

BHB

Collaborator Championing Economic Growth



Business Hawke's Bay CEO Susan White in the Hawke's Bay Business Hub.

Three years down the track what has the region's business-led economic development agency achieved? Ask Susan White, Business Hawke's Bay CEO and you'll need a reasonable amount of time to hear her answer. The short answer is "a significant impact".

"With tight resources, BHB is all about focus; whatever we do, we need to be credible and do it well," Susan says. "We make judgement calls all the time about what we can deliver, where our energies will get best results."

Established in 2011, under the Hawke's Bay Chamber of Commerce, BHB separated and became an incorporated society in July 2013, with Susan appointed as its CEO. The BHB board, made up of leaders of their own businesses with a vested interest in seeing this region grow, is a voluntary one with an expectation of giving active support to Susan and her small team.

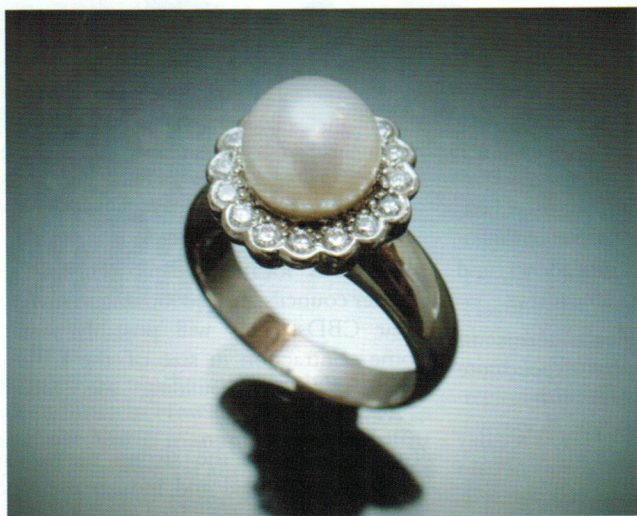
"As a result, we bring a business perspective to what and how we deliver," says Susan.

BHB receives sponsorship support from various local businesses and is also funded through local government. Specific projects are funded through contracts with government agencies, sometimes with co-funding from business.

While reporting to separate stakeholders can be time consuming, Susan believes having an independent EDA arms-length distance from any political agenda, is a positive benefit for the region. "It also means we can be agile, taking advantage of opportunities as they arise."

Set up as a collaborative model, BHB operates within a network of networks. Developing trusted relationships, leading initiatives, and demonstrating a willingness to participate in projects led by others, has been BHB's modus operandi.

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So what's been the focus for BHB to date?

The establishment of the Hawke's Bay Business Hub, a co-location of 13 organisations based in the former Big Save store in Ahuriri, has been a massive effort that saw many of the BHB board actively involved. Our Story at www.hbbusinesshub.co.nz tells more.

Celebrating its first anniversary in the middle of this year, Business Hub members pointed to a myriad of success stories where businesses had been helped to grow, new opportunities had been identified for economic development, and the accelerated access to information and advice of Business Hub colleagues was leading to deeper levels of collaboration beyond co-location.

"We're still each answerable to our own organisations but some of us are individually quite small so there's real value in members being able to talk at the coffee machine or pull up a chair at the desk across the way. It's just so much easier to develop relationships of trust and knowing who can do what to help."

The recent launch of the Matariki - Hawke's Bay Regional Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan (REDS) was a milestone for BHB. When Susan joined BHB, refreshing the 2011 version was a KPI for BHB by Hawke's Bay Regional Council. Advisors to the strategy development process included Alasdair Macleod, a former lead partner for economic development at Deloitte (a contact Susan met through her NZTE days) and Hamahona Ambler who was appointed by Te Kāhui Ohanga o Takitimu – a collective of Ngāti Kahungunu Iwi and Hapū post treaty settlement groups committed to driving economic development in Hawke's Bay.

Project team and governance group members represented local and central government, Te Kāhui Ohanga o Takitimu, and business via BHB representatives and others. For BHB, the resource allocation to



BHB Board – Jenni Giblin, Hamish Whyte, Chris Bain, Stuart McLauchlan, Allan Pollard, Mike Purchas, Doug Duckler, Michelle Turfrey, Chris Collins. Absent – Hamish White, Ken Sutherland, Robert Darroch.

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– SUSAN WHITE

REDS over the last two years reflects it as a key priority, and it will continue to be so during its delivery.

Given Hawke's Bay primary produce strengths, BHB has a dedicated food and beverage team member. A year-long market-led investigation into a whole new nutritional powders industry opportunity for Hawke's Bay resulted in over 200 people attending a day-long conference. Presenters were from across the full spectrum, providing information from market drivers to livestock genetics to processing.

Susan notes that they were able to demonstrate that goat and sheep dairy industry and processing is a global market opportunity and a good fit for the region. The key to establishing the value chain is to attract smart investment, she says. To this end, BHB has continued to liaise with potential investors interested in this region.

Messaging and mentoring around the need to improve productivity and innovation is another priority. More than 30 businesses have undertaken customised training and mentoring to improve their

productivity through High Performance Work Initiative and Better by Lean.

Acknowledging that a fair degree of local business success rests on the need for travel, BHB has been keen to see improved air travel business connectivity. It was part of collaborative lobbying to attract Jetstar to service Hawke's Bay, and earlier this year established the Hawke's Bay Landing Pad project to identify and implement ways to sustain competitiveness for all the region's air carriers. Check out www.hbip.co.nz

And as a core function, the BHB team is constantly connecting business people, both local and from outside of the region; putting them in touch with others to provide advice and expertise.

What's next?

A marketing and operations manager position will have been filled by the time of going to print, allowing Susan to focus more on BHB's strategy, leadership, and the delivery of REDS actions.

As a core participant in the region's economic development framework, BHB will continue to work in partnership with business, TKO, local and central government to empower delivery of economic growth. The BHB board has been strengthened with three additional appointees augmenting skills and sector expertise and bringing more hands on to the 'doing'.

"Partnership is not easy and takes time and goodwill by all partners but BHB believes this is the direction we need to head. It'll be a challenge but working together to co-design our growth is a huge opportunity for Hawke's Bay."

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