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# TAURA



**DIVERSITY  
WORKS<sup>NZ</sup>**

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# Editor's letter

## Kia ora

Towards the end of last year, I was fortunate to attend The Future Workplaces forum, hosted in Auckland by HRNZ. Unsurprisingly, the topic of artificial intelligence (AI) dominated several presentations and panel sessions, with discussions focusing on the need to retrain workers currently doing repetitive manual tasks that may no longer be needed and to develop a new cohort of workers who will do roles we've never heard of to maximise the benefits of AI. One speaker made the point that, "AI won't take your job. People who understand how to use AI will."

When I read researcher Amanda Reid's Unveiling the power of socio-economic diversity piece in this issue, I realised this is yet another workplace change that has the potential to create an economic hurdle for some of our most marginalised communities. How do we ensure that people who have been failed in our education system or don't have access to the latest technologies don't get left behind again? Amanda offers some fascinating insights into the opportunities and challenges for our organisations in ensuring the changing world of work does not create greater inequity.

We also take a look at whether we are making progress in increasing female representation in STEM roles and the importance of increasing te ao Māori capability across our organisations.

It was inspiring to return to the University of Auckland's Advanced Design Methods Capstone course to catch up with the second cohort of students tasked with designing products, services or experiences that address diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace. This year's projects demonstrated an intersectional approach, astute consideration of individual positions, and a focus on systemic change. Our article showcases four of the standout ideas.

We also caught up with the National Association of Women In Construction to talk about the mahi it's done to create safer environments and allow women to thrive in this traditionally male-dominated sector.

If you have a DEI topic you would like to see covered in the next edition of Taura or would like to contribute to the magazine, please contact me on [communications@diversityworks.nz](mailto:communications@diversityworks.nz)

Ngā mihi



**Sheryl Blythen**  
Head of Marketing and Communications

A close-up, low-angle shot of a blue metal staircase. The steps are made of blue-painted steel with a textured, diamond-plate pattern. A single red sneaker with white soles is positioned on one of the steps, as if it has just been stepped on or is about to be. The background is a bright, slightly blurred blue sky. In the top left corner, there is a decorative graphic of orange dots forming a grid pattern.

# Women in **STEM**: Are we making progress?



Lack of female participation in science, technology, engineering and mathematics careers has been firmly in the spotlight. We look at the current landscape and showcase some of the organisations making traction.

Unleashing the full potential of women in STEM contains a myriad of benefits for workplaces and society in general; it's a powerful catalyst for economic empowerment and closing the gender pay gap, fundamental to forging a dynamic and diverse STEM community, and essential to dismantling the biases that linger in these sectors.

Campaigns and initiatives to encourage more women to study or work in science, technology, engineering and mathematics have received significant attention and investment in recent years. But has the hype generated any traction in increasing the number of women in STEM?

The answer, it seems, depends on who you talk to and which STEM-related field you are talking about.

Stats New Zealand data from the June 2023 quarter indicated that about 47 per cent of New Zealand's workforce were female. Comparatively 44 per cent of people working in STEM jobs were female. →



→ However, HR professional Susan Lowe, who also judges the Diverse Talent category of the Diversity Awards NZ™, says the definition Stats New Zealand is using for STEM roles is impacting the stats.

Its STEM occupation list, based on analysis done in 2019 by Australia's Department of Jobs and Small Business, includes roles such as accountants and health professionals.

Susan says that, from her experience in leading HR teams at both Coca-Cola Europacific Partners New Zealand and AI talent marketplace pioneers Fuel50, it's common to have a high proportion of females in finance and accounting. But it's a different story in tech and engineering.

The software engineering team at Fuel50 had very low female representation, mainly because there were so few female applicants for roles. "We would have loved to hire more women, but there are just too few available candidates."

Dr Mahsa McCauley, founder of She Sharp, a non-profit organisation dedicated to empowering women in tech, agrees that in certain sectors, there is still work to be done.

A clearer picture, she says, can be gained by looking at the 2023 STEM snapshot put together by the STEM Alliance Aotearoa and education specialists Te Hononga Akoranga – COMET.

It shows that 78 per cent of students enrolled in bachelor's degrees in health-related studies last year were female and 22 per cent male. But for information technology subjects the split was 73 per cent male and 26 per cent female and for engineering and related technologies, it was 78 per cent male and 21 per cent female.

Tech companies, McCauley says, are desperate to get more female talent in their companies. "They know that half the products they are developing or the systems they are training will end up in the hands of women, and they want their input and diversity of thought."

McCauley, who has worked in tech for the past 20 years, is a Senior Lecturer in the Auckland University of Technology School of Engineering, Computer and Mathematical Sciences, and Director of Women in Tech for the Faculty of Design and Creative Technologies.

