



MEET THE PROFESSIONALS SESSION OVERVIEW

Opening Session: Being work ready 5.30 – 5.50pm

LIBRARY Led by Gillian Peacock, People and Capability Manager, Queen Margaret College

This session will equip students with practical insights on how to prepare for their future careers. Covering the key steps to becoming a standout candidate, it offers guidance on essential skills, professional readiness and strategies for success in any industry.

Session 1: 6pm – 6.30pm

PW1 Design

Phoebe Edge
Co-founder & Designer, PS/Digital

PW2 Public Service

Sam Latham
Workforce Strategy Lead, New Zealand
Defence Force

PW3 Entrepreneurship

Jane Kelley
Entrepreneur & Director, Beyond the Bit

PW4 Finance

Sarah Southee
Business Finance Advisor & Shareholder,
Finance New Zealand

T1 Environmental & Marine Science

Mariana Horigome
Project Manager, Beca

T2 Law & Justice

Erin Judge
Executive Director, Justice Sector

W1 Psychology & Entrepreneurship

Karlin Sloan
Entrepreneur & Organisational Psychologist,
Sloan Group International

Session 2: 6.40pm – 7.10pm

PW1 Psychology & Management

Roz Freeman
Managing Director, TheraMAS

PW2 Law

Lucie Scott
Criminal Defence Barrister, College of Law
& NZ Law Society

PW3 Health

Vanessa Simpson
Physiotherapist, Vertigo Balance Clinic

PW4 Health

Lynda Lovett
Nurse, Lynda Lovett Lady Talk

T1 International Affairs

Dawn Blalock & Craig Goodwin
Humanitarian Affairs Officer, United Nations
Director Mission Support, United Nations

T2 Government

Gary Haddon
Talent Acquisition Partner – Programme Lead,
Wellington City Council

W1 Creative Industries

Brenton Cottman
Head of Matte Painting and Environment Artist,
Wētā FX

W2 Finance

Rhiannon McKinnon
Founder & CEO, Cassiobury & CEO 101



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Session 3: 7.20pm – 7.50pm

PW1 Law

Stacey Shortall
Partner & Lawyer, MinterEllisonRuddWatts

PW2 History

Lucy Mouland
Historian & Senior Performance Auditor,
Office of the Auditor-General

PW3 Finance

Inna Koning
Principal Policy Advisor, Ministry for
Primary Industries

PW4 Medicine

Dr Sandini Munasinghe
General Practitioner, Paraparaumu
Medical Centre

T1 Marine Science

Simon Davy
Marine Biologist & Professor,
Victoria University of Wellington

T2 Media & Creative Industries

Grant Maxwell & Chris Bleackley
Founder & Director, EightyOneM
Executive Creative Director & Partner, EightyOne

W2 Project Management

Chris Palmer
Systems Design Manager, Road Ambulance,
Te Whatu Ora

Session 4: 8pm – 8.30pm

PW1 Medicine

Dr Mark Hussey
Emergency Medicine Consultant & Clinical
Leader, Te Pae Tiaki Wellington Emergency
Department

PW2 Engineering

Tony Cameron
Director, Cameron Consulting

PW3 Intelligence & Security

Nick
Deputy Director-General, Protective
Security, New Zealand Intelligence Service

PW4 Creative Industries

Jerry Kung
Animation Supervisor, Wētā FX

T1 Event Management

Alana Bicknell
Director of Sales & Planning, New Zealand
International Convention Centre

T2 Medicine

Dr Nicola Smith
Respiratory Specialist, Wellington Hospital



MEET THE **PROFESSIONALS** Speakers' Biographies

Opening Session: Being work ready

Gillian Peacock, People & Capability Manager, Queen Margaret College

Gillian is the People & Capability Manager at Queen Margaret College. An experienced HR practitioner, senior leader, coach and facilitator, she has held general management roles in human resources across private, public sector and not-for-profit organisations.

At the College, Gillian focuses on developing leadership and capability, ensuring staff have the tools and resources to excel in their roles. Previously, she was National People Manager at New Zealand Red Cross, contributing to response efforts following the 2011 Canterbury earthquakes. As part of the task force overseeing relief efforts, she helped disburse \$135m in grants to support affected communities.

