KāpitiTech

Tech Cluster Action Plan

Oct 2024 - Dec 2026



Purpose Statement

The Kāpiti Cluster Action Plan will steer the Tech Cluster's activities over the next two years, shaping the long-term direction of the sector, identifying key opportunities and challenges, and guiding the prioritisation of initiatives for the future, and leveraging Kāpiti's unique characteristics.

Credit: Cover Page Image supported by ChatGPT

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Introduction

The Economic Development Kotahitanga Board (EDKB) oversees the implementation of Kāpiti Coast District Council's Economic Development Strategy. It recognises the need to foster a resilient Kāpiti Coast economy based on productive and innovative clusters that are environmentally sustainable and future focussed.

In response, commissioned research into Tech in Kāpiti was conducted, leading to the release of the Kāpiti Tech Report which was released in November 2023. The findings of the report showed that we need to:

- connect and collaborate more
- make Tech in Kāpiti visible
- understand how to support a long-term vision that includes a physical place
- develop and enable a shared vision of the Kāpiti Tech industry.

The report recommended that a Tech Cluster Action Plan be developed in partnership with industry, using findings from the October 2023 workshop. The workshop considered the industry's makeup, opportunities, challenges, and strengths outlined throughout this plan. Implementation of this plan. Using the findings from the commissioned research and subsequent sector engagement, will help establish the foundations to grow the Tech sector and its workforce, contributing to growing the local economy.

This Tech Cluster Action Plan outlines the opportunities, advantages, challenges, risks, and activities needed to grow the Tech sector in Kāpiti.

The Opportunity

Tech is a significant contributor to New Zealand's economy, contributing \$22.6 billion to its GDP in 2023, along with \$10.7 billion worth of Tech goods and services to the export economy, coming in third place after Dairy and Tourism. During this same year, 3,560 new jobs were created in Tech¹, and has doubled in size since 2013.

According to Technology Queenstown's research, Tech workers, on average earn 33% more per annum, generate on average, 45% more revenue per employee, and for every \$1 invested in R&D, \$3.50 is generated across the economy. The average Tech salary of \$100,000 outperforms the national median salary of \$74,7542. This is further supported by ImmigrationNZ's desire to grow the Tech workforce in New Zealand by fast tracking roles such as Analyst Programmer to Permanent Residence through the Green List process³.

Globally, it is recognised as being a high value sector, with Tokyo, London, Silicon Valley, Shenzen, and Bangalore being significant examples of economies successfully capitalising on its offerings. Expanding beyond Kāpiti's traditional key industries and fostering growth in Tech

¹ NZTech Annual Report 2024

² Infometrics

³ Green List roles | Immigration New Zealand

will benefit the district by increasing household income and boosting resilience, exports, and innovation.

Kāpiti's Advantage

Kāpiti's offers the following advantages to the Tech Sector:

- A strategic location with proximity to Wellington, providing easy access to the capital city and wider opportunities.
- A coastal lifestyle with new transport links and infrastructure development.
- A close-knit, connected business community that enables an agile approach for rapid adaptation, and potential to solve central and local government issues.
- Stronger partnerships with key ecosystem players such as Creative HQ, Ministry of Awesome, NZTech, the Global Entrepreneurship Network, and WellingtonNZ leveraging regional Tech offerings in alignment with the Wellington Regional Economic Development Plan.
- An experienced, connected workforce with a median age of 48 to support the development of the local Tech industry.
- A growing Māori economy supported by mana whenua, a Tech incubator at Te Wānanga o Raukawa, an indigenous digital creative hub, Māoriland Hub, and an established Māori business network, Te Rōpū Pakihi.

Tech is on the increase in Kāpiti

The Kāpiti Coast district is well-positioned to be the Lower North Island's Tech Coast, in part due to Kāpiti's strategic location, weather, coastal lifestyle, and ease of travel due to new infrastructure including Transmission Gully and the Peka-Peka Te Horo Bypass supported by more housing supply⁴.

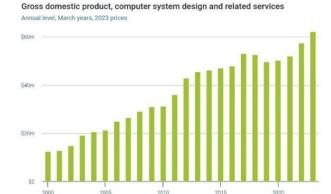


Specifically, Kāpiti is attracting Tech founders as well as Tech professionals who commute to Wellington, enjoying the local lifestyle and its benefits.

Product Leadership Coach, now based in Kāpiti.