When she moved to New Zealand from Iran in 2008, she was the only woman doing a PhD in software engineering at Massey University. An opportunity to travel to Sydney as an Anita Borg scholar and meet other women undertaking a PhD in her field convinced her she needed to set up a networking organisation in New Zealand.

She Sharp's initiatives are aimed at three different groups of females – high school students, university students studying STEM subjects and →

# Case study

## LawVu

In a nod to the adage that a rising tide lifts all boats, LawVu has committed to bringing women into tech positions not just to strengthen their own organisation, but to expand representation within the tech industry.

LawVu is a cloud-based software platform for in-house legal teams that enables them to share, collaborate and manage their work.

Women are significantly underrepresented across STEM careers globally with an estimated 26 per cent of tech-based jobs held by women.

“At LawVu, we believe that this lack of representation limits equality of opportunity for not only women, but also the transformative power of technology,” says Global Vice President of People Karly Boast.

“While we seek to attract diverse minds and experiences across the business, we have spent significant time working to bring women into tech positions at LawVu. Not only does diversity bring more unique perspectives and experiences that are crucial to innovating our product, but it’s also a step in closing the gender gap and ensuring that women have a seat at the tech table.”

Several initiatives have been put in place to support this.

Managers undergo training on recognising and understanding implicit bias, conflict resolution, cultural competency, and effective communication to better support diverse teams.

Steps have been taken to remove internal bias and barriers during the recruitment process and flexible working options are offered to all staff members.

Team members are supported through tailored individual development plans, regular feedback and opportunities for career growth.

LawVu also encourages more women to enter the tech industry, undertaking high school and university visits, supporting women in tech meet-ups, and collaborating with other start-ups in the Bay of Plenty.

LawVu was the Medium to Large Organisation winner in the Diverse Talent category of the 2023 Diversity Awards NZ™. [Read the full case study here.](#)



# Case study



## Rocket Lab

To increase gender diversity in its own business, Rocket Lab discovered it needed to help grow the number of women within the wider New Zealand STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) workforce.

Rocket Lab is an end-to-end space company delivering reliable launch services, spacecraft, satellite components and on-orbit management.

The company is dedicated to building a generation of home-grown talent which is representative of New Zealand's population, says Global Director – People, Culture & Capability Estelle Curd.

Two years ago, the organisation formed a Ladies Who Launch group, comprised of all wāhine at Rocket Lab, with the aim of identifying the challenges they face as women in STEM, promoting their achievements within the business and creating pathways for young women considering a career in STEM.

Group members revealed their pathways to Rocket Lab were paved with many challenges, including being deterred from pursuing STEM careers by teachers and having opportunities blocked due to their gender.

“Although there has been a lot of progress over the years, we are still finding that women and minorities are underrepresented in the STEM industry, and this is why we decided as a group that we would commit to making a real change,” Estelle says.

Rocket Lab leadership and the Ladies Who Launch group worked together to develop a number of initiatives, including:

- High school visits showcasing Rocket Lab female engineers



- A pilot programme at McAuley High School, an all-female Auckland school, providing dedicated STEM subject tutoring to small groups of year 12 and 13 students.
- A Trades Open Day bringing year 12 and 13 students from under-represented groups, including female students and Māori and Pacific students to the Rocket Lab facility.
- A Women in STEM scholarship awarded each year to a student who identifies as a woman or a gender minority.
- Ensuring 50 per cent female representation in the Rocket Lab internship programme

Sixty tertiary students have completed the Rocket Lab internship programme with many offered fulltime employment. In the past two years, half those interns were female.

Rocket Lab has also committed to the Space Workforce 2030 initiative, a global pledge within the aerospace industry that seeks to achieve a significant increase in women and underrepresented groups within the workforce.

Rocket Lab was a finalist in the Diverse Talent category of the 2023 Diversity Awards NZ™. [Read the full case study here.](#)



“When there is a human-centric element, when you are doing things to make other people’s lives better, you have a much greater chance of getting more girls interested in tech.”

→ women working in the profession. It started in 2014, hosting about 25 women at its first event. Today it has more than 1800 members in Auckland and Hamilton and has plans to be active in other cities next year.

The format of the events allows for a woman in tech to share her story so that participants can learn from the success of others or get to hear from an aspirational leader in tech. This is followed by a hands-on practical learning session.

Part of She Sharp’s mission, McCauley says, is to work with parents, teachers and career advisors to change their view of the opportunities that are available in STEM. “Often parents aren’t even aware of the jobs available now, let alone what their daughters could be doing in the future. Teachers can have a huge impact in changing students’ views on STEM.”

Last year the organisation invited 100 digital technology teachers to an event at the Google offices, which looked at how to teach AI and augmented reality in a fun way. It’s a topic that specifically requires creativity, problem solving and is very human-centred.

