

KPMG Alumni News

March 2024

Well, the year seems to be rolling past quickly – as we move into Autumn and Easter is staring us down the barrel. 2024 has started with KPMG welcoming 5 new partners into the partnership. We profile 4 of those partners in this newsletter which will hopefully give you a better sense of them, and what gets them up in the morning, and will hear from Sanel next time around.

At the other end of the spectrum, we also profile a partner from years gone by. Peter Kane was a Wellington Audit partner, then moved over to lead Consulting – prior to the sale in the early 2000's of the consulting business to BearingPoint. It's great to catch up with a past partner and hear a bit about what's been keeping Peter busy, which is a lot! Between family, competitive triathlon/half iron man competitions, and the various businesses Peter is

involved in makes for a busy schedule. My guess is that many KPMG Alumni from years gone by will remember Peter and hopefully this will bring you up to speed on what Peter has been doing.

Separately – we will be hosting Alumni drinks in Auckland and Wellington this year, the other offices do a range of separate events, but our two major events are just in the scheduling stages so keep a watch on your emails for the invites to those events!

As always – I welcome any thoughts – suggestions – or offers to profile past Alumni – and we will continue to try and bring you a range of updates on what's happening within the firm, our people and past KPMGers. Well – all the best and if you see me around, please do say hello....



What have our Alumni been up to?

London is calling! In February a group of our alumni gathered in Shoreditch, London for a much welcomed, informal reunion. It was great to see so many familiar faces in attendance.

It's always fabulous to see that our Alumni are connecting whilst they are overseas! We are always interested to hear what our Alumni have been up to, and always welcome pictures, so please feel free to reach out.



Welcome to our new 2024 Partners

We're thrilled to introduce our amazing new partners who have recently joined our firm in 2024! (Who some of you may recognize!) These talented individuals bring a fresh perspective and a wealth of expertise to our team. Their passion for excellence aligns perfectly with our firm's values, enhancing our ability to provide top-notch service to our clients. We eagerly await the exciting journeys ahead for our new partners. In the meantime, please explore their inspiring legacy statements below, and get to know them a bit better! Below we hear from Ben, Nicola, Jordan and Edwina. Sanel we will profile next issue!

Introducing our new partners



Ben Szeto, WLG Consulting

*Kia ora koutou
Nō Haina ōku tīpuna
Kei Te Whanganui-a-tara taku kāinga
Ko Kirsty tōku hoa rangatira
Ko Sebby rāua ko Izzy āku tamariki
Ko Ben Szeto tōku ingoa
Tēnā koutou katoa*

Kia ora everyone; I thought this mihi summed me up pretty well – It translates to that I have cultural ties to China, but I call Wellington home, my family is my wife Kirsty, my son Sebby and my daughter Izzy (and they are where my spirit and energy comes from, which I've been told I have lots of!).

I have been fortunate to have 'grown up' through KPMG – I started as an intern in 2008 and later a grad in 2010 in the tax team before joining Consulting in 2013. Over that time, I've been proud to work with several public and private sector clients through transformation, change, strategy and large investment decisions, whilst also getting married and having a couple of awesome kids. My break was largely centred around family, travelling between the North and the South Island and recharging for 2024.

What will your legacy be as a new Partner?

I want to be known as **way-finder leader**; someone that brings our people together and helps navigate uncertain waters but gives them confidence we are heading in a direction to make a lasting impact for the future of our people, clients and New Zealand.

What is going to be your key focus in 2024 (and beyond), i.e. what sort of client challenges will you be solving?

2024 is a year of opportunity for our clients. With significant uncertainty (geopolitically, locally and in the workforce), it gives a driver to reflect on whether organisations are delivering the right services and whether these are delivered in a streamlined way. A passion area of mine is thinking about the future workforce and demographic changes (first time in history we have such a multi-generational workforce) and the impact it will have on organisations – both private and public.

We are in a time where step change is needed to align the services citizens care about, how these services can be delivered in an efficient and effective way, and how that means organisations need to operate. A major consideration of this will be embracing the power of technology and considering the skills and expertise needed now and into the future.

What happens when you're not at work?

I spend my time with my kids (meaning getting them to their extracurricular activities) and challenging myself to try something that is new – this year I decided to take on golf and the learning curve is significantly steeper than I expected!



Ben picture with his wife Kirsty, and their two children Sebby and Izzy

Edwina Ma, Auckland Tax



I was born and raised in Wellington by my parents who immigrated to New Zealand from Taiwan in the early 1980s. I now live in Auckland with my husband Kevin, who is an architect, and my two young children. We spent the summer break mainly in Christchurch, where my husband is from, and we also explored the West Coast of the South Island.

Fun Fact, Edwina & Ben both started as grads together!

What will your legacy be as a new Partner?

My legacy will be to help create a safe and inclusive environment at KPMG where people feel heard, valued and respected.

What is going to be your key focus in 2024 (and beyond), i.e. what sort of client challenges will you be solving?

