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Rebecca Harris



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Cover: New RBA Chair - Rebecca Harris, GM Intelligent Environments

With thanks to our partners ...



EDITORIAL AND ADVERTISING ENQUIRIES:

Phil Clode,
Business Development Manager
Mobile: 027 448 7009
E: phil@rosebankbusiness.co.nz

ROSEBANK BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

527A Rosebank Road, Avondale, Auckland
PO Box 71034, Rosebank, Auckland 1348
Phone: 09 820 0551
E: info@rosebankbusiness.co.nz

www.rosebankbusiness.co.nz

www.facebook.com/rosebankbusiness



From My Perspective

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



We're pleased to welcome Rebecca Harris as the new Chairperson of the Rosebank Business Association! Rebecca replaces Stefan Crooks, after he spent five years in the Chair position.

The RBA team is delighted to have Rebecca become Chair after her time spent on the board. Rebecca is the general manager of Intelligent Environments Ltd NZ, a position she has held for nearly five of the past 17 years she has spent with the business. Rebecca has extensive experience in management, and she'll bring her vast knowledge of leadership to our organisation.

We'd like to thank Stefan for his guidance and direction through



the COVID period and during our transformation to the RBA's current structure. Neither was an easy task, both with what was happening in the world and with his own businesses. Stefan remains on the board and will continue to help determine the direction the RBA takes as we move into the future.

Whau Ward

Congratulations to the Whau Council Ward re-appointed Chair Kay Thomas and Deputy Chair Fasitua Amosa.

Kay and Fasitua, along with councillor Warren Piper, have secured their next three-year tenure on the Whau Board.

Warren has represented Whau's interests at our RBA Board meetings over the past three years. The Whau Council Ward has always been positive and supportive of the RBA and the greater Avondale area, and we look forward to this continuing.

Business Directory

The 2026 Business Directory has gone to print. We have worked on the many changes that have happened in Rosebank over the last year and put them into a concise book. I want to thank all the advertisers and contributors to the directory this year. Without your support, the publication wouldn't happen.

Welcome to our new neighbours

Apex Valves has moved from Copsey Place to a large warehouse at 525 Rosebank Road. They are a direct neighbour to the RBA, and we have been watching the building opposite transform over the past few months. This has been a big move for Apex; as such, we couldn't miss doing a story on them and the reasons behind the move. Please check out page 15 for that story.

Regards,

Phil Clode,
Business Development Manager



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Dr Grant Hewison

Local Election Results

The final count is in. Some key results for the Whau ward are below.

Sarah Paterson-Hamlin: Whau Ward Councillor

I believe in local government that invests in people. I live, work, and raise my children in Whau. I have been in leadership roles across disability and community sectors. I have also been a Whau Local Board member,

working to establish accessible public spaces and environmental protections, and progressing

Te Hono and the Whau Pool, safer roads, and stronger relationships with community organisations. I want to ensure neighbourhoods thrive with reliable public transport, cleaner waterways, adequate green space, and improved infrastructure.

Whau Local Board Members

Fasitua Amosa

I believe that Whau needs more and improved green spaces with facilities like built shade, drinking fountains, and toilets that make gathering with family and friends more attractive. I support staying on track with tree planting. I believe that better public transport, light sequencing, and safe biking and walking paths will reduce congestion, increasing independence and connection. I support a push for equitable funding and increased funding for the arts, as well as for local services, especially the libraries, hubs, and houses.

Warren Piper

An independent and community-focused voice, I'm a current Whau Local Board member and former Chair of the New Lynn Business Association. I'll advocate to retain green space at Avondale Racecourse, deliver an aquatic and recreation centre, enhance our waterways and environment, and improve transport options and infrastructure, including advocating for the Avondale-

Southdown rail line. I'll work to create safer, more vibrant town centres, plan sensibly for future growth, and support local business and economic development.

Catherine Farmer

I'm a current Whau Local Board member and an independent, supporting environmental restoration, accessible parks and recreation amenities, and the provision of a new swimming pool. I support increased green spaces; reliable and affordable public transport; safe neighbourhoods; encouragement for youth; practical assistance for older residents; and comprehensive library services. I also support the Living Wage and honour Te Tiriti. I oppose the sale of public assets.

Kay Thomas

I'm a strong believer in the importance of community; I've led Whau Local Board as Chair over recent years to improve community and environmental outcomes. I volunteer at New Lynn Citizen Advice Bureau, I'm on the Waitakere Citizens Advice Bureau Board and the Literacy Waitakere Board, and I'm also the Patron of Whau Ethnic Collective. I will continue to use my skills and experience to build a connected, safe Whau community focussed on wellbeing.

Fania Kapao

I grew up in Avondale, attended St Mary's, went to the Sunday market and played sports at the racecourse. I'm committed to social justice, equity, and community-led change. I served as a Youth MP on the Whau Youth Board, mentored at-risk youth, and was vice-president at Auckland University's Student Association. I now work as a union organiser, supporting workers across Tāmaki Makaurau, alongside finishing my Master of Indigenous Studies.

Rebecca Thomson

I've lived the hardship many still face: homelessness, struggle, and the search for dignity. Today, I lead the Whau Homeless Network, co-ordinate the Glenavon Community Hub, serve on the New Windsor Community Hub Governance board, and I'm the Māori Chair Representative for the Kai West Collective, advocating for affordable, nutritious kai for every whānau. I'll advocate for housing equity, rangatahi-focused initiatives, food security, and stronger local outreach.

