



Simon Gooding will benefit from the modified half-day charges.

DOUG SHERRING

Backdown a 'small win for little guys'

By Simon Plumb

Mobile vendors facing sizeable fee hikes have scored a "small win" over Auckland Council.

Last month the *Herald on Sunday* revealed street vendors were upset with a bylaw change designed to clamp down on the booming industry. Some questioned the viability of their business after being notified of \$500 rises annually over the next three years.

But Auckland Council has confirmed it is altering the bylaw to be more accommodating to some small business holders.

Council wanted to charge vendors a daily flat fee for renting space. But traders such as coffee franchisees said the concept was unfair because they stood to be charged the same amount for staying in a spot for a couple of hours as a seller who parked all day.

In response to feedback, council has agreed to introduce a half-day option, making small businesses more viable. The changes included cheaper rental for businesses that operated for fewer than four hours a day.

"We have agreed to offer a monthly rental rate that is now based on half of the full day rate," an Auckland Council spokeswoman told the *Herald on Sunday*.

Retail Food Group's business development manager, Ruby Gibson, applauded the council's move saying it's a "small win for the little guy".

Franchisees for its Coffee Guy operation were among small business operators who were upset at the size of the proposed fee hikes.

"The original changes were quite unfeasible for Coffee Guy franchisees, in particular, who are only in a space for a couple of hours a day," Gibson said.

"With us harassing them and the piece in the newspaper, they have come to realise there's a bit of a glitch and have brought in a half-day rate. It's fantastic."

The *Herald on Sunday* revealed on June 28 that Auckland Council was changing its charging structures to mobile food vendors to "ensure the outdoor dining, mobile trading and events contribute to the vibrancy of Auckland".

Simon Gooding, who runs a mobile coffee franchise, said under the proposed charges his annual fees would have risen from \$1200 to \$4620.

"I may only be there for a few hours but I'm still being asked to pay the same rental fee as a business that is there for the entire working day," he said at the time. Gooding is one of many vendors who will now benefit from the modified half-day fees.

Schools get media savvy

Crisis training 'insurance' for reputation.

By Lynley Bilby

Primary school principals are being urged to pay for one-stop media training to prepare for crisis situations.

Everything from lock-downs and student deaths to evacuations and bullying accusations are covered in pre-prepared generic press statements.

Touted as an insurance policy for the school's reputation, principals are being advised by association bodies to learn how to deal with media quickly after a crisis.

The crisis management advice comes as schools face an increased risk of legal action from parents. The

Herald on Sunday revealed this month a rise in threats of injunctions had forced principals and Crown Law to draw up legal advice for schools faced by parents hiring lawyers to fight decisions they thought penalised their children.

The media training service, run by a former journalist and Government press secretary, Pete Burdon, provides schools with ready-to-go statements, interview training and a crisis communication plan. Prices range from \$333 to \$569 a person.

Auckland Primary Principals' Association president Frances Nelson said school heads were competing against the clock when communicating information in a crisis and training was vital.

"You cannot leave it to chance. You have to be pro-active to make sure the right message gets out in a timely way through whatever those media connections are and you have to be prepared to do it effectively," she said.

Burdon, director of Media Training NZ, said it was important for schools to communicate with parents and media within minutes of a major event.

That included having ready-to-go statements because, once a crisis occurred, principals needed to talk to parents and media quickly.

If a school bus crashed with casualties, schools should be ready to communicate to the media within 15 minutes, he said.

"School leaders need to be on social media letting parents and the community know exactly what's going on the minute it happens

because everyone else will be talking about it."

Burdon's seminars included details of a crisis communication plan, how to handle different situations and a raft of media statements.

One generic press statement begins: "We have just learnt of the situation and not all the relevant details are known at this stage. I can confirm that (explain what you can say, but don't speculate). Our hearts go out to (whoever affected). (If applicable) We are doing all we can to support everyone who has been affected by this. For example (say something you are doing) . . ."

Beckenham School principal Sandy Hastings said the training was invaluable after a youngster set fire to the school's library.

"I went back to my notes and focused on the key messages and what we were going to say."