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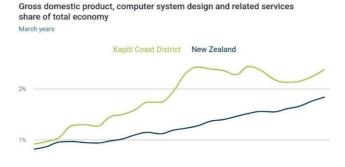
⁴ Chapter 5: Kāpiti Coast District Council HBA



The increased percentage of the Tech industry in Kāpiti is reflected in Infometrics' detailed data which states that Computer system design and related services accounted for GDP of \$62.2m in Kāpiti Coast District for the year to March 2023. This is up 8.6% from the previous year.

In 2023, Tech accounted for 2.47% of Kāpiti's GDP, up from 2.23% vs a 1.83% increase across New Zealand.

Despite the increase in Kāpiti's Tech economic activity, the research into Kāpiti's Tech industry revealed challenges related to visibility, connectivity, and community engagement, and has some way to go to perceive itself as a Tech hub in the same way the district sees itself as food and beverage and creative hubs.



The October 2023 workshop and subsequent meetings, however, highlighted a strong

willingness among local Tech businesses to network, collaborate, partner, and contribute to the growth of a vibrant Tech cluster in the district. In part, this is a district-wide cultural change.

Growth of the Kāpiti Tech Cluster

The EDKB provided initial support to understand what the Tech Sector was in Kāpiti. This research culminated in a paper to the EDKB outlining the industry findings including a sector map.

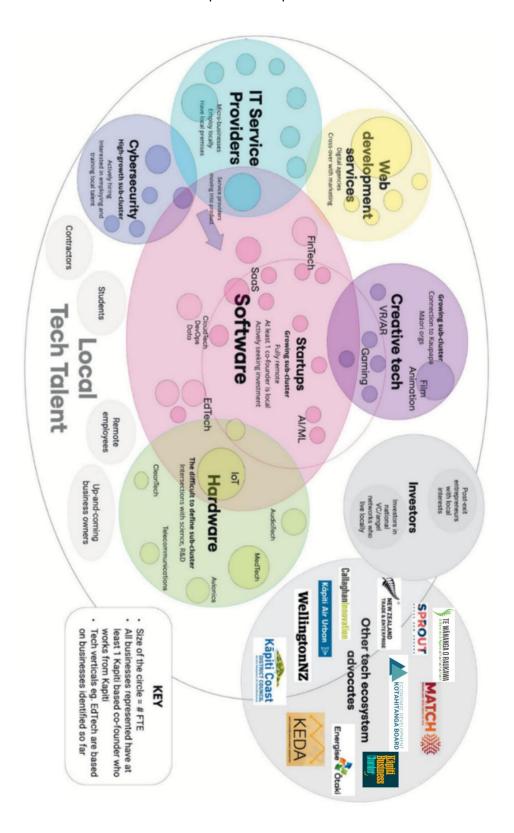
A Tech workshop was held on 26 October 2023 and:

- introduced the concept of a cluster and presented early research into the Tech sector in Kāpiti.
- defined a collective vision for Tech in Kāpiti.
- identified next steps and actions towards the formation of a local Tech cluster.

The findings from the workshop and earlier research were used to create the Kāpiti Tech Report, released in November 2023, which outlined a series of actions to position for the future as well as the agreed Tech vision. Additionally, the report recommended undertaking a Tech pilot, initially focusing on verticals. However, further research revealed that pursuing verticals was not feasible due to potential competition and intellectual property concerns. Instead, it was recommended to bring together around five businesses at a similar stage of development that do not compete, which has now been successfully implemented

Who are the Kāpiti Tech Businesses?

The diagram below offers an overview of Kāpiti's tech ecosystem, highlighting verticals and industry composition as outlined in the initial Kāpiti Tech report.



The Tech community shared their views on a vision for Tech in Kāpiti which were used to inform an initial Kāpiti Tech Report that was presented in November 2023 along with their experiences as to what perceived challenges and opportunities.



October 2023 Workshop

The Kāpiti Tech Report recommendations outlined below, based on the October 2023 workshop were successfully completed.

- Kāpiti Tech Directory & Online Portal
- Kāpiti Tech LinkedIn Group
- Industry event Four cluster meetings plus eight pilot meetings, four TechWeek event
- Event in collaboration with Kāpiti Business Chamber and Tech Step 2024 completed, 2025 event preparation underway
- Identified sector champions & potential working groups underway through the Tech pilot and Tech Cluster
- Continue research into Kāpiti Tech sector and cluster concept

Ongoing Tech Cluster Development

On 1 October 2024, the Tech Cluster members gathered to review the vision and provide feedback on findings from the previous 12 months, along with the proposed Tech Action Plan moving into 2025. Members unanimously supported both the vision, and the strategic pillars designed to support further development of the Tech Cluster.

