mcculloch + partners news
December 2025

Client Shout Out

WM Environmental – Supporting the land, the people, and the places of the Deep South

If you live or work in Southland, you'll know that our environment is one of our greatest assets, and one of our biggest responsibilities. That's where WM Environmental comes in. Based in Invercargill, this dedicated consultancy business plays a crucial role in helping farmers, developers, landowners, and businesses navigate the often-complex world of environmental compliance and resource management.

The WM Environmental team offer nationwide compliance services along with consenting support and advice across the Southland and Otago regions. From dairy farm operations and industrial sites to subdivisions and visitor accommodation, their team brings deep local knowledge matched with a high level of technical expertise. They handle everything from resource consent applications to environmental monitoring, reporting, and liaising with councils, ensuring clients meet regulatory requirements with confidence.

Their story is one rooted in the Southland environment itself. In a region where heavy rain, strong winds, and delicate waterways shape how we live and work, WM Environmental has built a reputation for providing clear, grounded and effective environmental guidance.

But what sets WM Environmental apart is their hands-on, people-first approach. They understand the pressure that comes with running a farm, managing a development, or operating a commercial site. Their team works alongside clients as trusted advisers, helping them protect the environment, meet regulatory expectations, and keep their operations running smoothly.

In this edition

McCulloch & Partners is proud to support WM Environmental on their journey. We've worked closely with their team to provide strategic financial guidance, business advisory support, and accounting services that strengthen their operations and position them for long-term sustainability.

We also collaborate with WM Environmental across a number of our clients and view them as a key partner in developing practical, effective strategies that support business growth and environmental performance.

Here's to WM Environmental, champions of environmental stewardship, trusted partners to local industry, and a valued part of our community. We look forward to continuing our partnership and watching their impact grow in the years ahead.

40 Years of Service, and a Legacy of Leadership

Celebrating Ross' Career and Retirement.

At the end of 2025, we'll be farewelling Ross Jackson as he retires from the McCulloch & Partners partnership after 30 years as a Partner and over 40 years with the firm.

Ross has been a cornerstone of MCP since returning to Invercargill after graduating in 1985 and becoming a Partner in 1995. Known for his prompt service, clear communication, and powerhouse of knowledge, Ross has guided countless clients with expertise in business advisory, governance, property development, corporate investigations, and succession planning, always delivering advice that is both practical and personal.

Beyond MCP, Ross has made a remarkable contribution to the industry, serving as NZ President of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in 2011, chairing the Practice Review Board, and continuing today as Chartered Accountants Advisory Group Chairperson. His governance experience extends widely across local, national, and international organisations.

He will continue with his Governance roles including University of Otago and Invercargill City Council and other directorships in 2026 .

Outside of work, Ross has always been just as active, particularly on the cricket pitch, travelling, or spending time with his children and grandchildren.

We are deeply grateful for Ross' leadership, dedication, and friendship over the decades. In celebrating this next chapter, we invite clients, colleagues, and friends to join us in congratulating Ross on an extraordinary career and wishing him all the best in his retirement!

Your Invercargill Partners

Supporting local clients with practical advice, steady guidance, and proven expertise.

If you have any questions or would like to connect with the team, get in touch today.

Key Takeaways from Rural Professionals Presentation

On Tuesday the 2nd of December we held an Agri event with presentations from Renee at WM Environmental, Natalie, a feed nutritionist from SGT Dan Stockfoods Ltd, and some of the McCulloch's team.

The presentation covered several important topics for Southland farm operations.

We began with an overview of environmental compliance changes, focusing on Resource Management Act reforms and freshwater farm plans.

Renee from WM Environmental pointed out that insurance can no longer cover fines from Environment Southland, though it still covers defence costs. The reforms have given regional councils stronger enforcement powers, including the ability to review resource consents after non-compliance and consider enforcement actions from the past seven years when assessing new applications. Maximum fines have increased, creating potentially serious financial implications for farmers who don't maintain compliance.

Freshwater farm plans are due in May 2026 for Southland farmers. These plans require showing ongoing improvement in environmental practices based on a benchmark year of 2022-2023. Despite potential changes from the National government, Southland's requirements remain in place as they're embedded in the local Water and Land Plan. WM Environmental mentioned they're currently handling several platform expansions and a full conversion, showing that agricultural intensification remains possible with proper planning and demonstration of contaminant reduction.

Natalie from SGT Dan Stockfoods shared valuable insights on animal nutrition, explaining that animals respond to nutrient supply rather than having fixed requirements. She noted that increasing amounts of supplement will reduce the response rate, but responses also change depending on the animal's physiological state, genetic potential, and stage of lactation. Her presentation showed how supplementary feeding can improve feed efficiency, with data demonstrating that energy supplements for pasture-fed cows can significantly improve milk production efficiency.

