

**RITANZ**

Restructuring Insolvency  
& Turnaround  
Association of New Zealand

# The 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Corporate Restructuring, Insolvency & Turnaround Conference

20 – 21 May, 2026

The premier conference for  
accountants, lawyers, licensed  
insolvency practitioners, financiers  
and advisors working in our industry  
in New Zealand.

**BOOK ONLINE  
TODAY**

**Register Now**

or email [conf@ritanz.org.nz](mailto:conf@ritanz.org.nz)

# The Location

## Conference Location

Cordis Hotel  
83 Symonds Street  
Auckland

*Earn up to 13 CPD hours*

CONFERENCE CHAIR  
Hon. Paul Heath KC

GUEST SPEAKER  
Raelene Castle, ONZM

SOFT TOPIC SPEAKER  
Jacqui McGuire

WIRI SPEAKER  
Sarah Cowley-Ross

ECONOMIST  
Shamubeel Equb

MC for GALA DINNER  
Dai Henwood

## Our Speakers





## Message from the Chair of RITANZ

Kare Johnstone

Dear Members,

It is my pleasure, on behalf of the Board of RITANZ, to invite you to attend the 24th annual RITANZ Conference.

This year, we are delighted to return to the Cordis Hotel on Symonds Street, Auckland. The programme will again follow the same two-day format as last year. The conference will commence on **Wednesday, 20 May 2026**, with two concurrent workshops in the morning, followed by the WIRI luncheon and presentation. The main conference will begin at **1.45pm**, with welcome drinks to conclude the first day. The conference will close on **Thursday, 21 May 2026** with the Gala Dinner.

As we reflect on the past year, the New Zealand economy started 2026 with a degree of cautious optimism “fix it in 2026” was the saying, which was against a backdrop of continued uncertainty and sustained pressure on businesses. While interest rates have fallen, they remain elevated relative to pandemic levels. Softer demand and persistent cost pressures have contributed to an increase in both formal insolvencies and restructuring engagements, with insolvency appointments reaching a 10 year high.

The outlook for 2026 remains challenging. Businesses continue to face margin pressure and heightened stakeholder expectations. These conditions reinforce the importance of early engagement, collaboration, and pragmatic solutions-focused approaches.

Further uncertainty has emerged through geopolitical developments, including conflict in the Middle East and the resulting fuel supply disruptions. New Zealand is not immune to these impacts. The flow-on effects across supply chains, operating costs, and consumer spending are already being felt, presenting yet another test of resilience for businesses that have only recently emerged from the challenges of the pandemic.

As conditions tighten and fatigue once again builds across the business community, the role of our members becomes increasingly critical. Preserving economic value, guiding stakeholders through uncertainty, and supporting viable businesses remain at the core of our profession and are essential to maintaining confidence from our clients facing such challenges.

In this environment, the judgement and conduct of practitioners is paramount. It is essential that we continue to approach our work with professionalism, respect for stakeholders and peers, and a genuine understanding of the human impact of financial distress. Upholding best practice means being disciplined in the engagements we accept, realism about capacity, and a commitment to ensuring that

the advice we provide is wellfounded, appropriate, and worthy of the trust placed in our profession.

Against this backdrop, it is more important than ever for our members to come together to share insights, experiences and perspectives. The conference remains an important platform for connection and development. The reach of RITANZ continues to grow, with a strong focus on supporting Future Leaders' and Small Practice members, ensuring strength and stability of our profession for years to come.

On this note, we are excited to introduce a new Workshop format, with two sessions being held concurrently. The **Future Leaders' Workshop** will offer a deep dive into a **manufacturing case study**, providing both technical and strategic insights into the complexities of an insolvency appointment. Delegates will explore real life challenges such as conflicts between creditors, whether a party must disgorge what they thought was theirs and who will be prosecuted for their shortcomings.

Running alongside this, the **Small Practice Workshop** has been specifically developed for delegates operating in smaller practice environments. Covering practical and highly relevant topics that we have canvassed from our members, including **Compliance, PR/Media, Asset Realisation and AI tools**.

Both these workshops will be led by members and external speakers. While each workshop has been designed with a specific audience in mind, all members are welcome to sign up to attend.

The **main conference** commences on **Wednesday, 20 May 2026 at 1:45pm**, following the Workshops and WIRI luncheon, with an in-depth case study on **Libelle Group**, at 2:00pm, examining the liquidation of a key provider of the Government's school lunch programme. This is followed by our **Spotlight session** on the **Transport Sector**, where a panel of experts will discuss the roadblocks and resilience of the industry facing disruption, compounded by sharp spikes in fuel prices.

Day one of the conference will also feature sessions on **Litigation Funding**, with Clover Risk Funding, and the **Privacy Act** and key consideration for members, before concluding with our Welcome Function, at the Cordis Hotel.

