

# Community job partnership seeks funding



The west Auckland scheme is getting men back into paid work

Organisers of a successful programme to get west Aucklanders who experience mental health challenges or serious injury, back into paid work are hoping for more funds to keep the scheme going.

Employment Works!, the employment division of the Henderson-based [Walsh Trust](#) and [Ecomatters Environment Trust](#) teamed recently to give four worthy recipients – Kevin Lauder, Manny Apiata, Mathew Hepburn and Eric Pook – a six-month part-time role at Ecomatters' Hobsonville Plant Network.

The men spend two days a week building infrastructure and cultivating seedlings, many of which are used in plantings at the Hobsonville Point development.

The employment period also includes work-based horticulture training in which the men work towards an NZQA qualification.

Walsh Trust employment manager Paul Revill, commented, "Now we no longer have the Waitakere City Council, both organisations are having to look elsewhere to build partnerships."

Mr Revill says Ecomatters, a New Lynn-based trust that delivers a diverse range of sustainability initiatives, is a good fit for Walsh because it has a social conscience as well as an environmental one.

"They understand that there's a place in employment for people who have experienced mental health challenges or have been injured to be included in society."

Walsh, an acronym for West Auckland Living Skills Homes, offers support services that promote recovery for people whose lives have been affected by an experience of mental health that has been personally challenging, or a barrier to participating in work or the community for six months or longer.

This Ecomatters project is just one of several community programmes formerly funded by the Waitakere City Council.

Ecomatters general manager Kevin Healy is waiting to see if the trust will get money from the Auckland Council's new budget.

"We're working with the council and its officers to see what can be done," says Mr Healy.

Auckland Council spokesman Glyn Walters says the council is still working on its funding for the 2011-2012 year.