Gillian holds a degree in psychology and sociology, a diploma in counselling, a national certificate in public sector management (leadership development) and a certificate in health and wellbeing. She is also an accredited ICC coach.

Design

Phoebe Edge, Co-founder & Designer, PS/digital

Phoebe is the Co-founder and a practising Designer at PS/digital, a creative agency where she balances business leadership with hands-on design across branding, campaigns and packaging. She completed a Bachelor of Computer Graphic Design with Honours at the Whanganui School of Design after attending Queen Margaret College.

Before founding PS/digital, Phoebe worked as a designer in Auckland and the UK, gaining experience across agencies and industries. She has helped shaped some of New Zealand's most recognisable brands, including Villa Maria Wines, Tegel Chicken, Frucor Beverages, I Love Food Co, and evre skincare.

Passionate about branding and packaging, Phoebe thrives on problem-solving, visual storytelling and bringing ideas to life.

Public Service

Sam Latham, Workforce Strategy Lead, New Zealand Defence Force

Sam is the Workforce Strategy Lead for the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF), responsible for developing and delivering plans to regenerate NZDF's workforce. This includes ensuring legislation supports those who serve, advising the Government on large-scale workforce mobilisation, and sourcing talent from international militaries.

Sam studied Criminology and Psychology before completing a master's in health psychology. She began her career as a Forensic Psychologist in HMP Maidstone before leading justice-sector projects, including an 'Offender Learning Passport' initiative. She later transitioned into consultancy, working for EY on the billion-dollar Inland Revenue transformation programme, supporting the design of the future tax system. Sam returned to public service, including a role as Senior Manager in the Department of Conservation before joining NZDF.



MEET THE **PROFESSIONALS** Speakers' Biographies

Entrepreneurship

Jane Kelley, Entrepreneur & Director, Beyond the Bit

Jane is a prominent leader in New Zealand's health sector and the Director of Beyond the Bit, an equestrian clothing company. With two degrees covering four majors, she has built a career spanning both public and private health and social services.

She began her career at ACC and has since navigated both the public and private health and social sector. She has played a pivotal role in significant events, including the Covid pandemic. Most recently, as Group Chief Executive of New Zealand Health Group, she oversaw 17 companies and a workforce of 12,000, leading billion-dollar initiatives and solving complex challenges.

Drawing from 20 years of experience, she looks forward to sharing insights on achieving success in business management and the importance of adaptability in one's career.

Finance

Sarah Southee, Business Finance Advisor & Shareholder, Finance New Zealand

Sarah is a Business Finance Advisor and Shareholder at Finance New Zealand, a start-up helping businesses access specialist lenders and banks. She began her career at GE Capital in Sydney, working her way up to Associate Director – Equipment Finance before returning to Wellington after ten years.

Recognised with multiple industry accolades, including highest annual volume, "Deal of the Year," and top income contributor.

Sarah is passionate about working with clients in forestry, transport, civil contracting and property development, where she helps businesses unlock their full potential.

Sarah's career has taken her from high-vis sites to high-profile forums, including representing Australia and New Zealand at the Global GE Women's Forum in London.

Environmental & Marine Science

Mariana Horigome, Project Manager, Beca

Mariana is an experienced Project Manager with a background in environmental and marine sciences. At Beca, she oversees critical projects, managing the entire project life cycle from master planning to completion.

She graduated top of her class with a BSc in Oceanography and received the prestigious Erasmus Mundus Scholarship. She later completed the Joint European Master's in Environmental Studies at the University of Aveiro, Aalborg University, and the Autonomous University of Barcelona. She also holds a Graduate Diploma in Project Management from the Western Institute of Technology at Taranaki.

Her career has spanned climate change assessments in Tanzania, technical research in Germany, offshore work in Brazil's oil and gas industry. At her previous role at MetService she combined her project management skills with applied science while working as an Oceanographer and Project Manager.



MEET THE **PROFESSIONALS** Speakers' Biographies

Law & Justice

Erin Judge, Executive Director, Justice Sector

Erin Judge, Ngāti Tūwharetoa, is the Executive Director for the Justice Sector, advising a board comprising the Chief Executives of the Ministry of Justice, Corrections, Police, Crown Law, Oranga Tamariki and the Serious Fraud Office.