**Day two** opens with keynote insights from **Raelene Castle**, CEO of Sport New Zealand Group, who will share her perspectives on leadership and governance. Raelene has considerable experience working across senior management roles in Australia and New Zealand. This will be followed by **Shamubeel Eaqub**, returning to provide his highly engaging economic outlook.

We are also pleased to welcome **Jacqui McGuire**, Clinical Psychologist, writer, speaker and media contributor, who will present her practical strategies to optimise personal and professional wellbeing in work and relationships. The popular **Legal Update** follows lunch.

The afternoon will feature three dynamic and engaging panels. The first focuses on **The Māori Economy**, exploring the What, Why and How for working with Māori clients or on a restructure that has a relevant Kaupapa Māori issue. The second examines the impact of **Rural insolvencies** – dealing with the key issues. The panel will be made up of leading experts from insolvency practitioners, banking, farm advising and legal.

The final session will explore the **Innovative Uses of and Challenges to DOCAs**, where we will be joined by Katie Higgins, Partner, Clayton Utz, and Dave Hacker, Merricks Capital, to explore the various examples of innovative uses of DOCAs and administration.

We look forward to the Life Member award at the Conference Gala dinner – always a highlight of the evening.

We're also delighted to welcome **Dai Henwood** as our MC for the evening.

The conference will conclude at 5.30pm Thursday, 21 May 2026, with the Gala Dinner finishing at 10:30pm.

We extend our sincere thanks to Hon. Paul Heath, KC, for his continued support of RITANZ and the broader profession, marking his 23rd conference as Chair.

We also acknowledge the significant efforts of our Conference Committee for their commitment, dedication and the considerable time invested in delivering this event. Our thanks also go to our Executive Director, Rachael Peacock, and Events Coordinator, Julia Clancy, for their invaluable contributions.

We encourage you to take full advantage of this opportunity to expand your knowledge, connect with industry leaders, and strengthen your relationships with your peers and fellow members. Finally, we thank all our sponsors for their ongoing supporting, with special recognition to our Platinum Sponsors, Turners Auctions and Clover Risk Funding.

I look forward to seeing you there.

Kare Johnstone  
Chair

## At a glance

### Wednesday, 20 May 2026

8:15 am Registration Opens

**8:30 am**

**Workshop: Future Leaders' – Manufacturing Case Study**

**9:30 am**

**Workshop: Small Practice Seminar – Key Issues Impacting Business Operations**

10:30 am Morning Tea

12:15 pm WIRI Lunch

12:30 pm WIRI Presentation: Goals, Grit and Governance – A Chat With Sarah Cowley Ross

1:45 pm Conference Opening

2:00 pm Serving Lunch In Liquidation: The Libelle School Lunch Case Study

3:00 pm Roadblocks & Resilience – A Sector Under Strain

4:00 pm Afternoon Tea

4:30 pm Litigation Funding In New Zealand – When, Why And How?

5:00 pm Managing Privacy In Insolvency

6:00 pm Welcome Drinks

### Thursday, 21 May 2026

8:30 am Conference Opens

8:35 am Directors Session with Raelene Castle ONZM

9:35 am Economic Update

10:30 am Morning Tea

11:00 am The Māori Economy: What, Why And How ...

12:00 pm Burn Bright, Not Out: Burnout, Emotional Load And Protective Leadership

1:00 pm Lunch

2:00 pm Legal Update

3:00 pm Rural Insolvencies—Dealing With The Key Issues

4:00 pm Afternoon Tea

4:30 pm More Than A Document. Innovative Uses Of Administration And Docas

5:30 pm Networking Drinks

7:00 pm Gala Dinner

DAY 1

20 May 2026

**Cordis Hotel**  
83 Symonds Street, Auckland

## Workshop #1

Great Room 1

9:30 am

### Small Practice Seminar – Key Issues Impacting Business Operations



Workshop sponsored  
by BWA Insolvency

Speakers: **Sam Brown**, Skylarc; **Shane Prince**, Turners; **Mike Edmonds**, Number8; **Janko Marcetic**, Chapman Tripp; **Dave Howden**, SupaHuman; **Laura Air**, AlexanderPR; **Lilly**, AlexanderPR and **Emma Laing**, Laing Insolvency

Moderator: **Larissa Logan**, Fixity

This intensive, practical four part programme features expert sessions on the topics our members have identified as having the greatest impact on their practice.

#### **Asset realisation strategies for small and regional appointments**

Join Sam Brown (Skylarc), Mike Edmonds (Number 8), and Shane Prince (Turners) for a panel discussion on navigating current market conditions and achieving the best outcomes in small and regional insolvency appointments. Moderator: **Emma Laing**, Laing Insolvency

#### **PR and media engagement strategies**

Laura Air and Emily Lilly (Alexander PR) will share practical guidance on responding to media enquiries and the impact media engagement has on insolvency work.

#### **Real world AI efficiency tips for practitioners**

Dave Howden (SupaHuman) will demonstrate how AI can be used in practice to improve productivity, increase efficiency, and streamline workflows.

