

Searching for start-ups to share their stories



If you've started a new business within the past three years, then Business Hawke's Bay and Napier City Council would like to hear from you. What did you discover you didn't know you didn't know? What were your challenges and obstacles and how did you get around, over or through them? In short, what can others learn from your experience?

Business Hawke's Bay (BHB) is the region's business-led economic development agency and together with Napier City Council (NCC), is involved with Matariki – Hawke's Bay Regional Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan (Matariki). This comprehensive plan tasks various of the region's economic and social agencies with responsibility for actions. BHB and NCC are working together as co-leads on actions related to identifying and supporting new and existing businesses wanting to grow.

"Our work with Matariki has identified that a key part of increasing economic development and employment opportunities is by 'growing our own'," says Susan White, BHB CEO. "We need to improve support for those wanting to start up new businesses and encourage a culture of entrepreneurship."

Paul Collits, Economic Development Project Manager at NCC is eager to see the establishment of a Start-Up ecosystem. "One of the contributing factors to this is growing the entrepreneur/start-up community. Make

it visible. Ensure it is networked. Link and leverage the bits of activity that are already going well. And make sure that anyone with a good business idea can find a pathway to the resources he or she needs to take the next step. Low entry barriers make for great local economies."

In past months there's been activity going on behind the scenes to explore how start-up businesses can be better supported. So far BHB and NCC have hosted three exploratory workshops facilitated by Peter Wogan of Fresh Perspective Leadership. The workshops were attended by a cross section of business people and advisors who amongst them represent hundreds of years of experience supporting businesses and social enterprise.

Drawing on their experience, these workshops focused on identifying what the issues facing Hawke's Bay start-up businesses are thought to be as inputs into scoping the ideal start-up customer experience. Soon market validation will be required, hence the shout out to those who have started new businesses in recent times.

"The workshops identified that clarifying your purpose for starting a business and confirming that you had a marketable idea (market validation) were essential aspects early on in the process of establishing a successful start-up, and that's now the process we are going through," says Susan.

"Often we hear about people spending scarce resources too early in the process on the wrong things. Market validation is one of the first things to do, so you know whether the opportunity is worth pursuing, needs some fine tuning, or needs more research, for example. How you do your market validation will depend on who and where your market is. Guidance on how to go about this is available."

Susan observes, "It's very tempting to go straight into solution-mode. It's important that we have a sound understanding of the gaps from a customer perspective, so we want to hear first-hand what those needs are from those experiencing them."

Susan and Paul say they are keen to hear from anyone who has recently started up a business anywhere from Central Hawke's Bay to Wairoa, and encourages them to contact them as a starting point – susan@businesshawkesbay.co.nz, paul.collits@napier.govt.nz

Personal contact will then be made to share insights that will be fed into the ultimate recommendations.

For more information on Matariki: Hawke's Bay Regional Economic Development Strategy see:

www.hbredns.nz

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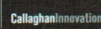
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