Given the Government's increased focus on tax compliance, my key focus for 2024 and beyond will be to help our clients navigate and resolve Inland Revenue audits and disputes. I will also be focused on helping our clients obtain greater certainty on complex tax issues in order to manage tax risk.

What happens when you're not at work?

When I'm not at work, I'll either be spending time with my family, attending a gym class or travelling.

Jordan Fincham, Auckland Tax

I currently reside near the beach in Orewa with my wife, Rachael, and our two beautiful daughters, Imogen and Isabella, who are 1 and 3 respectively. Rachael and I share a passion for travelling and renovating houses, which we are in the midst of with our current home. In my own time, I am passionate about physical well-being and rarely go a day without attending the gym or at least going for a run.

Over the summer break we went camping as a family up north with a group of friends as well as spending some time in the sun in the Coromandel.

What will your legacy be as a new Partner?

My legacy as a new partner is to make a positive impact by fostering a team culture of putting our people's wellbeing and growth first and ensuring that we strive for excellence in all we do.

What is going to be your key focus in 2024 (and beyond), i.e. what sort of client challenges will you be solving?

My key focuses for 2024 and beyond are:

- Continuing to grow our specialist real estate offering (both in tax and the wider firm); and
- Ensuring that our people are getting access to, and guidance with, the best opportunities available to help them grow, develop and thrive.

What happens when you're not at work?

When I'm not at work I will generally be spending time with the family at the beach or going for bike rides, undertaking various renovation activities at home (which generally end up taking a lot longer than I plan), or at the gym (if it's an early morning weekday).



Jordan picture with his wife Rachael, and their two daughters Imogen and Isabella



Nicola picture with her husband Sean, and their two children Edison and Lily

After seven years with the KPMG New Zealand firm, I'm absolutely delighted to join as a Partner in 2024. I am passionate about problem solving alongside New Zealand businesses, designing new ways of working that make a real impact on the market.

Like many I'm sure, my summer break felt well overdue by the end of 2023. It was great to reconnect and recharge with close family members who travelled from around the world to our hometown of Wellington.

With two young children (Edison, 6 and Lily, 2), spending time with family has become even more important and Christmas is a special time to pass on old traditions and create new ones. One of our new family traditions is an annual camping trip before starting back at the office, this year we were fortunate to get the most perfect camping weather in Whananaki.

What will your legacy be as a new Partner?

A legacy is important because it's our story and gift to the next generation. My legacy and hope is that I'm remembered as a collaborative, values-driven leader who challenged traditions to achieve the best outcomes and fuel New Zealand's prosperity.

He tumu herenga tangata. He taniwha.
E tuitui ana te onamata, te inamata, me te anamata,
hei kora ahi hei houkura mō te iwi.

What is going to be your key focus in 2024 (and beyond), i.e. what sort of client challenges will you be solving?

With a particular interest in helping our corporate sector in New Zealand, my key focus is on strategic operating model change and process optimisation. After setting a strategy, it can often be hard to know exactly what to do differently when it comes to the day-to-day running of teams and assets. I want to make sure our clients leave nothing on the table when it comes to profitability and growth and can fully execute on their strategy in 2024 and beyond.

Knowing that your business and operating model is designed effectively is key to making the biggest and most positive impact for New Zealand.

What happens when you're not at work?

I love to keep my creative spark alive and often have some kind of art or home design project happening when I'm out of office. That's often tailored to what can be achieved with or around young children these days!

Honestly though, I'm often still thinking about a problem that our clients need us to solve and find that the best solution ideas come when you think you are switching off.

Peter Kane: tales of corporate & other adventures

Since his departure from KPMG, Peter's post-firm endeavours have continued to be marked by remarkable achievements and significant contributions, along with multiple triathlons. In this article, we invite our esteemed alumni to reconnect with Peter as we delve into his remarkable experiences, both during his time at KPMG and beyond.

You retired last year as CEO of Unimarket, after 10 years running the company. But we hear you've taken on another very important role?

My wife Tanja and I have two toddlers under two, so that's keeping us busy! It's a big change of life but I'm loving being a father. It's been a real journey for us to get here...we went through a surrogacy programme in Georgia a couple of years ago. *

I still have various business interests, including two Board roles. And I'm usually in training for my next triathlon.

**You can read more about Peter and Tanja's journey to parenthood in this feature article from Woman's Day.*

You took up triathlons in your mid-forties – and recently achieved a PB.

I did my first triathlon after leaving KPMG. I'd always kept myself fit, but I couldn't really swim, so that was an initial challenge to overcome.

I did my first half ironman soon after. When I went to my first long-distance World Champs, I had no idea how I'd go, so I was surprised to come 4th.

I'm now in the 'gold card' age group, and just did my PB at a Tauranga half ironman in January.

You became a 'accidental CEO' of tech start-up, Unimarket*. Tell us more about that.

I was introduced to Unimarket by a former KPMG colleague and invested in 2009. I joined the board thinking there'd be an exit in 2-3 years...but then ended up stepping in to run the company in 2011. I really enjoyed being CEO – it was a lot of hard yards, but we substantially grew the US business, and the Australian Government became one of our biggest customers.

