth weight and complications.

Potentially giving consumers an excellent reason to "shop local", no New Zealand cosmetic manufacturers surveyed by the EPA use PFAS in their products. However, approximately 90 per cent of cosmetics sold here are international brands. If these companies do not use the next 20 or so months to transition away from PFAS ingredients, the affected products will be removed from sale in Aotearoa.



## The end of free public EV charging? Vector sells Auckland charging stations to ChargeNet

**CHARGENET HAS PURCHASED** eight of Vector's public EV-charging sites in Auckland, including the site at Constellation Drive McDonald's. Effective 19 February, these were integrated into the ChargeNet network, with additional sites expected to follow shortly.

With the support of its majority owner, Entrust, Vector began trialling the provision of public charging in 2015 – the same year ChargeNet started building New Zealand's first national charging network.

This sale means customers now need a ChargeNet account to use these sites. "We believe many of the current Vector charging users will already be ChargeNet customers, so it will be an easy switch. Our experience is that EV drivers are savvy when it comes to getting the most out of their charging, so some will also have

ChargeNet accounts linked to their electricity provider through our partnerships with Genesis Energy, Electric Kiwi and Octopus Energy, which provide flexibility across New Zealand," says ChargeNet CEO Danusia Wypych.

Acknowledging that shifting to a paid model for Vector charging users is a change, she says the teams are aiming to make the process as smooth as possible. "Ultimately, this move will allow us to make investments and improvements at popular sites, which benefits all EV drivers."

In the last year, Piermark Drive-based ChargeNet has increased its fast-charging points from 285 to 347, with plans to open up to 30 new sites during 2024.

**Customers can visit [charge.net.nz/auckland](https://charge.net.nz/auckland) for more information.**



## Go Green Expo

**THE GO GREEN Expo** is New Zealand's largest sustainable lifestyle show.

Anyone thinking about renovating, looking for more sustainable options or wanting to become healthier is encouraged to visit. Eco-build and healthy homes, food and beverages, organic products, health and wellness, beauty and personal care, home

and living and much more will be showcased at Auckland's April event. A couple of North Harbour businesses are exhibiting, including Nuzest.

Free tickets can be booked through the event website.

**WHEN** Saturday, 6 April, 10.00 am-5.00 pm

Sunday, 7 April, 10.00 am-4.00 pm

**WHERE** Eventfinda Stadium, Argus Place, Wairau Valley, Auckland 0627

**MORE INFO** [gogreenexpo.co.nz](https://gogreenexpo.co.nz)



# Top 3 ways to get your business in sustainability shape for 2024

Sustainable Business Network's (SBN's) advice for organisations looking to reduce their carbon footprint – and potentially their energy costs – this year

**BEGIN BY USING** the Climate Action Toolbox to see where you are today. Designed primarily for smaller businesses, it's a free online resource that shows how to measure and reduce your emissions. The self-assessment will identify priority areas and provide tailored advice and support, including a personalised action plan, and sector-specific guidance for construction companies. It will also help you track your progress.

SBN describes this as “the warm-up”. For businesses that want to get serious, here are three key areas where you can cut emissions and waste. (The good news is that several of these are common sense and easy to implement.)

## 1. Use renewable energy efficiently

### Understand your energy use

Start by determining which parts of your business use the most energy, and plan how to cut back. Typical areas include heating, cooling, lighting, transport, equipment, and machinery.

### Switch to renewables

Check out renewable electricity suppliers and/or consider installing solar panels. If you use fuels like coal or gas, explore alternatives.



## Improve energy efficiency

Optimise air conditioning and heating systems and implement power-saving practices like turning off equipment when not in use. Sensors and timers are also good options. When it's time to replace, upgrade to energy-efficient appliances and lighting.

## 2. Reduce your transport emissions

### Reduce car use and encourage sustainable commuting

Offer flexible work arrangements and support cycling, walking, public transport, and carpooling.

### Optimise fleet operations

Maintain vehicles regularly, encourage efficient driving habits, prioritise fuel-efficient models and explore electric vehicles. You could also consider car-sharing services like Zilch.

### Reduce business travel

Use video conferencing and virtual meetings when possible. If a work trip is essential, try to combine several meetings into one trip.

## 3. Go circular with your resource use

### Procurement

Choose suppliers walking the talk regarding environmental practices and prioritising locally sourced products. SBN has two free online resources: the Circular Economy Directory to find businesses that can help reduce your waste and improve the use of resources, and Docket to review the sustainability of your business and your suppliers.

