

2025 NEW SPEAKER COMPETITION

DATE: Thursday 4th December 2025
VENUE: Copthorne Hotel, Fenton Street, Rotorua



6:00pm Registration and Cash Bar - House Bar

6:30 -7:15 Dinner - Hotel Restaurant

New Speaker Competition Redwood Two Conference Room

7:30 **Mikayla Duffy, Technician, Scion Group Bioeconomy Science Institute**
"Per and Polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and Packaging"

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) play a significant role in the paper and packaging industry, primarily for their water- and grease-resistant qualities. At the same time, concerns about their environmental persistence and potential health impacts are prompting increased attention and regulation. This presentation covers key aspects of PFAS use in the industry, including where and why they are applied, how their presence in products can be measured, and what alternative solutions are being explored. It also considers the practical challenges and limitations associated with both current use and potential replacements.

8:00 **Harry McGurk, Process Engineering, Oji Fibre Solutions Tasman Mill**
"From Waste to Resource: Reducing landfill usage through vermicomposting of green liquor dregs"

Harry will be presenting on his work on the feasibility of sewerage green liquor dregs and their potential suitability as feedstock for vermicomposting, which considered operational challenges as well as potential environment impacts on the wastewater treatment plant and further downstream.

8:30 **Brayden Whitton, PhD Student, University of Waikato**
"Functionally Graded Cellulose Foam Packaging"

The research aims to improve the processability of cellulose foams, a biodegradable packaging alternative to expanded polystyrene. The focus is on developing an efficient production process for creating functionally graded cellulose foams using a wide range of input materials, progressing from lab-scale studies to pilot-scale production enhancements. A key objective is the development of an effective drying process that preserves the delicate foam structure and prevents collapse.

9:00 **Judging and Awarding of Prizes**

COST: Members: \$55 Non-members: \$65 Appita Retired Members: \$30
Payment can be direct credited to: Appita NZ Section, ANZ, Rotorua 06 0413 0178800 00
If paying via credit card, please inform when registering. **NB:** All Payments via NZ credits cards incur a surcharge of 3%). Pre-arranged invoicing also accepted.

COMPETITION ORGANISER: Matthew McGhie, Oji Fibre Solutions Kinleith Mill

**Please register by Monday 1st December by contacting
Shiraz Khashim, Appita at ShirazK@appita.com**

(People who register for technical meetings but fail to attend on the night will be charged. Please advise Shiraz Khashim as early as possible if you can no longer attend. The hotel now charges for the final number given.)