

# EMERGING TALENT MEMBERS IN FOCUS



*The Emerging Talent Network has been established by Infrastructure New Zealand to develop the next generation of infrastructure leaders. In this changing COVID-19 landscape we will be profiling a different ET member working in a different part of the industry and learn how they are surviving and thriving – and their tips for success, each week.*

*If you would like to be profiled, or would like to nominate someone from the ET Network to be profiled, please answer the questions below and send your picture through to [Tara](#).*

**We would like to introduce Adam Brown from Downer as our first Emerging Talent Member in Focus. In addition to his role at Downer, Adam also sits on the ET Auckland Committee.**



## ADAM BROWN

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER  
INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS



### **1. What organisation are you with, and what do you do day-to-day (normally)?**

Over the past seven years, I have worked at Downer in a variety of pre-tender and business development positions, which has led me to my current role as a Business Development Manager in the Downer Infrastructure Projects team. My professional background started with a passion for economics and marketing. This developed my skillset in supporting New Zealand's economic growth through strategic marketing. In my current role, I use these skills alongside a business development focus to win influential infrastructure projects for Downer by highlighting our company's capability. In most peoples' eyes, business development means taking clients out for coffee. I won't lie - I do this on a regular basis. However, these interactions play a vital part in my responsibilities, as they allow me to inform executive sponsors, business unit managers and the bid team on future opportunities and strategic recommendations for the Downer business. I also achieve positive business development outcomes through gathering and interpreting data on our customer and competitor activity, formulating reports, and developing and proposing joint venture and consortium recommendations. These actions enable our teams to deliver the best strategic and financial outcomes for Downer while managing and retaining relationships with existing and forthcoming clients.

### **2. How has your work changed since going into lockdown?**

Things have evidently changed over the last few weeks, but it is business as usual for our front-end teams. We are adapting to the crisis and actively continue to support our customers with economic responses, continuity plans and social initiatives to help the industry stay afloat. My workload has increased significantly, helping to maintain a positive relationship with all our customers in an unprecedented environment. Achieving these focus areas will accelerate project mobilisation when the lockdown lifts, either at a regional level or across the nation.

### **3. What are the biggest successes/challenges with the new ways of working? (i.e., video conferencing, lack of events and in-person meetings, etc.)**

Successes – Getting closer to my colleagues. Like myself, we all face additional stresses that the lockdown

brings, and are supporting each other through the changes. Our team has developed regular group video calls (including a virtual Friday afternoon drink) to bring a positive shift in culture and better understanding of each team member's personal situation.

*Challenges* - No doubt, this pandemic will have positive impacts on the way we work in the future, but right now, the adaptation to virtual meetings is a challenge. Simple queries or approvals were once a stroll across the office, but now involve multiple phone calls or a long Microsoft Teams meeting to reach solutions. If you get a spare five minutes, [this clip](#) is a great representation of my first week of virtual meetings.

I am adapting to the situation by continuously improving our use of virtual communication for day-to-day business to allow us to stay efficient and productive.

#### **4. How is your sector of the infrastructure industry going and what are your sector's biggest needs right now?**

The construction sector is under severe pressure. To overcome this, we are using mechanisms such as the Government Wage Subsidy to help bridge the gap. We appreciate efforts from the likes of Infrastructure New Zealand, who are in contact with the Infrastructure Commission and key ministers, to help make the right calls and acting to enable, not obstruct, future economy-stimulating infrastructure work. A number of our customers have also helped us by working quickly through contractual entitlements, allowing prompt payments. We are working through this with all our customers across the industry, to ensure we are best placed to hit the ground running when the lockdown lifts.

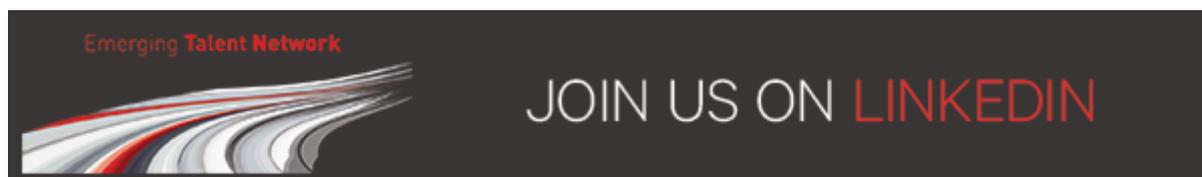
#### **5. What changes to your work or sector will endure after the lockdown is lifted?**

Regarding my work, pre-positioning for projects will undertake a definite shift as the government accelerates procurement and adapts to more collaborative contracting models to deliver the significant pipeline of upcoming projects. This will result in a greater amount of up-front strategic planning to secure the right contracting and consulting partners to best position Downer for the future. I am also eager to align Downer's strategies associated with strong social outcomes, helping to provide direct benefits to the development of families, communities and livelihoods affected by the pandemic. We will be going the extra mile to adapt and customise social procurement processes across our projects, as it's a fundamental element of rebuilding the infrastructure sector. A few changes to the sector include new health and safety guidelines to ensure the safe return to work, such as an increase in readily available PPE, changes in procurement and legislation, allowing flexibility to fast track specific projects and maintaining cash flow so our supply chain can still support our bids and hit the ground running if successful.

#### **6. What are your top tips and tricks for surviving and thriving in the COVID-lockdown landscape?**

Continue with your normal routine. For me it's, waking up early, having my morning (instant) coffee, and reminding myself that I am lucky my commute to work is no longer over an hour in traffic. I do the mahi, and make sure I exercise at the end of each day. Times like this are downright tough, both in and outside of work. My advice would be to try to look at the positives in the situation you are facing - whether it be spending more time with your family, having a fridge full of food, or not losing two hours of your day in traffic. We will get through this together, and I am sure our sector will come out stronger on the other side. Kia Kaha.

To learn more about opportunities for a career with Downer click [here](#) or you can connect with Adam on [LinkedIn](#).



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