

No. 2, 2003

June 2003

Timber Company Finds Valuable Workers

A Whangarei employer has found that putting his faith in the long term unemployed has resulted in hard-working staff.

Darrell Croft, owner of timber processing company Croft Poles, based at Kauri, has employed up to 20 workers who were formerly long term Work and Income clients.

Darrell says he is happy to take on people regardless of their

background if they can show they are the right person for the job and have the right attitude.

“I think the environment you put people into is very important. If you put someone into a positive environment with people who are working hard, they will generally work hard too.”

Darrell liaises with Work and Income Whangarei Work Broker Lorraine Tyler who understands his needs and only offers him potential staff who she thinks will suit his business. Lorraine also regularly visits the work site talking to the staff she has placed there and ensuring that they are still working well.

Sione Mau, 49, from Whangarei, says he is happier than he has ever been. He completed a trial period at Croft Poles and is now working in a permanent full time job for the first time in 12 years.

“When I came here I asked them to give me a chance and they did. So I have given them my best. I wanted to show them what I could do because they helped me. Earning a wage makes a huge difference to me - I’m just happy to be working.”



Left to right: Manager Jimmy Watson, workers Sam Almoti and Sione Mau, both formerly long term unemployed, and owner Darrell Croft.

For further information contact:
Work Broker Lorraine Tyler 09 983 0535.

Key Appointments For Northland

Two new appointments in Northland are set to boost the region’s social development and employment prospects.

A policy analyst has been appointed to work with Work and Income at a regional level – the first appointment of its type by the Ministry of Social Development outside of Wellington.

Beth Neill will work with Work and Income Northland region and report to Regional Commissioner Debbie Power. She will also assist Northland mayors with their joint social development strategy and work with other agencies and groups on cross-sectoral policy issues. Government agencies and territorial authorities in Northland are already working closely to find ‘whole of government’ solutions to the region’s social issues.

Beth is an expert in strategic planning

and has a background in corporate development planning and community psychology. She has previously lectured at Waikato University and has an interest in the analysis and application of Treaty of Waitangi frameworks for community settings.



Co-ordination of seasonal work throughout Northland will now be streamlined through the one contact person, recently appointed to work with the Kerikeri Fruitgrowers’ Society.

A seasonal work co-ordinator has also been appointed to work with Northland growers and to liaise with Work and Income service centres.

Sherryl Neale reports to the Kerikeri Fruitgrowers’ Society. She is tasked with developing a more strategic approach to seasonal employment, ensuring consistency of employment practices, looking at training opportunities and considering options around provisions of transport.

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Healthier Homes For Northland

Creating healthier homes and upgrading sub-standard housing are the aims of an interagency effort underway in Northland.

The work is part of the Rural Housing Project – a partnership between Housing New Zealand Corporation, Work and Income and Northland District Health Board.

Currently the project is overseeing work on retrofitting or insulation of homes in Moerewa and the Otangarei area of Whangarei, refurbishment of relocatable homes for rental and a comprehensive needs assessment of households in sub-standard accommodation.

Work and Income clients working for Moerewa-based He Iwi Kotahi Tatou Trust have been trained to install insulation. The result is warmer, drier, more economical homes which improve the health and motivation of residents, while also helping the clients to gain valuable employment skills.

Under the relocatable homes scheme disused units were purchased by Housing NZ Corporation and brought to Whangarei for renovation. The upgraded houses are available as rental properties through Housing NZ Corporation, mostly for elderly people in rural areas. The workers, all Work and Income clients, have gained practical skills which will help them find future employment.

The Rural Housing Project has also received a boost with the secondment of two Work and Income case managers to carry out assessments of household needs. Margaret Wright, based in the Far North, and Bill Coffey in the mid North, will co-ordinate a range of services to assist residents.

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At a retrofitting job in Moerewa were from left to right: He Iwi Kotahi Tatou Trust Project Manager Kimo Peita, Housing NZ Corporation's Darren Collins and Rick Boraston and Work and Income's Northland Regional Commissioner Debbie Power.

Mayors Taskforce Generates Work

Work and Income clients are hard at work around Northland taking part in projects sponsored by the Mayors Taskforce for Jobs.

In Kaipara district six men are helping to construct the Dargaville wharf on the Northern Wairoa River. Once finished, the team will then restore the Tikinui wharf.

All participants had been unemployed for at least two years before being selected for the Whangarei District



Left to right: Members and supporters of the Dargaville Wharf construction team - contractor Alan Vuletich, Matthew Manukau, Mack George, Stephen McKeen, Peter Dreadon, Dargaville Work Broker Simone Matthews, Cameron Barnes and contractor Mark Vuletich.

Council – sponsored wharf project. One worker, Mack George from Dargaville, describes the work as “excellent”, and is vowing to never go back on the benefit.

In Whangarei, a team of four men is working on the Whangarei Heads project. The team has upgraded a walking track up Mount Aubrey at Reotahi and will move on to dune restoration at Ocean Beach.

The men have been supervised by Whangarei District Council staff who have given a positive report on their progress and work ethic.

In the Far North district, a project aimed at reducing the number of young people driving without licences and in cars that are not roadworthy, is into its third programme. Project Wheels is a multi-agency initiative which also links participants to employment and training.

By allowing young Work and Income clients to divert to the programme instead of incurring large fines, and helping them bring their vehicles and driving status up to legal standards, it recognises the importance of having access to transport as a factor in gaining employment in rural areas.

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