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**Cover:** Henderson Reeves "Divorce Cafe" panel, from left, Shelley Funnell, Thomas Biss, Stuart Henderson and Taina Henderson.

With thanks to our partners ...



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# From My Perspective

Phil Clode, Business Development Manager, phil@rosebankbusiness.co.nz



## 200 Issues

As we commemorate Roundabout magazine's 200th issue, the occasion serves as a poignant reminder of the significance of community and the vital role our publication plays in uniting people. Roundabout goes beyond merely reporting news and accomplishments; it fosters a sense of belonging and connection. We have established a platform where the voices of our community can be heard, and I am immensely proud of the impact Roundabout magazine has had over the years.

Looking ahead, my aspiration is to continue growing and evolving as a publication and providing informative and captivating content.

In early August, I had the privilege of

visiting both San Francisco and Redding in California. Redding, a smaller city nestled beneath the state of Oregon, presented a striking contrast to San Francisco. The community there exuded a closeknit, amiable and inclusive atmosphere. It served as a reminder that not all cities face identical challenges and that thriving communities still exist.

The situation in San Francisco left me deeply unsettled. The overwhelming number of homeless individuals was staggering, especially for someone hailing from the small country of New Zealand. The central part of San Francisco seemed to lack a sense of law and order; some stores had security guards and police stationed at their entrances to prevent theft. I have never witnessed this level of security in any other country I have visited. Drug abuse was prevalent and openly carried out. It was disheartening to feel unsafe while exploring a city that boasts numerous tourist attractions. If this is a glimpse into

the future of major cities, then we must ensure that it does not befall us here in Auckland. It is disheartening to witness a city seemingly abandon its own people.

Despite the challenges and hardships they may encounter, Americans possess a can-do spirit and an unwavering belief in their own capabilities. This inspiring and re-freshing attitude is something that resonates deeply with me; reaching the momentous milestone of 200 issues is similarly a testament to the unwavering dedication and hard work of everyone involved in producing Roundabout magazine. I am sincerely grateful for the support of our contributors, advertisers and readers who have made this remarkable journey possible. Here's to the next 200 issues, and to the enduring success of Roundabout magazine in serving and connecting our community.

Regards,

**Phil Clode,**  
**Business Development Manager**



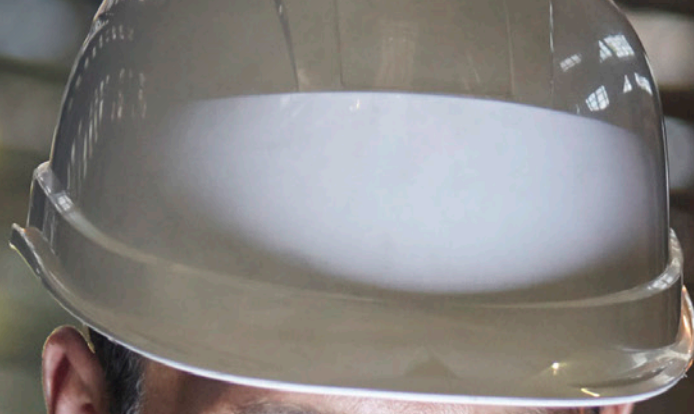
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# Rosebank Advocates

With **Dr Grant Hewison**, specialising in local government consultancy and legal services



Dr Grant Hewison

## Auckland Council Storm Recovery and Resilience Consultation

In early 2023, the Tāmaki Makaurau/Auckland region experienced a series of extreme weather events, with record-breaking rainfall, floods, landslides, and high winds. Thousands of people were affected, and homes, businesses, and communities have suffered long-term impacts. Tragically, 6 people lost their lives.

To address these events, Auckland Council formed the Recovery Coordination Office and created an interim recovery plan.

Auckland Council are now developing the Tāmaki Makaurau Recovery Plan and a series of stormwater improvements called 'Making Space for Water' to focus on longer-term recovery. Auckland Council is now seeking feedback on these plans.

The proposed Tāmaki Makaurau Recovery Plan will outline priorities for region-wide and local recovery activities. This plan is a legal requirement to address the repair, regeneration and resilience of the Auckland region.

The Council's Healthy Waters Department is developing a series of stormwater improvements called 'Making Space for Water' as part of recovery efforts. Healthy Waters is planning 9 initiatives to reduce flood risks and make big improvements to Auckland's stormwater network to be delivered over 6 years, including infrastructure improvements, such as culvert and bridge upgrades; increased stormwater maintenance; empowering our communities to prepare for and increase resilience to flooding; and creating blue-green networks (waterways and parks) to allow stormwater to safely pass through urban areas.

The RBA has made a submission supporting various initiatives in

'Making Space for Water.'

In particular, the RBA has supported: (a) undertaking more frequent street sweeping, targeting higher risk and heavy leaf-fall areas; (b) more frequent catchpit cleaning (at least 3 times a year in high risk areas, and twice a year everywhere else); (c) network upgrades, such as building catchpits with bigger inlets; and (d) targeted public overland flow path management and stream clearance.

The RBA has also supported initiatives to develop new blue-green spaces in the areas where there are serious flooding risks and to provide information to businesses about how to correctly manage an overland flow path on their property.

Although the RBA supports, in principle, the introduction of a targeted rate to cover the cost of 'Making Space for Water' (and consideration of either allocating the rate across the region in the same way general rates are applied or creating a tiered rate so that people pay more if significant investment is made in their local area), the RBA's concern, as it has stated with regard to the introduction of other targeted rates, is that it does not accept the views of Council that a business differential should be applied to targeted rates (or general rates), especially for reasons that "businesses are better able to manage additional costs than residential properties" or because "businesses can claim back GST and expense rates against tax." These reasons do not justify the business differential, particularly for small businesses who make up most businesses in Auckland and in light of the main beneficiaries of such a proposed rate being residential property owners.

Auckland Council is looking for feedback to help develop the Tāmaki Makaurau Recovery Plan and refine the 'Making Space for Water' initiatives, including understanding how the storms affected businesses; what is important for recovery; how Council can better prepare for future extreme weather events; and opinions on the ideas proposed in 'Making Space for Water.'

Submissions can be emailed to [stormrecoveryconsultation@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz](mailto:stormrecoveryconsultation@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz)

