

Defence Hub Executive Bios

Niki Gunning (Co-Chair)

MoneyTree Financial Services



Niki brings more than 20 years of experience in personal, career, and financial coaching, with a background spanning private practice, professional rugby, and the military. Her passion for financial wellbeing and lifelong learning gives her a strong ability to see the big picture, ask the right questions, and support people in creating a life aligned with their goals.

She is committed to helping individuals build financial confidence, reduce uncertainty, and ease the stress that often accompanies financial challenges. Niki also focuses on guiding people toward work that brings them genuine joy.

She holds a Degree in Education and a Diploma of Teaching from Massey University, is a qualified Hart Life Coach, a Certified Success Intelligence Coach, has completed Foundations of Positive Psychology, and holds a Certificate in Financial Services (Level 5).

Niki has published *Monday Musings – Start Your Week with Soul*, completed significant endurance walks, and built a financial services business while balancing full-time work and family life.

Amanda Linsley

Manawatū Business Chamber



Originally from the UK, Amanda graduated from the University of North London with a First-Class Honours Degree in Applied Economics and Management Accounting. Amanda started and developed three businesses, taking two to acquisition before moving to New Zealand permanently in 2008.

She has worked for the Manawātū Business Chamber since 2012, taking the role of CEO in 2017. Amanda has also been a familiar face within the events scene across the region, running Christmas in the Square for eight (8) years until 2019 and various other community and business events.

Amanda is a Member of the Institute of Directors and currently is a Trustee of Manfeild Park Trust.

Brian Murray

Briclops



Brian brings more than 20 years of experience in the NZDF as a RNZAF Aviation Rescue Fire Fighter (ARFF) which includes operational service in NZ and overseas, and instructional roles at the Joint Services Fire School instructing Army Emergency Responders and Airforce ARFF at all rank levels. He also held a Learning Designer role at New Zealand Defence College where he designed courses for both Navy and Airforce training schools.

During his time in the military, Brian took up the scholarship offered to NZDF members by the Manawatu Business Chamber to study business through UCOL. Shortly after starting his studies in 2022, Brian wanted to put his learning into practise, so he started his own videography and live streaming company - Briclops Limited. He graduated in 2025 with a NZ Diploma in Business and became a member of the Manawātū Business Chamber and Defence Hub.

Ricky Crutchley

Signature Homes



Ricky is a respected Manawatū business leader and Managing Director of Signature Homes Palmerston North & Manawatū. With close to 40 years in the construction sector, Ricky has built a reputation for delivering high-quality residential and light commercial projects while leading high-performing teams.

Ricky's career includes successful ownership of previous building companies, along with various leadership roles across the building supply and construction industry. His hands-on trade background, combined with strong operational and client-service expertise, has positioned him as a trusted figure in the regional building market.

Alongside his wife and business partner, Andrea Crutchley, Ricky continues to bring a customer-first approach to building and business, offering reliable, fixed-price building solutions and a strong focus on delivering quality outcomes for their clients.

Shar Carson

ADA



Shar Carson brings more than three decades of service, leadership and lived Defence experience to the Manawatū Defence Hub. Having served in the Royal New Zealand Air Force for over 30 years as a Logistics Specialist, Shar developed extensive expertise in global logistics, operational support, quality systems and compliance — experience she now applies within the civilian sector here in the Manawatū.

Following her military career, Shar joined ADA New Zealand, a Palmerston North-based organisation that supplies uniforms and equipment to the New Zealand Defence Force and New Zealand Police. In her role, she contributes her strong understanding of Defence expectations, supply chain requirements, quality assurance and compliance to support effective service delivery to those who serve New Zealand.

Shar is also the Co-Chair of the Manawatū Defence Hub Executive Committee, where she is committed to strengthening connections between Defence, local businesses, service personnel, veterans and Defence families across the region. She is passionate about creating meaningful engagement opportunities and helping the Hub grow as a trusted, collaborative network that supports both the Defence community and the wider Manawatū business sector.

Outside of her professional and Defence-related work, Shar is an enthusiastic supporter of the local arts community and is actively involved in theatre across Palmerston North and Feilding. Creative, energetic and community-minded, she brings warmth, practical insight and a genuine commitment to service to everything she does.

Through her work with the Manawatū Defence Hub, Shar hopes to contribute a strong military perspective while helping build lasting relationships with businesses and organisations interested in working with Defence, supporting service people and their families, and recognising the valuable role Defence plays within the region.