

The image shows the interior of a plant barn. On the left, a vertical wall features three rectangular skylights with white frames, providing natural light. To the right, a wooden slatted structure, likely a staircase or walkway, is visible, with light filtering through the slats. A green horizontal bar is overlaid on the top left, containing the main title text.

Bringing the outdoors inside

at Kings Plant Barn

VELUX®



Kings Plant Barn.

A customer friendly oasis.



Kings Plant Barns throughout New Zealand are known for their friendly in-house cafés. Not only are these eateries popular with garden centre customers, they are destinations in their own right. Locals find that meeting friends for lunch or a coffee at their nearest garden centre café is often more enjoyable and convenient than catching up at an urban venue, where parking can be a challenge. Even if their primary intention is food and drink, few café customers leave the centre without picking up a few things for their garden.



The factor that makes some garden centre cafés more successful than others is the 'oasis' effect - a glorious leafy, airy, outdoorsy ambiance that isn't adversely affected by the day's weather. When the 25-year old Botany Downs café was due for a makeover, the garden centre's management decided to take the oasis effect to a whole new level, with two fleets of VELUX solar-powered skylights controlled with VELUX Active technology (sold separately).

VELUX Active with NETATMO is the easy way to maintain an ideal indoor climate. Smart sensors continuously monitor the temperature, humidity and CO2 levels in your space, then open or close the VELUX solar-powered skylights accordingly.



Visit [velux.co.nz](https://www.velux.co.nz)
to view a video case
study on this project.





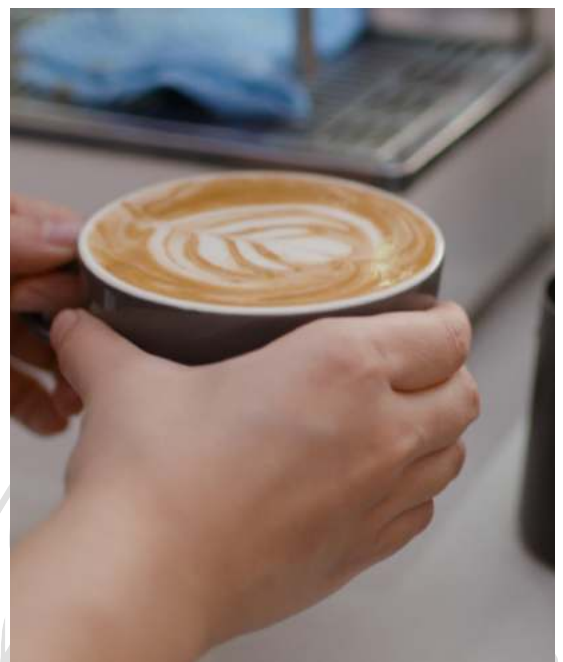
“

People like to be in a garden setting when they're having a coffee.



The customers love it. They've been quite amazed at the level of sophistication we've achieved

”



A reason to stay and enjoy longer.

An interview with Chris Hall, General Manager, Kings Plant Barn Botany Downs.

Chris Hall's connection with Kings Plant Barn Botany Downs stretches back to 1995, when the branch was first opened. At the time, having a café within the garden centre - run by an outside operator - was a key element in the business plan.

"People like to be in a garden setting when they're having a coffee," says Chris. "Having a café within the garden centre is both a reason to visit and a reason to stay longer."

In 2019, the café was due for a facelift. At the same time, Kings decided they wanted to expand the facility and operate it themselves.

"We engaged a designer to recreate the café in a new building at the front of the garden centre, where it's more visible and accessible. We wanted the café to represent a larger portion of our business, especially with us running it ourselves."

The designer's brief included an emphasis on living foliage and flowers. Kings wanted a true garden centre café that would provide a showcase for their number one product - plants.

"In particular, there's been a large increase in people's awareness of houseplants, so we have harnessed that trend by making the cafe very houseplant friendly. This necessitated the ability to control sunlight, temperature and air movement."

To create the ideal environment for both plants and customers to thrive, the designer recommended using the remote operated, solar-powered skylights.

"Solar power was a great benefit, because it meant we didn't have to wire them up. There's also a rain sensor, so the skylights automatically close when it rains. Before we learned about VELUX's new



technology, we were under the impression that opening and closing skylights would be a manual process involving a pole. When we looked into the solar-powered VELUX skylights, we realised the flexibility it gave to our operation was fantastic."

