

CASE STUDY

SkyCity Pride

Rainbow Belonging
Award Winner



SkyCity Pride began as a staff group that brought people together for events. It now helps make SkyCity a more inclusive workplace for LGBTQIA+ employees and brings their perspectives into decisions across the organisation. Its work is also helping guide other staff groups at SkyCity.

SkyCity's Chief People and Culture Officer Shaun Philp says staff feedback showed a gap. While people valued diversity, many staff did not always see themselves represented in leadership, decision-making or everyday workplace culture.

“The SkyCity Pride Employee Resource Group (ERG) stepped forward to address these challenges head-on.”

SkyCity invested in SkyCity Pride and brought senior leaders into the group. This gave its members more support and a stronger voice in decisions across the organisation.

SkyCity Pride has also taken a bigger role in working with external partners, including Burnett Foundation and Pride Pledge. As SkyCity takes greater responsibility for LGBTQIA+ inclusion, the group reviews those partnerships and helps shape people policies, considering how they affect staff with different identities and experiences.

“Their involvement in updates to our grooming guidelines and parental leave strengthened the relevance and inclusivity of these frameworks,” Shaun says.

This work has led to more opportunities to work together. When changing spaces were updated to include private changing bays, Pride leaders helped shape communications about privacy and safety. Their input has made them trusted advisors across SkyCity.

SkyCity has expanded its training on Rainbow communities and inclusion to help people build understanding and feel more confident in different situations. With Pride Pledge, it delivered introductory Rainbow 101 training to leaders, frontline teams and corporate staff across several sites, including its large 24/7 frontline workforce.

The experiences of LGBTQIA+ employees are now part of how SkyCity develops and updates people policies, helping make inclusion part of decisions that affect staff.

All-gender facilities, updated onboarding content and an annual training programme delivered by the staff group and SkyCity's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion team show the company's ongoing commitment to LGBTQIA+ inclusion.

SkyCity's 2025 staff survey showed gains in inclusion for Rainbow employees. More employees are also taking part in Rainbow initiatives, reflecting growing confidence and connection.

During an onboarding welcome day, a new employee shared that it was the first time they'd been asked their pronouns during an induction.

"This simple interaction, shaped by ERG-led training and inclusion practices, reflected the cultural shift occurring across SkyCity. For this individual, being recognised in their identity before they had even started their role set the tone for psychological safety and belonging," says Shaun.

"Stories like this have become more frequent as leaders gain confidence, and inclusion becomes embedded in everyday interactions."

SkyCity Pride is focused on keeping this progress going. SkyCity has published its Rainbow pay gap for the first time, giving it a starting point for future equity work. Leaders of the key employee networks are now paid for their work, recognising their leadership and giving them more time to contribute.

Te Uru Tāngata Centre for Workplace Inclusion Chief Executive Maretha Smit says SkyCity Pride represents a highly mature and embedded model of employee-led inclusion, demonstrating how an ERG can evolve into a core organisational capability rather than a peripheral activity.

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"What is particularly compelling is the shift to ownership and accountability – moving beyond external validation towards internally driven standards, supported by governance, funding, and leadership integration. The strength of measurable outcomes, combined with systemic influence across policy and operations, positions this as a credible benchmark for sustained Rainbow inclusion in complex environments."

Strategies for success

- SkyCity Pride grew from an events group into a staff group that helps shape how the organisation works.
- Senior leaders became sponsors, with annual planning and a dedicated budget for the group.
- LGBTQIA+ perspectives were included in people policies and workplace practices.
- Training on Rainbow inclusion reached leaders, corporate teams and frontline staff.
- SkyCity introduced all-gender facilities, private changing spaces and more inclusive onboarding.
- Leaders of the staff group and key employee networks were paid for their work.
- Employee feedback and survey results helped set priorities.



Results and benefits

- 88 per cent of Rainbow kaimahi say different sexualities and gender identities are respected, up 10 percentage points from 2024.
- The number of Rainbow employees reporting a sense of belonging increased by 15 per cent.
- 95 per cent of Rainbow employees say they are treated with respect at work.
- SkyCity Pride membership has increased by 42 per cent since 2023.
- Pronoun badge uptake reached 39 per cent across Aotearoa.
- SkyCity published its Rainbow pay gap for the first time.
- SkyCity Pride's approach is helping guide other staff groups.