



Emma McDougall is the Communications and Administration Co-ordinator of the NZSCA.

# There's a lot in that cup

The New Zealand Specialty Coffee Association on the need for specialty coffee to be recognised as the valued beverage it is.

**A**re you paying too much for your cup of coffee? No, you're probably not paying enough. When you take the time to consider what goes into your daily brew, you soon realise there's a lot in that cup.

As an association built on coffee, we are often asked why different coffees are more expensive than others. We also get asked how much we should be paying for that cup of coffee. Legalities rightly keep us from "setting the price" or indeed setting the recipe for a flat white. What we can do is explain what you're paying for in that cup. And why you could potentially be paying more. Roz Cattell, President of the New Zealand Specialty Coffee Association (NZSCA), says that roasters and cafés across New Zealand are absorbing significant increases in costs, which means the true value of your coffee isn't being represented in what you're paying.

"Our members are taking one for the team of five million by trying to keep the price of a long black or flat white relatively low. But we need to appreciate what we're actually putting into your cup of coffee, and there's a lot," Roz says. "Coffee is a deceptively simple product – beans, water, and maybe some milk. However, add the rising cost of freight, education on how to make the coffee, wages, equipment, power, rent, milk, the vessel you drink from, the beans themselves, and it paints a different picture."

New Zealanders drink around 2.2 kilograms of coffee each per year and we do have excellent coffee. It's our daily affordable luxury.

Looking at the journey of the coffee



Roz Cattell is President of the NZSCA.

to your cup, there's a lot of people and systems in that chain, and the NZSCA can see the added value at every link.

"The price of a cup of coffee should reflect the skills and experience that growers, roasters and baristas add to take your coffee from a caffeine injection, to a real experience. We owe it to coffee professionals to look at the value we place on their expertise," Roz says.

It can be hard to take a step back to appreciate the global supply chain of coffee and the things that can impact it. In New Zealand, we might notice a traffic jam of cargo ships waiting to be unloaded, costing more each day they wait at sea. But we don't see the devastating impacts of weather events like droughts or frosts that have ruined countless crops in Brazil. Or the changes in global currency that drives down the money farmers can earn while increasing the cost of importing coffee. Or the investment in research and development that farmers are doing to keep pushing up the quality, yield, and resilience of their crops.

It's interesting to note that in the last three years, the wages of New Zealand's frontline staff have gone up \$4 per hour.

The cost of the cup has remained insanely stable in the café. So while we are now valuing and ultimately paying a living wage to our daily baristas who have trained for hours and hours, and work with thousands of dollars of equipment in fitouts that are architecturally designed as safe, warm, clean inviting spaces, our consumers are certainly not paying for the unseen extras in the cup. It all adds up. It costs everyone in the chain before it ends up in your cup. With all of this in mind, would people care if their coffee costs more and reflects the true value of the experience they're having? It may take some time, but changing the mindset is an exciting prospect. There's a lot to be said for the rise of craft beer, wine, and chocolate in New Zealand and consumers happily paying more for those quality artisan products. Coffee is no different.

What can you do, as a consumer, to start to appreciate the full value of your daily coffee? You can start declining that loyalty card and embrace price changes with a smile, knowing that you are still getting a bargain, but might be paying a fairer price. And you can buy coffee from your local roastery. We're lucky to have an abundance of members doing good for sustainability in all aspects of the supply chain. Supporting locals has allowed our economy to bounce back stronger.

Remember, there's a lot in that cup. Stay safe, be kind, drink NZ coffee. ☑



For more information on the New Zealand Specialty Coffee Association, or to join, visit [www.nzscA.org](http://www.nzscA.org)