



Powering Tomorrow's Growth

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

**Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington
Wednesday, 11 June 2025**



Message from Board Chair



It's a pleasure and a privilege to present the 2025 APHANZ Annual Members Conference.

This is always a highlight in my calendar — a day for thought-provoking discussion, genuine connection, and celebration. And this year, as we gather under the banner of *Powering Tomorrow's Growth*, that sense of purpose feels stronger than ever.

This theme captures the spirit of not just today's programme, but the work each of you does, every day — growing our sector, growing our economy, and growing New Zealand's place in a rapidly changing world.

Powering Tomorrow's Growth is more than just a theme for today — it's a lens through which we can all shape our work for the year ahead to grow and sustain the industry. Today is a moment to step out of the everyday, to think big, challenge our assumptions, and be inspired.

Gavin Kerr
Chair



Message from Chief Executive

Welcome to the Animal and Plant Health NZ annual conference.

Today, will be one of through-provoking discussion, connection, and celebration of the contribution of our members to New Zealand's agricultural and horticultural sectors.

We are pleased to present a programme with a mix of speakers and panels providing their insights on how to drive sustainable development and future-focused growth.

Please take the opportunity to connect with industry leaders and policy makers who will shape the future of animal and plant health in New Zealand.

Thanks for joining us to be part of the important conversations on how we can power tomorrow's growth of the primary sector.

Dr Liz Shackleton
Chief Executive, Animal and Plant Health NZ

POWERING TOMORROW'S GROWTH

2025

PROGRAMME

9AM WELCOME & HOUSEKEEPING Milton Munro

9.05AM OPENING Gavin Kerr

9.15AM KEYNOTE ADDRESS Sir Bill English

10.05AM MORNING TEA

10.30AM MEMBERS ADDRESS Dr Liz Shackleton

11AM PANEL Balancing risk to enable growth

Facilitator Katherine Rich

Panellists Gráinne Moss, Sam Buckle, Dr Allan Freeth
& Vincent Arbuckle

12PM JOHN BALLINGALL Navigating risks and
unlocking growth opportunities

12.30PM LUNCH

1.30PM SABA SAMIEI The role of artificial intelligence
in Animal Health

2025

PROGRAMME

2PM **PANEL** Harnessing innovation and technology to power growth

Facilitator John Dow

Panellists Saba Samiei, Alex Matthews, & Jonnie Haddon

3.05PM **AFTERNOON TEA**

3.30PM **PANEL** Global perspectives on risk culture and innovation

Facilitator John Ballingall

Panellists Zahra Champion, Matthew Cossey, Nina McCormick & Dr William Rolleston

4.30PM **MESSAGE FROM MINISTER DAVID SEYMOUR**
via video

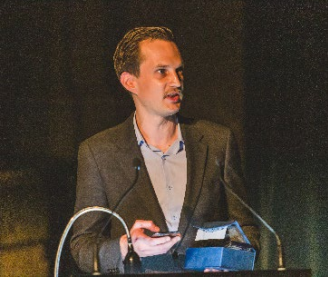
4.35PM **CLOSING** Gavin Kerr

4.45PM **APHANZ AGM & ELECTION** Members only

5.30PM **COCKTAILS**

7PM **DINNER & AWARDS**

POWERING TOMORROW'S GROWTH



ALEX MATTHEWS FOUNDER & MANAGING DIRECTOR, XEQUALS

Alex is a tech and innovation specialist with a knack for employing emerging technologies and cost-efficient methodologies for getting serious results. He has spent a career being passionate about applying our famous kiwi know how and problem solving to traditionally complex technology problems.

He has worked for 20 years in self-employed or entrepreneurial roles solving problems for big companies, local communities, and Government agencies in both New Zealand and abroad. He is the Director of Xequal, a Wellington digital agency, the CEO of Frost Flame Games, and an event organiser involved in helping put on many of Wellington's well-known events for technology, entertainment, hospitality, and business communities.



DR ALLAN FREETH CHIEF EXECUTIVE, ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AUTHORITY (EPA)

Allan took up the role of Chief Executive of the EPA in September 2015. He has extensive experience of both governance and management, and is well-known across New Zealand's business, cultural, and public sectors. Dr Freeth's previous roles include seven years as Chief Executive of Telstra Clear, and five years as Chief Executive / Managing Director of Wrightson Limited. Prior to that, he held senior roles in Wrightson Rural and at Trust Bank New Zealand Limited.