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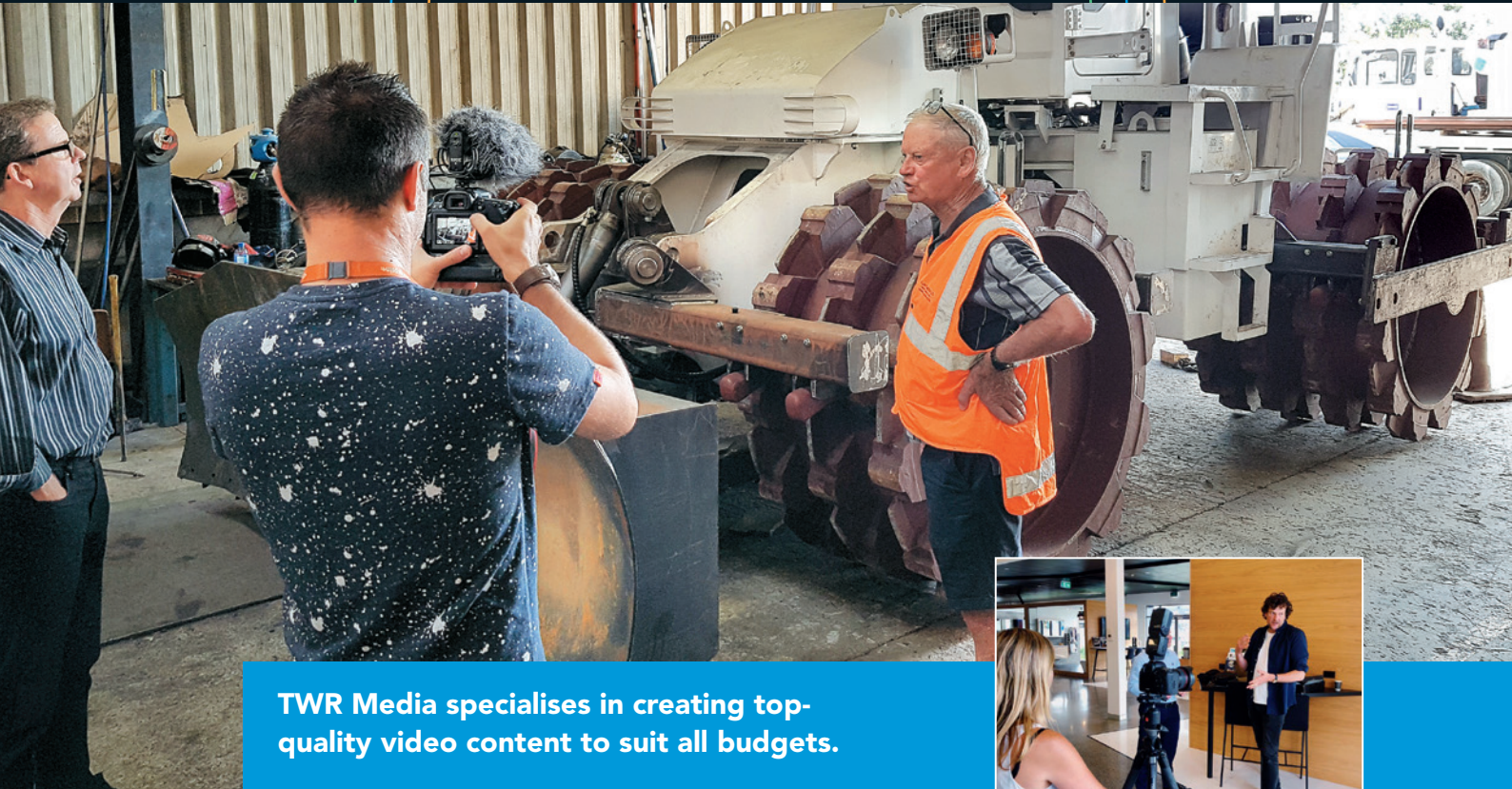
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# Kimmy's Korner

**Kim Watts** RBA Executive Engagement Manager  
Phone: 021 639 509, kim@rosebankbusiness.co.nz



## Pilot scheme helping local businesses get a handle on waste

Forward-thinking local businesses are getting a better handle on how to reduce waste to landfill, thanks to an innovative pilot project being run by the Rosebank Business Association and EcoMatters Environment Trust.

The long-term goal is to establish a local food scraps collection service for businesses which in turn will create nutrient-rich compost for nearby community gardens.

Thanks to funding from Auckland Council's Waste Minimisation Innovation Fund, waste audits are being done with 11 local businesses, all RBA members. The audits will help show how much and what sort of food scraps are available locally to see what potential there is to run a food waste collection service for businesses. But there are other benefits too.

"The waste audits are really valuable tools for the businesses themselves," says Carla Gee, CEO of EcoMatters.

"When you know what you are throwing away you can take steps to reduce what goes to landfill. This helps businesses reduce waste disposal costs and take a positive step for our environment."

So far Allegion, Alstef Group, Apex Valves, BidFresh, C-Tech, FoodChain, Mulcahy Engineering, Rheem, Solo Plastics Ltd, and Southern Spars have expressed interest in having a waste audit. EcoMatters contacted each company to find out more about their situation and in most cases, have recommended audits be undertaken.

Findings so far show most businesses have the potential to divert up to 95% of what currently goes to landfill. A good portion of this is food scraps, but there are also items that could be potentially recycled which are being thrown away instead.

Businesses involved will be getting further help from EcoMatters' waste experts to help them find better solutions for their waste.

The RBA are really excited about the potential this pilot offers for us as a business community, by offering local solutions to local issues. We would much rather our food scraps are composted locally than trucked further afield, increasing carbon emissions along the way.

The RBA are proud of the local businesses who've already been part of this trial - it's a great way to address their own environmental impact and showcases the benefits of composting locally. The fact our food scraps will be feeding a new Banana Swale underway at Hope Garden, and hopefully another in the future at Rosebank School, really is a wonderful example of a



circular economy.

The next stage is to pilot a food scraps collection service for businesses, so those resources can be put to better use.

"When food scraps are sent to landfill, their nutrient value is lost forever. As they rot down, they create methane gas, which is a significant greenhouse gas, trapping heat in the atmosphere," says Carla.

But composting food scraps locally helps businesses to support a circular economy, reduce their carbon footprint and contribute to a healthier local environment.

There are further benefits if the pilot is expanded, including supporting local employment, improving local food security as more can be grown in our community, and keeping more food waste out of landfill.

The RBA know this has real potential to be a showcase for other business communities around Aotearoa. When we raise awareness about the benefits of responsible waste management, we're helping create a more sustainable and resilient future.

There are limited spaces left for free audits or there is the option to pay for a waste audit from EcoMatters. Please contact richard@ecomatters.org.nz to find out more.



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# Rosebank News & Events

News, views and any other tidbits from the Rosebank Business Community.

## ALLEGION Hosting



Allegion is a global security products and solutions provider with a mission that matters. We help keep people safe and secure where they live, learn, work and visit. With more than 30 brands sold worldwide, we offer a range of security solutions from mechanical and electronic locks to access control systems and door closers. The company serves a variety of industries, including commercial, residential, institutional and industrial.

Locally, our leading brands include Brio, Briton, Legge, LCN and Schlage. We are an importer of high-quality security hardware, and proudly manufacture many of our key products within our Auckland facility. Our local manufacturing provides an integral part of our innovation, increases quality and efficiencies, provides timely product delivery, and allows us to

stay close to our customers.

Allegion welcomes you to join us at our world class facility, designed to showcase our products, whilst demonstrating our corporate responsibility within the design of the building to lessen our carbon footprint.

### ALLEGION Hosting

**Where:** 437 Rosebank Road, Rosebank

**When:** Thursday, 21st September, 2023

**Time:** 5.00pm - 7.30pm

**RSVP:** [maureen@rosebankbusiness.co.nz](mailto:maureen@rosebankbusiness.co.nz)

## SUCCESSION AND EXIT PLANNING



The Icehouse and Strategic Specialists Group are pleased to be offering a joint educational event to help you with future growth and potential exit succession.

Presented by Andrew Martin (Marty) from Strategic Specialists Group.

### Icehouse Event

**Where:** Browne St Eatery, 50 Rosebank Rd

**When:** Tuesday 5th September, 2023

**Time:** 7.45am - 9.30am

**RSVP:** [maureen@rosebankbusiness.co.nz](mailto:maureen@rosebankbusiness.co.nz)

## RBA Annual General Meeting @ BLUM



Join us for our Annual General Meeting to be held at BLUM on Rosebank Road.

Blum are world leaders in lift, hinge, pull-out and pocket systems for furniture.

### RBA AGM @ BLUM

**Where:** 621 Rosebank Road, Avondale

**When:** Thursday, 26th October, 2023

**Time:** 4.30pm - 7.30pm

**RSVP:** [maureen@rosebankbusiness.co.nz](mailto:maureen@rosebankbusiness.co.nz)



## A Hosting with a Twist by Henderson Reeves Lawyers

A huge thank you to Lawyers Henderson Reeves for Hosting along with their popular "Divorce Cafe" Podcast.