She has a bachelor's degree in law and has held key legal roles, including Chief Legal Officer for Oranga Tamariki, prosecutor and lawyer for New Zealand Police, and positions at Crown Law. Her work has also involved reviews of Corrections and Oranga Tamariki. Erin has international experience from her time at the Victorian Government Solicitor's Office and voluntary family violence work in Canada.

A dedicated advocate for equity in Aotearoa, Erin volunteers on the Māori Advisory Group for Cricket Wellington and has previously served as President of ILANZ.

Psychology & Entrepreneurship

Karlin Sloan, Entrepreneur & Organisational Psychologist, Sloan Group International

Karlin is an entrepreneur, organisational psychologist, leader and strategist who has helped founders and executives worldwide refine their vision and achieve business success. She is founder and CEO Emerita of Sloan Group International, a leadership development firm serving Fortune 1000 companies across five continents.

An award-winning thought leader in global executive coaching, Karlin is also a partner and investor at The Business Acumen Company, a board member, angel investor, and author. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in English and Women's Studies, a Master's in Clinical Psychology, and postgraduate certifications in Executive Coaching, Leadership Studies, and Positive Organisational Psychology.

She is the author of Smarter, Faster, Better, Lemonade: The Leaders Guide to Resilience at Work, Executive Presence, and Inspiring Leadership in Uncertain Times.

Psychology & Management

Roz Freeman, Managing Director, TheraMAS

Roz is the Managing Director of TheraMAS, a healthcare service provider supporting clients across New Zealand. Originally trained in psychology, she holds a Bachelor's degree in Psychology and a Master's in Applied Industrial and Organisational Psychology from Canterbury University.

She began her career in recruitment at ACC before transitioning to health procurement and supply chain management. During this time, she trained as a psychotherapist and later founded her own business while on maternity leave. What started as a small venture grew into a nationwide service, now supporting 300 clients and providing care to approximately 3,000 people annually.



MEET THE **PROFESSIONALS** Speakers' Biographies

Law

Lucie Scott, Criminal Defence Barrister, College of Law & NZ Law Society

Lucie has been a criminal defence barrister since 2008, representing clients across a wide range of cases, from minor traffic offences to manslaughter and murder. She appears almost daily in the District Court and regularly in higher courts, including the Supreme Court, where she has argued complex legal principles.

She studied Law, Italian, Psychology and Criminology at Victoria University, starting her career as a registrar at the Wellington District Court before joining chambers and junioring for the now Judge Sainsbury.

Beyond her legal practice, Lucie is an executive member of the Criminal Bar Association, a lecturer for the College of Law and NZLS CLE, and a guest lecturer at Victoria University of Wellington. She is also an active Duty Lawyer and the founder of a community pantry outside the District Court.

Health

Vanessa Simpson, Senior Vestibular & Neurological Physiotherapist, Founder, Vertigo Balance Clinic

Vanessa is a highly respected leader in vestibular and neurological physiotherapy. As the founder of Vertigo Balance Clinic, she specialises in assessing and treating vertigo, dizziness, balance disorders and neurological conditions linked to the inner ear and brain.

Holding a Bachelor of Health Science in Physiotherapy and extensive postgraduate training in vestibular rehabilitation, Vanessa blends clinical expertise with a holistic, patient-centred approach. Her experience spans both public and private healthcare internationally, giving her a broad perspective on treatment.

Committed to advancing her profession, Vanessa regularly teaches vestibular rehabilitation courses across New Zealand and Australia and has lectured at university level.

Health

Lynda Lovett, Menopause Specialist Nurse, Lynda Lovett Lady Talk

Lynda is a Registered Nurse and certified Lifestyle Medicine practitioner with over 30 years of experience in health and fitness. She specialises in menopause care, pelvic health and disease prevention, providing expert advice and treatment through her clinic, Lynda Lovett Lady Talk.

Her career has spanned general medicine, haematology, paediatrics, plastic surgery and practice nursing in both New Zealand and the UK. After earning national awards in postnatal fitness in 2017 and 2020, she returned to nursing in 2022 to focus on menopause support. Lynda is also the author of Lady Talk, her nursing autobiography.



