



Foodeast build starts in September

July 15, 2021

With Resource Consent granted, the land purchased and funding confirmed, a start will be made on building Hawke's Bay's new food innovation hub, 'Foodeast', in September.

The establishment this month of a new commercial entity that will manage the construction and then the operation of the facility, has enabled the handover of the project from Hastings District Council and the Foodeast Establishment Board to the newly formed company.

"It is a very exciting time," said inaugural board chairman Craig Foss. "On completion Foodeast will provide a modern state of the art innovation centre, where food industry players can base themselves or meet, collaborate and innovate. This will be a step change for our food and beverage industry; one that will foster product innovation to enable our industries to develop new offerings for both the New Zealand and international markets."

Foodeast will offer commercial and industrial spaces available for lease, hot-desking and meeting and collaboration spaces, all built around a café and surrounded by landscaped grounds. On site, Foodeast will have a small in-house team linking businesses to mentors and advisors, to enable them to commercialise new products.

The project's three investors are Hawke's Bay Regional Investment Company (HBRIC) 67%, and Hastings District Council and Progressive Meats (16% each).

The development of the facility is supported by \$12m of funding from Central Government's Kānoa - Regional Economic Development and Investment Unit. "Kānoa is delighted to help fund this innovative project as part of its drive to build and strengthen regional economies. Foodeast will allow Hawke's Bay producers to showcase the quality of their harvest from the region's orchards, farms and sea, providing jobs and boosting the local economy," said Kānoa principal regional advisor Cameron Osmond.

Mr Foss, who is also a director of HBRIC, says HBRIC is pleased to play its part as the lead investor, to support the ongoing growth of the food sector which contributes so much to the regional economy. He thanked Hastings District Council for its leadership of the project to this point, and Craig Hickson and the team at Progressive Meats for their ongoing commitment to the project and leadership within the sector. "This is a great example of private-public partnership working to deliver great outcomes for our region."

Hastings Mayor Sandra Hazlehurst said Hastings District Council, which had facilitated the project to date, is "extremely pleased to see it take its next steps. I am very excited to see the projects that are developed through Foodeast".

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Growing Food Innovation

“We are one of the most important food growing regions in New Zealand and there is no end to how far it can be developed. We only have to look around at the innovators we have here, businesses like Rockit, Bostock, First Light, The Apple Press, Watties, Progressive Meats . . . barely a month goes by without one of our region’s companies making it into national or international news for their successes. Through this project I have no doubt that we will see many more.”

Progressive Meats founder Craig Hickson, said Foodeast will provide “focus, facilities, synergy, assistance and support for people with entrepreneurial food aspirations. Having a B Tech (food technology) degree and an extensive career in the New Zealand meat processing industry, I clearly see the benefits of Foodeast and am really pleased to be closely associated with the project.”

The total construction and establishment cost is estimated at \$18m and the facility is expected to be completed by the end of 2022. It is forecast to add \$100m to the region’s GDP over 15 years, and bring 500 new full-time jobs to Hawke’s Bay.

Foodeast will be located on Elwood Road, Hastings.

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Caption:

Game changer: Hawke’s Bay’s Foodeast will give the region’s food and beverage industry access to the expertise it needs to bring new innovative products to market.

– artist’s impression

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