Attendees described the Kāpiti Tech Sector as *exciting, innovative* and *evolving,* with a sense of *belonging* and *refreshment* that sets it apart from other districts of similar size. Regular connections, especially through the Tech Pilot, have revealed that Kāpiti offers something distinct from surrounding regions due to its ease of doing business, size, proximity to Wellington, and new infrastructure. The lifestyle and strong sense of community are also key contributors to the unique culture within the Tech Cluster community.

The Tech Cluster is now actively fostering strong connections among members, promoting collaboration, shared success, and celebration of local achievements, seeking to position Kāpiti as a leader rather than following other regions.

The collaborative meetings have reinforced the Cluster's value, with the 2023 workshop goals, and members continuing to prioritise collective effort, offering their skills, expertise, and networks to support one another. Through feedback, they have expressed a desire for continued growth and expansion of the activities, aiming to attract talent and drive innovation.

"Having the ability to lean on locals in the tech industry has been a godsend in so many ways. We're all comfortable in the tech landscape, but the ability to wander out of your lane to go for help and advice has been invaluable.

The ability to be open and frank with others in the same position, being able to celebrate achievements, and commiserate when things don't go so well is such a precious thing when you're trying to grow a business."

Käpiti Coast TechWeek HerTech Advertures Creative minds and Tech Or of predictions that and the second of the se

Elizabeth Asbury, Pipi Learning, Tech Cluster

TechWeek 2024 | HerTech Adventure - Creative Minds and Tech

Tech as an Enabler for Industry Growth

Over time, technology has increasingly become an enabler for a wide range of industries. Within Kāpiti, the Tech Cluster members play an important role, not only in supporting local employment, economic growth, but also in the growth and development of other Kāpiti-based Clusters, such as Food and Beverage, Tourism and the Creative Industries.

The collaboration between Kāpiti businesses, with Tech as the enabler, enhances the unique value proposition of the district and drives success across multiple industries, further strengthening the district's economic ecosystem.

This was evident during the 2024 TechWeek programme, where Kāpiti cluster businesses participated in a workshop on using ChatGPT. The event was well received, with attendees taking their insights back to their respective organisations. The TechWeek events also included pathways into Tech for women with creative backgrounds, and an investor-investee forum.



TechWeek 2024 | ChatGPT for Kiwi Businesses workshop

Promoting Tech on the Coast

After engaging with the EDKB and Council through the Tech Cluster, further insights were gained on how to enable Tech businesses such as AgileData.



Founders, Shane Gibson and Nigel Vining, emphasised that it was extremely valuable to have support to raise awareness and visibility of their company.

The team agreed to become the subject of a Tech case study for the Business Kāpiti website and Economic Development Strategy. This has provided insights for the business community and in turn, showcased how Kāpiti is a great place to found and run a Tech business, and one that has been endorsed by Google, an example of what can be achieved when public and private collaboration is undertaken.

"We built our company to be remote and are lucky to live

The completed case study features on the <u>Business Kāpiti</u> website.

https://www.businessKāpiti.co.nz/grow/tech-and-innovation/

and work from the place we love. The sea and bush here offer a unique feeling."

Shane Gibson and Nigel Vining

Challenges

Kāpiti's Tech sector faces several key workforce challenges, including limited access to talent, a lack of physical infrastructure to support collaboration and innovation, and diversity issues.

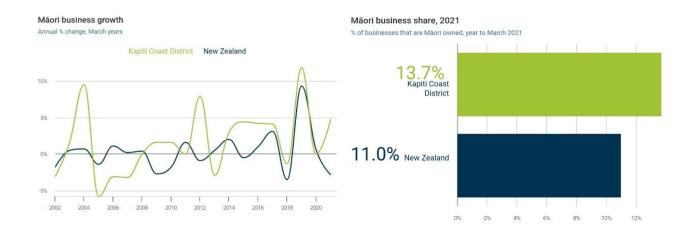
One of the main issues is the absence of a variety of training and research providers to foster a strong talent pipeline and support for Research and Development in the Tech ecosystem. While Kāpiti is home to Aotearoa New Zealand's first wānanga, Te Wānanga o Raukawa, Māori participation in the Tech industry remains low, highlighting the need for greater inclusivity in workforce development.