MEET THE **PROFESSIONALS** Speakers' Biographies

International Affairs

Dawn Blalock Goodwin & Craig Goodwin
Humanitarian Affairs Officer, United Nations
Director, Mission Support, United Nations

Dawn and Craig have a combined 50 years of experience working for the United Nations, serving in headquarters roles in New York and Geneva as well as duty stations in East Timor, Lebanon, Angola, Somalia and Sudan.

Dawn has specialised in humanitarian affairs, focusing on communications, emergency response and partnerships. Craig has worked in peacekeeping missions, with expertise in mission planning, logistics and operations. Together, they offer unique perspectives on navigating the complexities of global humanitarian and peacekeeping work.

Dawn holds a master's degree in International Affairs from Columbia University and has a background in journalism. Craig has 25 years' experience in the UK and NZ Royal Air Force and holds a master's degree in strategic military studies.

Government

Gary Haddon, Talent Acquisition Partner – Programme Lead, Wellington City Council

Gary began his career in retail, hospitality and owned a mobile DJ business before heading to the UK for his OE. Within six months, he was leading European tours for Contiki Holidays and later became Training Manager, overseeing leadership development for over 120 staff.

After working in sales, operations and global destination development around the world, he returned to Aotearoa, shifting into local government. For the past 12 years, he has worked at Wellington City Council (WCC), where he is now the Talent Acquisition Partner – Programme Lead in the People & Culture team. His work includes managing relationships with central Government agencies and universities. He also manages a number of portfolios including the 'early to career' portfolio in which he developed and runs the WCC summer internship programme.

Creative Industries

Brenton Cottman, Head of Matte Painting & Environment Artist, Wētā FX

Brenton is a Digital Matte Painter and Environment Artist with 20 years of experience in the entertainment industry. He has worked with leading studios such as Wētā FX (formerly known as Wētā Digital), ILM and Digital Domain, creating digital environments, conceptual art and composites for blockbuster films, including the Avengers films, the Hobbit Trilogy, Planet of the Apes and Avatar.

Recognised for his excellence in visual effects, Brenton received the Visual Effects Society Award for 'Outstanding Matte Paintings in a Feature Motion Picture'. He studied painting and illustration at the School of Visual Arts in New York City.



MEET THE **PROFESSIONALS** Speakers' Biographies

Finance

Rhiannon McKinnon, Founder & CEO, Cassiobury & CEO 101

Rhiannon is the founder and CEO of Cassiobury, a consultancy advising CEOs on strategy, growth and leadership, and CEO 101, which supports senior executives to thrive in their roles.

Previously the CEO of Kiwi Wealth (New Zealand's fifth-largest KiwiSaver provider), she has over 20 years of experience in finance, spanning equity research, corporate finance, investor relations and strategy. Named Sabre PR's 2022 CEO of the Year across Asia, Rhiannon is a passionate advocate for finance as a diverse and inspiring career for women. She also promotes women's financial education.

She holds a degree in History from the University of Cambridge, proving that career pathways don't have to be linear.

Law

Stacey Shortall, Partner, MinterEllisonRuddWatts & Founder, WhoDidYouHelpToday

Stacey is an internationally recognised lawyer with over 25 years of experience in litigation and regulatory matters. She holds degrees in law and commerce from Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington and a Master of Laws from the University of Alberta.

She spent 11 years in New York handling high-profile cases while advocating for domestic violence victims, refugee women and disadvantaged mothers. She has also worked in Ghana to support victims of violence. Since returning home, Stacey has been a partner at MinterEllisonRuddWatts and founded the WhoDidYouHelpToday Charitable Trust, leading social change initiatives.

Stacey is a Blake Leader, a Women of Influence Award winner, a Kiwibank Local Hero Award recipient, and a semi-finalist for the Kiwibank New Zealander of the Year Award (twice). In 2022, she was appointed as a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit.

History

Lucy Mouland, Historian & Senior Performance Auditor, Office of the Auditor-General

Lucy is a Senior Performance Auditor at the Office of the Auditor-General, which gives Parliament and the public an independent view of how public organisations are operating.

With a BA (Hons) from the University of Cambridge and a DPhil in History from the University of Oxford, Lucy's career has spanned more than 30 years, though she has officially held the title of "historian" for only two years. Her roles across the UK and Aotearoa New Zealand have included auditing public sector performance, giving evidence at the Waitangi Tribunal, working with Parliamentary Select Committees abroad, being seconded to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, and drafting UK Supreme Court judgments.

