



**IMPACT  
HUB**

**Waikato**

# Introduction

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Twenty-twenty was quite a year. As its impact was felt across the globe, Covid-19 came with its own set of challenges for Impact Hub Waikato, and the activities we have been working on. After months of preparations for the renovation, we finally received the keys to our Inspiring Space in the middle of the first lockdown. Not long after the first lockdown ended, we managed to kick-off our first-ever programme - the Open Challenge Accelerator. While working from home became the norm and a sheer necessity, we saw the need for connection increasing. If there is one thing we learned over the past year, it was adaptability.

Overall, despite the many challenges that this global crisis has presented, there is a silver lining. Having discovered how life can be lived in a different way, we have seen a spark of hope. Consumers have become more conscious of supporting local businesses, and entrepreneurs and companies have become more aware of different outcomes. For our team, we are filled with gratitude, knowing that we have been able to support our community of impact entrepreneurs, and professionals interested in impact, throughout these uncertain times.

In our second year of operation, our focus has primarily been on raising awareness of our existence, delivering on our promise of accelerating and broadening the services we offer. We have been able to expand our reach - and with that, the outcomes that we generate.

Personally, despite all the practical challenges we faced, I have thoroughly enjoyed the year in all different ways. Being able to have that flexibility and enabling myself for a better balance and spending more (quality) time with my family. Seeing and feeling the traction Impact Hub Waikato is gaining and meeting all those inspiring people that are actively working on making this world a better place. I can only say that it has been energizing and humbling at the same time. It fills me with pride and strengthens my belief that we are here for a reason, to connect, inspire and enable impact entrepreneurs and professionals in the Waikato and beyond. Let's do this!



Paul Kerssens  
Co-Founder & Managing  
Director  
Impact Hub Waikato

# Impact Hub Waikato

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Impact Hub is one of the world's largest networks focused on building entrepreneurial communities for impact at scale. Home to the innovators, the dreamers and the entrepreneurs who are creating tangible solutions to the world's most pressing issues. At Impact Hub we believe that the world's greatest challenges will never be solved by one person or organization alone. We need to work together. That's why we set out to create a thriving innovation ecosystem where people collaborate across organizations, cultures and generations to solve the grand challenges of our time.

There are over 100 Impact Hubs around the world in more than 50 countries. It is a community of more than 17,000 changemakers who all align on the mission of using business and profit as a force for good. The organization is set up as a cooperative model.

Each Impact Hub is privately owned by its founders and operators and all Impact hubs collectively own the Global Impact Hub Company which is governed through an association. All Impact Hubs around the world share the same vision:



*We see business and profit as a force for good. We believe that business can and should serve multiple outcomes, both financial, social and/or environmental.*

Impact Hub Waikato (IHW) was founded and accepted to the global network in April 2019. As a country we face massive challenges in relation to both our environment and our societal structure. We need all forces to work on these challenges, including business. The impact business sector, also known as for purpose businesses or social enterprises, is still in its infancy. Although the concept is not new to New Zealand and we see great examples and collaborations, it has not yet developed the ecosystem infrastructure to succeed. We see a strong need in the Waikato - and in New Zealand in general, for building such a connected ecosystem for impact; a supportive sector that enables and advocates for impact businesses and helps them achieve their goals. This is our mission which we have started working on since 2019:

We connect, enable and inspire. We are the ecosystem builder enabling entrepreneurs and professionals to create positive impact at scale in the Waikato and Aotearoa. We close the gap between profit and impact.

We try to achieve this mission through main strategic pillars:

- **Community Building:** Through a membership model and our co-working space we aim to create a community of changemakers and spark collaboration and social innovation. We offer an accessible professional working environment where like-minded entrepreneurs and professionals can meet and work. We organise and facilitate workshops and events in order to create these connections and relationships and develop a tight community feeling.
- **Impact Support:** We offer capacity-building support through individual workshops, 1:1 consulting sessions and through programmes. Furthermore, we run programmes for the different stages of an impact business from idea to scaling and more in-depth courses

on essential venture building and leadership topics. The aim for this support is to assist the entrepreneurs in successfully building and growing both their business and impact.

- **Impact Innovation:** To reach out to the broader community with an interest in Impact, we offer inspirational events and activities that we usually deliver in collaboration with public and private organisations. We also initiate and execute projects where we help organisations find purpose or measure the impact they intend to create.

We are convinced that, through our services and the work we do, we create a long-lasting ripple effect that will not only have a successful impact on businesses as an outcome, but moreover, will influence both consumers, other businesses and not-for-profits in the way they behave and operate on a daily basis. A way that ensures a sustainable future for all.