Two challenges that had to be overcome were the steep pitch of the roof and the Danpalon panels the roof was made of, however VELUX were able to assist the construction team with technical information that ensured problem-free installation.

"Our builders worked very closely with VELUX to get the installation right and made a fine job of the finished result."

Discover a new local.

The new café had only been open for a few days when New Zealand went into Level 4 lockdown for Covid-19, so the real opening happened when the country moved to Level 2.

Keen to get out of their homes and gather garden necessities, customers in east Auckland left their bubbles and ventured forth to discover the new café, their local Kings Plant Barn. They were quick to heap praise on its light, airy feeling. Many also remarked on the café's level of sophistication, compared to other garden centre eateries.

When customers arrive in the space, they're greeted by a welcoming mix of delicious smells and attractive tables in a bright, plant-decorated environment. The skylights above them let in just the right amount of sunlight and air, so the scents of food and coffee never become overwhelming. If it starts to rain, the skylights automatically close

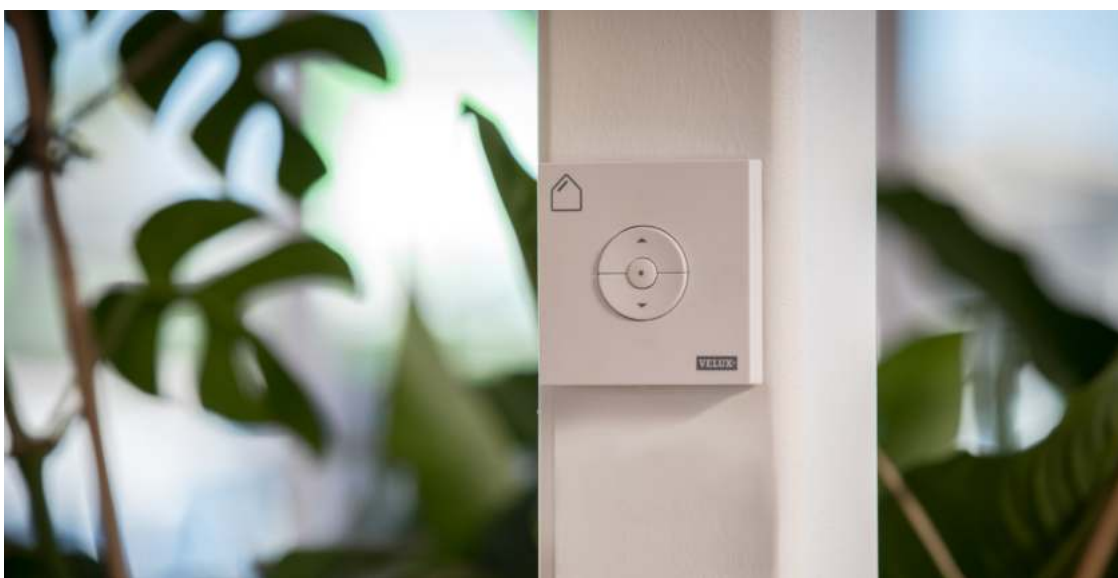
themselves; if it gets too hot and sunny, sunshades can be deployed to screen incoming light.

Although there are wall-mounted controls for the skylights, the café manager finds it easier to use the iPad app to make adjustments. For example, the optimum temperature can be adjusted on the app, then the VELUX Active system will open and close the skylights and screens to help maintain that temperature. The app can also be downloaded to a mobile phone, so Kings' manager Chris Hall can check in anytime to see what the skylights are doing. One glance at the App shows whether they're open or closed.

“

Solar-power is a very cost-effective solution. There are no issues with electrics or worrying about energy usage in the future

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FACT FILE

The VCS SOLAR skylight used for the Kings Plant Barn Botany Downs project is ideal for commercial projects that want to create a light, airy, climate-controlled hospitality venue.

Product used: 16 VELUX VCS4646 SOLAR skylights with rain sensor

Special features: Laminated, argon fill, double glazing with Low-E3 coating to produce an R-value of 0.50.

Suitable for: Hospitality venues, foyers, living spaces, atriums, bathrooms, kitchens and laundries.

Remote control: VELUX ACTIVE with NETATMO indoor climate control

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Even in warm weather when the café is really busy, the skylights are helping to keep the temperature under control.

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Visit [velux.co.nz](https://www.velux.co.nz) to view a video case study on this project.

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