#### **Compliance requirements for LIPs in small practice**

Janko Marcetic, Partner at Chapman Tripp, will provide an overview of key compliance obligations for Licensed Insolvency Practitioners and practical guidance on navigating these requirements.

DAY 1

20 May 2026

**Cordis Hotel**  
83 Symonds Street, Auckland

## Workshop #2

Great Room 2

8:30 am

### Future Leaders' – Manufacturing Case Study



Workshop sponsored  
by BWA Insolvency

Speakers: **George Bannerman**, BDO; **Sophie Hawksworth**, Simpson Grierson; **Nick Hale**, Westpac Institutional Bank; **Kerry Puddle**, TWA Legal; **Bryan Williams**, BWA Insolvency

When business failure occurs, stress and demands across all stakeholders are inevitable. Situations such as conflicts between creditors, whether a party must disgorge what they thought was theirs and who will be prosecuted for their shortcomings are just some of the issues that are every day for an Insolvency Practitioner. The field of insolvency, while narrow in comparison to business success, is enormous when considering its impact on society and the individuals it effects.

The Future Leaders Workshop is designed to provide insights into the structural framework of the insolvency industry as well as to identify key concepts and strategic considerations that are essential to those with leadership in their sights.

Through a case study, participants are asked to engage in a fictional fact situation that isolates key concepts and then to robustly challenge them by discussion with other participants and the panelists.

This high impact workshop has been designed, and will be delivered, by industry experts that have many years of hands-on experience. Valuable learnings to be shared by the panelists, earned across their own careers, are intended to support early mid-career participants in becoming a future leader in the industry.

DAY 1

20 May 2026

**Cordis Hotel**  
83 Symonds Street, Auckland

**8:15 am**  
Registration Opens

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RuddWatts.

**8:30 am – 12:30 pm**  
Workshop Sessions

**10:30 am**  
Morning Tea

**12:15 pm**  
WIRI Lunch

DENTONS

Deloitte.

Women in  
RESTRUCTURING  
& INSOLVENCY

**12:30 pm**

**Wiri Presentation**  
**Goals, Grit And Governance – A**  
**Chat With Sarah Cowley Ross**

Great Room 2

Sarah Cowley Ross is an Olympian, broadcaster, and governance leader passionate about health, wellbeing, and high performance.

A proud New Zealand-born Samoan, Sarah realised her childhood dream when she represented New Zealand in the heptathlon at the London 2012 Olympic Games. Across a distinguished 15-year international athletics career, she competed at two Commonwealth Games—Melbourne 2006 (heptathlon) and Glasgow 2014 (high jump)—and finished her career representing the Asia-Pacific team at the 2014 World Athletics Continental Cup.

Holding dual degrees in Health Science (Physiotherapy) and Communications, Sarah brings a unique blend of performance insight and storytelling to her work. Since retiring from elite sport, she has become a respected voice in sports media and leadership. She was part of the Olympic Broadcasting Services commentary team at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games and is a regular commentator for Athletics New Zealand and a host for TVNZ TrackStars.

Sarah holds several sports governance positions at a national and regional level and has previously been on a Director of the NZ Olympic Committee. She is also a columnist for LockerRoom, where she champions stories that elevate women in sport.

An engaging and authentic speaker, Sarah draws on her experiences in high-performance sport, leadership, and life to inspire others to perform at their best.

Above all, she is most proud of her role as mum to Max and Poppy.

DAY 1

20 May 2026

**Cordis Hotel**  
83 Symonds Street, Auckland

**1:45 pm**

## Conference Opening

Great Room 1

Speaker: **Kare Johnstone**, RITANZ Chair and Partner, McGrathNicol

Chair: **Hon. Paul Heath KC**, Bankside Chambers

**2:00 pm**

## Serving Lunch In Liquidation: The Libelle School Lunch Case Study

Speakers: **Rob Campbell**, Deloitte; **Christine James**, Senior Associate, Dentons; **James McMillan**, Dentons; **David Webb**, Deloitte

Serving Lunch in Liquidation: The Libelle School Lunch Case Study

This case study examines the liquidation of Libelle, a member of the School Lunch Collective and provider of the Government's school lunch programme, where continuity of service was non negotiable. It traces the engagement from pre appointment planning through to sale and post completion outcomes.

The session outlines the structure of the school lunch programme, its funding and key stakeholders, before addressing the condition of the business pre appointment, the

immediate pressures faced, and the rationale for the chosen insolvency pathway. It then covers the critical matters dealt with upon appointment, including maintaining nationwide operations, managing premises and employees, and implementing a services agreement to ensure meals continued to be delivered.

The sale process is examined, focusing on speed, structure, interaction with secured creditors, operational constraints, and the legal and commercial protections required where the liquidators were effectively dealing with a single counterparty. The session concludes with a discussion of post sale settlement issues and investigations, drawing practical lessons for practitioners managing high profile insolvencies shaped by public interest and operational continuity.