Ross Clow

I'm an independent with a proven track record of achievement in Whau community affairs. AJC racecourse closes in 2026, and while I support intensification around Avondale/New Lynn town centres, we also need public green spaces. We must fight to retain the sports fields. Other goals are to finish Te Whau Pathway and the Avondale Community Centre/Library projects. The Blockhouse Bay and Green Bay town centres need upgrading, and New Lynn needs its Crown Lynn Park.



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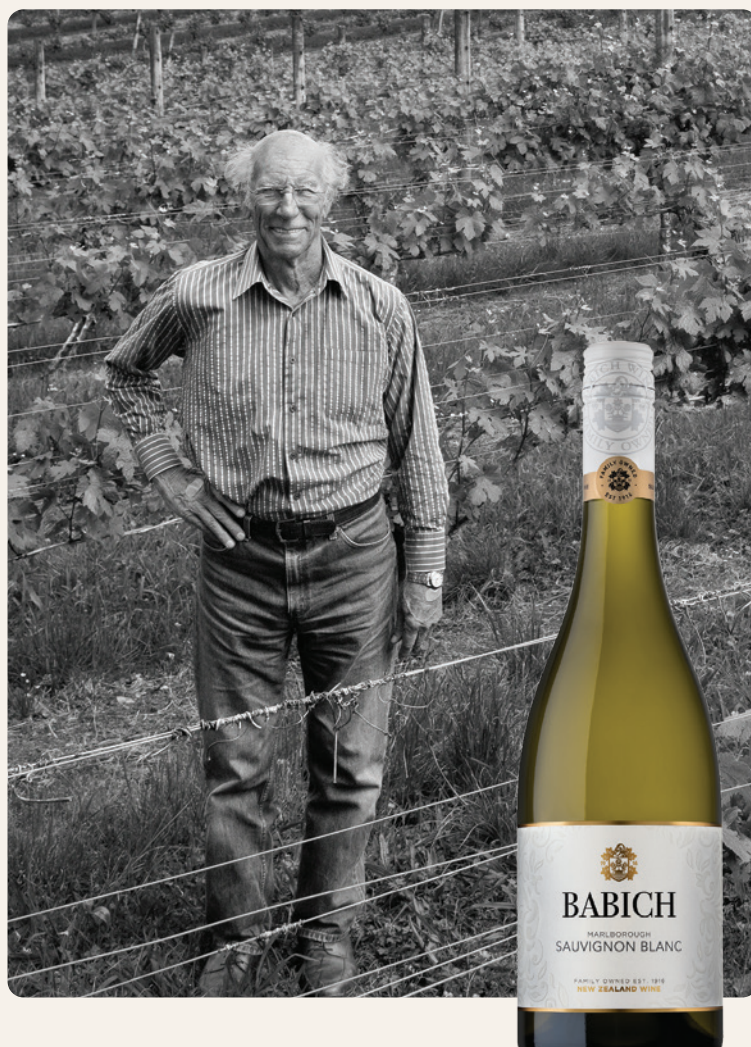
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To the characters who brought character to our wine

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Buy a Tile Thank You Event

On Thursday, 23 October, the RBA hosted a special event to celebrate the businesses that had bought a tile as part of the Buy a Tile initiative. The evening was a wonderful opportunity to thank contributors and connect with fellow businesses, as well as highlight the impact of their support in making Rosebank a safer business community.

When COVID-19 hit, local businesses faced heightened safety concerns. The RBA responded with a series of proactive measures. First was the launch of the "Burglary Blog" to keep the community informed, followed by the introduction of visible deterrents, such as signage. Finally came the



Scott Carter, Rebecca Harris, Kim Watts and Wayne Kitcher

installation of a backbone CCTV network, including ANPR cameras, in November 2024. These initiatives, combined with vigilant community engagement, have already reduced reported incidents and supported investigations by NZ Police. Kim Watts from the RBA shared the backstory behind these initiatives, giving attendees insight into the planning and effort involved.

A highlight of the evening was acknowledging the incredible support for Buy a Tile, which has raised \$46,700 towards the \$60k goal. Special thanks went to board member Stefan Crooks,

who helped brainstorm and shape the Buy a Tile concept, along with board member Bruce Reid, for the initial input that ensured businesses could actively contribute to making Rosebank safer. Appreciation was also extended to the 63 businesses that bought tiles, as well as the Whau Local Board and Auckland Council for their support.

Guest speakers Inspector Wayne Kitcher, Area Prevention Manager for Auckland City West, and Scott Carter, CEO of Matrix Security, inspired attendees by sharing crime statistics and alternative safety options available to businesses. The Rosebank Crime Prevention Group members were introduced, highlighting their dedication to keeping the community safe and connected.

Adding to the excitement of the evening, prize draws tied to the theme of the night included free security patrols from Matrix Security and a Schlage electronic lock, jointly donated by Allegion and Hardware Direct.

The event was a fantastic celebration where everyone left informed, inspired, and proud of how the Rosebank business community is coming together to create a safer, stronger business area.

Thank you to all who contributed and attended!



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Rosebank News & Events

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

Pathways Celebration & Awards Night



Celebrate the achievements of our talented graduates from the Pathways to the Future Trust as they are recognized for their hard work and dedication.

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Portage Ceramic Awards 2025



The Trusts are proud to announce their sponsorship of the 2025 Portage Ceramic Awards, Aotearoa's premier celebration of ceramic art. This partnership reflects The Trusts' ongoing commitment to supporting arts, culture, and community connection in West Auckland and beyond.

The Portage Ceramic Awards is an annual celebration of contemporary ceramics in Aotearoa. Established in 2001, the awards embrace the rich history of pottery in the West and have become a cornerstone of New Zealand's arts calendar. Since its inception, the awards have maintained an inclusive

framework, welcoming practitioners with a wide range of practices – from traditional forms to experimental and conceptual approaches.