### Design out waste

Review operations to ensure your resources are used as efficiently as possible. Reduce packaging and source sustainable materials. Implement recycling and composting programmes. Encourage suppliers to set up take-back schemes for their products when they are no longer of use.

### Reduce paper consumption

Digitise documents and use secure cloud storage. If you have to use paper, encourage double-sided printing.

Every step counts! Many of these changes can save money, support staff wellbeing, and attract more customers.

Every step counts! Many of these changes can save money, support staff wellbeing, and attract more customers.

**Learn more about SBN's free tools and resources at [sustainable.org.nz/learn/news-insights/sustainability-tools-to-help-your-business](https://sustainable.org.nz/learn/news-insights/sustainability-tools-to-help-your-business)**



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# 走进神经多样性:释放潜能,拥抱差异

“神经多样性”(Neurodivergence或neurodivergent)也被称为“神经非典型”(Neuroatypical)。神经多样性(Neurodiversity)这个概念最初由澳大利亚的社会学家Judy Singer提出,旨在强调人类神经系统的多样性和差异性。这意味着,这类人的神经发展与神经典型人群(Neurotypical)并不同步,因此在社交、注意力、学习、协调性、情绪和其他心理功能等方面会呈现出差异。神经多样性是一个伞状术语,下面包含了好几种障碍,比较广为人知的有:自闭症/孤独症谱系障碍、注意力缺陷及多动障碍、发展性协调障碍、阅读障碍、书写障碍、妥瑞氏症等。如果有其中任何一种或者多种障碍,都算是神经多样性群体的一员。

在我们生活的这片土地上,每七个新西兰人中就有一个是神经非典型人士。这个数字可能让你感到惊讶,但神经多样性确实已经成为我们社会中一个重要而普遍存在的现象。尽管近年来人们对神经多样性的认识不断增加,但一些根深蒂固的偏见仍然存在:据统计,同行业内神经非典型人群的失业率远高于神经典型的人群。

然而,随着时代的变迁,越来越多的有远见的公司开始认识到神经多样团队带来的诸多优势。Ember Korowai Takitini首席执行官Darryl Bishop对此有着清晰的认识:“我想要建立一个包容、多样化的工作场所,因为我想要找到最适合的人才。作为CEO,如果因为偏见而使排除掉15%的员工,那就太得不偿失了!”

Darryl的观点引人深思。如果企业主固守刻板观念,排斥某些人,那么他们可能会错失改变公司命运的机会。神经非典型员工可能为企业带来独特的视角和创新的能力,这是值得珍视的。

然而,神经非典型的人面临着双重挑战:不仅更容易失业,而且心理健康问题发生率也更高。他们的“公民权”得不到保障值得我们深思,这让人感到不安。当人们能真正理解并接纳这些人的能力和价值时,他们将成为组织中不可或缺的一部分。

那么,如何打破观念的局限,创造一个真正包容的工作环境呢?

Darryl提出了一些需要我们重视的关键领域:

## 文化和政策:

建立一个多元化、包容性的工作文化至关重要。制定明了的培训和政策支持,让团队成员了解神经非典型同事的特点,并对工作场所发生欺凌行为零容忍。

## 人力资源和招聘:

审视招聘流程,打破传统的招聘方式,让更多人有机会进入工作岗位。考虑如何公平地招聘,并为申请者提供多样化的申请方式。

## 灵活性:

为了更好地提高员工的生产力和保留率,我们需要将工作方式与个体的特点相匹配。考虑员工不同时间段的工作效率,以及提供多样化的工作环境,例如提供升降式桌子和休息室等。

神经多样性不仅仅是一种社会现象,更是一种宝贵的资源和机遇。正如Darryl所言:“拥有一个包容的工作场所会给你的企业带来竞争优势。那美妙的15%会为你打开大门,为你带来更好的销售、更好的行政管理、更好的一线员工。”

在这个多元化的时代,让我们共同走进神经多样性的世界,释放每个人的潜能,拥抱差异,创造一个更加美好、包容的未来。





# Scrapping the Regional Fuel Tax

Comments from Kevin O'Leary, BNH General Manager

**CURRENTLY IN THE** midst of 'March madness', Auckland's travel woes are set to be exacerbated following the government announcement on 8 February to scrap the Regional Fuel Tax (RFT) on 30 June.