**3:00 pm**

## Roadblocks & Resilience – A Sector Under Strain

Moderator: **Leon Bowker**, Partner - Deal Advisory, KPMG

Panelists: **Logan Fenemor**, Director, Commercial & Industrial, New Zealand, Gordon Brothers; **Liza Gunn**, GM Customer Service & Acting GM Digital, NZ Post; **James Smith** GM of Policy and Advocacy for National Road Carriers

New Zealand's transport sector is navigating significant disruption, with shifting industry



DAY 1

dynamics, rising operating costs, labour shortages, tightening freight demand, and financial pressure compounded by sharp spikes in diesel prices driven by geopolitical tensions, including associated global developments. This panel will unpack the sectors most pressing challenges and explore the turnaround strategies emerging in response to these pressures. Fleet values and current buyer appetite as indicators of market sentiment will also be examined, giving practitioners a clear view of where stress is building and how restructuring professionals can best support transport operators in an increasingly volatile environment.

**4:00 pm**

**Afternoon Tea**

**4:30 pm**

**Litigation Funding In New Zealand – When, Why And How?**

Interviewers: **Jennifer Tunna**, Director - TWA Legal and **James Burt**, Barrister

Interviewee: **Stephen Humphreys**, Chief Executive Officer, Clover Risk Funding

Exploring the circumstances in which litigation funding can be used to access claims that might not otherwise be available. Clover Risk Funding is a new sponsor of RITANZ this year

**RITANZ**

**20 May 2026**

**Cordis Hotel**

83 Symonds Street, Auckland

and are well placed to help members understand how and when to access litigation funding.

**5:00 pm**

**Managing Privacy In Insolvency**

Moderator: **Lucy Harrison**, Senior Associate, Simpson Grierson

Speakers: **Anita Birkinshaw**, Special Counsel, Simpson Grierson; **Michelle Dunlop**, Senior Associate, Simpson Grierson

This presentation will explore the practical and legal challenges of managing privacy in an insolvency context. It will examine how insolvency practitioners balance their statutory duties of investigation, reporting, and asset realisation with obligations under privacy law. The Q&A format will discuss handling of personal and commercially sensitive information, data sharing with creditors and regulators and responding to data breaches. The session will also highlight recent developments, common risk areas, and best practice approaches to ensure compliance while maintaining transparency and efficiency in administrations, liquidations, and receiverships.

**6:00 pm**

**Welcome Drinks**

Cordis Prefunction

Dress code: business attire



Sponsored  
by KPMG

DAY 2

21 May 2026

Cordis Hotel

83 Symonds Street, Auckland

8:30 am

Conference Opens

Hon. Paul Heath KC, Conference Chair

8:35 am

Directors Session

Speaker: **Raelene Castle**, ONZM

Raelene Castle is the CEO of Sport New Zealand. She has worked across senior management roles in Australia and New Zealand. Raelene brings a wealth of knowledge on the challenges within business and the boardroom both as a CEO and director. Addressing the changing shape of sport organisations, dealing with difficult financial situations, what boards need to focus on and the political issues of working with boards.

9:35 am

Economic Update

Speaker: **Shamubeel Eaqub**

Economic Update: 2026 and beyond

10:30 am

Morning Tea

11:00 am

The Māori Economy: **What, Why And How ...**

Moderator: **Te Aopare Dewes**, Chapman Tripp

Panellists: **Michael Harper**, Chapman Tripp;  
**Juliet Tainui-Hernandez**

This session explores **What** the Māori economy is; **Why** it's relevant to restructuring and insolvency practitioners in Aotearoa and some tips and tricks (the **How**) for working with Māori clients or on a restructure that has a relevant kaupapa Māori issue.

12:00 pm

**Burn Bright, Not Out: Burnout, Emotional Load And Protective Leadership**

Speaker: **Jacqui McGuire**, Clinical Psychologist

Burnout is often misunderstood as individual weakness or poor self care. In reality, it is a predictable response to prolonged emotional load, cognitive strain and ethical tension –

## DAY 2

all of which are embedded in insolvency and turnaround work. Alongside commercial and regulatory pressure, practitioners also carry a significant invisible load: the emotional labour of managing distressed clients, navigating conflict and holding boundaries with empathy.

This keynote explores burnout not as fragility, but as a systems and leadership issue. It equips professionals and firm leaders with practical, evidence based strategies to protect sustainable performance without lowering standards.

### 1:00 pm

#### Lunch

### 2:00 pm

#### Legal Update

Speakers: **Tim Fitzgerald**, Partner, Bell Gully; **James Ruddell**, Senior Associate, Bell Gully; **Megan Staines**, Senior Associate, Bell Gully

This session will be a focused update on the most important and interesting case law developments from the past year. We will canvas the decisions most relevant to practitioners to highlight what they mean for the state of the law, and what that means for practitioners in practice, drawing from significant developments in New Zealand and overseas.