"The Portage Ceramic Awards are a cornerstone of New Zealand's art scene, and we are proud to support an event that celebrates creativity, community, and cultural expression. These awards not only highlight the incredible skill of ceramic artists but also bring people together to experience and appreciate the power of art," says Adrienne Schierning, Director, Te Uru.

The 2025 Portage Ceramic Awards will be presented at Te Uru Waitākere Contemporary Gallery later this year. The exhibition will showcase a diverse and thought-provoking collection of works from across the motu, offering visitors a chance to experience the many ways clay continues to inspire artistic expression.

For more information about the awards and upcoming exhibition dates, visit <https://teuru.org.nz/>

Celebrating Five Years of Free Health Checks

This year marks five years of collaboration between RBA and Unitec Bachelor Nursing students in providing free workplace health checks for employees, held once again at Apex Valves. The initiative makes it easy for staff to monitor their wellbeing through five quick stations: eye test, BMI test, blood pressure check, blood glucose test, and the Sugar Station.

The program not only supports healthier lifestyles but also gives the students valuable practical experience. It's a genuine win-win, encouraging employees to be proactive about their health while helping students gain real-world skills for their future healthcare careers.



Brendon is receiving a token of appreciation from Odette Jury, HR Manager for Allegion New Zealand

Retirement of Brendon Simpson

After 25 years of dedicated service at Allegion, including 19 years as Managing Director, Brendon Simpson has announced his retirement, effective 30 April 2026. Allegion are pleased to announce that Fiona Robinson will succeed Brendon as Managing Director at Allegion (New Zealand) Limited. Fiona will be joining Allegion from their Australia business.

Please join Allegion and the RBA in recognizing Brendon's outstanding service milestone and in thanking him for his significant contributions to our business and the Rosebank community. We wish him all the best in his retirement.



Cause for Celebration:

Bringing Your Team Together

As the silly season approaches, the cost of team celebrations is often top of mind. Birthdays, cultural holidays, and morning teas over the course of the year can add up, but they're a worthy investment in the health of your business – and one that doesn't necessarily have to break the bank.

Celebrations and opportunities for teams to get together over food or drinks provide deeply needed opportunities for connection, says Tristan Mulgrew, Head of Advisory at MyHR. She adds that if there was ever any doubt that fostering connection at work is valuable, the distancing effects of lockdown during the Covid era provided firm proof.

"If we go back to Covid times," she says, "we saw people trying to get together over Zoom meetings. It was evident how much people missed that connection with their colleagues and having the opportunity to talk about life outside of work, rather than just being at work talking about work."

But the benefits go beyond basic social connection. Occasions like recognising employee birthdays, cultural celebrations, or even providing the opportunity for everyone to chat over Friday drinks are good for morale, Tristan says. "And that, in turn, leads to better engagement and motivation."

Giving your team the chance to scoff sausage rolls and mingle with each other – and with the leadership team – also lays the foundation for better inter-colleague relationships, which become important when it's time to work as a team. "It creates that informal connection, rather than sitting with somebody across a meeting table," says Tristan. "You can chat to someone in the next layer up of management and find a connection. That facilitates ease when you work with that person on a particular project or piece of work."

When leadership participates in workplace get-togethers, it can sometimes be appropriate to seize the moment to answer

employee questions or communicate information directly to the team.

"If the occasion is company-wide with everybody there, you can use it as a platform to have one-to-many communication," says Tristan. "If there is a change in your business – say you're looking at branding or acquiring a new piece of equipment, or maybe it's time to talk about introducing fleet vehicles -- getting to have one conversation and speak to everyone at once is gold. You may not hit 100% of the team, but if you're not having regular toolbox meetings because of the industry you're in, having the floor for five minutes before everybody grabs a biscuit and sits down is a real win from an engagement and leadership perspective."

She cautions that this approach may not work with every leader's style, nor for every topic.

"It's an individual leadership preference. Some people wouldn't be comfortable with an open mic, 'ask me any question as a leader' situation, but others are really comfortable with that. It's certainly not the place to talk about changes that include letting people go, or redundancies."

When it comes to balancing the benefits with your budget, Tristan says that you don't need to push the boat out for every team celebration, both in terms of the frequency and the level of refreshment you provide. Birthday shouts, for example, could be the main type of celebration in a smaller business, whereas a larger organisation might put on a monthly or quarterly morning tea.

If your food budget is slim, Tristan says it's better to find balance by simplifying or dialling back the number of occasions, rather than to asking your team to provide their own food each time or skimping on foods that will cater to those with dietary requirements.

"It doesn't need to be a full spread, where you've got sausage

rolls and donuts and all of that it – maybe you'd only have it once a quarter and provide the biscuits. It can be ad hoc, like calling for a moment where you all down tools and everybody has their coffee or tea together at 10:30 that day."

Asking your team to bring a plate can work, too, but not every time, warns Tristan. She says this works best as a theme. "If you've got a larger team with international workers, you could suggest people bring a plate from their home country, or people could bring a favorite dish from childhood. If it's a theme, people are generally quite willing to contribute. But if you were being asked to attend a morning tea every quarter and to bring a packet of biscuits, it would start to wear a little bit thin."

On the subject of international workers, Tristan adds, newcomers to New Zealand might need a bit of a heads-up when it comes to Kiwi traditions around celebrating with food. "If you do birthday shouts, tell that person before it's their birthday," she says. "So many times, people say, 'Oh, that's how you do it here in New Zealand, I didn't know that,' and then they feel really bad that they haven't

brought morning tea themselves."