The absence of a physical Tech hub is another workforce challenge, particularly for Tech professionals who work from home and experience isolation. Without a dedicated space for collaboration, professionals must travel outside of the district for access to support, networks, and industry bodies like NZTech or ITP. While efforts are being made to address these needs locally, the lack of a centralised hub still limits opportunities for innovation and collective growth.

Additionally, despite a positive rise in women founders in Kāpiti's Tech cluster, diversity challenges persist. Nationally, only 29% of the Tech workforce is female, and there are significant gaps in the representation of Māori and Pacific Peoples. Furthermore, neurodiversity, although common in Tech, has traditionally been underserved, with workforce statistics showing considerable disadvantages for whalkaha.

The Māori Economy in Kāpiti

The Māori Economy is a strength in Kāpiti, growing at a greater rate than New Zealand holistically. However, the low volume of Pakihi Māori Tech businesses in Kāpiti reflects a nationwide trend which has a low workforce participation rate of 4.8%.



Te Wānanga o Raukawa

There is an opportunity to support the Māori economy in alignment with mana whenua and Māori organisations such as Te Wānanga o Raukawa (TWOR), further supported by the EDKB.

TWOR has identified that Tech is an area of focus which is outlined in its strategy *Whitihiko ki te Ao.* The strategy outlines the approach and commitment to accelerate Māori participation in Tech, and an incubator aimed at rangatahi and Pakihi Māori has commenced at TWOR.



It is expected that this will contribute to positive economic and social wellbeing impacts for whānau Māori. This assumption is supported by the findings outlined in the 2024 <u>Toi Hangarau Report</u> into Māori-owned Technology Enterprises which further outlines the opportunities for Māori in Tech.

Māoriland Hub

An internationally recognised centre of excellence for indigenous film and creativity in Ōtaki, Māoriland Hub contributes to the Tech industry by offering digital technology programmes in addition to its other offerings for rangatahi and adults as part of its wider purpose, such as M.A.T.C.H, Creative Intensifier.



Kāpiti Tech Vision

Establish Kāpiti as a dynamic Tech hub and premier lifestyle destination, where a thriving, collaborative Tech Community drives growth in the sector.

Strategic Objectives

In alignment with the recommendations from the Tech workshop and reports, strategic objectives have been developed that provide the foundations that establish Kāpiti as a hub of Tech and Tech-enabled innovation across growth sectors that includes skills training, creative industries, food and beverage manufacturing, healthcare, and tourism.

The strategic objectives serve as the foundation for the Action Plan and are equally important due to their interdependence. They guide initiatives that will drive the development of the Tech industry in Kāpiti. They address the current challenges to achieve the broader Tech industry vision, developed in partnership with the Tech Cluster.

Specifically, the objectives of this Action Plan over the next 18 months are to:

- Establish Formal Network Cluster by developing and implementing a sustainable action plan supported by resourcing to coordinate cluster activities, communicate the collective Tech community direction, and ensure effective implementation of the cluster's goals.
- Enhance Cluster Connection, Collaboration for the Tech Community by fostering
 consistent engagement within the Tech community, encouraging networking, knowledge
 sharing, and the formation of business partnerships to drive growth and innovation.
- Increase Cluster Visibility by creating a prominent and recognisable tech presence in Kāpiti, highlighting the region's successes and unique value proposition, and elevating the cluster's profile locally, nationally, and internationally.
- 4. Build Cluster Capability by supporting the growth and development of local Tech professionals and businesses, enhancing their capabilities, encouraging Tech community involvement, and creating a unified vision that contributes to the broader Tech ecosystem in Kāpiti.
- 5. **Engage with Iwi, Hapu, and Māori Organisations,** identifying priorities in the district relating to the Tech industry.

Outcomes

The Kāpiti Tech Cluster Action Plan aims to deliver the following outcomes.