**21 May 2026**

**Cordis Hotel**

83 Symonds Street, Auckland

### 3:00 pm

#### Rural Insolvencies—Dealing With The Key Issues

Speakers: **Rees Logan**, Partner, BDO; **Crispin Vinnell**, Partner, Anthony Harper; **James Law**, Project Manager, ANZ Bank; **Chris Lewis**, Farm Advisor, Baker Ag

New Zealand's rural economy contributes to 10% of GDP and over 80% of all export goods. In recent years, the rural economy has been performing well, but the sector is not without its challenges, and a formal insolvency process for a rural business can have significant impacts on stakeholders and communities. This expert panel discussion, introduced and led by Rees Logan, will cover the key issues that arise in a rural insolvency, including:

- First day / planning considerations
- Managing debtor family dynamics and expectations
- Animal welfare issues
- Considerations for managing crops
- Working with key stakeholders, including employees
- Resource Management Act compliance
- Health and safety
- Asset management issues (e.g., theft of vehicles and/or other equipment)
- Key aspects of sale and purchase agreements unique to selling rural assets
- Managing purchaser expectations



**21 May 2026**

**Cordis Hotel**

83 Symonds Street, Auckland

**4:00 pm**

Afternoon Tea

**4:30 pm**

**More Than A Doca-  
Ument. Innovative Uses Of  
Administration And Docas**

Moderator: **Alex McDuff**, Partner - Russell  
McVeagh

Panellists: **Katie Higgins**, Partner - Clayton  
Utz; **Dave Hacker**, Merricks Capital

The panel will explore various examples of innovative uses of voluntary administration, particularly DOCAs, to preserve flexibility, manage risk and ultimately deliver better stakeholder outcomes.

**5:30 pm**

Networking Drinks

Cordis Prefunction

Dress code: business attire



Sponsored by  
TWA Legal

**7:00 pm**

Gala Dinner

Great Rooms

Dress code: business attire

MC: **Dai Henwood**



Wine sponsored  
by Buddle Findlay



Dinner sponsored by  
Russel McVeagh

# Speaker Biographies



## The Honourable Paul Heath KC / RITANZ Conference Chair

Paul Heath KC was called to the New Zealand Bar in 1978. After time as a partner in a firm of barristers and solicitors, he moved to the separate Bar in 1998 and was appointed Queen's Counsel the same year. He was appointed a Judge of the High Court of New Zealand in March 2002, and sat intermittently in the Court of Appeal between 2003 and 2016. He retired from the Bench, with effect from 6 April 2018. On 9 April 2018, Paul joined Bankside Chambers in Auckland, offering services primarily in dispute resolution (particularly arbitration) and insolvency advice. From the same date, he became an Associate of the leading set of insolvency chambers in London, South Square.

Between 1997 and 1999, Paul was a consultant to the New Zealand Law Commission on commercial issues. He was appointed a member of the Commission in the period between 1999 and 2002. During that time, he oversaw preparation of a report recommending adoption of the UNCITRAL Model Law on Cross-Border Insolvency, was responsible for the preparation of study papers for the Ministry of Economic Development's insolvency law review and also attended meetings of UNCITRAL's Working Group on Insolvency, chairing the meeting on one occasion. Paul was responsible for preparing the first draft of the UNCITRAL publication Judicial Perspective to the Model Law on Cross-Border Insolvency, now available on the UNCITRAL website. Paul is a co-consulting editor of Heath & Whale on Insolvency. He was granted life membership of RITANZ in 2015.

In addition to his private work, Paul continues to hold judicial office in four jurisdictions. He is a Judge of Abu Dhabi Global Market (ADGM) Courts, a Judge of the Court of Appeal in both Fiji and Tonga, and Chief Justice of the Pitcairn Island.

# Speaker Biographies



## **Raelene Castle / ONZM**

Raelene Castle joined Rugby Australia as the code's first female Chief Executive Officer, where she held the role from January 2018 until April 2020. Following her move to New Zealand, Raelene became the CEO of Sport New Zealand, beginning her role in December of 2020.

Prior to this, she was previously the Chief Executive of the Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs, where she spent four years leading the National Rugby League club following her 6 years as Chief Executive of Netball New Zealand.

Before beginning her career in sports administration, Raelene built a successful corporate career with senior roles in communications and sales & marketing and general management at some of New Zealand leading companies, including Telecom, Bank of New Zealand, and Fuji Xerox.

She has a rich sporting background as a former representative-level netball, tennis and lawn bowls player. Raelene has held several governance roles in sport, previously serving as a board director of the ANZ Championship netball, the International Federations of Netball Associations (IFNA), SANZAAR Rugby and World Rugby Council.

In 2015, Raelene was made an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit (ONZM) for services to Business and Sport.



## **Shamubeel Eaquad / Economist**

Shamubeel Eaquad is an experienced economist who makes economics easy. He is also an author, media commentator and a thought leading public speaker.