Prior to the podcast, attendees were given the chance to submit anonymous questions, which were addressed during the concluding part of the event. This interactive segment allowed the audience to clarify doubts, share personal experiences, and gain a deeper understanding of the nuances surrounding business breakups.



Stefan Crooks and Stewart Henderson



Taina Henderson, Stefan Crooks and Shelley Funnell



Neal Ramphal and Shelley Funnell



Kellie Mead and Fiona Norris

## Give a Kid a Blanket

RBA Member Accent Construction have been busy over the last month or so, gathering blankets, PJs and Socks to support the Community initiative, Give a Kid a Blanket. Many children are going to bed cold at night and some don't even have a bed to call their own. And through our donation journey we have discovered the need in our Community in Auckland is huge.

Give a Kid a Blanket provides warm blankets, PJs and socks to those children that are going to bed cold due to unfortunate circumstances. Give a Kid a Blanket works with various agencies, including DHB's, Police and Social Agencies to ensure that the children in greatest need are being supported with warmth and comfort. The Team at Accent Construction rallied to gather a large donation of New and Excellent Pre-Loved items.







# Don't Click Here:

Keeping your business safe from online scammers

*\*Some names have been changed*

\*Simon wasn't part of the leadership team where he worked, so he was surprised to receive an email from the CEO. The short message held a simple request - could he please follow the link below to an online report and give his feedback?

Curious, Simon clicked the link, which took him to a page where he was asked to log in with his work email and password. He didn't, believing the email had been sent to him in error. A quick word with the CEO's PA revealed the truth: the email was part of a scam, a phishing attack sent from a bogus email address and designed to steal Simon's login details.

Cyber scams are a hot topic in 2023, with renowned psychologist Nigel Latta having delivered a deep dive in his recent programme *You've been Scammed with Nigel Latta*. To paraphrase Latta in his opening voiceover, the vast majority of Kiwis believe they're savvy enough to spot a scam from a mile away. But this confidence, Latta goes on to explain, can create blind spots that make people even more susceptible to scammers.

"A lot of people don't take these things super seriously, but we try to do as much as we can to combat phishing attacks, because they do lead to other things," says Jordan Heerspring, Threat and Incident Response Team Manager at CERT NZ. CERT NZ, an acronym for the New Zealand government's Computer Emergency Response Team, supports people and businesses across the country by receiving reports about cyber-attacks, tracking online scams, and advising Kiwis on how to protect themselves. Jordan's team in particular looks into reported incidents, responds to them, and works to help people and businesses deal with those incidents.

"Once a phishing victim has entered their login details, the scammer can use their username and password to sign into the business's Microsoft online account," he explains. From there, the

scammer can potentially wreak havoc, using every tool at their disposal to access accounts with more privileges, compromise the business's emails to conduct invoice scams, and even introduce ransomware. "Ransomware is probably on the top end of seriousness - all your systems get corrupted, and you essentially can't do anything."

According to statistics released by CERT NZ, in the first 3 months of 2023 alone, the organisation received reports of almost 2,000 cybersecurity incidents, from phishing attacks to romance scams and more. And it's no longer emails from Nigerian princes that catch people out. "A lot of scams are done by SMS these days," notes Jordan. "It used to be primarily email, but now it's SMS with a little email on the side."

Jordan says that most scams target individuals, but Kiwi businesses are far from safe. Name-dropping the CEO, it turns out, doesn't just work as a phishing lure; it can also be an effective way to run a gift card scam. According to Sebastian Waldschmidt, a coordinator on Jordan's team, CEO gift card scams are regularly reported. "They'll have a heading like, 'Hey, it's your CEO. I want to buy presents for everyone - why don't you get me X-number of dollars in gift cards.'" If the gift cards are purchased and sent as instructed, the scammers have made off with an untraceable and non-refundable chunk of the victim's money.

Invoice scams are another lucrative scheme for scammers, and businesses are regularly a target. The scammer will impersonate a goods or services supplier and send out an invoice, hoping the receiving business doesn't look too closely and just pays. One of the more blatant impersonation tactics sounds like something out of the latest *Mission Impossible*.

"We've seen a couple cases of people using publicly available information on the New Zealand business register to set up



websites impersonating a business,” says Sebastian. Using that easy-to-find information to build a startlingly convincing website, the scammers then launch invoice-style attacks, fooling businesses into believing they’re dealing with a trusted supplier.

Mike Hannan, Owner Operator of RBA Partner Spark Business Hub West Auckland, says that businesses of any size can be targeted by scammers. Mike and his team specialise in business IT solutions and services, including diagnostics and IT Health Checks. He likens online scammers to “digital RAM raiders,” playing on the term for computer memory, aka RAM.

“As a business owner or manager, you may not think that your business is at risk of a cyber-attack. However, ‘small’ businesses are at risk of cybercriminal activity. The targeting is often a ‘broad stroke’ attack across hundreds or thousands of accounts so can impact any business regardless of industry or size.”

The risk of assuming otherwise, Mike adds, is significant. “A security breach can result in financial loss, reputational damage, and legal liability. Ask yourself: What would happen if I couldn’t access my systems? What if someone had access to my financial records, commercials such as COGs, pricing and customer base, or my employees’ private information?”

Jordan agrees: anyone can be targeted. “For the most part, it’s very much a scattergun approach,” he says. “They’ll fire things out as broadly as possible and just try to get some response.”

And it’s easier than you might think to fall victim to scammers’ manipulation tactics. By piling on the pressure, scammers push people into taking action before they’ve had the chance to think things through.

“Scammers use whatever method they can to try to create a sense of urgency,” says Sebastian. “That typically plays in their favour. If someone feels that there’s a sense of urgency around a task, they’re less likely to use a critical lens to assess it.”

“Urgency is a big one,” agrees Jordan, “as well as the threat of repercussions. A lot of the scams will say things like, ‘Your password has been changed - please click here to confirm whether it was you’ or ‘There’s a big new charge about to go through on your credit card - click here to stop it.’”



Mike Hannan and his team from Spark Business Hub West

In the face of scammers’ increasingly devious and creative methods of attack, how can businesses protect their valuable systems and data? “IT security should be a top priority for small business owners,” says Mike. “IT security needs to protect your business’s IT infrastructure and data from unauthorized access, use, disclosure, disruption, modification, or destruction.”

Mike says that the best way to start is to take a thorough look at your systems and processes. “Conduct a risk assessment to identify potential threats and vulnerabilities,” he advises. “It’s better to know issues tested by an independent party than by a digital RAM raider.”

Next, take steps to protect yourself and your business. Mike suggests using strong passwords, keeping software up to date, installing firewalls and antivirus software, and creating data backup and recovery procedures. And, perhaps the most important piece of the puzzle: strengthening the human firewall. “Ensuring that all staff know not to open links or files from unusual email addresses is also a 101!”

Jordan agrees that educating your team on the importance of IT security is one of your best defenses against online scammers. “There are several things that businesses can do to lower their risk, and one of them is raising the awareness of this type of activity among their staff. A lot of these things can start with a phishing attack, and so if staff know about phishing and how to spot it and deal with it, the business is least likely to be affected.”

Jordan also advises questioning any sudden changes to how a supplier or service provider asks you to pay.

“If things change - like bank accounts - that’s a bad sign,” he says. “But if it’s always the same process and nothing has changed, it’s probably okay.”

And, if you do feel suspicious of an invoice, Sebastian adds, “Try to independently verify it through a channel that you didn’t receive the invoice through.” As in, don’t call the phone number listed on the invoice or reply to email you received - instead, look up the publicly listed phone number for that business and call them directly.

