

INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE AWARD

Chorus

Chorus has embedded a Board-endorsed, data-driven Gender Equity Plan across recruitment, remuneration and leadership. This approach has reduced its gender pay gap by four per cent and increased female representation in senior roles. By integrating equity into core strategy, Chorus is driving meaningful change and raising the bar across its sector.

dentsu Aotearoa

Dentsu Aotearoa has reimaged its approach to inclusion, replacing a traditional committee with an employee-led DEI Council grounded in identity-based communities. Backed by executive sponsorship and partnerships with external experts, this shift has strengthened authenticity, increased participation, and lifted respect, belonging and engagement.

Fletcher Living

Fletcher Living is increasing opportunities for women through targeted mentoring and its BuildHers initiative — New Zealand's first all-female home build. These efforts are lifting female representation in leadership and improving engagement and belonging. By embedding inclusion in a visible way, Fletcher Living is showing what's possible in a traditionally male-dominated sector.

Hind Management

Hind Management has co-designed accessible recruitment and internship pathways with community partners to address gaps for Māori, Pasifika, and people living with disabilities. From easy-read job descriptions to pre-shared interview questions, mentoring and wraparound support, these initiatives have increased representation and strengthened retention and engagement. By moving beyond traditional practices, Hind is embedding inclusive recruitment in a fast-paced hospitality environment.

Northland Regional Council

Northland Regional Council identified lower engagement among neurodivergent staff and took action. Through manager training, inclusive meeting practices and workplace accommodations, they've improved engagement and created more supportive environments. These practical, system-level changes are embedded into the council's inclusion strategy and into everyday practice across the organisation.

SkyCity Entertainment Group

SkyCity Entertainment Group has brought its employee resource groups together under a formally governed Inclusion Council, backed by executive sponsorship, a six-figure budget, and paid ERG Chairs. This shift has driven 700 per cent growth in membership and embedded the employee voice into decision-making, lifting engagement, belonging and inclusion.

Te Toi Mahana

Te Toi Mahana has embedded Rainbow inclusion across both its workforce and tenant communities through co-designed initiatives and visible everyday practices. Grounded in te ao Māori values and mana whenua partnerships, this approach is strengthening safety, belonging and cultural connection across both workplace and housing environments.

BREAKING BARRIERS AWARD

ANZ Bank New Zealand Limited

ANZ has taken a system-wide approach to removing barriers for Māori, redesigning recruitment, retention and leadership pathways through culturally grounded practices. From whānau-based interviews to mentoring and leadership development, these changes are increasing Māori representation and lifting inclusion. They are embedding equity into governance, processes and leadership across the organisation.

Bay of Plenty Regional Council Toi Moana

Toi Moana has tackled structural gender inequities by redesigning its pay, performance and flexible work systems. From decoupling pay from performance to normalising flexible work at all levels, these changes are breaking down barriers to progression. The result is a reduced gender pay gap and more women in senior leadership.

DUAL

DUAL has introduced flexible, gender-neutral family support policies to remove barriers for caregivers. From extended parental leave to continued KiwiSaver contributions and additional Life Leave, these changes are supporting employee wellbeing and progression. In a small organisation, these policies have seen strong uptake, improving engagement and helping retain talented people.

Kinetic

Kinetic is removing barriers for women entering frontline driving roles through its Women Up Front programme. From funded licensing and extended training to flexible rostering and improved facilities, these changes have delivered rapid and measurable impact, with 172 women recruited into driver roles within 13 months - an average of three per week. With leadership support, Kinetic is dismantling a deeply embedded workforce barrier.

Kiwibank

Kiwibank has taken a system-wide approach to improving inclusive recruitment, gender equity and career development. Through accessible hiring, targeted leadership pathways for women, and community partnerships, these changes are creating opportunity for under-represented groups. The result is stronger culture scores, more women in leadership, and greater accountability through data and reporting.

Lyttelton Port Company

Lyttelton Port Company has redesigned its parental leave policy to address high turnover of female employees and low return-to-work rates. With extended leave, financial support and flexible return options, these changes are making it easier to come back to work. The result is a 100 percent return-to-work rate, reduced turnover, and increased female representation in a traditionally male-dominated workforce.

RESPECTFUL CULTURE AWARD

Kaitiaki Kindergartens

Kaitiaki Kindergartens has transformed its organisational culture by grounding its values in te ao Māori and shifting leadership from control to connection. Through co-created values, inclusive decision-making and trust-based leadership, the team has strengthened relationships, built psychological safety, and embedded a sustained culture of respect across the organisation.

Rio Tinto

Rio Tinto NZAS's Everyday Respect programme addresses long-standing harmful behaviours such as bullying, racism and harassment. The initiative embeds expectations through daily conversations at the start of shifts, leadership development and employee-led action. Employees are more confident to speak up and there has been a 49 per cent increase in women in operational roles. The programme has delivered a credible model for culture transformation.

Sudima Lake Rotorua Housekeeping Team

The Sudima Lake Rotorua Housekeeping Team has built a respectful, inclusive culture through everyday practices — from team briefings and cultural sharing to strong peer support for migrant staff. This consistent, values-led approach has strengthened connection and psychological safety, delivering high wellbeing scores and the lowest turnover among comparable teams.

CULTURAL COMPETENCE AWARD

Kaitiaki Kindergartens - Parakai Kindergarten

Kaitiaki Kindergartens Parakai team has embedded bicultural capability through Te Waka Hourua, co-developed with Ngāti Whātua o Kaipara. Grounded in Te Tiriti and tikanga Māori, this framework shapes curriculum, leadership and daily practice. The result is stronger cultural identity, deeper belonging, and increased use of te reo Māori, with impact reaching beyond the centre to the rest of the group.