He has over two decades of experience as an economist in Wellington, Melbourne and Auckland in leading international banks and consultancy. He currently balances a portfolio of consulting, public speaking, governance and family duties.

He holds a BCOM with Honours in Economics from Lincoln University and is also a Chartered Financial Analyst.

He lives in Auckland with his wife and two sons.

# Speaker Biographies



## **Sarah Cowley Ross**

Sarah Cowley Ross is an Olympian, broadcaster, and governance leader passionate about health, wellbeing, and high performance.

A proud New Zealand-born Samoan, Sarah realised her childhood dream when she represented New Zealand in the heptathlon at the London 2012 Olympic Games. Across a distinguished 15-year international athletics career, she competed at two Commonwealth Games—Melbourne 2006 (heptathlon) and Glasgow 2014 (high jump)—and finished her career representing the Asia-Pacific team at the 2014 World Athletics Continental Cup.

Holding dual degrees in Health Science (Physiotherapy) and Communications, Sarah brings a unique blend of performance insight and storytelling to her work. Since retiring from elite sport, she has become a respected voice in sports media and leadership. She was part of the Olympic Broadcasting Services commentary team at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games and is a regular commentator for Athletics New Zealand and a host for TVNZ TrackStars.

Sarah holds several sports governance positions at a national and regional level and has previously been on a Director of the NZ Olympic Committee. She is also a columnist for LockerRoom, where she champions stories that elevate women in sport.

An engaging and authentic speaker, Sarah draws on her experiences in high-performance sport, leadership, and life to inspire others to perform at their best.

Above all, she is most proud of her role as mum to Max and Poppy.



## **Jacqui McGuire / Clinical Psychologist**

Jacqui McGuire is a clinical psychologist, writer, speaker, and media contributor, with a passion for workplace wellbeing. Jacqui translates complex psychological studies into easy-to-understand concepts. She provides practical strategies to optimise personal and professional wellbeing, work, and relationships. All with the simple goal of helping people live the good life.

# Speaker Biographies



## Te Aopare Dewes / Chapman Tripp

Te Aopare leads Te Waka Ture, Chapman Tripp's specialist Māori legal and advisory practice, which provides legal and strategic advice to clients across Aotearoa. She has over 15 years' experience and specialises in corporate structuring, governance, strategic and commercial advice for iwi and hapū, Māori landowners and for the Crown and private entities. Te Aopare is from Ngāti Porou, Ngāti Whakaue and Ngāti Rangitahi and is a fluent speaker of te reo Māori.



## Juliet Tainui-Hernandez

Juliet Tainui-Hernandez (Ngāi Tahu, Ngāti Kahungunu, Te Whakatōhea) is a professional director and adviser with experience across the legal, financial services, commercial and iwi sectors. She serves on the boards of ASB Bank, Whai Rawa Fund, Ōnuku Rūnanga, Rewiring Aotearoa and Skills Group Trust, sits on the Nominating Committee of the New Zealand Superannuation Fund, and is a member of the Waitangi Tribunal.

Juliet previously served as Assistant Governor at the Reserve Bank of New Zealand and as a director of Ngāi Tahu Holdings Corporation. Earlier in her career she spent two decades as an international regulatory lawyer and law firm executive, including as a Partner at Norton Rose Fulbright. Her broad experience brings a unique perspective on risk, regulation, and long-term institutional stewardship across complex systems.



## Katie Higgins / Clayton Utz

Katie has over 25 years' experience advising financial institutions, companies, funds, investors, directors, and insolvency practitioners on complex restructuring, distressed investing, and insolvency matters. She has played a key role in high-profile administrations of major retail and energy companies and regularly advises on debt and structured capital markets transactions across the resources, health, and fintech sectors. Katie is also an experienced finance lawyer, having acted on a range of financing transactions and navigating complex intercreditor and stakeholder situations.

Katie is the national head of Clayton Utz's Restructuring & Insolvency practice

# Speaker Biographies



## **Dave Hacker, Merricks Capital / Merricks Capital**

Dave is a Director in Private Credit at Merricks Capital and specialises in restructuring, transactions, and special situations. He has led a range of complex and high-profile restructuring engagements, navigating and managing a broad range of domestic and international stakeholder requirements. Dave also works to identify and execute special situation opportunities which provide attractive risk adjusted returns. Prior to joining Merricks Capital, Dave worked in restructuring and transactions across KPMG and Ferrier Hodgson.



## **Chris Lewis / BakerAG**

Chris Lewis started his consultancy career in Northland (1985) after completing an Agricultural Science degree at Massey University. Chris was an MAF / Agriculture New Zealand consulting officer from 1986 – 1994. Working in Warworth, Rotorua, Waipukurau and Wairarapa. In 1994 Chris left the Ministry of Agriculture to become a partner of Baker & Associates Ltd now BakerAg.