SIR BILL ENGLISH

Sir Bill English was Minister of Finance from October 2008 to December 2016 and Prime Minister of New Zealand in 2017. He retired from politics in 2018.

Bill sits on the board of Wesfarmers Ltd, Todd Corporation and the Paul Ramsay Foundation. With his family he is a director and investor in several private companies in primary production and serving the philanthropy and disability sectors. He consults to New Zealand and Australian companies and governments.



GRÁINNE MOSS SECRETARY FOR REGULATION & CHIEF EXECUTIVE, MINISTRY FOR REGULATION

Gráinne was appointed to the role of Chief Executive and Secretary for Regulation in September 2024 for a five-year term. Prior to this role, she was Chief Executive and System Lead Pay Equity at Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission; served as the first Secretary of Children and Chief Executive Oranga Tamariki — Ministry for Children and was Managing Director of BupaCare Services New Zealand.



JOHN BALLINGALL SENSE PARTNERS

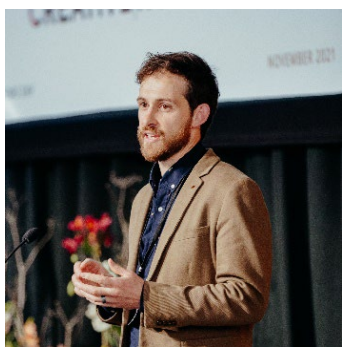
John joined Sense Partners in early 2019 after a decade of being Deputy Chief Executive at the New Zealand Institute of Economic Research. Prior to that, he worked for MFAT as Deputy Director in its Economic Division from 2005-2008.

He recently served as an Independent Director on the Board of New Zealand Winegrowers. He has worked on the major policy and business issues of the day for New Zealand and overseas clients for nearly 25 years; with a focus on trade. John has a Master of Applied Economics from Massey University and is a Chartered Member of the New Zealand Institute of Directors.



JOHN DOW DIRECTOR, AGENDA MARKETING & WELLINGTON GOLD AWARDS

John is the Creator and Producer of the Wellington Gold Awards, the Business Awards for the Wellington region since 1999. The awards have profiled and celebrated over 1500 leading businesses since their inception. World renowned technology driven businesses such as WETA Digital, XERO, Datacom, Icebreaker, Volpara Technologies, Pik Pok, Malaghan Institute, J H Whittaker & Sons have all been Supreme Award winners. John has also worked on international marketing campaigns and projects in North America, Europe and the Middle East, secured and delivered successful Major International Sports Events for Wellington and was the first ever Marketing Director for the NZ Festival of the Arts.



JONNIE HADDON GENERAL MANAGER GOVERNMENT INNOVATION, CREATIVE HQ

Jonnie is committed to helping governments and NGO's create a culture of innovative problem-solving from MBIE to BRANZ. Jonnie is passionate about GovTech and established the NZ GovTech Accelerator in 2018. He has worked on 60 of New Zealand's most innovative government projects from over 30 government organisations. Internationally, he is a member of the World Bank's GovTech Innovation Lab and the GovTech Global Alliance. Outside his core public sector role, he works with early-stage innovative tech companies with huge growth potential. Working closely with early-stage Startups that go through Creative HQ programs (such as Sharesies, Hnry and Goldie).



KATHERINE RICH CHIEF EXECUTIVE, BUSINESSNZ

Katherine is the Chief Executive of BusinessNZ, the peak advocacy organisation for New Zealand business, bringing a wealth of experience from her career in both politics and industry. She served as a Member of the New Zealand Parliament from 1999 to 2008. Prior to joining BusinessNZ, Katherine was the Chief Executive of the New Zealand Food and Grocery Council from 2009 to 2023, advocating for the interests of grocery manufacturers and suppliers as well as advocating for trade liberalisation as a member for the APEC Business Council for five years.



MATTHEW COSSEY CHIEF EXECUTIVE, CROPLIFE AUSTRALIA

Matthew Cossey is Chief Executive Officer of CropLife Australia and leads the organisation’s strategic management and advocacy on crop protection, agricultural biotechnology and industry stewardship in Australia. He is also a member of the Executive of the Agricultural Biotechnology Council of Australia and the Coordinating Council of CropLife Asia.

Prior to joining CropLife, Matthew served as a senior executive and a member of the Australian Executive Leadership Team for one of the world’s leading defence and technology companies, Raytheon. Before entering the private sector, Matthew was a senior official and campaign director for one of Australia’s major political parties. He was Chief of Staff and Senior Defence Adviser to the then Shadow Minister for Defence from 1998 to 2002 and before that worked as a senior political adviser in the Senate for three years.

