

Run by locals, loved by locals. Dave's role in Canterbury's Macca's story.



Dave and Andrea Whalley
with their Restaurant of
the Year award



Wendy McHaffie
receiving the
Operations
Manager of the
Year award

From his first job as a crew member at McDonald's Merivale to owning multiple local restaurants, Dave Whalley's Macca's journey is one of loyalty and local pride.

For Canterbury franchisee Dave Whalley, Macca's has always been about people - his crew, his customers, and the community that has supported him for nearly four decades.

Dave's journey began 37 years ago, when he joined the team as a crew member at Merivale, the first McDonald's to open in the South Island. He later became Restaurant Manager at Riccarton, a restaurant he now owns. Over the years, Dave worked his way up to become a franchisee known for leading with care, supporting his people both in and outside the restaurants.

It's been a long road, marked by hard work and recognition. A career highlight came in 2024, when he was named Operator of the Year at McDonald's New Zealand's annual

awards. That same year, Riccarton was awarded Restaurant of the Year, and long-serving team member Wendy McHaffie took home the title of Operations Manager of the Year.

And even as his business has grown, Dave has stayed grounded in the values that first drew him to Macca's: service, teamwork, and connection.

A business built on people

Across Dave's five restaurants, around 500 staff members make up the heartbeat of the business. Many of them have been with Dave for more than a decade.

Wendy started her career as a crew member when she was 21 and has worked her way up the ranks. "She's been with us for years, and with the brand even longer. I was really proud when she won the Operations Manager of the Year award last year. It was so well deserved."

"Then there's Miriam at Riccarton. She's amazing, she even bakes cakes for people's birthdays and knows the customers by name. She's just wonderful, truly one of a kind."

Loyalty runs both ways. "I actually hired the current Riccarton Restaurant Manager 24 years ago when I was a manager at Riccarton. He was still working at the restaurant

when I came back as its franchisee, and now he's my Restaurant Manager. It's pretty special."

A presence in the community

Dave's restaurants are more than just places to grab a burger. They are gathering points, community hubs, and sites of local generosity.

"We've been supporting the McDonald's Youth Duathlon for many years along with other Christchurch franchisees and we're very proud of the strong turnout we get every year. It's a big achievement to get kids up and moving, and the event has a long history in Christchurch," he says.

His team also gets behind major fundraising efforts for Ronald McDonald House Charities, including McHappy Day, Supper Clubs, and the annual Rotary Club fundraiser.

"We always keep our doors open and help people as much as we can when they come to us...whether it's helping with events or supplying buns for a sausage sizzle. We believe there's always a way to help," he says.

Part of the neighbourhood

The sense of community connection goes both ways.

"There's a men's group that comes into Ashburton every day and takes



Dave Whalley at the 2024 McDonald's
Annual Franchisee Gala Awards

over a corner of the restaurant. Sometimes there are four or five of them, other times a dozen. They just like to come and catch up. It's really lovely to see them," says Dave.

And Riccarton? That's home. "I ran the Riccarton restaurant for 16 years, then stepped away for about 15 years to follow my own franchising journey. When I eventually bought Riccarton and came back, I was blown away to see many of the same customers still coming in every day."

Want to know more? Stop by your local Macca's.