

## RESILIENCE

The ability to anticipate and resist the effects of a disruptive event, minimise adverse impacts, respond effectively, maintain or recover functionality, and adapt in a way that allows for learning and thriving.



The COVID-19 emergency has forced businesses, individuals, and families to adapt quickly to challenging circumstances, and accept that the future is uncertain and complex.

Auckland Emergency Management (AEM) is working alongside local boards and business associations to help businesses to become more resilient to disruptive events like extreme weather, natural disasters and pandemics.

## Building the resilience of Auckland businesses

COVID-19 has heightened the need to build the resilience of Auckland's small businesses, many of which were forced to close during lockdown and are now faced with unforeseen financial pressures and market conditions.

Bridget Vercoe, AEM's Principal Business Resilience Advisor, says while we cannot predict when an emergency will happen, we can work to become better prepared.

**"As businesses navigate through this rapidly changing economic landscape on our way to recovery, Auckland Emergency Management is here to support small to medium businesses in building their resilience to emergency events."**

Bridget says that to survive in this rapidly changing business environment, it is important to share experiences and creatively problem solve with others.

To help small business owners do this, AEM teamed up with [Resilient Organisations](#) to deliver a series of interactive, knowledge-sharing workshops.

The pilot launched on 20 April, while the country was in Alert Level 4, and was supported by the Waitematā Local Board and six business associations, including five BIDs: Heart of the City, Newmarket, Parnell, Uptown and Karangahape Road.

"The workshops provided an opportunity for small business owners to share experiences, seek reassurance, think more positively and develop creative solutions. Content was focused on what is needed to survive in the short term and how businesses can position themselves to thrive in recovery."



Bridget Vercoe





Waitemata Local Board Member **Sarah Trotman**, *pictured*, was approached to support the pilot as she oversees the board's economic development portfolio. An entrepreneur in her own right, Sarah worked with Bridget Vercoe and Resilient Organisations, which had a proven track record of supporting business owners in times of distress.

"The feedback I've had from business owners has been extremely positive," she says.

Benefits have included:

- the opportunity to face reality in a supportive environment;
- connecting with other business owners who are struggling with the immediate impact of business disruption; and
- learning more about what other support is available for businesses during this difficult time.

In addition to her elected role, Sarah has run her own fast growth businesses for over 20 years and is also Chief Executive of Business Mentors NZ.

- Sarah represents her local board working with two BIDs - Parnell (lead rep) and Newmarket (alternate).

### Bridget Vercoe explains AEM's approach.

"For us, resilience building is all about helping small to medium business owners to:

- **Understand** their risks and how their business assets (capital and people) might be impacted.
- **Prepare** so that when an emergency hits they can keep their employees and customers safe.
- **Plan** so their business can continue to function to the fullest possible extent during and after an emergency. This includes business continuity planning.
- **Build** their business connectedness, so they can support their neighbouring businesses and communities during and following an emergency."

As shown by the knowledge-sharing workshops, AEM has adopted a flexible working approach, partnering with key organisations, including local boards and BIDs, to deliver a range of resilience building resources and initiatives which can be tailored to meet the needs of particular business communities.

### Examples of resilience initiatives that have, or could be, developed include:

- Workshops, either face to face or over zoom. These can be delivered either by AEM or [Resilient Organisations](#), depending on the workshop outcome and budget.
- Guides and templates, webinars, video 'sound bites' and resources in different languages.
- Presentations at meetings.
- Speed dating – short one-on-one sessions for business owners.

### Business Continuity Planning – Templates and guides

A suite of resources, developed specifically for small business owners, are available [online](#). These include a business continuity guide and plan templates. Hard copies are also available on request.

Simplified Chinese versions will be available shortly.

### Bridget says business continuity planning is crucial.

"It helps a business to make informed decisions to keep their people safe and to enhance situational awareness during events to maintain safety and continuity of operation.

"A business continuity plan identifies the most essential and critical parts of a business, potential risks to these critical services and prepares the business to recover."

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