When selecting supplements, Natalie advised farmers to focus on what's first limiting - typically energy in New Zealand pasture-based systems. High starch supplements not only increase milk production but also help reduce weight loss in early lactation, which impacts fertility.

The financial presentations from McCulloch & Partners emphasised the importance of cash flow planning and benchmarking. Feed costs represent about 46% of total farm costs, making feed efficiency crucial for profitability. Our team shared benchmarking data showing average milk production per cow in Otago-Southland has increased to 473.85 kgMS, with total operating costs averaging $6.09 per kilogram.

We concluded with a discussion on succession planning, noting that more than half of New Zealand farm owners will reach retirement in the next decade, representing billions in assets. Only about a third of farmers currently have formal succession plans in place. We emphasised that succession planning isn't just about "handing over the papers" but requires long-term discussion involving all stakeholders. Key recommendations included:

- Starting conversations early in a neutral space
- Distinguishing between ownership and management roles
- Seeking professional advice on financial structures
- Ensuring paperwork is in order (wills, power of attorney, etc.)
- Recognising that "fair does not always mean equal" when it comes to farming and non-farming children
- Maintaining clear communication throughout the process

We stressed that while parents ultimately make the decisions, having an independent facilitator can help draw out ideas and expectations from all family members while keeping emotions in check.

Strengthening Our Expertise in International Tax

Professor Craig Elliffe

As business becomes increasingly global, so too does the need for specialist tax expertise. At McCulloch & Partners, we're proud to announce the appointment of Professor Craig Elliffe as an international tax consultant — supporting our growing number of clients involved in complex, high-value, cross-border transactions.

Professor Elliffe is widely regarded as one of New Zealand's leading authorities on international and corporate tax. He is a Professor of Law at the University of Auckland, a former tax partner at both KPMG and Chapman Tripp, and served on the Government's Tax Working Group in 2018/19. His research and advisory work focus on international tax, corporate tax, and tax avoidance.

Partner Dr. Benjamin Walker, who leads our Tax Practice, says the appointment reflects a natural evolution for the firm.

"Craig's expertise is second to none," says Walker. "He won't be involved in every matter, but when a high-value transaction with significant complexity or risk arises, having his insight ensures our clients receive the very best advice available."

Walker himself specialises in tax law, including property development, high-net-worth individuals, family trusts, GST, corporate taxation, and inbound migrants. The collaboration with Professor Elliffe formalises a relationship that has already proven valuable through previous mandates.

Partner Donald Jackson, from our Queenstown office, says the appointment comes at a time of continued growth and diversification for the South Island economy.

For further information or to discuss your tax advisory needs, contact our team.

Cashflow Confidence

See what's ahead, stay in control, and keep your business moving.

Cashflow isn't just about money in the bank, it's about timing, forecasting, and planning ahead.

Many strong businesses get caught short because they don't have visibility over when payments and expenses hit.

If you want to turn your numbers into insight (not just information) talk to us about cashflow forecasting and management.

Coming soon: Xero's New Automated Bank Reconciliation

Xero is gradually rolling out a new Automated Bank Reconciliation feature, powered by JAX (Xero's new AI assistant). This will automatically match and reconcile bank transactions where there is a high level of confidence, helping keep your Xero file up to date with less manual clicking and data entry.

Behind the scenes, JAX applies your bank rules, matches bank lines to the right invoices (or bills), and draws on patterns from your existing transactions to code items it's confident about.

You'll still stay in control – you'll be able to review what's been matched, make any changes you need, and deal with anything the system isn't sure about. Think of it as an assistant that handles the routine lines so you can focus on the exceptions and on running your business.

JAX is a valuable tool that's available on the Grow plan and aobve, but like any AI-based solution, it works best with strong financial oversight in place. Our team can guide you on how to use it effectively, ensure the setup is right for your business, and help you maintain accuracy as workflows evolve.

To enable JAX in your Xero organisation, the subscription holder must activate the feature. In many cases (especially for clients whose Xero subscription is managed through us) McCulloch & Partners will be the subscription holder.

If you would like JAX turned on for your organisation, simply get in touch with your usual MCP contact and we'll take care of the activation process.

Xero Subscription Direct Debit – New Invoicing Process

We're updating the way we bill Xero subscription fees that are paid by direct debit, in line with the Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand (CA ANZ) client monies guidance.

If you currently pay your Xero subscription through our direct debit, you will now receive an invoice each month at least 14 days before the direct debit is processed. The first invoice will be issued prior to our offices closing for Christmas, for the direct debit due 20th January 2026.