Chris met his wife Rachael while working (OE) in London. They now live on the outskirts of Masterton while their two young adult children are away expanding their horizons.

Chris has specialised as a dairy consultant. With a strong interest in farm modelling systems and developed the Dairy System Monitoring service, now co-owned with Farmax and Macfarlane Rural Business.

Milklines is the monthly report for dairy farmers and rural professionals which is edited by Chris. See elsewhere on the BakerAg website for more information and the opportunity to subscribe.

From 2016 Chris was the BakerAg board chairman but in 2023 Chris has stepped back from the chair to take on a managing director role for BakerAg but will be keeping a hand in farm consultancy and retaining a few clients.

# Speaker Biographies



## **Liza Gunn / General Manager Customer Service and Acting GM Digital, NZ Post**

Visionary transformation leader with 15+ years driving enterprise-wide change, customer experience innovation, and operational excellence across complex, multi-regional environments. As a Tier 3 executive at NZ Post, has led national teams of 300+ delivering measurable impact across CX, digital enablement, and strategic growth, achieving multimillion-dollar EBIT improvements, reducing churn, and elevating NPS through data-driven, human-centered initiatives. Specialise in turning complexity into clarity—whether through Salesforce implementation, AI-powered service design, or cross-functional collaboration with Product, Sales, and Marketing. Leadership style blends strategic foresight with empathetic coaching, fostering inclusive cultures where people thrive and performance scales.



## **James Smith / General Manager of Policy and Advocacy, National Road Carriers**

James started his career in transport as a management cadet for New Zealand Government Railways in 1982 and spent until 1995 working in a variety of roles within their freight division through the transition to State Owned Enterprise and Privatisation in 1993.

Departing Rail in 1995 James moved into Road Transport. First joining the NRC team in 1998 until leaving in 2011 to take up leadership roles at Toll and Halls.

James returned to NRC in 2021 and is tasked with improving the Policy and Regulatory settings for our industry.



## **Dave Howden / SupaHuman**

A creative engineer who's been building things in emerging tech since 2001 – across BT, Orange UK, Umbrellar, Pax8, and Integration Fox. Now one of the founders at Supahuman, where they've been building an AI-first operating system for vocational education and workforce training in Australia and New Zealand. Work with trades training providers, polytechnics, and industry bodies to make skills development more effective, more accessible, and more connected to what employers actually need.

# Speaker Biographies



## **Laura Air / Director, AlexanderPR**

Appointed Director in July 2024 after 17 years with Alexander PR, Laura has in-depth experience working with local and global companies and leaders, notably across financial services, construction, retail, real estate, professional services and the arts.

Laura specialises in reputation building, crisis and issue management, complex legal communications, and M&A, restructures, and insolvency. She has worked on several landmark transactions, particularly in the financial services sector and has advised on complex cases with national and mainstream interest, including strategies to navigate the lifting of name suppression during delicate and sensitive legal cases. Clients rely on Laura's combination of strategic PR counsel, practical know how and calm demeanour to resolve complex issues, navigate ambiguity and consistently deliver successful outcomes.



## **Emily Lilly / Senior Account Director, AlexanderPR**

Emily is a communications professional with a rare flair for understanding the full spectrum of corporate communications, PR, content, and marketing disciplines and how they impact organisational effectiveness. Having worked at a senior level at both corporate and agency side, Emily has delivered on numerous international award-winning PR & content led campaigns through her focus on strategy and implementation that exceeds clients' core stated outcomes.

Working with teams across multiple industries supporting national and global clients, she brings common sense, creativity, and an action bias to her clients across sectors including technology and education, professional services, property, scaling startups as well as financial services organisations.

Originally from Austria, Emily's clients benefit from her think global, act local multidisciplinary approach.

# Speaker Biographies



## Dai Henwood / Gala Dinner MC

Dai Henwood is one of New Zealand's most beloved comedians. His stand-up comedy has taken him around the world, with international touring, sell-out seasons at the New Zealand International Comedy Festival, and invitations to perform at renowned events such as the Just For Laughs Festival in Montreal. Among many accolades, he has won the Billy T Award, the Fred Award (twice), NZCG Best Male Comedian, and the Rielly Comedy Award. In 2025, Dai was recognised with a New Zealand Order of Merit (ONZM) for his services to the entertainment industry and charitable fundraising.

A music fanatic, Dai spent 10 years on radio before beginning his TV career, where he started out on C4 cult favourites Insert Video Here and Roll the Dai. Since then, he has hosted a number of popular shows such as Family Feud, Dancing with the Stars, and Lego Masters. He is also known as a staple favourite on 7 Days.

Dai is constantly rallying the New Zealand nation with support and joy—most notably during the COVID-19 lockdown, when he launched the comedy show Dai's House Party to keep spirits high and bring laughter into people's homes. He continues to support causes close to his heart, with affiliations to Starship Children's Hospital and Hello Sunday Morning.

