



**NZFSSRC Industry Futures Forum**  
**Tuesday 03 November 2026, 9:00am – 5:00pm**  
**James Cook Grand Chancellor, Wellington**  
**FutureSafe 2035: Building Resilient Food Safety Systems for a Changing World**

0815-0900 Tea & Coffee on arrival

**0900-0930 Welcome & Introductions**

*Karakia*

Denver McGregor (NZFSSRC Industry Leaders Group - Chair)

**Food Safety: New Zealand's Licence to Operate in an Uncertain World**

Hon. Tim Groser, International trade expert; former NZ chief agriculture negotiator and Trade Minister

Scott Champion (Facilitator)

**0930-1000 Future Keynote: Food Safety 2035: What Will Keep Industry Leaders Awake at Night?**

Lain Jager, Zespri Director and former CEO

**1000-1100 Session 1: Panel Discussion: Future Disruptions and Emerging Risks - What Could Challenge Food Safety Over the Next Decade?**

Jo Hendy, Climate Change Commission CE

Vincent Arbuckle, MPI NZFS DDG

Hon. Tim Groser, International trade expert; former NZ chief agriculture negotiator and Trade Minister

Nicola O'Rourke, Board Director CMIInstD

**1100-1120 Morning Tea**

**1120-1220 Session 2: One Health, Systems Thinking and Trust Rethinking Food Safety Through a Wider Lens**

1120 - 1140 *Title TBC*

Linda Tuhiwai Smith

1140 - 1200 *Title, TBC*

Amanda Black, BioProtection CoRE Lincoln

1200 - 1220 *Title, TBC*

Nigel French, Massey University

**1220-1300 Executive Panel: Regulation, Innovation and Agility**

Dandan Chen, A2 Milk

Steve Brown, Veeva

Fiona Duncan, MPI

**1300-1345 Lunch**

**1345-1445 Session 3: Digital Food Safety 2035 AI, Automation and Real-Time Assurance**

1345-1415 *Title TBC*

Johan Potgieter, NZ Product Accelerator

1415-1445 *Title TBC*

Greg Cross, Cross Ventures Limited

**1445-1530 Session 4: The Future Food Safety Workforce - People, Culture and Capability in 2035**

1445-1505 *Title TBC*

Greg Cross, Cross Ventures Limited

1505-1530 *Title TBC*

Alex Richter, University of Auckland

**1530-1550 Afternoon Tea**

**1550-1640 Futures Workshop: What Must New Zealand Do Now?**

**1640 - 1700 Forum close / Karakia**

## Speaker Biographies



**Hon. Tim Groser**

International trade expert; former NZ chief agriculture negotiator and Trade Minister

After joining the NZ Treasury as a junior economist in 1973, Tim became deeply involved in Australia/NZ economic relationships which then evolved into the CER Agreement. In the early 1980s, Tim served as the Foreign Affairs adviser to both Prime Minister Muldoon and Prime Minister David Lange in the Prime Minister's Department. In 1986, Tim was then appointed NZ Chief Trade Negotiator with responsibility for the last successful multilateral Trade Negotiating Round, the Uruguay Round. He served as Ambassador to Indonesia 1994-97 (Tim's first involvement with the Geothermal Industry (the Wayang Windu 600 MW plant built by NZ). In 2002 Tim was appointed Ambassador to the WTO and chaired the Agriculture Negotiating Group – the first New Zealander to do so. He served as NZ Trade Minister, NZ Climate Change Minister (International) and Associate Minister of Foreign Affairs 2008-15. From 2016-19 Tim was Ambassador to the United States. Tim was recently appointed Chair of the Advisory Group on Supercritical Geothermal Energy.



**Lain Jager**

Zespri Director and former CEO

Lain is best known for being CEO of ZESPRI from 2008 to 2017. This was a challenging period for ZESPRI including Importer issues in China and Taiwan, the deregulation campaign run by Turners and Growers, and most severely the bacterial disease Psa. Despite these challenges Zespri grew strongly, grower returns doubled, and the share price grew from \$1.00 to \$8.00. Perhaps most importantly, under Lain's tenure the culture of the company matured, enabling the development of the genuinely global approach to sales and marketing that exists today. Today, Lain invests across a range of businesses in Tourism, Technology, Food, and Agribusiness. Lain was the Chairman of the Primary Sector Council which produced the Fit for a Better World Report focused on the New Zealand Food and Fibre Sector and was Co-Chair of Te Puna Whakaaronui – a Food and Fibre think tank. Current Directorships include: The A2 Milk Company, Arepa, Nibblish, New Zealand Avocado Oil, Origin Capital Management, Redwoods Treewalk, Rubisco and Zespri. In addition to this Lain sits on the advisory Board of the Sustainable Nutrition Initiative. Lain and his wife Debra live on a lifestyle block in Tauranga, New Zealand.