# Output and Outcomes

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We have had a busy year up until now! In creating this year's report we feel our happiness and pride grow. Having such a reflection allows us to celebrate the year we had. It also allows us to think about the things that went well and that didn't go so well.

We are a start-up ourselves and constantly learning and optimising. We hope to become more effective and efficient in our daily operations and to amplify our impact.

We would love to take you through the output and outcomes Impact Hub Waikato has created in the past year and invite you to share your thoughts with us. As we try to practice what we preach, we collaborate with members of our community and other key stakeholders in everything we do. In regards to all the output, achievements and outcomes that we mention below, we want to acknowledge our partners and funders for helping and enabling us to do this work.

In assessing ourselves, we identify outcomes on three different levels - an individual level, a company level and a system level.

## Outcome 1: On an individual level

- Perceived increase in wellbeing of IHW and broader community members
- Increase in skills/capacity of individual entrepreneurs/professionals.

We aim to achieve outcomes on an individual level through our community development and entrepreneurial support practices.

## Hamilton Inspiring Space:

In central Hamilton, we have set up an inspiring community space for entrepreneurs. This space has supported and enabled more than 120 impact professionals over the last 9 months, in a number of different ways, as outlined below.



## Co-working options:

We're proud to have a growing community of entrepreneurs who frequent our space.

The options we provide are versatile and suit a number of different needs and budgets:

- Hot desking
- Flexi and fixed desking
- Permanent office space
- Podcasting & editing studio
- Workshop & meeting rooms
- Event space

Over time, we have seen many exciting developments emerge from our space. The businesses that make use of our space are increasingly impact-focused. Interactions are becoming more meaningful. Friendships are forming, and people are organising gatherings and get-togethers in our space, to help each other grow their businesses and amplify their impact.

This has taken some time and consistent effort on the part of our team to both encourage people into the space, and foster these relationships - so, although the build was slower than we expected, we are really proud of the traction we are gaining here.

## Networking & Capacity-building Events & Workshops:

Over the last year, we have developed five different event 'types' and executed more than 30 online events which were well attended, and brought impact-trending, or capacity-building for impact to our members and growing community. In the last quarter of 2020, we started hosting physical events, which have grown in popularity, and are now attracting a regular community who are genuinely impact-focused individuals, many of them entrepreneurs.

### **2020:**

- Tea & Jam - a fortnightly lunchtime catch-up, where members could connect, chat, and share, prior to our space opening.
- The Plug - generated by members, for members, these fortnightly interactive digital sessions presented an opportunity for our community to "plug in" and connect, all whilst learning from - and being inspired by, a guest facilitator, who shared their expertise on a particular impact-related topic (including Alina Siegfried on the power of storytelling, Seda & Monica from Riposte on Instagram marketing, David Macaskill on Intellectual Property, Tom Steward on SEO marketing, and more).

- Other community gathering events, such as Doco & Drinks night - coming together to watch an impact-related documentary.

2021:

- Impact Drinks - a networking event held in our space every second month.
- Innovation Lunch - a monthly inspiring event, hosted online (for example, Planetary Accounting with Kate Meyer, BCorps with Tim Jones, and Frugal Innovation with Faisha Subhan).
- Capacity-building events - a focused capacity-building event held in our space every second month (for example, Escape Artists with Partner for Growth, Ethical Influence with Influence Ecology, and Serious Play (Lego) with Rob Bull).



## Tokoroa Hub Development:

In mid-2020, we brought the South Waikato community together and asked some key questions about how we might support entrepreneurs in a pop-up space.

This resulted in a six-month trial hub space with a retail shop, co-working, event and art exhibition space. Run with the support of the South Waikato District Council, this space supported 24 local and regional entrepreneurs, featured three entrepreneurs, and hosted four community events. The outcome of this trial is that we identified a need in Tokoroa for support for entrepreneurs.

The outcomes of the space were:

- Gave 24 makers a chance to retail their goods.
- Increased sense of wellbeing, connection and expression.
- Practical knowledge gained around pricing, packaging.
- 7k sales made over a three month period.
- One collaboration emerged - which has now taken on a CBD lease for retail.
- One entrepreneur featured - who has since moved to a larger space.
- One partnership established between a local artist and a local retailer.
- Exposition for 20 different local artists in the exhibition space.