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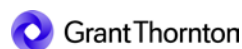
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## Venue

### Cordis Hotel

83 Symonds Street  
Auckland

#### Parking

[Secure Parking Guide](#)

## Accommodation

### Cordis Hotel

83 Symonds Street  
Auckland

**BOOK NOW** >

*Please note no rooms are being held.  
Rooms are subject to availability at the  
time of booking.*

# Terms and Conditions

## PROGRAM CHANGES

This conference is an in-person event, the conference sessions will be recorded and streamed this year. Details regarding this conference were confirmed and correct at the time of publication. RITANZ reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to cancel the conference or amend the details of the conference at any time.

## RECORDING AND VIRTUAL ACCESS

All conference sessions will be recorded and made available via secure virtual access to delegates who specifically request the link. Recordings will be stored securely, and access to these recordings may be requested following the conference.

## PRIVACY NOTICE

The personal information you provide on this form is collected and held by RITANZ for the purpose of processing your registration and keeping you informed of upcoming services and events. The provision by you of your personal information is voluntary, but if you do not provide some or all the personal information requested, we may be unable to process your registration. Pursuant to the Privacy Act 2020, you have the right to access your personal information and to request that it be corrected.

RITANZ's Privacy Policy is available [here](#).

## RITANZ ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR AND SOCIAL FUNCTIONS POLICY

RITANZ's policy for social gatherings is available [here](#).

To attend the conference, you are required to acknowledge below that you have read and understood the policy and agree to observe and be bound by it during the conference.

A reminder that members should also ensure that any guest of a RITANZ member adheres to this Policy.

Any behaviour that contravenes the Policy will not be tolerated, and we reserve the right to refuse entry or to remove people or content from a physical or virtual conference premises.

## CANCELLATION

Should you be unable to attend the conference, you may transfer your registration, and a substitute delegate is welcome to attend in your place. Please let us know your colleague's name and details no later than 48 hours prior to the conference.

Alternatively, RITANZ will offer a refund (less a \$100 service charge) for cancellations received in writing (letter or email) at least seven working days prior to the event. Regrettably, due to RITANZ's obligations with the conference venue, no refund will be made for cancellations received less than seven working days prior to the event.

## WORKSHOP

The interactive Workshops on 20 May 2026 are an in-person event, the preferred format to maximise learning opportunities and career development. If the Workshop cannot be held in person it will be deferred to a later date. In the event that a delegate from outside of Auckland is not able to attend on the rescheduled date, RITANZ will refund the delegate the workshop registration fee (or, where relevant, the difference between attending as a workshop/conference package or conference only attendee).

**Booking  
Options**

**Register here**

**Book now via email**

**Gala  
Dinner**

**Group  
Bookings**

**For Group Bookings please email the  
completed registration form on the next  
page to [conf@ritanz.org.nz](mailto:conf@ritanz.org.nz)**

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# Registration Form

## 24th Annual Corporate Restructuring, Insolvency and Turnaround Conference

20 – 21 May 2026

Cordis Hotel  
83 Symonds Street  
Auckland

### Register Online

EMAIL [conf@ritanz.org.nz](mailto:conf@ritanz.org.nz)

WEB [ritanz.org.nz](http://ritanz.org.nz)

MAIL RITANZ, c/o PO Box  
287, Shortland Street,  
Auckland 1140

### DELEGATE DETAILS

Surname ..... First name .....

Position held ..... Email .....

Additional delegate(s) full name .....

Position held ..... Email .....

Firm .....

Address .....

Tel No .....

Contact Name (if not delegate) .....

By registering to attend the conference, you acknowledge that you have read and understood the Terms and Conditions on page 16, and the Acceptable Behaviour and Social Function Policy, and that you agree to observe and be bound by those Terms and the Policy.

TICKET		Qty	Subtotal
Member Conference fee	\$1575 + GST = \$1811.25		
Member Conference + Dinner	\$1697.50 + GST = \$1952.13		
Member Conference + Dinner + Workshop	\$1847.50 + GST = \$2124.63		
Member Conference for Small Practitioners, Government, Academics - 30% discount	\$1102.50 + GST = \$1267.88		
Member Conference for Small Practitioners, Government, Academics + Dinner	\$1347.50 + GST = \$1549.63		
<b>NON MEMBERS</b>			
Conference fee surcharge (includes membership*)	\$1900 + GST = \$2185		
<b>ADD ONS</b>			
Workshop	\$300 + GST = \$345		
Gala Dinner	\$245 + GST = \$281.75		
		<b>Total</b>	

\* Subject to membership process

# RITANZ Conference Planning Committee



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**Chair**  
**TWA Legal**



**David Webb**  
**Treasurer**  
**Deloitte**



**Mornet Van Der Merwe**  
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**Logan Fenemor**  
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**Emma Laing**  
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**James McMillan**  
**Committee Member**  
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**Rachael Peacock**  
**Executive Director**



**Julia Clancy**  
**Conference Organiser**