She notes that different age demographics within your workforce also need to be considered. "The older employees might like the morning tea, but the younger ones might want to have an after-work drink. That's very much a generalisation, but the point is to mix it up."

If you do serve drinks, Tristan says, keep health and safety in mind. "If you're doing a social event in the afternoon and you're

providing alcohol, your health and safety obligations extend to getting people home safely. You've got to be careful that no one's overindulging and make sure people get home safely. The \$30 or \$40 cost of an Uber for one of your team members is far outweighed by the impact of something happening to that person on their way home."

Special thanks to Tristan Mulgrew of MyHR for contributing to this article. Story by Beth Caunter.



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CCTV Buy a Tile night

On Thursday, 23rd October, the RBA celebrated our Buy a Tile contributors with a special thank-you event at the RBA office.

The evening recognised their generosity and the role they play in keeping Rosebank safer for businesses and staff. Guests heard from Inspector Wayne Kitcher of NZ Police and Scott Carter from Matrix Security, and reflected on the progress made in improving local safety. By working together, our community grows stronger and Rosebank remains a vibrant, secure place for all.





Apex Values

Excellence in Quality and Support

From their humble beginnings in a Titirangi garage, Apex Valves has grown to be one of New Zealand's most high quality and highly regarded manufacturers of water control valves for homes and farms.

"Our quality is excellent, and that's where we hang our hats," says General Manager Mark Gracie. "Also, we have a presence here in New Zealand -- with the other valve brands, there's no one here to really support customers."

Apex Valves manufactures and sells valves to big plumbing retailers, as well as to agricultural retailers on the farming side. What sets them apart, says Mark, is their built-to-last quality and their commitment to customer service.

"On the plumbing side, a big part of it is the local manufacturing and the local, after-sales service support," says Mark. "If something goes wrong on a system and a customer needs help with the install, or setting the valve, or whatever they need to do, we have a whole team here that can help. Customers are welcome at our factory anytime, and we can set the valve up, show them how it works, and give them support."

Apex Valves was founded in 1982 by Mark's father, Alan Gracie, after he spotted a gap in a very particular market. New Zealand, at the time, was short on manufacturers of valves for home hot water cylinders. From there, Apex Valves expanded into agricultural valves, again thanks to a specific demand.

"There was an opportunity to partner with a company in New Zealand called Hydroflow," explains Mark. "They were basically

family friends who sold farming products, and they asked if Apex could make them a valve for troughs for cattle to drink out of. So we manufactured the first New Zealand-made brass trough valve. It's still our number-one selling valve."

Ten years ago, the business took another major leap forward when it was purchased by global water solutions company Watts. Watts is based out of Boston in the United States, and when their team first laid eyes on Apex's products, the spark of interest was immediate.

"They came to New Zealand to visit a customer of theirs," recounts Mark, "and saw our product on the shelf, and they asked, 'Who makes this?'. What started off as discussions around partnership opportunities quickly turned into their wanting a footprint down in the Southern Hemisphere, and within about a year they had purchased Apex."

Still, the identity of Apex Valves remains proudly Kiwi - and their quality standards remain high. "Watts backs us as a manufacturer," Mark says. "They're not trying to cut costs and just get the product out. They're setting us up to be the best in class here in New Zealand for a long time."

It was with Watts' support that Apex Valves recently moved to a brand-new facility on Rosebank Road. Their previous factory - the big blue building on the corner of Rosebank Road and Copsey Place - was home for 28 years. With that space outgrown, the Apex team seized the opportunity to start fresh and create a state-of-the-art factory.

"We didn't bring anything with us from the old place," says Mark. "Everything is modern and well lit, and we're on completely renewable energy sourcing - we only use hydropower. Assembly is our core job - people putting together valves every day - and we've got new electronic, ergonomic, height-adjustable benches so no one overextends and overreaches."

When it comes to testing each and every valve, an essential step in the process, the new factory has been set up to be green and efficient.

"We use and circulate about 20 million litres of water a year," explains Mark, "because every single valve gets tested before it goes out the door, and you've got to run water through it to test it. Previously, we would recirculate some of that, but it was really inefficient. Here in the new factory, we're completely self-sufficient water wise. We capture all our water off the roof, and we circulate it through filters and a pump system. Now, we effectively won't need to use any council water at all."

When it comes to the Apex team, Mark says that their 53 employees feel like a big family. "We've got a real family orientation," he says, noting that a few of his cousins and other family members work there as well. "We've absolutely got that, 'Eat together, work together, and look after each other' family ethos. Because it was a family business originally, I value that across our team. We've got people who have been here over 25 years; I remember them from when I was a young kid."

Looking into the future, Mark says it's been "a real honour" to help set up the business for the next 28 years.

"Our new buildings unbelievable," he says. "We rethought how we did every single thing across the whole company, and the transformation is amazing. Even the lunchroom is big and modern. If people are happy here, it helps us capture people who want to work here."

Now their focus is looking at how to make the most out of Apex Valves. "We want to be as efficient as we possibly can when we make valves for New Zealand," Mark says. "That helps us accelerate new product development. We have a really amazing wet laboratory here, where we can test and design valves and get products to market way quicker.



"Ultimately, we also want to strengthen our connection with the plumbing industry through training, having guests through the factory, and showing off our people and what they make and the care that goes into what we sell. We want to show

that we're not just another brand."

You can find Apex Valves at their new factory at 525 Rosebank Road. Get in touch by visiting their website:

watts.nz.co.nz/our-story/brands/apex.



INVESTING IN ROSEBANK **SINCE 1994.**



**Apex Valves first moved to Rosebank Road in 1994
from a humble garage in Titirangi.**

We've now moved to 525 Rosebank where we will continue to focus on local manufacturing, employing locals, investing in our community, and sending quality products around the world.