Lucy will talk about the transferable skills a history degree gives and will offer some glimpses into the kinds of careers it might lead to.



MEET THE **PROFESSIONALS** Speakers' Biographies

Economics & Policy

Inna Koning, Principal Policy Advisor, Ministry for Primary Industries

Inna Koning is a Principal Policy Advisor at the Ministry for Primary Industries, where she ensures that regulations impacting New Zealand's dairy industry are fit for purpose and that the benefits they confer outweigh the costs they impose. She holds a Bachelor of Commerce, majoring in Economics and Finance, from the University of Waikato.

Inna began her career at the New Zealand Treasury and has worked across several economic development agencies. She specialises in regulatory and competition policy, with a career highlight being the redesign of the Commerce Act. Inna wants to help people understand that economics is more than just money—it's about how people make decisions, weigh trade-offs and respond to incentives. As regulation shapes choices, economics helps reveal what works and what doesn't.

Medicine

Dr Sandini Munasinghe, General Practitioner, Paraparaumu Medical Centre

Dr Munasinghe completed her medical degree in Sri Lanka before moving to New Zealand, where she initially worked as a hospital doctor. She gained experience across medical specialties in Waikato, Whanganui and Wellington hospitals before transitioning to General Practice.

Now practising as a GP in the Kapiti region, she is passionate about encouraging more wāhine to pursue careers in medicine, particularly in General Practice.

Marine Science

Simon Davy, Marine Biologist & Professor, Victoria University of Wellington

Simon is a Professor of Marine Biology at Victoria University of Wellington. He studies coral bleaching and the adaptability of coral reefs to climate change. His fieldwork has taken him to Australia, Japan and Hawaii.

He holds a BSc in Zoology with Marine Zoology and a PhD in Marine Biology from the University of Wales. His career has included research fellowships in Florida and Sydney, lecturing at the University of Plymouth, and leadership roles at Victoria University, where he served as Head of the School of Biological Sciences and Dean of Science.

Simon has received the Charles Fleming Senior Scientist Award and served as President of the International Symbiosis Society for seven years. He is currently a member of the executive team at the International Coral Reef Society.



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Media

Grant Maxwell, Founder, EightyOneM

Grant is the founder of EightyOneM, a Wellington-based media and advertising agency that specialises in strategic ad placement to ensure campaigns reach the right audience at the right time. His work centres on understanding human behaviour and continuously testing new ways to communicate effectively.

He studied marketing and management at Victoria University before embarking on a career spanning fine arts, national libraries and, ultimately, advertising—an industry he entered unexpectedly but has thrived in ever since. Grant has worked across a wide range of businesses, including a memorable project where he travelled to Phuket to help a client refine their consumer marketing strategy.

Grant is excited about finding new ways to make advertising more fun for people and less harmful for the environment.

Creative Industries

Chris Bleackley, Executive Creative Director & Partner, EightyOne

Chris is the Executive Creative Director at EightyOne, guiding creative thinking for advertising and marketing clients. Drawn to the industry for its emphasis on ideas over formal qualifications, he built a career by working hard and creating more interesting ideas.

After years working at multi-award-winning agencies around the world, he chose to establish his own agency in Wellington. He sees advertising as a constantly evolving field—perfect for those who love creative writing, visual arts or innovative problem-solving.

Passionate about mentoring, Chris supports young creatives in finding commercial pathways for their talent.

Project Management

Chris Palmer, System Design Manager, Road Ambulance, Te Whatu Ora

Chris is the System Design Manager – Road Ambulance at Te Whatu Ora – Health New Zealand, leading work at the intersection of leadership, design and emergency health services. With a background in business and leadership, they bring over a decade of experience across service design, coaching and strategic management.

Prior to their current role, Chris held senior positions at MSD, including Head of Client and Channel Experience and Director of Service Design, working across the housing sector. Passionate about understanding human behaviour and interactions with systems, they support the next generation in challenging outdated norms and building meaningful careers.



