

Hardus and Frieda — a story of resilience



ORIGINS
DANIELA DIAZ SOTO

In April 2019, before the Covid pandemic shook the world, Hardus and Frieda de Bruyn bravely decided to leave their homeland of South Africa in search of a better future.

Originally from Pretoria, during his childhood, Hardus faced the turbulent post-apartheid era in South Africa.

Despite the country's natural beauty and the warmth of its people, political and economic challenges were enormous.

The inequalities bred by apartheid cast a long shadow, leaving many trapped in a cycle of poverty and uncertainty.

Driven by the desire for change and a better life for his family, Hardus boldly decided to move to New Zealand.

Armed with degrees in theology and architecture and his wife's profession as a



A better life . . . Wānaka architect Hardus de Bruyn and his wife Frieda, from South Africa, have made a fresh start in Wānaka. PHOTO: NAURIGHE COEN

teacher, they saw an opportunity for a fresh start.

"We decided to come over and open a new chapter, be part of a new society and community," he said.

Challenges and sacrifices marked their journey.

"We came with our backpacks and some clothes,

and that was it. I still have photos of us sleeping on the floor on my phone," he said.

From the stress of financial uncertainty to the mixed reactions of friends and family to their decision, they faced each obstacle with resilience and determination.

They arrived in Wellington,

where they quickly found work in their respective careers and began to build a new life.

Unfortunately, shortly after embarking on this new life, his father died.

Hardus found solace in running, using it to cope with the loss and, unexpectedly, opening up an unimaginable opportunity.

Collaborating with people he met along the way, Trail Athlete (www.trailathlete.net) was started, coaching runners driven by a shared passion for the sport and community-building.

After their time in Wellington and shortly after the birth of their son, Hardus and Frieda decided to move to Wānaka.

Surrounded by breathtaking landscapes, they found a sense of belonging in the community.

Hardus embraced new job opportunities and joined the fire brigade.

"I really enjoy it. It's giving me the opportunity to volunteer and contribute to society.

"The cool thing about it is that you are making a difference."

For Hardus, security is essential, especially with a young child and another baby on the way.

"It's a safe and good community. People care about each other."

The family's journey has not been without its ups and downs, but despite everything, they are grateful for the opportunities that come their way in New Zealand, now with a new job in Queenstown on the horizon.

"God looks out for us. There have been so many miracles during this journey that I didn't doubt his existence."

Hardus' story is a testament to the resilience of immigrants and the power of hope and determination in the face of adversity.

From humble beginnings in South Africa to a new life in New Zealand, their journey inspires all those seeking a better future for themselves and their loved ones.

The QLDC Welcoming Communities initiative brings together local government

councils and communities to

the places we love more welcoming for everyone and to provide support for newcomers choosing to make the Queenstown Lakes District their home.

For more info, visit www.qldc.govt.nz/welcoming-communities.

Unlocking investment opportunities in commercial real estate using ESG frameworks to deliver sustainable returns.

More than two-thirds of New Zealanders prefer their money to be invested ethically and responsibly*.

While many recognise the stable, long-term returns commercial property investment can provide, not everyone realises its potential to positively impact the environment, making it appealing to investors seeking benefits beyond profit.

With a diverse commercial portfolio of premium office, industrial and retail assets valued at approximately \$1.8 billion, Oyster Property Group is one of New Zealand's leading unlisted commercial property fund managers, well-positioned to make a difference by shaping more sustainable cities in New Zealand.

ESG is an integral part of Oyster's strategy. Its sustainability plan is designed to create long-term value for its stakeholders through sustainable growth and by taking steps to reduce both its own carbon footprint and those of its tenants.

Fabio Pagano, Oyster's General Manager - Property, says they are seeing increased demand from tenants for landlords who'll collaborate with them to achieve their sustainability goals.

"New Zealand's largest companies are now required to make climate-related disclosures across their operations,

and many organisations mandate sustainability credentials as part of their leasing and procurement policies.

"Ensuring our assets contribute to a more sustainable New Zealand is not only environmentally responsible, it unlocks value for tenants and investors."

Oyster's ESG commitment is clear: 19 of its office properties achieved 4-star or higher NABERSNZ ratings.

"We understand the influence we can have by prioritising ESG to make our business economically robust and socially and environmentally responsible," Fabio explains.

"Installing smart meters across our portfolio improves monitoring of electricity and water consumption, reducing costs for our tenants and lifting value for our investors."



"Having partnered with Ecotricity, New Zealand's first and only Toitū climate positive certified electricity provider, we now supply 100% renewable electricity to most of our tenants."

Last August, Oyster Management Limited became Toitū Envirocare "carbonreduce" certified, establishing a baseline for carbon emissions reduction.

Oyster's ESG strategy lays out clear, attainable goals, establishing it as a preferred landlord and assuring investors that their investment contributes to a sustainable future.

*Source: A recent Financial Markets Authority survey.

Scan the QR code or visit www.oysterproperty.co.nz/sustainability to read our latest sustainability report.

