

Business Kāpiti

2026-2027

Food & Beverage Capability Programme

For the people growing, making, selling and serving food and drink.

Better products. Stronger businesses. New markets.

Built around your business.

Industry-led. Business-focused.



Behind every product on a shelf, every plate served and every new idea brought to market is a business making decisions about where to invest its time, people and money.

Across Kāpiti and Horowhenua, our food and beverage sector brings together growers, artisan makers, beverage producers, hospitality operators and retailers. Each faces different opportunities and challenges, from developing new products and managing production costs to strengthening teams, reaching new customers and entering larger markets.

We know that what works for one business won't necessarily work for another.

That's why we've worked alongside local businesses, our Food & Beverage Cluster Leadership Committee and industry specialists to develop a more targeted approach to business capability.

The 2026–27 programme brings together practical workshops, specialist development programmes and individual mentoring, designed to meet businesses at different stages of growth. Whether you're refining your first product, improving commercial performance or preparing to scale, the focus is on building skills and knowledge you can put to work.

Importantly, this programme forms part of a wider commitment to strengthening our regional food and beverage industry. Alongside capability development, we're creating stronger connections between businesses, improving pathways to market and supporting opportunities that are difficult to achieve individually.

Our ambition is simple: more capable businesses, stronger commercial connections and a food and beverage sector equipped to make the most of what's next.

Programme overview

Find your next step. Every business has a different starting point. Whether you're developing a new product, improving profitability or preparing to grow, there's a pathway worth exploring.

Explore the 2026–27 programme

What you're working towards	Programme
Testing a product idea or starting out	NZFIN Catalyst Foundations
Developing new opportunities or planning growth	NZFIN Catalyst SME Growth
Scaling an established business	RISE Growth Accelerator
Strengthening your brand and packaging	Creative Jam
Improving production and commercial performance	Food & Beverage Gurus
Entering retail, wholesale or distribution	Food & Beverage Gurus
Improving hospitality operations and teams	Hospitality Capability
Working through a specific challenge	One-to-One Mentoring

The programme brings together practical workshops, structured development programmes and one-to-one mentoring, giving businesses access to specialist expertise in a format that suits their needs. Choose the opportunities most relevant to your business, and we'll help you find the right fit.

Innovation and Business Growth

From idea to growth.

Developing a successful food or beverage business takes more than a great product. Understanding your market, making informed commercial decisions and knowing when to invest are just as important. These three programmes offer different levels of support depending on where your business is today.

1

NZFIN Catalyst Foundations

Test your idea before investing further.

BEST FOR: First-time founders and early-stage food and beverage businesses.

A practical five-hour workshop introducing the commercial realities of bringing a product to market, followed by an individual one-hour session to identify your next steps.

Format: Group workshop + one-to-one follow-up.

2

NZFIN Catalyst SME Growth

Turn opportunity into a commercial growth plan.

BEST FOR: Early-revenue and growing businesses developing new products, validating markets or preparing to scale.

Five structured modules and individual coaching covering market validation, business models, commercial strategy and the capabilities needed to grow.

Format: Five modules + individual coaching.

3

RISE Growth Accelerator

Strengthen the business you're building.

BEST FOR: Established operators ready to focus on their next stage of growth.

An intensive development programme focused on business strategy, financial performance, leadership and making the commercial decisions needed for sustainable growth.

Format: 6-month structured accelerator programme.

Brand and Production

Build a stronger product. And the business behind it.

From how your product is made to how it appears on a shelf, strong foundations make a difference when entering new markets. Two specialist programmes are being developed to help producers improve both their commercial presentation and technical capability.

1

Creative Jam

Brand strategy. Packaging. Retail presentation.

BEST FOR: Emerging food and beverage brands preparing to launch, refresh or enter retail.

A proposed six-month programme combining brand strategy, customer understanding, creative development and individual mentoring.

Participants will work towards a clearer market position, professional brand assets, packaging artwork and the tools to present their products confidently to retailers.

Proposed format: Six-month programme, with up to eight businesses.

2

Food & Beverage Gurus

Technical expertise for commercial production.

BEST FOR: Makers and manufacturers wanting to strengthen production, product development and commercial performance.

Targeted workshops being developed around the practical challenges of making and selling food, including product quality, production processes, packaging, costing, compliance and retailer requirements.
Specialist knowledge for the decisions a general business workshop doesn't cover.

Format: Targeted technical and commercial workshops in development.

People and New Markets

Strengthen your operations. Reach further.

Growth isn't always about creating something new. Sometimes it's about improving margins, developing your team or finding better ways to reach customers and markets.

1

Hospitality Capability

Better margins. Stronger teams. More resilient operations.

BEST FOR: Cafés, restaurants, bars and food service operators.

We're exploring specialist workshops and mentoring with the Restaurant Association and Hospitality New Zealand, focused on food costs, menu profitability, staffing, service standards and team leadership.

Format: Specialist workshops and mentoring in development.

2

Retail & Market Access

Know what buyers need before you approach them.

BEST FOR: Producers preparing to enter retail, expand wholesale or strengthen distribution.

Working with Food & Beverage Gurus and specialist retail partners, we're developing practical support covering wholesale pricing, margins, labelling, barcodes, supply capacity and pitching to buyers.

Format: Targeted workshops and buyer-readiness support in development.