MEET THE **PROFESSIONALS** Speakers' Biographies

Medicine

Dr Mark Hussey, Emergency Medicine Consultant & Clinical Leader, Te Pae Tiaki Wellington Emergency Department

Mark is the Clinical Lead for Emergency Medicine in Wellington and a Fellow of the Australasian College of Emergency Medicine (ACEM). He trained at St Mary's Hospital Medical School, Imperial College London, earning his MBBS in 1999. His academic background includes a BSc in Medical Anthropology, an MSc in Sports & Exercise Medicine and membership in the Royal College of Physicians (UK).

His career has spanned four countries and twelve medical specialties, ultimately affirming his passion for Emergency Medicine after moving to New Zealand in 2004. He is a member of the Court of Examiners for ACEM and Deputy Chair of the College Quality and Patient Safety Advisory Committee.

A recipient of the ACEM Distinguished Service Award, Mark is dedicated to mentorship and the training of future Emergency physicians.

Engineering

Tony Cameron, Director, Cameron Consulting

Tony is the Director of Cameron Consulting, an engineering advisory firm that supports the strategy and development of major infrastructure projects across New Zealand. He holds a Bachelor of Engineering, specialising in Electrical, Electronic and Software Engineering, and later completed an MBA at Victoria University of Wellington.

Tony began his career working on hydro-electric stations along the Waikato River before expanding into geothermal, wind and solar energy. He has since led projects across sectors including energy, roading, rail, general civil, three waters, IoT (Internet of Things – connected devices and technology) and smart transport.

He will discuss practical engineering in New Zealand and abroad, highlight future industry changes, and offer insights for those considering a career in or alongside engineering.

Security and intelligence

Nick, Deputy Director-General, Protective Security, New Zealand Security Intelligence Service

Nick is the Deputy Director-General of the Protective Security Directorate within the New Zealand Security Intelligence Service (NZSIS). His team provides protective security services and advice to help government agencies safeguard people, information and assets, mitigating risks such as espionage, foreign interference and other security threats.

A career intelligence officer, Nick has spent over 20 years with the NZSIS in investigative, operational and leadership roles. Before joining the agency, he worked as a solicitor in private practice. He holds degrees in Law and International Relations.



MEET THE **PROFESSIONALS** Speakers' Biographies

Creative Industries

Jerry Kung, Animation Supervisor, Wētā FX

Jerry is an Animation Supervisor at Wētā FX (formerly known as Wētā Digital) where he has worked since 2009 as a previsualisation artist and an animator on multiple films and TV shows. He supervises motion tasks and provides day-to-day guidance to his team of artists, ensuring high-quality work.

Originally from Kansas City, USA, Jerry's career path started in aerospace engineering as an aircraft structures designer after earning a Bachelor of Science from the University of Kansas. He later completed a Master's in Civil and Environmental Engineering at the University of Texas at Austin. He worked for eight years as an environmental engineering consultant, specialising in air quality and stormwater assessments.

His passion for animation led him to study visual effects at the Gnomon School of Visual Effects and online with Animation Mentor. He launched his current career in Los Angeles, USA.

Event Management

Alana Bicknell, Director of Sales & Planning, New Zealand International Convention Centre

Alana is the Director of Sales and Planning at the New Zealand International Convention Centre (NZICC), leading a team that drives event sales, strategic partnerships and revenue growth. She has extensive experience in events across both the UK and New Zealand, with a proven track record in hospitality, venue sales, operations and project management.

With over 17 years in the industry, Alana specialises in business events, stakeholder engagement and innovative leadership. She is passionate about fostering strong networks and shaping impactful event experiences. Of Ngāti Ruanui descent, Alana is also the President of the Queen Margaret College Parents' Association.

Medicine

Dr Nicola Smith, Respiratory Specialist, Wellington Hospital

Dr Nicola Smith is a Respiratory Specialist at Wellington Hospital, where she diagnoses and treats patients with lung conditions such as asthma and lung cancer. Her day can involve anything from attending emergencies, diagnosing patients, teaching medical students to perform bronchoscopies (a procedure that lets her look inside the lungs!), and overseeing research trials.

Nicola completed her medical degree at the University of Auckland before training in internal medicine and respiratory medicine in New Zealand, Australia and England. A career highlight has been leading international research into techniques for reducing breathlessness in people with lung cancer, establishing procedures that are now used internationally. She is passionate about breathing and how vital it is for everyday life. Nicola helps patients of all ages improve their breathing and manage their health.