Top training tips

- » Get a puppy about 7-8 weeks old as the first four months are critical. Start simple training in non-distractive environments such as the yard or house.
- » Socialise the dog by having it around people and other dogs.
- » Give the dog experiences it is likely to be living with, eg, being among traffic or in city environments.
- » House train by keeping them in an appropriately-sized crate indoors when unsupervised for the first 4-6 weeks. Dogs will not soil their own den and will soon learn to toilet outdoors.
- » Use a hand-held clicker and food reward technique to quickly encourage correct responses to commands such as "sit", "stay" and "come".

DOUG SHERRING

New life for death-row dog not to be sniffed at

By Russell Blackstock

A former rescue dog has been trained as New Zealand's only specialist kauri dieback sniffer dog.

Three-year-old golden labrador Paddy was so emaciated when he was rescued from the home of an injured hoarder in Auckland, all his ribs could be counted. The dog was infested with fleas and was aggressive.

Animal behaviourist Mark Vette, pictured with Paddy, feared the worst when he was brought to his clinic in Waimauku, northwest Auckland.

But in a few months, the canine underwent a remarkable transformation. He has now been adopted by Auckland Council's biosecurity team and will be used as a secret weapon in the battle against kauri dieback.

"Paddy was in a bad way and his rehab took a while," Vette said. "[But] I realised he had an amazing nose and would make a great sniffer dog."

Vette contacted biosecurity specialists after hearing they were curious to discover if dogs could be trained to identify the dieback fungus at an early stage.

"It was a big job to train him

because dogs can be good at identifying things like drugs and fruit, but no one knew if they could detect plant disease like dieback," Vette said.

"Paddy had a knack for sniffing this out. I believe he is the first dog in the world that has been able to do this. We are so proud of him."

Dr Nick Waipara, principal biosecurity adviser at Auckland Council, said Paddy's skills could prove invaluable in combating the spread of kauri dieback.

Paddy has been adopted by Stacey Hill, the council's dieback programme manager, and will join

other dogs at the biosecurity team, including some trained to sniff out pests such as rodents.

The unit also has the world's only dog that can identify Argentine Ants and another is being trained to uncover Australian skinks.

Paddy's story will be told in an upcoming episode of *Purina Pound Pups to Dog Stars*, which begins a second series on TV One on Tuesday.

The Kiwi animal rescue show launched last year and has become an international sensation.

It highlights Vette and his team who rehabilitate maltreated and neglected dogs.

Real estate agencies celebrate success

Barfoot & Thompson scooped the top Real Estate Institute award on Thursday night.

Auckland's biggest real estate agency chain was named this year's large agency, all disciplines, winner at a ceremony at the Rendezvous Grand Hotel.

JLL won the award for boutique agency of the year, all disciplines, and Cooper and Co Real Estate, Harcourts, Auckland, was the medium agency of the year, all disciplines. Barfoot & Thompson

Stonefields was the rising star office of the year.

Bayleys was named top commercial real estate agency and won a swag of top awards, including best large commercial and industrial office (Bayleys Auckland); best small rural office (Success Realty, Bayleys, Hamilton); commercial and industrial salesperson of the year (Paul Hain), best rural salesperson (Ben Turner, Whalan and Partners, Bayleys, Canterbury); residential salesperson of the year, highest volume (Chris Jones, Whalan and Partners, Bayleys Canterbury); and best multimedia campaign (Sneha Gray, Success Realty Ltd, Bayleys Tauranga).

The residential salesperson of the year, highest commission, was Matty Ma of Cooper and Co, Harcourts Group, Auckland.

ABC Business Sales in Auckland won the top prize for large business broking agency. The award for rising star of the year went to Sarah Sneyd of Wendell Property Management.

Barfoot Pukekohe was named the large residential office of the year (highest commission) and Tommy's Real Estate Ltd, City Office, Wellington, was the large residential office of the year (highest volume).

Barfoot Mission Bay was the medium residential office of the year (highest commission) and Property Brokers Ltd, Wanganui, was the medium residential office of the year (highest volume). Almost 40 awards were presented to New Zealand's top agencies and salespeople.