



## Introducing Sharon Cavanagh, your new Manager Veterans' Services

VA News sat down with Sharon Cavanagh, our new Manager Veterans' Services, at the end of her first month at Veterans' Affairs.

**VA News:** Kia ora Sharon, welcome to Veterans' Affairs. How's your first month been?

**Sharon:** Kia ora, and thanks! It's been busy and full-on, but equally fantastic—I've really hit the ground running. My first two weeks involved an induction and hand over from Pat Povey, the outgoing Manager Veterans' Services. I also headed up to Warkworth in my first week with our team for a VA Forum at the local RSA. Getting the chance to talk to our veterans face-to-face was not only an enjoyable experience, but also was productive and gave me a few ideas to take back to the office.

**VA News:** You really have hit the ground running! I'm sure our readers would love to know a little bit more about you. Would you be happy to share?

**Sharon:** Of course. I was born and grew up in Whanganui, however whakapapa to Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Porou and Ngāti Kahungunu. I've also lived in Rotorua and Tauranga, and here in Wellington for the last twelve years. I've worked in a range of organisations, both public service and NGO sectors, including leadership positions with Ministry of Social Development, ACC, Inland Revenue, IHC, Arthritis New Zealand, the Asthma Foundation, and a Primary Health Organisation. Most recently I worked for FinCap—a new NGO established in 2017 that supports more than 200 financial capability and budgeting services throughout the country. There I developed a Quality Assurance framework and supported the establishment of the new organisation. My passion has always been to do meaningful work that genuinely makes a difference in the lives of New Zealanders. I think my entire career to date has led me to this role and Veterans' Affairs.

**VA News:** And what about outside of work?

**Sharon:** I love to cook, and really enjoy a jaunt around op shops and markets. I'm involved with a few community organisations, passionate about supporting community groups, and also culture and arts. I'm a member of the Māori Advisory committee for the Stroke Foundation of New Zealand, and a trustee for both the Second Chance Group—which raises money for second chance education awards—and my whānau trust. I'm also a volunteer with WOW (World of Wearable Arts). Other than that, spending time with whānau.

**VA News:** Any final thoughts?

**Sharon:** I'm excited to be part of an organisation that has such a strong focus on the people it serves—our veterans, and their whānau and family. It's a fantastic kaupapa, or reason for being, that everyone here understands. This year is going to see us introduce new ways to better support those we are already helping, but also being a lot more proactive in engaging with younger veterans who may not yet have connected with us.

Also—and I hope this goes without saying—I want to remind everyone that we're here, and only a phone call or email away. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with us if there's something we can do to help.

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Date

**01 April 2019**

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