One final tip: if you’re the unfortunate victim of a cybercriminal, reach out to CERT NZ. “If you do get one of these scams,” says Jordan, “the best thing you can do to help yourself, especially if you don’t know all the details behind it, is to report it. That way, we can help you understand what’s going on and potentially help you recover accounts or money lost. And whether you fall for the scam or not, you can help others by reporting it. If you tell us at CERT NZ, we can share the domains being used to perpetrate these scams across a range of organisations. It also helps us to build a picture of what’s going on so we can target our efforts and coordinate our response across the government and private sectors.”

For additional advice or support with strengthening your IT security, contact Mike at his team at the Spark Business Hub on 0800 824924 or via email at [HubWaitakere@spark.co.nz](mailto:HubWaitakere@spark.co.nz). You can reach CERT NZ on 0800 CERT NZ or at <https://www.cert.govt.nz/> and <https://www.cert.govt.nz/individuals/report-an-issue/>

Written by Beth Caunter



# Did you know..



## BNZ - Mike Jones

Mike Jones, the chief economist of BNZ, engaged in discussions about the current economic challenges faced by NZers and businesses during a business lunch hosted by the RBA and BNZ.



## The EMA Workshop

EMA's Head of Legal and General Counsel, Paul O'Neil delivered a seminar on getting your business processes right and what might happen if you don't.



## 'Colour Me Rosebank' Matariki competition

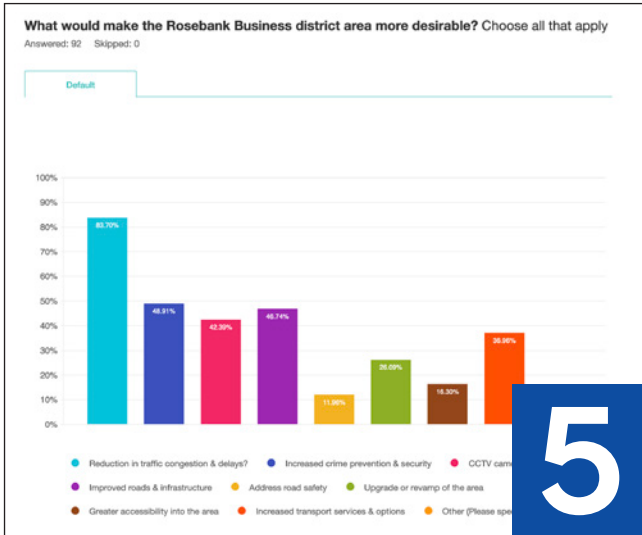
With over 250 entries from Rosebank School, Avondale Intermediate, and our Rosebank employee families, winners were treated to family passes to Auckland Zoo.



## Meat and Greet

8,250 Westie pies were delivered to Rosebank businesses with the aim to use them as a starting point for either a shared morning tea or lunch with workmates.





5

## RBA Survey

86% of responders want the RBA to look into projects to reduce traffic congestion.



6

## Building a high performance culture

RBA members joined Andrew Webster (Warriors Head Coach), Cameron George (Warriors CEO), Jason Ennor (MyHR CEO), and Sylvie Thrush Marsh (MyHR Chief Evangelist) in discussing what a high performance culture is, and how to build one.



7

## Most Wanted

Regal Rexnord joined forces with volunteers from the Ukraine Humanitarian Support project to fill a 40ft container filled with medical supplies, toys, and clothing bound for Ukraine.



8

## Banana Swale – 2nd Bite composting

11 local Rosebank businesses are involved in a food waste pilot project to create compost for a Banana Swale and circular economy.



9

## EMA Mental Health First Aid Course

Four employees from Rosebank attended a two-day workshop focusing on mental health literacy, promoting early help-seeking behaviours, and reducing stigmatizing attitudes.



10

## Henderson Reeves live Podcast

In August, Lawyers Henderson Reeves held a Hosting with a twist, a panel discussion about breaking up is hard to do (especially when you are in business) with their "Divorce Cafe" Podcast.



**KIA KAHA  
TE REO MĀORI**

**Te Wiki o te Reo Māori**  
11-17 o Hepetema 2023

**Māori Language Week**  
11-17 September 2023

## Te Wiki o te Reo Māori: Connect With Your Customers Beyond September

From 11 to 17 September this year, Aotearoa New Zealand and Māori speakers around the world will celebrate Te Wiki o Te Reo Māori (Māori Language Week), an annual spotlight on one of our official languages and a taonga (treasure) under the Treaty of Waitangi. This year's theme is Kia Kaha Te Reo Māori - Making the Language Stronger, and there are easy-to-use resources and materials available online at [reomaori.co.nz/resources](http://reomaori.co.nz/resources) to help your business participate.

But while te Wiki o te Reo Māori is an excellent opportunity to practise your pronunciation and learn some light vocabulary, New Zealand business owners and customers alike say there's significant value in incorporating te Reo into the day-to-day running of your business.

"The feedback has been fantastic from both clients and team members," says Riann Umaga-Marshall, Director of Accounting and Advisory business Tahora, who sees using te Reo at work as critical to normalising use of the language in all facets of life. Te Reo Māori is woven throughout Tahora's website, from the invitation to "Book a kōrero" to the business's core values: Mahi Tahi, Mana Enhancing, Mahi Pono and Mahi Tika. "We are clear in all of our

communications, be it emails, website or social media, that te Reo is encouraged wherever possible." she says. "We ensure there is buy-in from the start with all of our staff, who are in varying journeys with regard to using te Reo Māori. [Clients] love to see our authentic selves being expressed, as it encourages others to do the same."

Riann's view is shared among businesses of all sizes across New Zealand. From mum-and-dad cafés offering kawhe (coffee) to big names like McDonald's and Whittakers (you'll find the New Zealand chocolatier's special-edition miraka kirīmi - milk chocolate - back on store shelves this month), the adoption of te Reo as regular business practice is increasingly evident, and for good reason: customers seem to approve. West Auckland residents approached by Roundabout felt universally positive about the use of te Reo by businesses - but they're quick to spot when the language is used as a gimmick.

"It's more impressive when they quietly participate on an everyday basis rather than make a big deal for a week and then forget about it," says one resident. "It's becoming more common for me to see greetings and kupu [words] sprinkled amongst business newsletters and even business emails nowadays, which

I see as accepting and promoting the language in daily practice."

Pākehā (non-Māori) small business owner Naomi Kitchener says that te Reo is a core part of her Hawaiian healing arts practice and a "most precious taonga." In her view, incorporating te Reo into your business is well worth it. "Businesses can't learn te Reo Māori - people do - so this journey is all about people and culture. Learning te Reo can be a wonderful way to begin a journey to understand Māori employees' views better, to understand your own business and where you fit, and to understand your clients better."

In fact, Naomi adds, not doing so can create limitations that impede a business's growth. "Businesses that want loyal, satisfied customers need to make an effort to first understand their clients. Integrating te Reo Māori into a business isn't about only connecting with Māori customers - it's about understanding how doing business through one single lens is holding your business back from connecting with all customers who don't identify with the pākehā way."

Naomi says she has seen non-Māori businesses look to incorporate te Reo with "varying degrees of success" and she encourages business owners to



look beyond token gestures to discover the deeper value embracing te Reo and Māori culture. "I think where some businesses fall short is when they apply a pākehā view of the process without consulting with people whose language and culture they're learning. In my view, it's not enough to use Māori words to name your meeting rooms and Māori greetings on your emails and consider your business integrated. To integrate te Reo as a business is to collaborate with the people whose language you're learning, be open to receiving guidance, and recognise that te Reo Māori has mana that ought to be respected. When a business does these things, the outward facing communications will flow naturally."