3

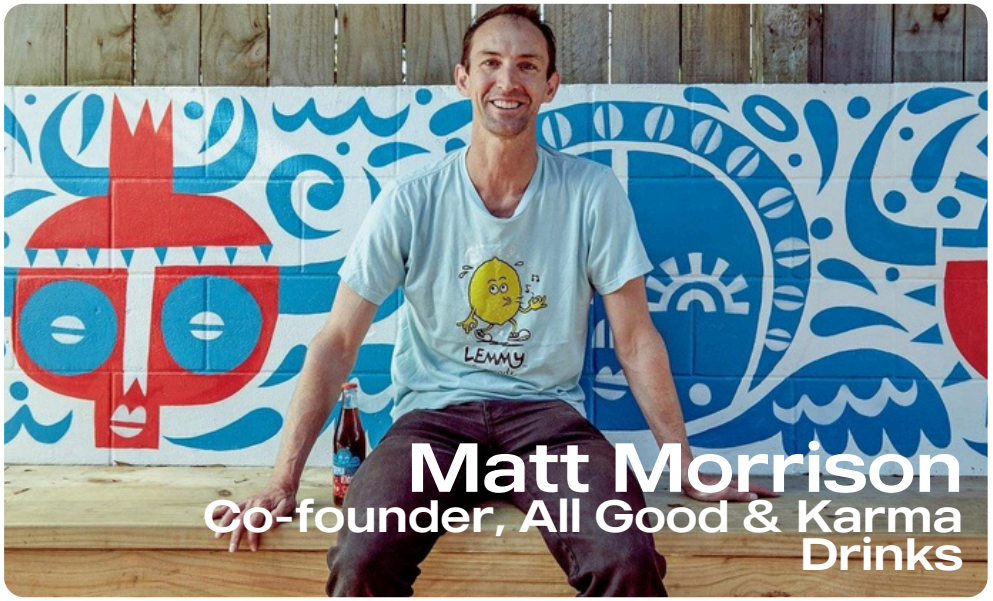
Specialist One-to-One Mentoring

The right expertise for your next challenge.

BEST FOR: Businesses with a specific commercial challenge or growth opportunity.

Our proposed specialist mentor network includes Rebecca Brook from RISE Growth Lab for export-focused businesses, alongside expertise in beverage development, distribution and commercial growth.

Format: Individual mentoring, subject to availability and confirmation.



Specialist insight. For your next big decision.

Beverage development. Commercial growth. Distribution.

Matt has helped build internationally recognised food and beverage brands, with experience across product development, supply chains, distribution and scaling businesses into wider markets.

His mentoring offers practical insight into the commercial decisions involved in building and growing a successful food or beverage brand.

BEST FOR: Beverage makers and producers working through product development, distribution or growth challenges.



Industry connections. Partnerships. Market positioning.

Sarah brings more than 25 years of experience across food, events and tourism, including co-founding Visa Wellington On a Plate.

Her expertise spans industry partnerships, food and beverage experiences, commercial relationships and opportunities to build stronger market presence.

BEST FOR: Businesses looking to strengthen industry connections, develop partnerships or reach new audiences.

Individual mentoring will be matched to business needs, readiness and available programme capacity. Expressions of interest welcome. Availability and session arrangements to be confirmed.

Thinking beyond New Zealand?

Export Growth Group

Led by Rebecca Brook | RISE Growth Lab

Entering a new market is a significant commercial decision. From understanding demand and choosing the right channels to managing pricing, distribution and investment, exporting requires a clear strategy.

We're developing a dedicated export-focused group to help Kāpiti and Horowhenua food and beverage businesses assess opportunities beyond New Zealand and build stronger foundations for international growth.

Who is it for?

Food and beverage businesses with established products that are exploring exporting or looking to strengthen their existing international market approach.

A focused opportunity for businesses with shared export ambitions to learn, connect and plan their next steps.

Group structure, eligibility and delivery details to be confirmed.



What we'll focus on

Market Opportunity - Understanding demand, customers and where your product has the strongest potential.

Channels & Distributions - Exploring routes to market, potential partners and the commercial requirements of international growth.

Export Readiness - Identifying gaps in capability, resources, pricing and operational readiness.

Growth Strategy - Developing clearer priorities and practical next steps for your business.

Stronger hospitality. Better business.

We're developing dedicated capability support for Kāpiti and Horowhenua cafés, restaurants, bars and food service operators, alongside opportunities to strengthen connections with local producers.



Hospitality business capability

Working with the Restaurant Association and hospitality industry partners, we're developing practical workshops and specialist support covering food costs, menu profitability, pricing, staffing, team leadership and operational efficiency, alongside strengthening customer experience and loyalty.

Connecting hospitality with local producers

Alongside capability development, we're exploring more opportunities for hospitality businesses to work directly with local growers, makers and beverage producers.

This includes supplier introductions, opportunities to source local products and collaborative food and beverage experiences.

Who is it for? Restaurants, cafés, bars, caterers, food trucks and other food service operators looking to strengthen their businesses and build industry connections.

Specialist workshops, partnerships and delivery arrangements are being developed.

Your next steps start here.

You don't need to commit to the entire programme. Tell us what your business is working towards, and we'll help you identify the opportunities and specialist support that best fit your needs.

Making specialist support more accessible.

We aim to subsidise 50–75% of selected programme costs, where funding and eligibility allow. Some programmes may also qualify for support through the Regional Business Partner Network, subject to its separate approval process.

All costs, dates and participation requirements will be confirmed before registration.

Register your interest and tell us what's next for your business.

1

Register your interest

Let us know which programmes interest you, the challenges you're facing and where you're looking to grow.

2

Find the right fit

We'll help you explore relevant workshops, development programmes and mentoring opportunities based on your business needs and readiness.

3

Confirm your place

We'll confirm programme availability, eligibility, funding and any business contribution before you register.

Good businesses. Better connected.

Our food and beverage industry is built by the people growing, making, selling and serving across Kāpiti and Horowhenua. We're here to connect that ambition with the expertise, partnerships and opportunities that help businesses grow.

Better products. Stronger businesses. New markets.

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