Money raised by the RFT, which sees Aucklanders paying a levy of around 11.5 cents per litre of fuel, is collected to fund major roading and public transport projects across the city aimed at easing congestion and improving public transport services. As of September 2023, about \$780 million in RFT revenue had been raised, of which about \$341 million remained unspent. However, those funds are earmarked to complete the Eastern Busway and to purchase electric rail units for the City Rail Link.

Mayor Wayne Brown has said that scrapping the RFT will leave a \$1.2 billion shortfall over the next four years

for roading projects in Auckland, resulting in the country's largest city missing out on planned major road and public transport improvements. He has also said that Auckland Council won't be raising rates to cover the shortfall, which begs the question: how will these major roading and public transport projects for the city be funded?

The mayor has already called upon the relevant council departments to stop work on any projects reliant upon RFT money, so the future of transportation in Auckland is now very much in the balance. The introduction of time-of-use or congestion charging is proposed to add to the coffers, although the time frames around this are uncertain.

So where does that leave us? Sadly, it would appear with far more questions than answers.

As the population in Auckland



continues to grow and more vehicles enter the road every day, the cost of increased congestion on businesses will also continue to grow. I'm not sure how much more some businesses, already facing challenging economic pressures, can take.

Having taken this decision, I believe that the government needs to work closely with the mayor to find solutions to the resulting problem that has been created. Whether they will or not, remains to be seen. To date, there doesn't appear to be a plan as to how this significant issue can be addressed.



## RUC applies to hybrids and EVs from 1 April

**OWNERS OF LIGHT** electric vehicles will need to buy and display a road user charge (RUC) licence from next month.

You'll need to purchase RUC if your vehicle is powered fully or partly from externally supplied electricity, and weighs less than 3.5 tonnes. Plug-in hybrid vehicles (PHEVs) are therefore included, but self-charging hybrids (i.e., those that do not plug in to recharge) are not.

The RUC rate for fully electric vehicles (EVs) will be \$76 per 1000km. The rate for PHEVs will be \$53 per 1000km, which is lower to recognise that some fuel excise duty is paid when petrol is purchased. There will also be an admin fee: \$12.44 for a licence bought online or \$13.71 bought at an agent.

Registered owners should receive written confirmation from Waka Kotahi NZTA prior to April, confirming the relevant details.

EVs have been exempt from RUC since 2009. This exemption was implemented until electric vehicles accounted for about 2 per cent of New Zealand's light vehicle fleet. That point has now been reached, with approximately 100,000 light EVs on the roads.

## Driver's licence scam

**IN ONE OF** the latest phishing scams, fraudsters are offering driver's licences online or through social media. Waka Kotahi is warning that these scammers may be using its branding to look convincing.

You must go to a Waka Kotahi driver licensing agent in person to apply for a licence. You cannot apply online.

Approved driver licensing agents are the Automobile Association (AA) and Vehicle Testing New Zealand (VTNZ). You should only apply for a driver's licence through these organisations.

One exception to these rules is if you are applying for a replacement driver's licence card online for one that's been stolen or lost. This will go through Waka Kotahi's website, and you'll need a RealMe verified identity to log in.

**Remember: do not give personal or payment details to anyone offering driver's licences online. And, please report any suspicious social media activity.**





## Want security? Look no further.

WITH SO MANY business priorities these days, it's easy to miss a few important things. One area that's often left unfinished – until it's too late – is security.

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If you have a security issue or are already contemplating engaging a security provider, let us take a look, obligation-free. You might be surprised by what we see and come up with.

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the North Shore, we take the territory extremely seriously.

We provide services to the following sectors: education, commercial (large and small), charitable, community-based, medical, multinational, media, construction, sporting, property management, filming, manufacturing, civil, and many more.

We employ locally, spend locally, deploy locally, and share our knowledge locally.

We believe in collaboration, fair play, decency, maximum effort, never giving up, continuous learning, and always doing everything possible to achieve the

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## The Valentino's story

IN 2004, AN unforgettable trip to Australia ignited a passion for gelato and sorbet. Drawn by the wave of popularity sweeping across the dessert scene in Australia, we decided to bring this delectable delight back to New Zealand. In 2005, our dream took shape when we managed to secure a 100 sqm space in Auckland's iconic Ferry Building. That's where Valentino's Gelato Wholesale Ltd was born.

Over the course of 11 transformative years, the business blossomed. It wasn't long before we expanded beyond the Ferry Building, establishing a small food-grade factory in Albany. By 2016, we made the pivotal decision to shift away from retail and focus exclusively on manufacturing. This marked the turning point that set the company on its path to becoming a player in the wholesale industry.