Matthew worked in several positions in the Australia Commonwealth public service in both Canberra and Sydney prior to taking up his positions at Parliament House. Matthew previously served as a Director on the Board of AFL Canberra for four years and the CLC Group for seven years and is a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.



MEGAN SINCLAIR NEW PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT MANAGER, J.H. WHITTAKER & SONS

Megan is a creative food scientist with over 25 years of experience in product development and manufacturing. For the past 15 years, she has led New Product Development at Whittaker’s, playing a key role in its growth from a small family business to one of New Zealand’s top food manufacturers. Megan holds an MSc from Oxford Brookes, a Dip Grad from Otago, and a BSc from Massey. She is passionate about creating innovative, high-quality products that meet the highest food safety standards and excite consumers here and abroad.



NINA MCCORMICK REGULATORY SCIENCE COUNTRY REPRESENTATIVE, CROPSCIENCE ANZ BAYER

Nina leads Bayer’s Regulatory Affairs team for both Bayer’s agricultural chemistry and biotechnology portfolios. In 2023 she spent a year in Bayer’s Brussels office on a short-term assignment as acting Regulatory Science Lead – Traits, for Europe, the Middle East and Africa. Nina has a wealth of knowledge and experience, with a PhD in plant molecular biology and 15+ years’ working in regulatory affairs, sciences and policy. She has a sound understanding of the processes required to take gene technology research outputs to the marketplace, including regulatory and stewardship requirements, intellectual property protection and licencing considerations, policy and LTO.



SABA SAMIEI FOUNDER & CEO, MASCO TECHNOLOGY

Saba is the founder and CEO of MACSO Technologies and Comfort.AI. MACSO is a pioneering AI company transforming livestock health through innovative sensor fusion technology. Under her leadership, MACSO has secured global partnerships and is present on 8 different countries on four continents.

Named CEO of the Year in the EdgeAI Category at the 2025 APAC Insider Awards and Innovator of the Year at the APAC Women in AI Awards 2023, Saba is a recognised leader in AI, AI Ethics and Agritech. She has spoken at global forums, including the prestigious STS Forum in Japan, and is committed to using AI to enhance animal welfare, reduce farm mortality, and promote sustainable agriculture.



SAM BUCKLE DEPUTY SECRETARY, CLIMATE MITIGATION & RESOURCE EFFICIENCY

Sam leads the Ministry for the Environment’s Climate Change Mitigation and Resource Efficiency business group and brings experience in policy and managing industry, media and government relationships.

Sam’s career has included working both inside Government and the commercial sector. He has worked for several Government agencies, including as a policy advisor within the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. He was also previously General Manager of Government and Stakeholder Affairs at Fonterra, Executive Director at the New Zealand Shipping Federation, and consultant for a major public relations consultancy.



VINCENT ARBUCKLE DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL NZ FOOD SAFETY, MINISTRY FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES

Vincent joined the Ministry for Primary Industries in November 2018 and currently leads New Zealand Food Safety. Prior to this, he was Deputy Director-General Compliance and Governance, and held senior roles in Corrections, the New Zealand Fire Service, and AXA New Zealand.



DR WILLIAM ROLLESTON LIFE SCIENCES NETWORK

William is co-founder of biotech and vaccine manufacturing company South Pacific Sera Ltd, and chair of Genomics Aotearoa. He is a strong advocate for science, industry and agriculture as the founding chair of Aotearoa New Zealand’s biotechnology industry association (now Biotech NZ) and the Life Sciences Network, as president of both New Zealand Federated Farmers and the World Farmers Organisation. He has also advised local and central government on science strategy, economic development and biosecurity through the Science and Innovation Boards, Aoraki Development Trust and as external advisor to the Governor of the Reserve Bank.



ZAHRA CHAMPION EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, BIOTECHNZ

Zahra has been the Executive Director of BioTechNZ since 2018. She holds a PhD in Biotechnology and has extensive experience overseeing significant projects and initiatives across the biotech, agritech, health, and local government sectors collaboration across industry, government, research to advance biotech solutions in New Zealand.

As a champion for gene technology and its role in sustainable agriculture, Zahra will share insights from international biotech success stories, exploring how New Zealand can balance precautionary approaches with cutting-edge advancements to unlock the full potential of gene technology in plant and animal health.

THANK YOU!

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**The voice of crop protection
and animal health**