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Thank you to these Rosebank businesses for supporting our CCTV initiative. Their contributions have made our area significantly safer. If you would like to Buy a Tile contact Kim Watts at kim@rosebankbusiness.co.nz



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Member Profiles

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

Party Direct

At Party Direct, we are dedicated to creating unforgettable experiences for any occasion, big or small. As a premier provider of event hire services, we offer a broad selection of high-quality, affordable sound, lighting, karaoke, and event flooring solutions, because we believe that exceptional events shouldn't have to come at a high cost. It's important to us that our customers get the best results possible without breaking the bank.

We serve clients across the region and specialise in delivering setups that transform any space into a vibrant, lively environment. Whether you're planning an intimate wedding, corporate event, or a fun-filled birthday celebration, we have everything you need to bring your vision to life.

As well as premium mains powered lighting and sound systems, our range of services includes battery-powered lighting and sound, perfect for events without access to power. We also offer SnapLock vinyl modular flooring, DMX illuminated dance floors, and starlight flooring to add a visual impact that enhances the atmosphere. With a wide selection of JBL sound systems and a variety of karaoke setups available, we ensure your event is equipped with top-tier entertainment technology.

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Direct combines professional expertise with a personal touch. We work closely with all our suppliers and customers to ensure each event exceeds expectations. Our commitment to personalised service, attention to detail, and a genuine passion for what we do sets us apart.

Get in touch with us today to start planning your next event!

Contact Party Direct by calling 09 476 011, emailing info@partydirect.co.nz, or visiting partydirect.co.nz.



Party Direct

Phone: 09 476011

Email: info@partydirect.co.nz

Website: partydirect.co.nz

Local Spotlight: ITW Fastex - Engineering Excellence in Avondale since 1984

Located in the heart of our community, ITW Fastex has long been recognised as a leader in innovation and quality within the manufacturing sector. With a strong reputation for designing and producing highly engineered plastic components, the company has become a cornerstone of excellence in its field.

Driven by a commitment to product innovation, superior quality, and exceptional customer service, ITW Fastex has earned the trust of international clients across a broad range of industries.

ITW Fastex employs a dedicated team of 27 staff members. This tight-knit, talented team continues to be a driving force behind the company's ongoing success.

As part of the larger ITW (Illinois Tool Works) family, ITW Fastex benefits from global resources while maintaining a decentralised structure. Its presence here not only contributes to the local economy, but also reflects the strength and potential of manufacturing talent within our own community.

ITW Fastex is a shining example of what dedication and innovation can achieve. We're proud to have such a forward-

thinking company as part of our local business landscape.

For more information about ITW Fastex, please visit www.fastex.co.nz.



ITW Fastex NZ

Phone: 09 820 2720

Email: info@fastex.co.nz

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Business Nuts & Bolts

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



Alan McDonald,
EMA Head of Advocacy

Holidays Act Changes Will Bring Clarity and Confidence to Kiwi Workplaces

The government is on the brink of fixing one of our most frustrating and confusing pieces of employment law.

For years, the Holidays Act 2003 has been recognised as a minefield of complexity, legal risk, and unintended cost for both employers and employees.

It has confused the most diligent businesses with complex calculations and compliance headaches, while leaving workers unsure of what they are entitled to or when.

In late September, we saw the shape this new legislation will take when Workplace Relations and Safety Minister Brooke van Velden announced the proposed reforms at our EMA headquarters.

These reforms will provide the foundation for the first draft of legislation, which will likely be released for public consultation and submissions early in the new year.

The current law was built around an employment landscape that has changed, with variable hours, hybrid working, and flexible contracts now the norm.

The new framework looks to deliver a system that is simpler, fairer, and far easier to navigate for all types of work.

At the heart of the reform is the shift to an hours-based accrual system for annual and sick leave. Rather than waiting six or 12 months before leave starts to build up, entitlements now begin on day one, accumulating with every hour worked.

This simple change reflects modern work realities, where part-time and variable-hour arrangements are common. Employers gain a clear, consistent formula, and employees get more flexibility.

Leave can now be taken in part-days or even part-hours, meaning workers can take time off when they truly need it without burning a full day's entitlement. That's a win for fairness.

One of the best features of the proposed Act is its sense of balance. For employers, it simplifies payroll systems, removes overlapping calculations, and reduces compliance costs. For employees, it ensures leave rights are linked directly to the hours they work.

The new leave compensation payment of 12.5% for casual and additional hours worked replaces the previous 8% "pay-as-you-go" approach.

Workers see an immediate uplift in pay for each hour worked beyond their standard hours, while employers gain a predictable, transparent cost structure.

Even the long-criticised "parental leave override," which often penalised parents returning from leave with reduced holiday pay, is gone. Under the new proposals, parents will be paid their normal rate for annual leave after returning to work. That's a family-friendly outcome to support.

Another long-overdue fix is the clear test for determining whether a public holiday is an "otherwise working day." Instead of a subjective, case-by-case debate, there will be a simple rule: if an employee has worked at least half of those days in recent weeks, the holiday counts. It's easy for employers to apply and easy for employees to understand.

Mandatory, itemised pay statements will also become standard, ensuring both employers and staff understand exactly how leave and pay are calculated. For an area that causes confusion, that's a welcome step.

Every reform comes with trade-offs. Some part-time employees will see a reduction in sick leave compared with the current flat allocation. And employers will face transition costs as payroll systems and employment agreements are updated. But these are short-term challenges for a long-term gain: a leave system that works.

We also support the two-year implementation window for the new Act. It gives businesses time to prepare, adjust, and get it right.