## Entrepreneurial Support Programmes:

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Over the past year, we have also started and completed three entrepreneurial programmes - the Generation Impact Fellowship (GIF), which focused on developing Impact Leadership (8 participants), the Open Challenge Accelerator (OCA), which aimed to prepare impact enterprises for their growth stage (7 participating ventures), and finally the Back to Purpose programme (B2P), which aimed to help aspiring impact entrepreneurs to specify their impact business idea and set up their company (22 participants).

In all of these programmes, there has been a mixture of capability-building and individual coaching for the participants personal and team wellbeing.

The self-assessed increase in capabilities of the OCA participants was 70%, with the highest growth in the areas of financial planning, investment case, go-to-market strategies and team & governance. In terms of self-leadership skills, these same participants scored a 4.4 (on a scale of 5) - demonstrating an increased sense of confidence and capability in leading themselves, their team and company.

For the Generation Impact Fellowship, the participants scored a 3.9 (scale of 5) in how helpful the programme was to help them develop as “Impact Leaders”. The participants of the Back to Purpose programme scored a 4.2 (scale of 5) on their abilities of self-leadership, self-confidence, and confidence in the future of their enterprise.





## Outcome 2: On a company level

- Increase in successful impact enterprises; increase in invested (able) impact enterprises; increased engagement and transition to impact models by organisations.

### Programmes:

In regards to the outcomes on a company level, the programmes have had a large influence on this. As mentioned above, we have had 25 (aspiring) enterprises in the three programmes that we delivered over the past year. As all of the participating ventures are still fairly small teams or single entrepreneurs, the increased skill and confidence levels mentioned above also apply to the enterprise level.

Besides those measurements, from both the GIF and the OCA - which both finished in H2 2020, we have seen a large part of the cohorts achieve some significant milestones.

- At least two have successfully raised a capital round.
- At least three are currently actively raising capital.
- At least four have acquired significant new projects and/or procurement deals.
- At least four are successfully continuing their business and growing organically (by choice).

### Services:

In the past year, we have also developed and introduced a 1-2-1 service offering to help impact entrepreneurs/professionals become more successful.

In collaboration with multiple associates, we offer a wide range of in-depth consultancy and capability development services that cover the essential (potential) needs for (young) enterprises.

To date, we have helped three businesses with their investment needs, one company with their marketing strategy, two ventures with general business coaching, and four entrepreneurs with mindset coaching.

Besides that, we have also worked with two organisations on their impact measurement.

### New services in development:

Finally, we have also been working on the development of a few new services to make our offering more accessible to all, and to broaden our target audience/beneficiaries. We are currently working on - and have piloted, a short course on Impact Measurement. We will offer the first final version mid-2021. This short course format will enable a broader range of organisations to access in-

depth capacity development opportunities.

We are also working on developing a programme specifically for not-for-profits that want to diversify into social enterprise - offering them support on commercial, governance and transition. Finally, we are offering a new type of membership starting in July that sits in between a standard membership and programme support - again, with the intention to have a more accessible level of support for entrepreneurs.

### Outcome 3: On a system level

- Heightened awareness and level of connection within the impact ecosystem
- Facilitated collaborations & new impact projects and initiatives
- Increased awareness & uptake of impact models within the general public

### Vision 2030:

We have developed the Vision 2030 event series to reach a broad audience/public, and to inspire and educate them on “Impact-trending” topics. We organised the first version of this event - with a focus on ‘Regeneration’, in November 2020. Due to Covid, we had to pivot to an online event - which led to us hosting one session on Regenerative Agriculture, and another on Regenerative Tourism. Both sessions were attended by 80+ individuals and we had a very high level of engagement and input.

The second Vision 2030 was held at the end of May, and was on the topic ‘Impact Recovery’ - exploring how impact businesses can take the lead in the decade of action. This was an in-person event and was attended by 60+ individuals. Initial feedback was really good and we are currently working on the outcomes and evaluation.



## Connected Ecosystem:

In the past year, we have had a strong focus on developing relationships with relevant organisations to create a connected ecosystem, and initiate collaboration towards strengthening this ecosystem.

We have been engaging with the Waikato Wellbeing project, Te Waka, Connect Waikato and the Waikato Plan, as we are working on similar outcomes but have different approaches and reach, thus the reason to find the connection.

We have set up a collaboration with the Seedling fund and All Good Ventures - both small scale funds, specifically designed for social enterprises.

We are also increasingly connecting and exchanging experiences with a collective of intermediaries and investors around impact investing.

Finally, we are actively exploring opportunities and building relationships in Auckland for a possible Impact Hub Auckland. This is still at a very early stage but multiple organisations have been reaching out to us to express their interest.



# Evaluation

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We have learned that there is a need for both the development of a community of impact-focused entrepreneurs and professionals in the Waikato, and also a strong need for a support network that is able to provide the capacity-building to enable these entrepreneurs.