New Zealand Football

New Zealand Football has taken a system-wide approach to embedding Te Tiriti o Waitangi across governance, partnerships and everyday practice. Supported by Māori Football Aotearoa, this change is increasing Māori participation, visibility and cultural capability. It's a powerful example of how national bodies can meaningfully respond to Te Tiriti obligations while strengthening identity and performance.

Social Impact and Reputation Team at Downer

The Social Impact and Reputation Team at Downer has implemented a kaupapa Māori-led leadership pathway to address underrepresentation. Guided by Te Korowai, Downer's Māori Advisory Board, and supported through programmes like Te Ara Whanake, this work is strengthening Māori leadership, retention and identity — creating culturally grounded pathways that are building long-term capability across the organisation.

Te Ara Tupua Alliance

Te Ara Tupua Alliance has embedded tikanga Māori into project delivery through mana whenua leadership and hands-on cultural practice. Guided by iwi partnership, this work builds capability through doing, not just training. It is shifting cultural practice from tokenism to lived Te Tiriti partnership, growing confidence and participation across a diverse workforce.

Whakarongorau Customer Experience / Transformation Roopu

Whakarongorau has redesigned digital health through Te Korowai, a tikanga Māori framework embedding cultural safety into service design and delivery. By shifting from efficiency-led systems to mana-enhancing experiences, this work is strengthening trust and engagement — with whānau Māori feeling recognised, respected and understood in every interaction.

EMPLOYEE NETWORKS AWARD

Accessibility Network, AIA NZ

AIA New Zealand's Accessibility Network has developed a market-leading neurodiversity toolkit, shifting inclusion from awareness to practical support. Co-designed with experts and employees, it has increased disclosure, confidence and access to support — tackling a complex challenge and making accessibility an open, supported part of workplace culture.

Air New Zealand - Employee Networks

Air New Zealand has brought 10 employee networks together into a cohesive, well-governed ecosystem of influence. Through shared funding, cross-network collaboration and co-led initiatives, this approach is breaking down silos. The result is 60 percent growth in engagement, wider reach across communities, and inclusion embedded as a shared capability.

Commerce Commission Neurodiversity Network

Commerce Commission has established a grassroots, employee-led neurodiversity network, breaking a culture of silence. Through safe spaces, peer support, monthly forums and quiet hours, this work is increasing confidence and understanding. It is embedding more inclusive practices across recruitment, leadership and everyday work.

Fisher & Paykel Healthcare

Fisher & Paykel Healthcare's Spectra network is reshaping a traditionally conservative engineering culture by normalising rainbow visibility, allyship and inclusive practice. Through leadership engagement, gender-affirming policies and workplace design changes, this work is strengthening confidence, visibility and belonging for rainbow employees.

Hamilton City Council - Neurodiversity Network

Hamilton City Council has established a lived-experience-led neurodiversity network, growing from four to more than 40 members. Through tailored support, sub-networks, sensory-friendly initiatives and leadership engagement, this work is increasing awareness and influencing practice — with impact beyond the workplace.

INZ Women's Infrastructure Network

Infrastructure New Zealand's has built a national women-led ecosystem spanning six chapters and more than 2,200 members. Through targeted events, governance influence and initiatives such as Girls in Infrastructure, this work is strengthening visibility, connection and leadership pathways — building a pipeline of women into senior roles.

Mums in Blue

Mums in Blue has grown from a grassroots network into a community of more than 1,300 frontline mothers advocating for change within New Zealand Police. Through collective voice, they have influenced improvements to parental leave, return-to-work support and career pathways — reshaping what it means to be both a police officer and a mother.

SkyCity Pride

SkyCity's Pride employee network has transformed Rainbow inclusion from one-off celebrations into everyday practice. Embedded across policy, training and culture, this work is a benchmark for sustained Rainbow inclusion. It's delivering measurable change — lifting inclusion sentiment to 88 percent, increasing belonging and respect, and growing participation, demonstrating the power of a well-resourced employee-led approach.

StandOut @Downer

StandOut@Downer has transformed Rainbow inclusion on the organisation's frontline. Campaigns like Check Your Language are shifting everyday behaviour, while the network has grown from five to 180 members. Beyond the Downer workforce, it supports emerging talent and community initiatives, building belonging at scale in traditionally hard-to-reach environments.

INDIVIDUAL AWARDS

Inclusive Leader of the Year Award

Joint Winner – Ed Collett, Air New Zealand
Joint Winner – Superintendent Tracey Thompson, New Zealand Police

Workplace Inclusion Professional of the Year Award

Winner – Anna Paris, New Zealand Transport Agency Waka Kotahi
Highly Commended – Max Wallace, Tap In

Emerging Inclusion Champion of the Year Award

Winner – Einnee Facey, Northland Regional Council

ORGANISATION AWARDS

Inclusive Workplace Award

Medium-Large Organisation
Winner – Hind Management
Medium-Large Organisation
Highly Commended – Chorus

Breaking Barriers Award

Medium-Large Organisation
Winner – Kinetic

TEAM AWARDS

Respectful Culture Award

Winner – Rio Tinto

Employee Networks Award

Winner – Air New Zealand – Employee Networks

FEATURE AWARDS

Gender Equity Award

Winner – Mums in Blue

He Ara Māori Tohu

Winner – New Zealand Football

Neurodiverse Talent Award

Winner – Accessibility Network, AIA NZ
Rainbow Belonging Award
Winner – SkyCity Pride

PINNACLE AWARDS

People's Choice Award

Winner – Kinetic

Supreme Award

Winner – New Zealand Football