And, she adds, using te Reo as a non-native speaker begins to feel more natural with practice. "As I continue on my journey, I feel more confident about engaging with customers from cultures different to my own, and I'd hope that helps with customer satisfaction."

Riann acknowledges that "there are still many in society who can't get their head around" using te Reo regularly

as a business, but she hopes that people keep an open mind to seeing the positives. Even in her own Māori-led organisation, she adds, there have been obstacles to overcome - but it's all part of the learning process. "As Māori but second language learners, we aren't always as confident," she says, "but as in our professional space, we try to encourage a learning environment and that it's ok to make mistakes."

For business owners interested in broadening their use of te Reo to connect authentically with customers, organisations like Maurea ([www.maurea.co.nz](http://www.maurea.co.nz)) and Tira ([www.tira.maori.nz](http://www.tira.maori.nz)) offer specialised services tailored specifically to workplaces and leadership teams. If you're just starting on your te Reo journey or would like to find out more about te Wiki o te Reo Māori, visit [reomaori.co.nz](http://reomaori.co.nz). *Written by Beth Caunter*



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# RBA Partners Profiled - Part Two

The RBA is proud to partner with a number of businesses who are passionate about helping you and your team to succeed. From local knowledge with a personal approach to renowned programmes harnessing decades of expertise, our partners offer a wealth of specialised services and support to our RBA members.

## Paramount

Looking for a one-stop shop for your commercial cleaning and facilities services? Paramount Services Ltd is proud to provide a range of services designed to keep your premises looking their best, including commercial and domestic cleaning, grounds maintenance, pest control, advisory services for waste, recycling and sustainability, property maintenance and Covid-19 sanitisation. The franchise-based company, which has enjoyed their spot on Rosebank Road since 2018, carefully chooses and supports their individual owners to create a network of thriving local businesses across New Zealand.

"We take our franchise owners on a journey of success," says Director of Operations Avi Rao. "That's our purpose at Paramount. We identify individuals who possess the right potential to excel as business owners, and we provide them with comprehensive support to establish and maintain a sustainable business. At Paramount Services Ltd, we believe in nurturing talent and



empowering our franchise owners to run thriving and environmentally conscious businesses."

The franchise model, says Avi, allows Paramount clients to benefit from both the dedicated service of a local business owner and the support of a nationwide brand. "We combine Paramount's proven franchise delivery model with our centralised contract management system to produce an exceptional customer experience." In addition to this, Paramount has created their own software system called "Totallane"

which has enabled them to achieve a remarkable level of operational efficiency and provide a seamless service delivery system.

Paramount's friendly team is always ready to talk about your cleaning or maintenance needs. Find out more by visiting their website: [www.paraserve.co.nz](http://www.paraserve.co.nz)



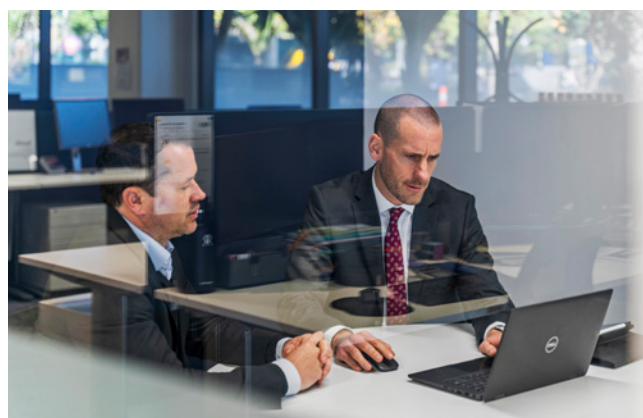
## Bayleys

Whether you're looking to buy, sell or lease property for your business, the team at Bayleys has the knowledge and expertise to help make it happen.

"We provide a service that enables people to unlock their next moves and take their business to the next level," says Brendan Graves, General Manager of Bayleys Northwest. For the past 10 years, Bayleys has partnered with the RBA to support business owners through the ins and outs of buying, selling and leasing commercial property. A large part of their work is sitting down with leaseholders to discover whether or not their current premises is still suitable, and then finding alternatives and negotiating the lease if it's time for a change. The process often starts with meeting you at your own premises for a friendly chat.

"We're happy to come to you," says Brendan. "That way we can get a feel for your business and see where you're currently operating. If that doesn't suit, Northwest is a great place to sit down for a coffee."

Bayleys is a proud supporter of a number of charity initiatives through The Bayleys Foundation, including Cure Kids and Live Ocean. Just as rewarding, says Brendan, is helping a business



to succeed - even transform - with the right property decisions. "Good markets and bad, it's an exciting journey for a lot of people."

For a coffee and a chat with the Bayleys team, get in touch via their website: [bayleys.co.nz](http://bayleys.co.nz).







programme as well.”

Since the early 1970s, The Trusts (short for Waitakere Licensing Trust and Portage Licensing Trust) have been managing the sale of liquor in West Auckland on behalf of the community. The licensed trust model was voted in by the community to keep local benefit at the heart of alcohol sales in post-prohibition New Zealand, and The Trusts have been operating ever since.

When it comes to planning functions, The Trusts are also happy to lend support. “We can help with organising cold beverages for Christmas drinks,” says Amanda, “or finding a great venue, like Bricklane.” And if there are any activities or charities you’d like to do something to support, she adds, “please do get in touch.”

You can find out more about The Trusts (including how to apply for funding) on their website: [thetrusts.co.nz](http://thetrusts.co.nz).

## The Trusts

When you purchase alcohol or enjoy the hospitality from a Trusts store or venue in West Auckland, did you know you’re also supporting charities and initiatives in your local community?

“All of our surplus profits go back into the community,” says Amanda Cassidy, General Manager of Operations and Marketing. Surplus profits from The

Trusts’ retail stores, bars, eateries, and investments go straight into sponsorships, donations, major grants, and the West Support Fund, which chooses annual recipients like The Auckland Fire Brigade, Nurturing Families, The Whau River Catchment Trust, and dozens more. “We’ve also supported RBA’s Pathways programme,” says Amanda, “and one of our team actually went through the



## Amplifier Design

Amplifier Design is a creative studio that works closely with businesses to meet their unique requirements for marketing and design services. Part of the RBA community for over a decade (and in the design business for over 20 years), the studio’s range of services cover all the bases, from digital marketing and content creation to graphic design, photography, videography (including webinars, brand ads and animation), and web design and hosting.

Small but agile, the Amplifier team prides itself on building relationships with clients and suppliers based on shared values, supported by the team’s passion for creativity and problem-solving.

“We’re friendly and approachable,” says Managing Director Tristan Bishop. “And we’re right around the corner, just off Rosebank Road. Local clients see a real benefit working alongside us. We’re able to have regular face-to-face catchups, and it’s those conversations that help us to truly understand the client’s product/service, customers, competitors and marketing objectives.”

Amplifier’s portfolio includes both small and large budget brands, with projects ranging from new brand identities and websites to fully integrated marketing campaigns. Firm believers in keeping their business operations close to home, Amplifier supports a number of local suppliers, and have been fortunate to have one



of their team members access learning through RBA’s Pathways programme. “In today’s constantly evolving digital landscape, staying abreast of marketing trends can mean the difference between success and failure,” says Tristan. “The learning support has helped our team to stay on top of new developments and adapt our strategies accordingly.”

For more information, visit their website: [amplifier.nz](http://amplifier.nz).



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The EMA is more than just another business organisation - no matter your industry, they're here for you. Founded in 1886 to help New Zealand businesses thrive, the Employers & Manufacturers Association is proud to partner with

## EMA

the RBA, offering you expert business support, advocacy, and learning in human relations and employment relations. And, coming as a surprise to many business owners, these services are at a fraction of the cost you might expect.