Growth in the Kāpiti Tech Sector

- Support Tech innovation across Kāpiti
- Identify and promote new products from the Tech Cluster
- Promote more jobs in Tech
- Support Research and Development in Kāpiti

Key Performance Metrics

- Increase in GDP and GDP per capita in the K\u00e4piti Tech Sector
- Increase in the volume of Tech jobs in and income per capita in Kāpiti
- Increase in Tech by business unit number and employees
- Increased investment in Kāpiti Tech businesses
- Original Tech Pilot participants launch new Tech offerings (12 months / 24 months)
- Tech Cluster reflects positive feedback in post-activity surveys and in-person interviews
- Increase in media coverage on KāpitiTech

Attract and Develop Tech Talent

- Enhance the visibility of Kāpiti's Tech sector
- Strengthen local Tech community engagement
- Create opportunities to develop the Tech capability of Kāpiti Tech professionals
- Attract skilled Tech professionals to the district
- Determine and connect with Tech talent currently working outside of the district to meet future need and foster connection

Key Performance Metrics:

- Increased participation in Tech cluster meetings, workshops and other Cluster activities
- Anecdotal information on the ease of local recruitment and talent sourcing for opportunities within local tech businesses
- Survey data and in-person discussions reflect increased cross-collaboration between members of the Tech Cluster

Risks

Risk	Mitigation
Tech Cluster interest wanes	 Provide cluster meetings that foster connection and collaboration, and meet the Tech Cluster's needs Promote and encourage collaboration and engagement that promotes growth in addition to the cluster meetings, linking to the wider Tech ecosystem
Businesses relocate outside of Kāpiti	 Work closely with businesses to understand needs and challenges Foster a culture of support and collaboration Explore business case for a physical hub
Tech businesses do not have the depth of local workforce to grow	 Seek out opportunities to collaborate with tertiary and industry providers Link to the Skills and Workforce Plan to explore internship and programmes.
Perceived competition with other locations seeking to grow Tech industry	 Work collaboratively with stakeholders to complement initiatives Clear understanding of our value proposition Promote broader Wellington region initiatives that promote capability building for Kāpiti Tech businesses

Action Plan

Vision

To establish Kāpiti as a dynamic Tech hub and premier lifestyle destination, where a thriving, collaborative Tech

Community drives growth in the sector



Goal

Increase the volume of Tech Businesses and professionals in Kāpiti to enable a resilient, vibrant, and sustainable economy



Strategic Priorities

Establish Formal Network Cluster

2

Enhance Cluster
Connection,
Collaboration for the
Tech community

3

Increase Cluster
Visibility



Build Cluster Capability



Engage with iwi, hapu, and Māori organisations to identify priorities in Tech



Actions

Each priority has a suite of actions identified that are intended to progress the development of the Kāpiti Tech Cluster.

This table outlines the actions that will be taken to support the formalisation of the Kāpiti Tech Cluster. In consultation with the Tech community, EDKB and key stakeholders, the actions will be supported by the ED Lead and the Tech Cluster Coordinator. However, a number of actions will be executed by Tech cluster members as the cluster matures.

Strategic Objective/s	Action	Outputs	Outcomes	Timeline
Establish Formal Network Cluster	Implement the Tech Action Plan to guide cluster objectives and outcomes.	Insights for future Action Plan	An Action Plan for Tech Cluster development is developed and implemented, focusing on key actions that foster connection, collaboration, and measurable growth within the Cluster.	October 2024 - Ongoing
	Develop and implement industry engagement and communication plans.	Insights from the Industry Engagement and Communication Plans	Clear communication and engagement plans are implemented to drive consistent buy-in and participation in the Tech Cluster, providing insights that ensure that Tech Cluster remains community-driven and aligned with the needs of its Tech community members	October 2024 – Ongoing
	Determine what the Tech Cluster would need to enable it to be fully industry led.	Insights around funding options, governance, partnerships EDKB paper outlining findings	Findings provide strategic insights into funding, governance structures, and partnership models, paving the way for the Tech Cluster to transition into being fully industry-led.	February - September 2025
Enhance Cluster Connection, Collaboration for the Tech community	Establish regular Tech Cluster Meetings, incorporating findings from the Tech Pilot to deliver value and grow the Tech Cluster.	Calendar of meetings Code of conduct Insights	Regular opportunities are provided for Cluster members to connect, learn, share knowledge, and grow the Cluster, fostering stronger connections and emotional investment within the community.	Ongoing 4 – 6 weekly meetings
	Enhance online community engagement.	Linkedin group - Kāpiti Tech Linkedin posts	The Tech cluster has a digital space to connect, support one another, and share information relevant to one another.	October 2024 – Ongoing
	Investigate demand and need for a multipurpose Tech hub.	Initial Market sounding	Insights are captured to inform a draft business case.	January – June 2025
	Celebrate Kāpiti Tech through a calendar of events, leveraging and connecting with national initiatives where possible.	Tech professionals and business leaders champion the growth of Kāpiti Tech (Dragon's Den, TechStep, Tech Week, Library Tech Exhibition) TechWeek Events (including EduTech, Cybersecurity, SaaS, Data, and Compliance)	The profile of Tech in Kāpiti is increased with a view to creating a Tech conference or festival once the Cluster is well established, providing the Tech Cluster with opportunities to connect with a wider tech network and showcase tech in Kāpiti. Local Kāpiti expertise is showcased through strategic TechWeek events to elevate the profile and capabilities of the Kāpiti Tech Cluster.	February 2025 - ongoing