Our journey began with scoop gelato and sorbet, delighting customers with a tantalising array of flavours. As demand grew, we diversified our offerings, introducing 125ml tubs and later expanding to 475ml tubs. The applause from the market was encouraging, leading Valen-

tino's Gelato Wholesale Ltd to supply not only cafés and restaurants but also supermarkets, reaching customers nationwide.

When lockdown hit, we realised markets and trends around the world would change. Therefore we recognised the potential of the non-dairy and vegan market. We embarked on an exciting endeavour: oat milk gelato. The result? At present, two mouth-watering flavours of boysenberry and dark chocolate have struck a chord with the non-dairy and vegan community, resonating with health-conscious consumers seeking indulgence without compromise.

From a visionary journey in Australia to the vibrant heart of Auckland, Valentino's Gelato Wholesale Ltd has carved a story of passion, evolution, and taste. Our dedication to innovation and the changing preferences of our customers has not only driven growth but also exemplified our commitment to delivering an experience that transcends the boundaries of traditional gelato.

Our motto has always been "simply to create joy in someone's day".

[valentinosgeloato.co.nz](http://valentinosgeloato.co.nz)



# Do you have external CCTV? You could join BNH's new crime prevention partnership

Update from Dave Loader,  
BNH Crime Prevention Specialist

AS I FIRST reported in FYI September 2023, Auckland Council (AC) received a \$2 million crime prevention fund from the then government. AC divided the amount equally between Auckland's local boards and Business Improvement Districts (BIDs).

Subsequently, Business North Harbour (BNH) has been looking into several options for how our allocation could best be spent. We want to optimise the benefits for all our members by enhancing existing crime prevention initiatives in the area.

There's already very comprehensive CCTV coverage along the boundaries of our BID on local motorways. To strengthen this network further, we are considering a partnership initiative with our current security provider, which



would enable us to provide a business community-focused CCTV monitoring network within our BID's boundaries.

We are asking any business member with cameras that offer a good view of the road frontage (or could be adjusted to do so without compromising on-site security) to get in touch. You could be eligible to participate in and actively support local crime prevention at no extra cost to your business.

Vanguard Security Services Ltd would monitor the road-facing external

camera/s during the hours of darkness, 365 nights a year. BNH would provide the necessary equipment to record and store the images.

**Don't miss out! Funding for members' involvement is only available until June 2024.**

**If you'd like to know more about contributing to this important crime prevention initiative, please contact me as soon as possible via [crimeprevention@businessnh.org.nz](mailto:crimeprevention@businessnh.org.nz)**

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## 9 reasons why Phone Plus celebrates neurodiversity

- 1. Better Problem-Solving:** Different ways of thinking mean more creative solutions to challenges.
- 2. More Creative Ideas:** Neurodiverse people bring fresh perspectives, making the team more creative.
- 3. Great Customer Service:** With diverse communication styles, they can connect better with all kinds of customers.
- 4. Attention to Detail:** Neurodivergent individuals are often really good at spotting small things, which helps with accuracy.
- 5. Adaptable:** They're good at dealing with surprises, which is super-handly in a busy contact centre.



- 6. Different Skills:** They bring all sorts of talents, like great memory and technical know-how, that can be useful in different roles.
- 7. Happy Team:** Being inclusive boosts morale and makes everyone feel valued.
- 8. Fewer Staff Leaving:** When people feel supported, they're more likely to stick around.
- 9. Good Image:** Supporting neurodiversity shows the contact centre cares about everyone in the community.

**If your business needs help to increase customer engagement, maximise sales leads, or create new opportunities and efficiencies, please get in touch. We're here to help create a solution to improve sustainability.**

info@phoneplus.co.nz

[phoneplus.co.nz](http://phoneplus.co.nz)

## Bolster Risk Management



### Neurodiversity and Group Insurance Schemes

**WHEN LOOKING AT** health, life, or disability insurance, pre-existing medical conditions always need to be underwritten to help the insurance company determine the risk of the proposed client. The insurer will then offer 'terms' on the condition. There are only four ways the outcome can go: accept as standard, defer cover (not proceed), exclude the specific condition and, lastly, increase the premium to compensate for the increased risk.

That said, there is an exception: employer-funded group insurance schemes. Pre-existing conditions are covered up to a limit (depending on the size of the group). For example, with life cover, if the client has the cover accepted under the automatic acceptance limits (which is not underwritten), they would be covered for conditions

such as autism, ASD, and ADHD. For any increases above the automatic acceptance limit, the conditions are fully underwritten, and terms may apply.