"Our core purpose is helping businesses succeed," says Lyndsay Jobin, the EMA's Key Relationship Manager. "As a not-for-profit organisation, we're in a unique position where our staples and benefits are priced in a non-commercial way. Whether a business is looking to do cost comparisons or needs sound HR and ER solutions, an EMA membership is a fraction of what you'll pay for services with a commercial organisation."

The EMA is also strategically aligned

with the RBA's Pathways programme, which recognises and supports high-performing young employees to progress in their careers. "Pathways gives young people wonderful opportunities in terms of recognition, and we support them with training, learning, and capability-building courses," says Lyndsay. "Helping to develop and keep successful people working in your local business community is one of the greatest outcomes."

To find out more about how EMA can support your business, please contact: [charishma.aithal@ema.co.nz](mailto:charishma.aithal@ema.co.nz) or 027 254 7147.



## BNZ

The West Auckland BNZ team is dedicated to supporting the success of local businesses like yours. The BNZ West Auckland partners are a group of 10 locally based business and commercial bankers supporting our West Auckland region. Ninety percent of the team lives locally, and with a rich cultural diversity and capabilities in several languages, they're uniquely placed to create lasting connections with people from the vast array of cultures within our region.

"Many of our team have grown up here and attended local schools," says Kate Ross, Head of Region for West Auckland. The team operates out of two hubs - Lincoln Rd and Kumeu - allowing them to give region-specific support to business

owners. The team also regularly spends time giving back, having recently helped out at Fair Food and with cyclone relief efforts. "We live in the same neighbourhoods as our clients, so we're passionate about helping our local business community prosper and supporting your ongoing success."

Along with offering the standard suite of banking products, BNZ also provides a number of specialised products, such as the Credit Plus Asset Finance facility and the Cashflow Plus invoice financing facility, which can help you unlock funding opportunities outside of traditional loan and overdraft-style funding.

The BNZ team are regular attendees at RBA Business After 5 events, and they would be happy to connect and talk about your banking needs. You can get in touch via their website: [bnz.co.nz](http://bnz.co.nz).



## RGM Consulting

Are you a successful business owner with no time to enjoy your own life? RGM Consulting specialises in helping mid-sized Kiwi companies to grow. The solutions are tailored to you, and the goal is simple: to grow the value of your business while giving you a better quality of life.

"Typically what happens is that as a business grows, it becomes more consuming," says Director Rob Morris. "We give business owners and leaders some of their freedom back, so they can actually enjoy the ride."

Rob founded RGM Consulting after a decades-long career in the corporate sphere, both overseas and with big names here at home. He's certified in



the internationally-renowned Scaling Up growth system, which provides a

structured, proven approach and access to a wealth of global resources to help you scale your business.

"Mid-size companies don't have the benefit of having full-time strategy teams, so that's where we come in," says Rob. "We work across four areas: People, Strategy, Execution and Cash. It's not just about looking to scale revenue for the sake of getting bigger - it's about growing the value of the business."

For more information or to get in touch with RGM Consulting for a coffee and a chat, visit their website: [rgmconsulting.co.nz](http://rgmconsulting.co.nz).

### RGM Consulting





# Member Profiles

We profile **Members** of the Rosebank Business Association

## Anyone for Cricket?

Suburbs New Lynn Cricket Club (SNLCC) is excited to be joining the Rosebank Business Association as a member. Based at Ken Maunder Park in New Lynn, just 5 minutes from the RBA offices, SNLCC has over 50 years of history and is the largest senior cricket club in New Zealand. Each year, over 70 teams proudly call "Suburbs" their home club. Membership starts from age 5, and the oldest member is 101 years old!

SNLCC is equipped with a fantastic indoor training facility (even better than Eden Park, according to Club Manager Kate Hillier-Cook) and takes pleasure in hosting various schools, community clubs, and local businesses. With a strong social and community focus, the club encourages members to play to the best of their abilities and to always have fun, whether they're playing competitively or otherwise. SNLCC holds Principal Club status with the Auckland Cricket Association, and their teams participate in Junior, Youth,



and Senior competitions for both men and women. This includes playing all formats, such as 2-day matches, 1-day games, and T20 matches.

SNLCC has nurtured outstanding players like The Black Caps' Martin Guptill, Jimmy Neesham, Fynn Allen, and Ajaz Patel, who developed through the club. The club has also won 6 premier titles in the last 4 years, but it's not solely about competing at the highest levels. The great joy of Friday afternoons is seeing Junior kids start out on their cricketing careers (and

yes, the bar is open for parents).

Kate is hoping to build partnerships with local West Auckland businesses and encourage a few social teams - perhaps even an in-house RBA competition - and she looks forward to meeting you all at RBA events. If you have any inquiries or interest, Kate would love to hear from you.

Suburbs New Lynn Cricket Club  
Phone: 021 753 355  
Email: [manager@suburbsnewlynnccricket.com](mailto:manager@suburbsnewlynnccricket.com)  
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# Business Nuts & Bolts

Business to Business advice from **RBA Members & Partners**



Jocelyn Visser  
HR Business Partner  
at MyHR

## Sick Leave: How Much Is Too Much?

Most people take less paid sick leave than they are entitled to, but occasionally employees request or use so much sick leave that it starts to have a real impact on the business.

As an employer, what should you do if you suspect someone is misusing sick leave provisions?

### **Paid sick leave entitlements**

An employee can take sick leave when they, a partner, dependent child, or other person who depends on them is sick or injured.

Most employees are entitled to 10 days of paid sick leave each year.

Full- or part-time permanent employees are eligible once they have worked continuously for the same employer for 6 months. Casual employees are eligible once they have worked for 6 months for an average of 10 hours per week, and at least one hour in every week or 40 hours in every month

Unused sick leave can accrue to a maximum of 20 days.

Employers can offer or agree to better terms (such as more than 10 days' sick leave a year or a higher cap than 20 days) but can't provide less than the legal minimums.

Independent contractors aren't entitled to paid sick leave.

### **Managing people who take a lot of sick leave**

If a team member is taking lots of sick leave, it's important to start from a position of trying to support them, rather than mistrust. There might be wider problems to consider, such as health issues, low engagement, bullying or personality clashes, or other concerns outside of work.

Have a casual conversation explaining how their absence is impacting the business, while trying to understand what is going on for them.

If the issue persists, examine any patterns. For example, do they regularly take sick (or other) leave either side of the weekend? Raise any pattern with the employee and then consider putting other measures in place, like potential shift changes or work-from-home arrangements.

You could also require the employee to get a medical certificate for every instance of sick leave. Remember, if the person has been sick for fewer than 3 consecutive calendar days (including weekends), you'll have to meet the costs of them getting proof, such as a doctor's visit.

If you have valid evidence that an employee is taking sick leave for non-genuine reasons, or if they refuse to provide evidence of illness, you could consider taking disciplinary action to address their behaviour. However, it's better to initially take a more informal approach.

### **Can I fire someone for taking too much sick leave?**

Employers may have grounds to terminate the employment relationship if a person is no longer able to do their job because of serious illness or injury. This is known as medical termination - or termination due to medical incapacity - and as with any dismissal, you need to act in good faith and follow due process before you make a decision. This means:

1. Giving the person a "reasonable" time to recover (a 12-week absence is generally long enough)
2. Conducting a fair enquiry into the person's medical situation, prognosis, and ongoing needs
3. Notifying the employee of the possibility of termination
4. Giving them an opportunity to provide feedback and take it into account
5. Exploring options for temporary cover or alternative duties or work arrangements, such as working from home or staggering their return to work
6. Considering the employee's length of service and whether the job or business contributed to the injury/sickness.

