

LSG Sky Chefs NZ expands retail, supplying superstores, school lunches and more



Auckland-based EatMyLunch is a social enterprise that aims to ensure no child is at school hungry. All lunches bought through the company Give provides lunches to kids

[LSG Sky Chefs](#) New Zealand Ltd. (LSG NZ) is expanding its reach in the retail market, launching six new products under its Naturezone brand at Countdown stores, and partnering with health food brand SwoleFoods and school lunch program Eat My Lunch.

The partnership with [Countdown](#) superstores was ongoing before the pandemic, but in January of this year the caterer launched six new products at 23 stores, Bilal Ozturk, Sales and Service Director at LSG Sky Chefs New Zealand and Pacific, tells *PAX International*. The products, including the Toasties, Bacon Buttie, cheese rolls and hot chicken rolls, are “creative” and “smart” innovations for retail customers, he says.

Ozturk gives special recognition to Nick Swedell and Nick Blayney for their work on the innovations. “People in the company should be recognized for their hard work throughout the pandemic,” Ozturk says.

Auckland-based [EatMyLunch](#) is a social enterprise that aims to ensure no child is at school hungry. All lunches bought through the company [Give](#) provides lunches to kids. The company relies on volunteers for the making of their Give lunches. In late-January, LSG Sky Chefs began supplying and delivering cooked products to Eat My Lunch, supporting them to deliver lunches as part of the new [Ka Ora, Ka Ako Healthy School Lunches Programme](#). The caterer has supplied tons of cooked pasta and

couscous.

“They have short timelines, so this is very helpful,” Ozturk says.

LSG NZ is supplying school canteens directly with products such as healthy sandwiches and wraps. In addition, the caterer is supporting schools in developing new school meal concepts for students by hosting workshops and offering consulting with students. A first pilot project has been launched in the South Auckland area. For the initial workshop, LSG NZ invited kids into the kitchen for taste tests to define the menu. Kids were involved in choosing the ingredients that had the best taste and texture.

“Absolutely they should be here testing stuff. It’s not just school lunches – we want kids to have healthy, fresh meals, and to know how cooking works,” Ozturk explains. “Our aim is social responsibility.”

Partnering with New Zealand food supplier [SwoleFoods](#), LSG Sky Chefs NZ provides nutritious, healthy, ready-to-heat meals for fitness lovers. The meals are offered as part of the weekly meal plan chosen by subscribers to the program.

LSG Sky Chefs NZ is also catering a multinational chain of coffeehouses throughout the country. The caterer is testing different options for one week at a time and getting feedback from customers.

“It’s a great opportunity to have,” Ozturk says. “It’s a win-win opportunity for both [parties]. There is lots of opportunity for growth together.”

Beyond retail opportunities, Ozturk says the caterer is also keeping an open mind to create relationships with new potential clients during the pandemic. LSG NZ will be hosting an on-site business event at its Auckland facilities with The New Zealand Institute of Food Science & Technology Inc ([NZIFST](#)) to explore business opportunities.

Ozturk has also been part of the private monthly ‘Masterchefs of Aviation’ discussion groups. Organized and hosted by LSG NZ, top airline chefs come together in video calls to explore the post-COVID world. The meetings have included representative from Emirates, Turkish Airlines, Air New Zealand, Qatar Airways, Singapore Airlines, Aircalin, Qantas and others.

“We talk about what is happening in the world right, who is leading aviation in terms of airlines and caterers,” Ozturk says. “It is the platform where we can speak to airline-to-airline; to learn, build a relationship, earn trust and sometimes meet others for the first time.”

“All people used to know about LSG Sky Chefs was that it was the caterer you would see out the window [of the cabin], not much else. Now, people know more about what we can do, our daughters go to school and eat our meals, we see our food in the supermarket, we travel with Kiwirail to see our great offerings, and soon we will be on fitness sector to provide nutritional meals,” Bilal says. “Everything along the [daily] journey [in New Zealand] is LSG Sky Chefs. It’s a good feeling.”

In 2021, LSG Group also renewed its global off-shore contract with [Air New Zealand](#) for five years. The contract applies at [LAX](#), [SFO](#), [NRT](#), [ORD](#), [ICN](#), [IAH](#), [YVR](#), and [PVG](#), which Ozturk calls “an important win” for the times.

The news of these retail ventures follows LSG NZ’s first steps into the retail market [last summer](#) in effort to remain useful to the community during COVID-19. In June 2020, the caterer began working with supermarkets including Foodstuffs chains New World and PAK’nSave. LSG NZ is still working with these partners, supplying in-store ready-to-heat meals, sandwiches, wraps, salads and cooked lobster. In September, the caterer announced its agreement with [KiwiRail to cater three scenic routes](#).