**Jo Hendy**

Climate Change Commission CE

Jo Hendy is Chief Executive of New Zealand's Climate Change Commission, where she leads independent advice to help the country move toward a low-emissions, climate-resilient future that works for everyone. With over two decades of experience at the intersection of science, policy, and economics, Jo is known for her calm, clear thinking and ability to bring people together around complex issues. She's committed to building trust across government, business, iwi, and communities – helping decision-makers navigate uncertainty and act with confidence as the climate changes.



**Vincent Arbuckle**  
MPI NZFS DDG

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.



**Nicola O'Rourke**  
Board Director CMIInstD

Nicola is a seasoned executive in New Zealand's food and beverage sector, with over 20 years of experience spanning innovation, marketing, sales, and general management roles. She has held leadership positions at companies such as Comvita (as Chief Digital Officer) and Lewis Road Creamery (as General Manager), where she was instrumental in launching innovation into global markets across Australasia, the USA, and China. Nicola is the co-founder and managing partner of Founders Advisory, a business that invests in and advises branded Food & Beverage businesses, holds board and advisory roles across multiple Food & Beverage export businesses such as Giesen Wines, Pics Peanut Butter, Lilo Desserts and is an advisor to NZTE portfolio customers on scaling for export growth. Nicola is known for her passion in building a shared future for the next generation of NZ Food & Beverage businesses on the global stage. She was recognized in 2025 as one of Cuisine Magazine's Top 50 Women in Food & Drink Aotearoa New Zealand.



**Linda Tuhiwai Smith**

Distinguished Professor Linda Tuhiwai Smith, PhD. CNZM. Ngāti Awa, Ngāti Porou, Tuhourangi. Linda is both a Professor at Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiāraangi and the CEO of Ngā Āhuetanga O Te Kai Ltd. The Kai Research Institute. She is an internationally renowned and highly awarded researcher, scholar and writer known for her work on Decolonising Methodologies, Kaupapa Māori and Mana Wahine and Māori Education. She has also published Children's books and poetry. Linda is a mother, grandmother, wife, cousin, and aunty. She lives in Whanganui with her husband Graham Hingangaroa Smith.



**Amanda Black**

BioProtection CoRE Lincoln

Amanda's research area is in environmental soil chemistry and biochemistry, focusing on the health of soil ecosystems. My current areas of focus are understanding the relationship between gene expression and soil productivity such as carbon storage; halting kauri dieback through discovery of disease suppressive traits in soils; and focusing on biosecurity and climate change issues that are of concern to Maori and indigenous communities. I am the director of Bioprotection Aotearoa which is a national centre of research excellence (CoRE) that collaborates across 11 partner organisations across New Zealand. It conducts innovative research framed by Māori values, to develop approaches that make our productive and valued ecosystems resistant and resilient in the face of increasing threats from pathogens, pests, and weeds, which are exacerbated by climate change



**Nigel French**

Massey University

Nigel is Distinguished Professor of Infectious Disease Epidemiology and Public Health at Tāwharau Ora | School of Veterinary Science, Massey University and Honorary Professor in the Department of Pathology and Biomedical Science at the University of Otago. He is currently Emeritus Director of Te Niwha, the Infectious Disease Research Platform, and Emeritus Director of the New Zealand Food Safety Science and Research Centre. He was elected as Fellow of the Royal Society of New Zealand in 2014 and made Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit in 2023 for services to epidemiology.



**Dandan Chen**

A2 Milk

Dandan Chen, based in Sydney, NSW, AU, is currently a Group Head of Quality, Regulatory and Product Development at The a2 Milk Company. Dandan Chen brings experience from previous roles at The a2 Milk Company. Dandan Chen holds a 2002 - 2005 Bachelor of technology (Hon) - Food Tech in Food Technology and Processing @ Massey University - Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa. With a robust skill set that includes Quality Systems, NPD, Food Safety, HACCP, Food Industry and more.