We eventually decided to exit via the PE route, and I was charged with finding the right company and negotiating a sale. Which we did, just over two years ago now. I'm still on the Unimarket board, and a co-investor alongside the US PE firm.

Back in 2003, I also invested in a recruitment company, Momentum, where I'm still a major shareholder and on the board. It's a fun company with a different mix of people.

I've also invested in a few other companies where it's more of a passive investment.

What do you miss about being a partner at KPMG?

When I think about the camaraderie of the partnership, especially the Wellington practice in the 80s and 90s....nothing really compares.

"There was always this really strong sense of fun, alongside the work ethic and professionalism. Some of my earliest memories as a grad was sitting at my desk and hearing the partners joking and just roaring with laughter.

** Unimarket, established in 2005, is a cloud-based platform that simplifies procurement processes by integrating supplier marketplace, purchasing, invoice management, and card payment functions. Trusted by various industries, Unimarket enables organisations to streamline their procurement, gain visibility, and make informed decisions. Their collaborative approach empowers businesses to focus on what they do best while optimising their procurement practises.*



Peter completing the 2024 Half Ironman event.



Peter pictured with his wife Tanja, and their two children Jackson and Amelia.

And how's it different to the corporate world?

One thing you notice in the CA environment is that pretty much everybody you work with is smart. Whereas in the corporate world, you're working with a range of people and capabilities.

To be successful in the CEO role, it's not just about dealing with the Board or the exec team. You've got to lead and guide and inspire everybody in your workforce and relate to people at all different levels and backgrounds. Unimarket was a real United Nations in our development team, so it was great learning about different cultures as well.

You started out in Audit and moved to Consulting. How did that come about?

I'd already been an Audit Partner for 5 years and got asked to transition across to Consulting in 1995. There were 8 or 9 different business units, and I enjoyed that broader base of client engagements and the different skillsets it required.

We had a fantastic group of Partners. There was a lot of respect for each other and our capabilities, and we had a lot of fun as well. We became friends for life. More than 20 years on, we still get together and catch up every few months. I really enjoy the annual KPMG Retired Partners functions as well.

You were involved in the KPMG BearingPoint transaction. For those that don't know, can you explain what it was?

It was back in 2000, KPMG's sale of their consulting business. The idea was to split out and purchase the consulting businesses from each KPMG partnership and bring them together under a corporate structure. It was partly in response to Enron and other big scandals in the US around the potential conflict between audit and consulting. The business was called BearingPoint, and it was floated on the NASDAQ.

New Zealand's consulting business was one of the first to be purchased. I became senior VP of Southeast Asia, still based in Wellington but commuting a lot.

Unfortunately, BearingPoint lasted less than 10 years. It initially had two very charismatic US CEOs with a good strategy, but ultimately it wasn't run well and had a number of financial setbacks, and the business filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in 2009.

What's the key to having a good work-life balance?

Like everyone, I put in some long hours at times – but only when it needed to be done, not for the sake of it. I think that's healthy for mental well-being.

I've always had a life outside of work. Early in my KPMG career, I was playing rugby fairly seriously, and playing in a band 5 nights a week.

That's not to say I don't have a good work ethic. I was one of 9 children and the expectation from our parents was that you worked hard and did your best. It was a similar expectation at KPMG.

What's your #1 tip for generating new business and sales?

Being a good listener. I think that serves you really well. If you show a genuine interest, it makes the selling process much better.

I did a lot of RFPs at KPMG, interviewing executives to try to understand their business. By really listening and asking probing questions, you pick up cues like 'that's obviously really important to them, we'd better think about that in terms of how we respond.'

As someone with a background in tech companies, what's your take on AI?

It will be fascinating to watch AI evolve. Everybody's talking about how quickly it's moving – which is true in terms of the technology itself, but not so much in terms of businesses actually starting to use it. It's a bit similar to blockchain in that respect. A lot of businesses are looking at it, but there's some inertia around adopting it.

It was a pleasure catching up with Peter. We cannot thank him enough for taking the time to share his insights and experiences with us.

We want to keep the momentum going and encourage all our alumni to step up and be featured in upcoming editions of our newsletters. Everyone's journey is unique and deserves to be shared. By sharing their stories, our alumni can inspire and support each other while rekindling connections that mean so much.

So, a big round of applause to Peter for his fantastic interview! We invite him to join us in encouraging our fellow graduates to come forward and share their own stories. Together, let's make our newsletters a vibrant space, showcasing the incredible talent and accomplishments of our alumni family.

Thank you once again, Peter, and to all the alumni who have already participated. We can't wait to celebrate more of your journeys and achievements!

We value your connection with us and invite you to visit our [Alumni website](#) to stay abreast of all the latest news and happenings at KPMG New Zealand. Please reach out to us by emailing alumni@kpmg.co.nz if you would like additional information regarding any of the above topics.

Malcolm Bruce

KPMG New Zealand Alumni Partner

kpmg.com/nz/en/home/alumni.html