Develop relationships with relevant stakeholders and organisations to leverage intilatives that build regional, national and international profile.					
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Appendices

Kāpiti Tech findings: The Tech Cluster seeks a Tech Hub

One of the findings of the Tech workshops and Tech Report is that there is a desire for a physical Tech Hub which fosters innovation, connection, and economic growth.

The Tech and Startup Hubs closest to Kāpiti include CreativeHQ and the recently opened Startup Hub located in Rutherford St in Te Herenga Waka, Victoria University of Wellington's Business Campus. Additionally, a recent co-working space, The Depot, opened in Porirua in mid-2024 although this is not tailored to Tech and Innovation specifically.

There are various types of hubs, most having multiple purposes which generate sources of income. The <u>2024 Co-working report</u> shows this has been growing but co-working itself is generally not viable unless other services are offered along with anchor tenants and a niche.

Two examples of Hubs are identified on the following pages.

Tech Hub Case Study

Marlborough Tech & Innovation Hub (marlboroughnz.com)

Features

- 500m2
- Three meeting rooms
- Two hire rooms
- Prototyping facilities
- 30 desks
- Disabled space
- Shower



\$578,000 - Kanoa

\$460,000 - Better off Funding



The Marlborough Tech and Innovation Hub in Blenheim, opened in late 2023 with funding from Better Off Funding and Kānoa (PGF), and features in the Marlborough Economic Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2032. A robust business case was developed with external stakeholder engagement.

Te Kahu o Waipuna, a new library and art gallery, was partly funded by the government (\$11m of \$20m). After an exhaustive search for buyers and no suitable offers, the council repurposed the upper floor of the former library for the Tech Hub, following a thorough Council voting process.

Starting with 4-5 people, the Tech community expanded to 40-50, initially focusing on horticulture, viticulture, and agriculture, and latterly included the aerospace sector due to the nearby airport and Woodbourne defence base. The team strategically engaged with industries, focusing on high-growth sectors and leveraging connectivity via the airport.

Like Kāpiti, they are supported by a small, collaborative Economic Development team.

Multi-purpose co-working facility Case Study

https://generatornz.com/

The Generator sites are multipurpose co-working facilities, owned by New Zealand company Precinct Properties and led by CEO Scott Pritchard. In operation for approximately twelve years and operating six sites in Wellington and Auckland, they are expanding into Christchurch, and have



another site due to open in 2025 in the Wynard Quarter.

The Generator's award-winning properties offer a niche, premium service with facilities for long-term anchor tenants, offices, permanent desks, short-term (1-3 day) spaces for rent, as well as meeting and event spaces with different tiers of membership.

Additionally, the premium service offering includes full wrap-around



services including a café and bar, all consumables, IT support, printing, drycleaning, wellbeing offerings such as yoga, all consumables, massage chairs, discounts on restaurants, and access to all Generators in New Zealand.

While staffing increased as the sites' popularity grew, each facility is now run by 8-9 people. The fulltime staff also run events, activities that foster connection such as scavenger hunts, Christmas events, and training as well as allowing space to be rented for external parties.

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<u>Labour market statistics for disabled people - June 2024 quarter | Whaikaha - Ministry of Disabled People</u>

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BWA Insolvency quarterly market report Q1 2024

Insolvencies by industry		Year-c	n-year
-	Q1 2023	Q1 2024	Change
TRANSPORT & DELIVERY	14	25	79%
MANUFACTURING	18	32	78%
FINANCE & INSURANCE	13	23	77%
BUSINESS SERVICES	44	73	66%
FOOD & BEVERAGE	43	54	26%
CONSTRUCTION	115	126	10%
RETAIL	34	31	-9%