Be sure to also check what is stipulated in the person's employment agreement and what might be detailed in any company policies, such as a rehabilitation and return to work policy.

In certain exceptional circumstances, you may have legal grounds to dismiss an employee for serious misconduct, but case law has established that you will need a very high standard of evidence that the person has deliberately abused sick leave provisions, and you will need to follow fair and reasonable process throughout.

If you are having difficulty with employees taking too much sick leave, please contact MyHR at [www.myhr.works](http://www.myhr.works).



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Kate de Lautour  
The Icehouse

## Intelligent Environments: Icehouse Alumnus Lights Up

**Bex Harris is the owner of Rosebank-based lighting controls business Intelligent Environments, and many of you will recognise her as a Rosebank Business Association Board member. In 2022, Bex won a community scholarship to contribute towards her attending the Icehouse Owner Manager Programme (OMP). She talked to me about getting into The Icehouse this year and what's changed since she took the plunge and joined 22 other highly motivated owners from around the country for the 6-month programme.**

Intelligent Environments is proudly a family business that provides super-smart lighting solutions for both new and existing buildings, creating more efficient and healthier places to live and work.

When Bex started the OMP in February, she felt like maybe she wasn't good enough to be there. "I had that imposter syndrome thing going on," she says, "but in the first 2 days, I realised that everyone there was just so much like me – lots of family-owned businesses – and my confidence levels started lifting pretty quickly."

Bex was able to swiftly implement real changes and new leadership techniques back into her business, and they clearly resonated with her team. A staff questionnaire before Block 3 of the programme confirmed that the changes Bex was making were appreciated.

"They noted that there had been a massive shift in the way I was approaching things, so there was obviously quite a quick impact!"



Bex Harris  
Intelligent Environments

Bex describes the industry as challenging right now, but she says the OMP has been solid confirmation that her team is at the forefront of the industry – and, that with more than 100 projects on the go, they're "nailing it."

"We realise that we are the industry experts, and we back ourselves. We want to shout about it, so we've got stuck into a whole new level of marketing with a video that shows exactly what we do. We know now that we were missing talking to the end-user, and that's who we needed to educate about the benefits of smart lighting. We have employed a fractional marketer, and now we're able to share what we do in a really effective way."

Public speaking has been a barrier for Bex, but the OMP has changed that – helped by one of the experts who made a big impression, communications specialist Amanda Fleming. At a recent speaking engagement where Bex was presenting to graduate students, she realised that for the first time, she wasn't shaking when she walked up to the podium.

"It's funny because on paper, I'm an extrovert, but I have always disliked public speaking. This time, I was able to use the video that we had made and I just felt a confidence I hadn't felt before."

Bex says that anyone thinking about the Owner Manager Programme should be courageous and "just do it, and don't worry about age or the experience you think you may or may not have."

"There was a range of ages in OMP 60 – most were mid-30s, and [there were] quite a few family-owned businesses. It was really interesting to see the different styles of family businesses and how they work – I learnt a lot from the others in the group, who were from all over New Zealand."

Bex continues to support the Rosebank community with her board-level involvement at the RBA and the company's contribution to Fair Food Rosebank, sending a team once a month to sort food and remaining on call if they need volunteers.

**Bex was the winner of a Stephen Doecke scholarship awarded to business owners giving back to their community. There are a number of scholarships available for Icehouse programmes and coaching; please contact me for more details by email at [k.delautour@theicehouse.co.nz](mailto:k.delautour@theicehouse.co.nz) or via mobile on 0274323087.**

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027 432 3087



Taina Henderson  
Henderson Reeves

## Children across borders: the impact and limits of the Hague Convention

What happens if you separate while living overseas, and only one of you wants to return home? What happens to the children when you no longer agree on where to live or, worse, when it is dangerous for one parent to stay in the country? If you take action without the other parent's consent, chances are you will come up against the Hague Convention. We talked to Hague Convention expert Alex Ashmore of Ponsonby Chambers in episode 6 of the Divorce Café podcast about the impact and limits of this law, and whether it is still doing its job.

### What is the Hague Convention?

The Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abductions was created in 1980 to prevent the kidnapping of children across international borders by their parents. Member countries sign up and are bound to return abducted children to their 'country of habitual residence' upon application by a guardian, unless specific defences are met.

The Convention does not make final decisions on who the child lives with and where. Rather it is a **forum** instrument to determine which country has jurisdiction to decide custody matters. The broad underlying principles are that it is not in children's interests to be abducted, so the Convention should act as a **deterrent**, and that a child's home country is best placed to make decisions about them.

### How does the process work?

When a child has been taken or kept overseas, their other parent can contact their country's Central Authority (a division of Government). The Central Authority appoints a lawyer to assess whether the Hague Convention has jurisdiction. The child must be in a country that has ratified

the Convention, and the Applicant must have 'Rights of Custody' that have been thwarted. "Are they a guardian? That's really the test", says Alex.

If the Central Authority agrees to take the case, the lawyer will work with the parent to file an application.

Hague Convention cases frequently result in an order to return the child to the home country where the parties are able to apply to that country's local Court to have their care, contact or relocation case heard.

### Are there any exceptions?

A return under the Hague Convention can be successfully resisted if the parent who relocated the child has one of a short list of defences AND the Judge agrees the child should not have to return. The defences are:

- a) The application was made more than one year after removal and the child is settled in their new country;
- b) The applicant was not exercising rights of custody at the time of removal, or consented to or later agreed to removal;
- c) There is a grave risk that the child's return would expose them to harm or an intolerable situation;
- d) The child objects to being returned and is of sufficient age and maturity to do so;
- e) A return would breach the child's fundamental rights permitted under the law.

Even if a defence is proved, return may still be ordered. "Never underestimate the importance of the discretion stage, because that is often where the battle is" warns Alex.

Judicial discretion generally favours return in order to uphold the Convention as a deterrent to abduction. The tide is turning, however, with 'grave risk' being taken into consideration more often. Alex says it is a "no-brainer - you are never going to order a child back if you found it is grave risk".

### Is the Convention still doing its job?

The Hague Convention was created as a solution to last century's problem of non-custodial parents removing

**A return would breach the child's fundamental rights permitted under the law**



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children overseas. Nowadays it is more usually the custodial parent - often the mother - relocating overseas, and the non-custodial parent seeking return. This raises questions about the purposes and effects of the Convention, particularly in situations where abuse is present.

Two recent headline-grabbing cases in the Court of Appeal have confirmed the possibility of avoiding an automatic return where there is evidence of harm that outweighs the Convention's underlying principles.

*LRR v Col* centred around a woman in a violent relationship who relocated her child to New Zealand via Women's Refuge in Australia. The abusive father attempted to have their 2 ½ year old child returned to Australia, however ultimately the Court found in favour of the mother. The Judge ruled the child did not have to return on the basis of 'grave risk' - a precarious situation for the mother was also a precarious situation for the child.

*Roberts v Cresswell* returned the opposite result. A depressed and suicidal mother, abandoned by her ex-husband in France, relocated the children to New Zealand without his consent. The father filed an application under the Convention, and the mother tried to resist return by arguing 'grave risk'. The Court ultimately found the situation in France would not be quite as bad as the mother had said. *"Intolerable - it's a big word"*, says Alex.

*LRR* was seen as ground breaking in that it seemed to reward the absconding parent, but it consolidated principles scattered through dozens of cases both in New Zealand and abroad, to say ultimately *"You can't assume the current country will be safe, you can't not look at evidence because you think Mum is naughty."* *Cresswell* provides the counterpoint and in some ways is *LRR II*, says Alex. Both sides need to come to Court with proper evidence. Both these cases were won - and lost - on evidence.