Additionally, many schemes, including group health cover, will include family members under the same terms. For example, one partner may be employed by a company that offers health cover, and their spouse has ADHD. If the spouse applies within 90 days, they can get cover for that condition.

This is a huge advantage to employee group schemes - employees and family members get cover for pre-existing medical conditions. At Bolster Risk Management, we can put group schemes in place for firms with just five or more staff.

**Whether you are looking to offer staff benefits like I've mentioned for your team, or want to get cover for yourself, I'd be happy to have a chat! Please email me on**

dominic@bolsterriskmanagement.co.nz

[bolsterriskmanagement.co.nz](http://bolsterriskmanagement.co.nz)



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IS  
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# Diversity's potential drives demand for flexibility

**THERE HAS BEEN** unprecedented demand for commercial premises on the North Shore, reflecting business confidence, with investors returning to the market and decision-makers purchasing to own and occupy their own premises.

The office market has certainly changed since pre-Covid, and work practices have also changed, especially



with the increasing adoption of remote work. Companies are rethinking their office space needs as employees have become accustomed to working from home. This shift has led to a re-evaluation of the traditional office setting, with an increased focus on creating more flexible work environments.

With the rise of remote work, businesses are also adapting their office spaces to accommodate employees who may require neurodiverse considerations. This means creating inclusive and supportive workplaces for individuals with varying cognitive processes. Furthermore, the pandemic accelerated the need for companies to address neurodiversity in the workplace, recognising the value that different perspectives and talents can bring to a business.

In order to thrive in this new landscape, it's important for organisations to consider how to balance remote work with the benefits of in-person collaboration. This might involve reinventing office spaces to be more dynamic and multi-functional, allowing for greater flexi-

bility in accommodating different working styles and needs.

Shared office spaces, also known as coworking spaces, have gained popularity in recent years due to their convenience, flexibility, and the opportunity for networking. These spaces provide an alternative to traditional office environments and are particularly attractive to small businesses, start-ups and remote workers.

We are certainly experiencing an increase in properties coming to the market, and for tenants and purchasers, 2024 brings many opportunities. Contact the Colliers team for details of available premises.

**Janet Marshall** is a Director at Colliers North Shore, a business mentor at BMNZ and board executive with Business North Harbour and Takapuna Beach Business Association. Contact Janet on 021 684 775 or email [janet.marshall@colliers.com](mailto:janet.marshall@colliers.com) for any assistance, whether leasing or purchasing commercial property.



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Located right next to the new Albany bus exchange and Park & Ride, this modern and sustainable office provides ample natural light with four street frontages. There are extensive end-of-trip facilities, including showers and bike storage and secure basement car parking.

Additionally, the building features EV chargers, making it an environmentally friendly and efficient workspace.

For further information and/or to arrange a viewing please contact Janet Marshall (021 684 775) or Sam Gallagher (021 885 474).



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# Celebrating different

**ACORN CHARITABLE TRUST** provides specialist therapy and support services for neurodiverse children and youth. The organisation, which has its North Shore base in Triton Drive, works on the premise that every child can learn as long as they are given the right tools to reach their potential.

CEO Tami Harris says the team strives to recognise every child's strengths, acknowledge their challenges, and understand their and their family's priorities. "We help children and families develop tools to empower them, enable them to advocate for themselves, and thrive in their community."

In New Zealand, the average age for autism diagnosis is six years, compared to four years in the USA, UK, and Australia. "This might not sound like much, but high-quality early intervention support can transform a child's developmental trajectory and vastly improve outcomes for them, their whānau, and the wider community," says Tami. "And intervention is likely to be more effective and less costly when available earlier in life."

Indeed, Acorn often works with young people in the care of Oranga Tamariki. Tami observes that these teenagers can be in "rather dire straits" because they didn't receive that early intervention. "Potentially, not only will these people not be able to lead their most meaningful lives, but the economic burden on the state will be higher, as resources such as welfare support and residential care have to be allocated."

Of Acorn's many services, psychology and speech therapy are the most in-demand. "A significant proportion of our referrals are for tamariki with challenging



Autistic children are three times more likely to be stood down, suspended, or excluded from New Zealand state schools.



behaviour who've been excluded from school or are only allowed to attend for a couple of hours each day."

There's also a developmental plan of up to 20 hours of therapy a week for very young children who are non-verbal, struggle with self-care, or have behaviours that prevent them from attending kindergarten. "They learn how to interact; some learn how to speak. It's wonderful to see them starting to realise their potential and know their life will be different now," Tami smiles.