There are significant changes that employers will have to manage in those two years that will affect contracts, previously accrued leave, and leave payments for commission staff in particular.

The EMA can help with those. But, once in place, the new system should last, regardless of changes in government.

For the EMA, this reform is the culmination of years of advocacy, and we've been working closely with MBIE and the minister to present the views of the business community.

We've also just taken a roadshow around the middle and upper North Island to drill down into the details with our members. There will be more to come when the draft legislation is made public in early 2026.

These reforms are proof that when business and government work together with a shared goal, there are mutual benefits.

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Jason Ennor
MyHR Co-founder and CEO

Garden Leave

In some situations during employment - especially at the end of it - you can agree to pay an employee to stay at home instead of having them come to work. This is commonly called “garden leave” or “gardening leave,” or “leave in lieu of notice.”

This means they’re still an employee and get paid in full, but they aren’t required to attend work. Garden leave gets its name in reference to the employee staying home to tend the garden (or whatever other pastime they prefer), rather than being at work.

What is garden leave?

Garden leave is not a term defined in employment legislation, but the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment defines it as “a period when an employee remains employed and receives full pay, but does not report to work.”

Garden leave is commonly used when it’s better for an employee not to be at work, either because they are working out their notice period or they’re not needed for a set period, e.g., there is a temporary break in operations.

The period of garden leave must be specified; you can’t place an employee on gardening leave indefinitely or for an extended period of time. Garden leave can only be used if either:

- both the employee and employer agree to it, or
- it is specified in the employment agreement.

It’s important to remember that during garden leave, both parties are still in an employment relationship, and all employment rights and obligations must be adhered to.

Employee rights/obligations and employer obligations during garden leave

Employee rights during garden leave:

- Continuation of employment status.
- Entitlement to full pay and benefits, including final payment at the end of the notice period.
- Accrual of leave, e.g., annual leave and public holidays.
- Fair and reasonable treatment.

Employee obligations during garden leave:

- Act in good faith (i.e., not in a way that is contrary to the company’s interests).

- Respect company policies, e.g., confidentiality and leave policies.
- Be available for handover (if required) or any other reasonable request.

Employer obligations during garden leave:

- Continue paying the employee’s salary/wages.
- Honour benefits and leave entitlements.
- Act in good faith and follow the employment agreement.

When is garden leave useful?

Garden leave is mostly used during the notice period, either for some or all of it, especially in instances of:

- dismissal as the consequence of a series of disciplinary actions - when it’s better for both parties not to be in the same space
- the employee is going to work for a competitor and has access to commercially sensitive information (they may be covered by a post-employment restraint of trade clause)
- redundancy - the employee has the opportunity to start looking for another job while they’re still employed
- the employee resigns and there are relationship issues at work, the employee is a distraction, or they don’t want to attend work for professional or personal reasons.

Garden leave is also useful when:

- the employee has no work to do, e.g., they have finished work on a project and there is a gap before the next one
- there is a difficult situation at work that requires counselling or mediation, and it could help calm things if the employee(s) did not attend work. In this situation, you need to make sure that the employee agrees so it is clear you’re not suspending or punishing them.

Get in touch with MyHR

Garden leave clauses aren’t mandatory in employment agreements, but including them ensures you can lawfully direct an employee to take garden leave, if the time comes. Remember, if the employer is found to have misused garden leave, you could open yourself up to personal grievance or other legal claims.

If you need any help drafting clear, robust employment agreements, get in touch with MyHR. <https://www.myhr.works/>



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Ravina Ram
Matrix Security, 09 579 1567

Keep Your Business Safe Over the Christmas Break

The festive season is a time to relax and recharge - but unfortunately, it's also a peak period for opportunistic crime. With many businesses closing or operating on reduced hours, empty premises become easy targets for burglary and vandalism.

Here's how to make sure your business stays protected while you enjoy a well-earned break.

1. Check Your Alarm and Security Systems

Before locking up for the holidays, make sure your alarm system, cameras, and access control are all working correctly.

- Test your alarm and ensure it's connected to a monitoring centre.
- Update your contact list with current keyholders.
- Replace any low batteries or faulty sensors (including smoke detectors/alarms).

Tip: If your alarm system still relies on 3G, it may need an upgrade to ensure continued connectivity and reliable monitoring.



2. Review Patrol and Monitoring Services

An active human presence is one of the best deterrents. If your business is closing for an extended period, consider increasing patrol frequency or adding virtual patrols for extra peace of mind.

- External patrols can quickly identify suspicious activity or damage.
- Video verification allows monitoring teams to respond faster and more accurately.
- Virtual tour patrols provide real-time, remote walkthroughs of properties using strategically placed cameras - ideal for large or high-value sites.

Tip: Matrix Security offers temporary patrol services over the Christmas and New Year shutdown period, operating locally from their base at 561 Rosebank Road. It's a smart way to keep your premises protected while you take a well-earned break.

3. Secure the Premises

Simple measures can make a big difference:

- Lock away valuables and sensitive documents.
- Close blinds or shutters to keep equipment out of sight.
- Check all doors, windows, and gates for weak points.
- Don't leave spare keys on-site.

Tip: Ask Matrix Security to conduct a **FREE** risk assessment before the holidays for reassurance that your site is fully secured.



4. Be Smart with Lighting and Signage

Well-lit properties deter intruders.

- Use motion-activated lights or smart timers to create the impression of activity.
- Display security signage prominently - it signals that your site is protected.

Tip: Install sensor security cameras with built-in spotlights. They instantly light up and record when motion is detected - a smart, visible deterrent that helps stop intruders in their tracks.

5. Communicate with Your Team and Neighbours

If you're part of a shared complex, let others know your operating hours and who to contact in an emergency. A community approach helps everyone stay safer.