**Steve Brown**  
Veeva

A pioneer in digital transformation for regulated industries, dedicated to turning quality management from a traditional cost center into a strategic engine for business excellence. As the CTO for Veeva QualityOne in Asia, Stephen provides the technical vision and strategic leadership that helps companies from regulated industries such as Life Sciences and Food & Beverage, deliver products that consumers trust. With a career spanning nearly 30 years—including 15 years as an early team member and leader at Veeva—Stephen has helped customers navigate the shift from fragmented legacy systems to unified, cloud-first quality backbones. He uniquely bridges the gap between executive strategy and technical execution, leading the regional Solution Consulting team to deliver real-world examples of high-impact transformations that address the complexities of global regulation.

**Fiona Duncan**  
MPI



**Johan Potgieter**  
NZ Product Accelerator

A New Zealander who grew up in South Africa, Johan Potgieter is a professor of robotics within the Massey AgriFood Digital Lab Research Centre. His current research interests are in the areas of Additive Manufacturing, Sustainable Product Development and Advanced Mechatronics/Robotics with applications in AgriTech. He has been an avid user of additive manufacturing since the mid-90s and is passionate about its potential for innovation and extending the reach of businesses within the world market. He has a well-established reputation for his work in educational robotics and has been inducted into the World Robotics Education and Competition (REC) Foundation Hall of Fame



**Greg Cross**

Cross Ventures Limited

Greg is an experienced global entrepreneur, technology executive and Company Director with a governance focus on innovation, strategy and growth. A pragmatic business leader with strong strategic skills combined with the ability to inspire, motivate and lead people. Proven skills in US, international growth, capital raising, and M&A. Corporate governance experience across a wide range of high growth companies operating in US and Asia Pacific. Over the last 10 years most of Greg's focus has been in the AI industry. In 2024 he founded Eighty20 AI Inc., a native AI company which is developing Quantum Social Clubs - a next generation CR-X platform with a revolutionary on-line community underpinned by a trust exchange. In 2016 he co-founded Soul Machines quickly establishing it as a leading Artificial intelligence company backed by international investors including Temasek, Softbank Mercedes Benz and Salesforce. Prior to this another technology company he co-founded PowerbyProxi sold to Apple. Greg has been recognized as an international thought leader in how we humanize AI by focusing on the way people experience AI and integrate it into their daily lives. He is known for his strategic insights and has worked with Executives at major brands including Pfizer, WHO, Walmart, JPM Chase, Mercedes Benz as they re-imagine the workplace of the future. He has been a keynote speaker at leading global conferences like Singularity University Global Summit (San Francisco), Web Summit (Lisbon), Cannes Lions (Cannes), CogX (London), Gitex (Dubai) and Collision (Toronto). He was selected by the World Economic Forum as a Technology Pioneer for his work in the field of Artificial Intelligence in 2018 and in 2019 he was inducted into New Zealand's Technology Hall of Fame as the recipient of the Flying Kiwi Award and was an Auckland Grammar School Augusta Award winner in 2020. Earlier in his career Greg was Managing Director of Microsoft New Zealand as it transitioned into the Internet era and developed its Enterprise Software business and was 2IC and Head of Sales and Marketing at BellSouth New Zealand during its build out, launch and the initial growth years of its digital cellular business (subsequently sold to Vodafone).



**Alex Richter**

University of Auckland

Alexander Richter is a Professor of Human-Centric AI and the inaugural Director of the AI Initiative at the University of Auckland. He studies how people and AI can work together in ways that improve performance, preserve human values and build institutional capability. His research spans topics such as human-AI collaboration, the future of work and AI governance. Across these areas, he develops frameworks that help organisations decide what AI can do and, more importantly, what it should do. Alex believes in engaged scholarships and has advised governments and organisations across three continents. He is also a passionate teacher and received the 2024 Association for Information Systems Innovation in Teaching Award for his teaching approach, "Learning Out Loud". His talks combine empirical research, future-oriented thinking and practical guidance for leaders navigating AI-driven organisational change.