*"It was painful as a parent to watch our child unable to communicate and struggle, as we felt so helpless. He used to struggle to even look at us when we talked to him and would have big meltdowns."*

*"At Acorn, we felt understood and valued for the first time. The therapists truly care about my son and enjoy being with him, even on his bad days. They know how to make therapy fun, so he wants to learn. He has started speaking and has learned important personal safety skills. Overall, he is so much happier, and we feel more confident that he is safe."*

*"Each therapist we have worked with or talked to has gone out of their way to support us as a family and to really understand our journey. Acorn really is Danny's safe place because of the relationships he has there. We only wish that all children like our Danny could have access to this life-changing therapy."*



Acorn CEO Tami Harris

## Get involved: become an Acorn Partner

"Most people assume that children with learning differences or neurodiversity are well supported in kindy or school."

"Unfortunately, we hear a different story day in, day out. As a community organisation, Acorn receives numerous enquiries from the North Harbour area from families desperately seeking support for their neurodivergent children but without the means to pay for it. As a local business, you can make a big difference for children and families in your community by sponsoring them to receive direct support from Acorn."

"As a charity, we hope that someday all children who need specialist services to learn and reach their potential will have access to them. In the meantime, we call upon local businesses and community members to invest in the 10 per cent of children and young people who have so much to contribute to New Zealand if they're just given the right tools."

**(09) 280 4303**

[acornneurodiversity.co.nz](https://acornneurodiversity.co.nz)  
[acornneurodiversity.co.nz/contact-us](https://acornneurodiversity.co.nz/contact-us)



# Embracing the 'Spirit of the Dragon' celebrating Chinese New Year 2024

## ASIAN FAMILY SERVICES (AFS)

commenced the auspicious Year of the Dragon in style on 3 February at Auckland's ASB Showgrounds, sparking a celebration throughout the community. The event was a success, drawing in crowds from far and wide to partake in the festivities.

The venue was filled with energy, as hundreds of stalls showcased a vibrant



array of traditional delicacies, cultural treasures, and specialised services, captivating over 3,000 attendees. Entertainment delighted audiences of all ages with mesmerising performances.

In addition to the festivities, AFS played a crucial role in supporting the community by raising awareness about common psychosocial issues. Through various outreach initiatives and informative materials, AFS facilitated discussions and promoted understanding and normalisation of these challenges.

AFS's presence at the event helped reduce the stigma around seeking support, emphasising that accessing social services is both acceptable and encouraged. By engaging openly with attendees and highlighting available services, AFS contributed to creating a culture of acceptance and inclusivity.

The active involvement of AFS led to a notable shift in the community's perception of tailored social services. Attendees

showed interest in accessing support services catering specifically to the Asian community in Aotearoa NZ, marking a positive step towards addressing community psychosocial needs.

Overall, AFS's efforts catalysed meaningful dialogue and action, underlining the importance of addressing psychosocial issues and promoting access to essential support services. By fostering acceptance and interest in these services, AFS continues to play a vital role in enhancing the wellbeing and resilience of the Asian community in Aotearoa NZ.

The event embodied community optimism, with smiles and shared moments reinforcing togetherness as they embraced the promise of 2024. AFS extends heartfelt gratitude to volunteers for ensuring its success, embodying our spirit of community.

[asianfamilyservices.co.nz](http://asianfamilyservices.co.nz)

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**CONTACT CENTER SERVICES / ADMINISTRATION  
SERVICES / ACCOUNTING SERVICES / PERSONAL  
ASSISTANCE**

**OXYGEN**  
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**FUEL YOUR BUSINESS GROWTH.**



**e [info@oxygenoutsourcing.co.nz](mailto:info@oxygenoutsourcing.co.nz) [WWW.OXYGENOUTSOURCING.CO.NZ](http://WWW.OXYGENOUTSOURCING.CO.NZ)**





BUSINESS LUNCH

# LEADERSHIP IN BUSINESS WITH LAURIE SHARP

THURSDAY 14 MARCH | 12.00–2.30pm  
NATIONAL HOCKEY CENTRE



EXCLUSIVE MINI SKIN HEALTH SESSION BY CAROLINE,  
HEAD OF TRAINING FOR DERMALOGICA NEW ZEALAND  
**dermalogica**

## Business & Beauty

with Natasha Bourke

WEDNESDAY 10 APRIL 2024  
NORTH SHORE GOLF CLUB | 10AM–12PM



WOMEN IN BUSINESS  
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