Tip: Reach out to Kim Watts from the RBA for advice and to register your emergency contacts - this ensures the right people are notified quickly if something happens over the break.

6. Schedule a Post-Holiday Check

When you return, conduct a full site inspection before resuming normal operations. This ensures any issues (like tampered locks or system alerts) are spotted and resolved early.

Tip: Check in with your neighbours or nearby businesses - they may have noticed unusual activity while you were away. Maintaining good communication helps strengthen community security.

Peace of Mind This Christmas with Matrix Security.

With a few proactive steps - and reliable security support - you can relax knowing your business is in safe hands.

Matrix Security provides tailored patrol services, CCTV, video surveillance and alarm installation, monitoring, and rapid response services across Auckland to keep your business protected 24/7, even when you're not there.

Talk to us today about a pre-holiday security check or temporary patrol schedule to keep your premises secure this Christmas.



Liz Wotherspoon
The Icehouse

Stressed Out Making Changes in Your Business?

One of the many outcomes of both the Owner Manager Programme and the Leadership Development Programme is giving business leaders the tools, the confidence, and the energy to deal with change – whether that's about restructuring teams, refining processes, an acquisition, or adapting to new market realities. And we are seeing unprecedented change going on in the market right now.

While change is often necessary for survival and growth, how it is managed can determine whether the outcome strengthens the business or weakens it. Poorly handled transitions can lead to falling sales, damaged trust, and the loss of valuable staff. Conversely, when change is introduced with clarity and structure, businesses can create stability, maintain morale, and even uncover opportunities for excitement, new energy, and innovation.

At the heart of effective change management is communication. Employees want to understand not just what is changing, but why it is happening and how it will affect their roles. Without that transparency, speculation and uncertainty can spread, eroding confidence in leadership. A structured approach gives staff clear expectations and allows them to prepare, reducing resistance and encouraging engagement.

Introducing the new

A critical element to success is involving teams in the process. Change that is dictated without input often breeds resentment, while inclusive practices help people feel valued and increase their

willingness to adapt. Leaders who acknowledge and recognise concerns, provide training, and create forums for feedback are more likely to retain talent and strengthen workplace culture during transitions.

Responses to new ideas are common with any innovation, new policy, skill, plan, environment, etc. that we didn't initiate ourselves. Expect feedback like: "What's wrong with what we do already?" or "I don't see the point!"

Liz Wotherspoon is the Icehouse Customer Solutions Specialist and a member of the Owner Manager Programme directing team. She says, "We often hear owners and leaders say that people don't like change. I think that's a flawed perspective or not actually true. The truth is that people don't like change when it's done to them, but they are much more open and accepting of change when it is done with them."

Create relevance

The first step is to demonstrate the relevance for the change, so that people can feel satisfied and continue with the change process. This helps provide a framework for the next steps to evolve, and it's part of creating a safe environment for the introduction of new things and for learning to occur. The essence is to be clear about why the change. Yes, crisis is often the driver, but some people will need more information than, "We can see the writing on the wall."

Some will be happy that the change is coming and simply want to know what they must know and/or do. Others will want information about how to do it, and others (the innovators) will want to know what it will mean – what will the organisation look like in the future?

Finally, change must be monitored and measured. Setting goals and checking progress helps ensure that new systems or structures deliver the intended results. It also allows leaders to course-correct if challenges emerge. In difficult economic conditions, the ability to adapt swiftly without destabilising the workforce can be a competitive advantage.

Change is inevitable in business, and with thoughtful planning and structured management, you can navigate uncertainty, protect your team, and set your organisation up for ongoing success.

Need help navigating change in your business? Email our team: grow@theicehouse.co.nz or visit us at theicehouse.co.nz.

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Jude Dragh
Smith & Partners

How a Commercial Lease Can Make or Break Your Business Sale

A commercial lease is a key factor in any business purchase. Whether buying or selling, the lease terms can affect the deal's value, and even whether it proceeds at all.

Why early legal review of the lease matters

Not long ago, we advised a couple purchasing their first small business. Keen to secure the opportunity, they paid the deposit and signed the agreement before seeking legal advice. Once we were engaged, several issues with the lease came to light, issues they had not been made fully aware of at the time of signing.

After reviewing the lease, our clients found it unsuitable. Key concerns included a complicated assignment history, the need for a personal guarantee and substantial bond, a short lease term with no renewal rights, and no allocated car parks, despite being required to contribute to parking costs.

Their experience shows why legal review of a lease is essential. Hidden issues can lead to serious long-term costs and complications.

Assigning the lease: it's not always straightforward

Buyers often expect to take over the existing lease, but this isn't automatic. Most leases require the landlord's written consent for an assignment. In our clients' case, consent was complex and came with undisclosed conditions.

Landlords often review the incoming tenant's financial position and may set conditions like personal guarantees or extra lease terms. If not managed early, this can delay settlement or even put the whole deal at risk. That's why it's so important to engage with the landlord as soon as possible.

Costly terms to watch for

Buyers should carefully review rent review mechanisms. Some are

fixed and some are CPI-based, while others are tied to a market rent valuation.

It's also important to understand the full cost of tenancy. On top of rent, outgoings like insurance, council rates, water, and maintenance can add up quickly. These costs aren't always clear during the sale process, so asking for a recent breakdown is a smart move.

Lease clauses around maintenance, alterations, and end-of-lease obligations can have major cost implications. A common example is a "make good" clause, which may require the tenant to repaint, remove fit-out, and restore the premises, often at significant expense. Understanding these terms and their practical impact is crucial before buying a business.