Through the Tokoroa space, the below areas were identified by our local champions as being areas entrepreneurs struggled with:

- Self doubt - a lack of self-confidence in their products and services
- Lack of support or encouragement around them
- Lack of practical business advice
- Limited access to resources & financing
- Outdated packaging & presentation
- Lack of knowledge around pricing for retail
- Lack of business planning & structure
- Lack of digital marketing skill & knowledge

These areas are quite similar to what we've learned in other geographical areas. We see that there is a strong need and demand within our target

group/beneficiaries for the community and services we provide. Every entrepreneur, professional, or venture we come across feels a sense of "homecoming" and sudden understanding when we talk about our vision, mission and what we do. There is a great willingness and hope from the communities we've worked with. Inspiration is both needed - and is waiting to be shared.

However, we perceive there to still be a fragmented landscape and very basic knowledge and awareness of the impact sector in general. There are a lot of assumptions and opinions about social enterprise/impact businesses.

We've also increasingly learned that not all "dual-purpose" businesses necessarily self identify with being a social enterprise. This shows that there is still a necessity for education and advocacy at a basic level. It is still very much a niche.

However, we do also see an increasing interest for "a different way of doing business" and an opportunity to pull people together around this vision and create an identity for Impact Business.

As we expand our reach across the Waikato and beyond, we also recognise that localisation is essential, and that each sub-community needs a slightly different approach - and each venture, a bespoke offering. This is something that we will work on in the coming year - exploring how to address this level of localisation and bespoke services, versus keeping systems and processes efficient and somewhat scalable.

Post-lockdown in 2020, our biggest challenge was encouraging people to come into a co-working space. Although people were willing to come to events or meetings and used the space for these purposes, securing contracts for regular desks has been challenging. The main reason for this is that people have become accustomed to working from home - and hence, are less likely to take on contracts that see them commit to set days in an office. This has been the experience of many coworking spaces around the Waikato, with a number of them closing, due to losing contracts.

Therefore, activating the community has been a slower process than initially anticipated. Without a strong physical community presence in our space on a daily basis, the community vibe has been more difficult to achieve. However, this is changing, as we continue to iterate on our approach,

and build trust and interest in the community.

As we expand our offering and services we have also learnt that funding in the social enterprise space is a challenge, both for ourselves, and our community. Philanthropic funding is largely restricted to charitable organisations, and investment for early-stage impact businesses is still hard to find. We tap into some of the opportunities through programmes or public funding/procurement opportunities, but recognise that market rate service offering is very difficult within the industry we work in.

### Building an ecosystem:

Impact Hub Waikato exists by its collaborations. A big part of our vision and philosophy is based on collaboration - and thus, in everything we do, we seek to collaborate with relevant stakeholders.

For the delivery of the programmes, workshops and events, we work together with a wide range of companies and professional service providers.

A few examples are:

- GoodSense Marketing
- CFO4U
- Venture Centre
- Akina

- Design Factory
- Togetherness
- VentureVal
- Regeneration HQ
- University of Waikato
- Mum's Garage
- Seedling Consulting
- Creative Good

In the development of the ecosystem, we try to collaborate or connect with the most relevant players around entrepreneurial development and impact. This is a continuous work-in-progress.

As mentioned above, we are also working together with South Waikato District Council and SWIFT for the Tokoroa Hub and our activities to stimulate entrepreneurship and digital capability development.

For the support services, we work together with different associates like Melde consulting, VentureVal, Seedling consulting and a few others. For the Impact Measurement projects, we work together with Huber Social.



# Final Words

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As mentioned in the introduction. It's been quite the year for Impact Hub Waikato. Full of activities, projects, new relationships and lots of positive outcomes. Considering it has only been our second year of operation and a Covid year, we can only look back with satisfaction.

However, we'd rather look forward.

We have lots of plans and ideas for the years to come and our ambition is sky high. Why, you ask? Because we're impact entrepreneurs! We get excited by the prospect of new projects, growth and innovation. We are driven by the necessity of the work we do because there is so much to solve and

achieve within the 8 remaining years in this decade of action!

Finally, we would like to express our deep gratitude for everybody who has been part of our journey so far. There are too many to mention but we want to mention our loyal supporters that enable us to do the work that we do. Thanks to Trust Waikato, Ministry of Business, Employment and Innovation, Bay Trust, TECT, Waikato Farmers Trust and the Bank of America.

Keep an eye out for us. Be a part of our community. Collaborate with us. Join the movement!

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