**What needs to change?**

The arc of justice seems to be moving in the right direction according to Alex, but there is room for improvement. The Hague Convention might result in better outcomes for families if Judges in New Zealand could impose conditions that would bind the

country the child is returning to. To do that New Zealand needs to ratify the 1996 Hague Convention on Parental Responsibility and Protection of Children. "Why we haven't signed it is a mystery to everybody," says Alex.

**Takeaways for parents:**

Communicate before you relocate. Can you address the issue directly and try to get agreement, or an order in the country of residence?

The left-behind parent needs to think carefully about what they want to achieve before filing. Winning a return under the Convention does not guarantee a smooth road ahead.

In New Zealand the left-behind parent has free legal representation through the Central Authority. The runaway parent has to find and pay for their own lawyer.

Mediated or negotiated returns are an alternative to Hague Convention proceedings. Keep a close eye on the clock, as the other side could be running down the time on the 12-month residence defence.

Trying to keep the child overseas while Family Court proceedings take place in the home country may harm your case.

You cannot contract out of the Hague Convention. A signed or verbal agreement is not binding. Chances are, you and your ex do not agree anymore.

If you are considering relocating with your children, or cannot reach agreement with your ex on where the children will live, get legal advice before taking action. Speak to Stuart Henderson, Nicole Dore or Taina Henderson in the family law team at Henderson Reeves on 09 281 3723.

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## Matrix Security mobile patrols

The demand for Matrix Security mobile patrols in the Rosebank area (for business and residential) has increased significantly in the past 12 months. Trends and insights are shared with the Business Association via crime prevention meetings.

Scott Carter  
Matrix Security

Mobile patrols are a security solution that helps to deter and prevent criminal activity and provides peace of mind for individuals working or living in Rosebank. They provide a tailored and cost-effective option when a traditional full-time security presence is not practical.

### Six key benefits are discussed below:

#### 1. Visibly deter crime and promote safety

Patrolling officers in marked cars, wearing professional well branded uniforms are easily identifiable. This visual presence acts as a strong deterrent to criminal activity.

#### 2. Surveillance of multiple locations

Patrol officers can patrol on foot or by car, which means they can monitor multiple areas during a shift. Through randomised but consistent rotations, they can keep an eye on several areas and help ensure that the premises and community are secure. Patrol officers can cover ground quickly, get to an alarm activation in a timely manner, and potentially catch criminals in the act.

#### 3. Perform a range of security checks

In addition to responding to alarms, patrol officers can deliver a wide range of security checks including carrying out external and internal inspections, ensuring doors and windows are locked

and that there are no unauthorised people onsite, escorting employees to vehicles at night and looking for any signs of vandalism or damage. The scope of the checks and response actions are tailored to the need of the client.

#### 4. Drive actionable insight with data

Security patrol software is used to collect, analyse, and report data (including photos) on incidents allowing insights for mitigating future risk. The use of data enables everyone involved in the decision-making process to understand which factors have contributed to past security problems allowing for the development of an effective security strategy. The areas that have seen the highest number of incidents should naturally have their security needs addressed first. A closer look at the types of incidents that have affected the premises should have a direct impact on threat mitigation planning.

#### 5. Cost effective option

The business or homeowner can choose the scope of the officers' work and the frequency of visits to site which are charged in units of time. Cost savings can also be achieved through reduced losses and liabilities from break-ins, vandalism, and other damage.

#### 6. Peace of mind

Mobile security patrols are a good choice for business owners who own several companies or buildings, or larger premises, as patrols can cover a wider area faster and more efficiently than traditional static security guards. Patrol officers offer around-the-clock protection in a designated area to ensure that the premises are safe and secure. They also offer peace of mind to employees especially for businesses that operate a 24 hour, 7 days a week shift.

#### Expert help and advice

With our extensive knowledge and experience, Matrix Security sales and operations consultants can work with you to scope requirements and make recommendations to improve security on premises. Our consultations are obligation free.



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## The importance of advisors for small businesses

**An Advisory Board can provide valuable input to any business, and fuel growth. Here's how you can tell whether your Advisory Board is cutting the mustard, and what can happen to businesses who choose to fly solo.**

When does a business need a formal Board?

The whole purpose of an Advisory Board is to drive a business forward – but when should a business start a Board? A formal Board of Directors usually comes once there are multiple shareholders in a company. Those who make up the Board of Directors are more often than not appointed by the shareholders to legally manage, direct and supervise the company.

However, there is a middle ground that start-ups and SME businesses can set up called an Advisory Board. An Advisory Board is set up by the owner-manager of the business, and exists to provide advice and information in an informal and flexible manner. There may be a number of reasons why your business is seeking out governance from an Advisory Board, including:

- to gain further insight and oversight into specific areas of the business
- you are looking for early stage market validation
- needing help with succession planning and/or to become investment ready
- you want your business to become more professional.

If the above sounds like you, and you're willing to share information, then no matter what your size or stage of growth, chances are you're ready for an Advisory Board.

### Why have an Advisory Board?

An Advisory Board is like having a business coach or mentor on steroids. Rather than having one experienced person to help you with accountability and act as a sounding board, you can have two or three, which can provide you with big picture thinking but also with the diversity that a single coach or mentor can't offer.

The purpose of an Advisory Board is to drive growth, so it's important to be very selective when it comes to choosing your

members. The right members will not only have experience and knowledge, but also the networks and connections that can help your business to fast track. To make sure you get the right advice, you want members that encourage open and robust discussion of ideas - hence why family and friends are a strict 'no-go' zone.

### Will my prospective board members add value to my company?

To be able to answer this question, you need to have criteria (formal or informal) in place. Knowing that a strong Board should have diverse members that either have experience, knowledge, or networks and connections that can move the business forward is one of the first steps. Diversity means bringing the full breadth of relevant skills and experience from across all of the fronts the business has to operate in.

Your Board can provide immense means, adding value to your business. They will be reading the reports in advance, contributing positively to the discussions within the meeting, challenging assumptions, offering knowledge, sharing their experiences, and following up with action points after the meetings. If they're not doing this, then it's time to cut them loose and move on. Fortunately, there are few legal headaches surrounding this – a Board is designed to be flexible so that you can change them as your business needs change. The sooner you can exit and replace poorly performing members, the better.

### Who should be on my Board?

An Advisory Board may be published/associated with the business i.e. they feature on the company website or in materials such as business plans for fundraising. Therefore, it's important that you not only conduct a background check before they sign on but you also set ground rules around what is expected of them.

If a member has anything in their past or has a tendency to be 'loose lipped' with the media, then what they have done or what they say can have an impact (both positive and negative) on the business. Just like employees, they are essentially an extension of your company and brand.

When you're trying to really grow your business, flying solo can feel lonely as well as dangerous. You want advisors that have experience in an industry that is relevant to your business and who have operated in a larger and more complex organisation. You often can't see the wood from the trees, or you're blind in your thinking because you're too close to the business. Sometimes this can lead to small issues, other times it can lead to you wasting valuable time, money and resources.

Although it's not crucial for a business to have an Advisory Board, it certainly helps to fast-track your business while keeping you and your team focused. Much like having your own personal business coach, Advisory Boards can help with acceleration, avoiding common pitfalls in your market, opening doors to influential people, and establishing the bigger picture.

Looking to someone who will walk with you, inspire you, champion you and celebrate success with you can make the journey seem a lot less lonely. Finding an advisor who sees your potential and relishes your accomplishments as much as you do really makes the world of difference.

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From top left: Stuart Bode, Alister Hitchcock, Wesley Gerber, Matt Clifford, Mark Preston, Beterly Pan, Brendan Graves, Sunil Bhana, Sam Raines

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