Know what you're taking on

When buying a business with leased premises, it's vital to understand what you're taking on. Request the full lease history, including any breaches, and confirm there is no unpaid rent or outgoings or unresolved compliance issues, as these can create problems even after settlement.

Also consider practical restrictions, i.e., are there limits on fit-out or signage? Will the landlord allow changes if your business evolves? Check whether you have a right of first refusal should the property be sold.

Knowing these details up front helps avoid surprises and ensures the lease supports your business goals.

The bottom line

Getting a lease reviewed before committing to a purchase can save significant cost, stress, and uncertainty.

In our clients' case, although they only received advice after signing, we were able to assist them in cancelling the agreement and avoiding what could have been a costly and risky commitment.

If you are thinking of buying or selling a business with a lease attached, do not leave it to chance. Our commercial team can help you identify risks, negotiate better terms, and ensure you are entering the deal with your eyes wide open.



Our Business Law specialists are experts in helping with:

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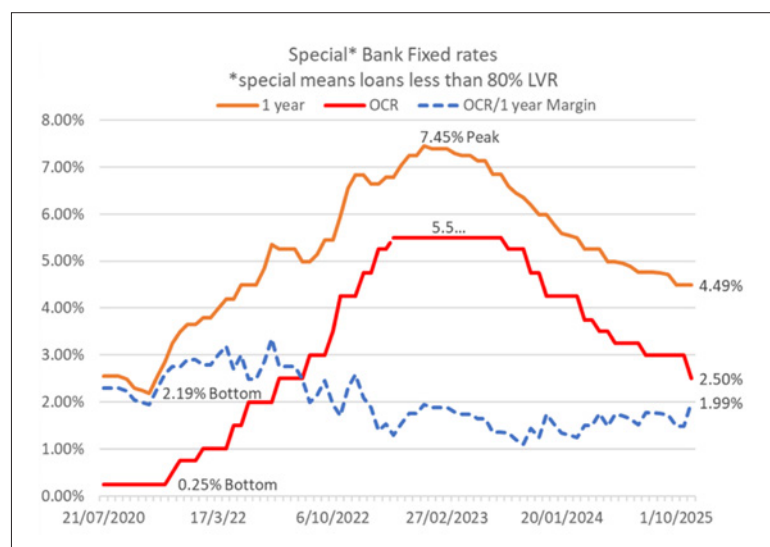
Bernard McCrea
Abbott Insurance Brokers

Where Is the Risk with Falling Interest Rates?

Falling rates bring relief, but they can also hide risks. Now's the time to check your wider financial safety net.

Interest rates have continued to ease, and with market expectations that the Reserve Bank will again drop the OCR in late November, the question for business owners and directors is: when do you fix, and for how long?

As shown in the chart below, we're heading back toward the lower levels seen before the rate peaks of late 2023. That's positive news for businesses carrying debt. It means lower borrowing costs and improved cashflow. But while falling rates reduce one type of risk, they don't remove the broader financial exposures that can threaten your business.



Looking beyond interest rates

Lower rates can make things feel rosier but without a strong financial safety net, unexpected events can quickly undo the benefits. Debt is only one form of risk exposure. Equally important are:

- **Key person insurance**

Could your business survive if a crucial employee or owner were

suddenly unable to work?

- **Shareholder or partnership cover**

Are all owners protected in case of illness, accident, or death?

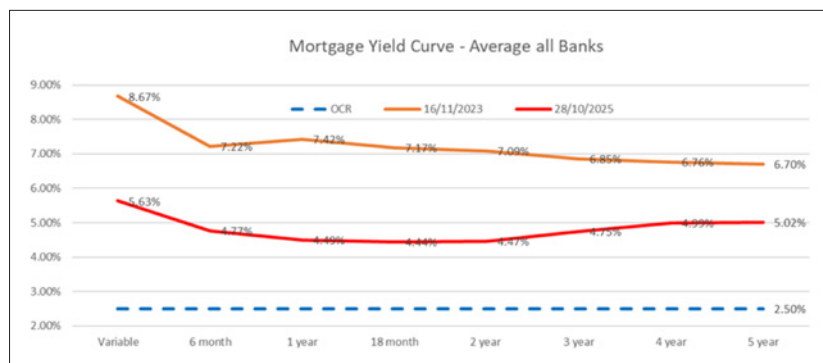
- **Asset protection**

Are your equipment, premises, and liabilities insured to continue operations uninterrupted?

In our experience working with SMEs, even small gaps in coverage can **turn manageable events into major disruptions**, affecting cashflow, borrowing ability, and long-term business growth.

What this means for borrowing

The mortgage yield curve shows shorter-term rates (1–18 months) currently offering better value than longer-term fixes (4–5 years). This suggests banks expect the easing cycle to continue though the pace and depth remain uncertain.



Lower wholesale swap rates are giving banks room to reduce lending rates. That's welcome news for borrowers, less so for savers. While falling rates can support expansion and investment, decisions made without considering insurance, risk cover, and asset protection may leave your business exposed.

Quick risk check for Directors

Ask yourself:

1. Could my business survive a key employee or owner being out of action?
2. Are all critical assets and liabilities adequately protected?
3. Would I be confident making borrowing or investment decisions if the unexpected happened tomorrow?

If any answer gives you pause, it's worth reviewing your financial safety net now while rates are favourable.

Next steps

A short review can uncover exposures that could cost far more than slightly higher borrowing costs. For a 15-minute, no-obligation discussion, call:

Bernard McCrea - Financial Adviser
Abbott Insurance Brokers
027 486 2501

This article is for general information only and does not constitute personalised financial advice. For advice tailored to your individual circumstances, please seek guidance from a registered financial adviser.



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