Important: You do not need to pay this invoice manually. The amount will continue to be collected by direct debit as usual.

This change is simply to provide clearer documentation of the charges being processed on your behalf. There are no changes to your Xero subscription or how your payments are collected.

xero PLATINUM PARTNER

Wellness Walk

Taking time to pause and reflect.

In October, the team stepped away from their desks for our annual Wellness Walk to the park - a chance to slow down, stretch our legs, and reflect on what we're grateful for. Afterward, we came together for a shared lunch, enjoying good food and even better company. It's these small moments of connection, reflection, and togetherness that make a big difference in our wellbeing and our workplace culture.

Waimumu Southern Field Days

We're excited to announce that the McCulloch & Partners team will be heading to the Waimumu Southern Field Days from 11–13 February 2026 in Gore!

The Southern Field Days are always a highlight on the rural calendar. Providing a chance for farmers, agri-businesses, and rural communities to connect, discover new innovations, and have great conversations.

If you're heading along, make sure to stop by site number 229 for a chat about cashflow planning, succession, benchmarking, forecasting, or anything else on your mind for the year ahead. Our agri-specialists will be there each day and would love to see you.

We look forward to catching up with clients, familiar faces, and anyone keen for down-to-earth advice to support their business.

southern FIELD DAYS waimumu - gore

Wanaka A&P Show

We're thrilled to be back at the Wanaka A&P Show on 13–14 March 2026!

One of the South Island's biggest annual events, the show brings together the very best of agriculture, rural life, food, entertainment, and the wider community.

Our team will be on site throughout the weekend, ready to talk farming, business planning, tax, or simply say hello. Whether you're a client or just exploring your options, we'd love to meet you.

Make sure to drop by and see us at site C17, enter our giveaway, and grab some MCP goodies while you're there!

WĀNAKA A&P SHOW

Christmas Holiday Dates

Meri Kirihimete from the team at McCulloch & Partners!

As the end of 2025 creeps up, we want to thank all our clients and community for your continued support throughout the year. It's been another busy and rewarding one, and we're looking forward to an exciting 2026 ahead.

Our offices will be taking a well-deserved break over the Christmas period:

Invercargill Office
Closing: 12:00pm, Tuesday 23rd December 2025
Back: 8:30am, Monday 19th January 2026

Queenstown & Wanaka Offices
Closing: 12:00pm, Tuesday 23rd December 2025
Back: 8:30am, Wednesday 14th January 2026

We wish you all a safe, relaxing, and joy-filled holiday season. Here's to good company, great weather, and a bright start to the new year!

Get More Out of Xero

Already using Xero but not sure you're getting the most out of it?

Our team of Xero experts is here to help with personalised one-on-one training sessions. These targeted sessions give you the opportunity to ask questions, focus on your unique business needs and build confidence using Xero.

We'll review how you're currently using Xero, tidy up any problem areas, show you time-saving features you might have missed, and answer those "I've always wondered..." questions. Sessions can be held in our office, online or on-site.

If you're interested, give us a call or contact your usual MCP advisor.

Key Dates

January – March 2026

January	
15 Jan	**PAYE:** (Large Employers) for the period 16 Dec to 31 Dec. **GST:** Return and payment due for the period ended 30 Nov. **Provisional Tax** • 1st Instalment (Jul balance date) • 2nd Instalment (Mar balance date) • 3rd Instalment (Nov balance date)
20 Jan	**PAYE:** (Small Employers) for the period 1 Dec to 31 Dec. **PAYE:** (Large Employers) for the period 1 Jan to 15 Jan.
28 Jan	**GST:** Return and payment due for the period ended 31 Dec.
February	
5 Feb	**PAYE:** (Large Employers) for the period 16 Jan to 31 Jan.
9 Feb	**Terminal Tax:** For taxpayers (with a tax agent) with a Jan balance date. **Terminal Tax:** For taxpayers (without a tax agent) with balance dates between 1 Mar and 30 Sep.
20 Feb	**PAYE:** (Small Employers) for the period 1 Jan to 31 Jan. **PAYE:** (Large Employers) for the period 1 Feb to 15 Feb.
March	
2 Mar	**GST:** Return and payment for the period ended 31 Jan. **Provisional Tax** • 1st Instalment (Sep balance date) • 2nd Instalment (May balance date) • 3rd Instalment (Jan balance date)
5 Mar	**PAYE:** (Large Employers) for the period 16 Feb to 28 Feb.
20 Mar	**PAYE:** (Small Employers) for the period 1 Feb to 28 Feb. **PAYE:** (Large Employers) for the period 1 Mar to 15 Mar.
30 Mar	**GST:** Return and payment due for the period ended 28 Feb.