“When there is a human-centric element, when you are doing things to make other people’s lives better, you have a much greater chance of getting more girls interested in tech.”

Organisations need to be investing in bringing young women into the sector, but they also need to look at changing their culture to ensure their workplaces are good places for women to be, says McCauley.

“For every five to six females who study STEM subjects, only about two or three end up in the industry.”

Susan Lowe, who recently began a new role as Chief People Officer at Alpine Energy, agrees that employers have a dual role to play in increasing female representation in STEM.

“We need to shift the dial so we have more women to choose from. You can’t change representation unless we get out in the community and get more women interested in working in STEM.”

It’s grassroots activity that means going into schools and talking to much younger students, she says. “It’s about making science more attractive - that’s what Rocket Lab and LawVu are doing”

“If we want to change the future, we need to start with the people who will be here in the future.”

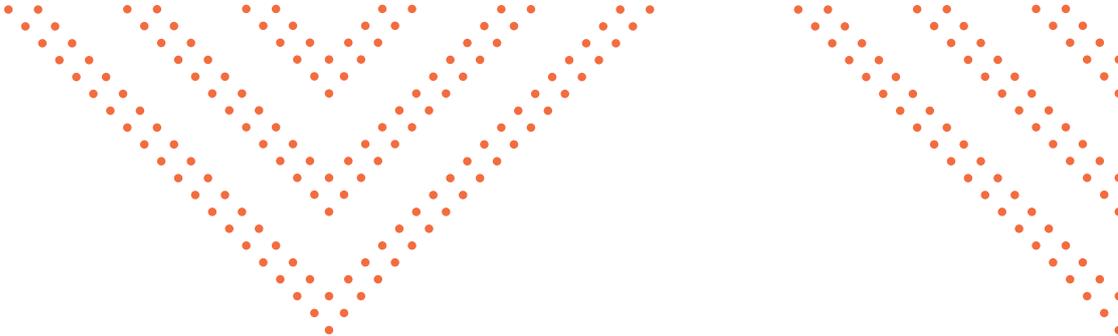
But the culture change piece is important too.

“We need to create workplaces that are diverse and inclusive where people can be healthy, safe and well. We need to make those workplaces accessible for all genders. I’m sure some of our non-binary and trans population are not represented equitably in STEM.

“As leaders, if we haven’t created an environment where people can show up and thrive, we haven’t done our job.”

Once a bigger female talent pool exists, organisations must be ready to recruit from it. “That means inclusive recruitment policies, gender neutral language in job ads and an employment brand that says, ‘We are gender inclusive.’”

Then, it’s about removing barriers to inclusion for the women you are bringing into the organisation, Lowe says. Ensure you have flexible working arrangements, appropriate female or gender-neutral bathroom facilities and PPE gear that fits. →



“Stats show that in 2017, only three per cent of 15-year-old girls were considering a career in STEM. It’s no wonder we have a shortage of female talent now. But hopefully the current interventions will have a real impact in five or six years.”

→ People leaders also need to look at behaviour within workplaces that have been male-dominated for a long time. “It can be a hard tide to turn but you need to shift culture so that the workplace is an accepting place to be. It’s important to do that without excluding men – you need to take them on the journey.”

Creating networks and support frameworks for women is also important. “If you bring women together, support them and celebrate success, it becomes infectious and helps to foster the right environment.”

### What’s the unrealised potential?

Lowe says STEM industries need to consider what they’re missing out on due to female under-representation.

“What aren’t we tapping into from an entrepreneurial and innovative perspective? How might we benefit from maximising the contribution women can make on an intellectual level if they are employed in these roles?”

Progressing women in STEM could also have a positive impact on New Zealand’s gender pay gap, she says. That gap is impacted by the number of women in traditionally female-dominated sectors where lower pay rates are the norm.

“A cleaner does not earn as much as an IT specialist.”

Putting more women in highly paid STEM roles could also reduce the retirement pay gap as they will have the opportunity to earn more across their working career. Additionally, given the fact that the majority of single parents are women, increased female representation in STEM could reduce child poverty, Lowe says.

“There are potentially huge societal benefits from making these roles more accessible.”

But it requires the courage to change the way we think about work, she says. The traditional view that jobs are something that are 40 hours a week from Monday to Friday, done by one person, is simply not true anymore.

“We have to challenge the people that design our jobs – we can break them up into pieces so they can be done by more than one person; we can allow people to do their 40 hours when it suits them. We can’t change representation without being more open to job sharing and flexibility.”

Lowe concedes that making these accommodations may be easier in a remote tech working environment than in workplaces where people work in teams on physical job sites.

But, she says, it’s not impossible, citing the case study of [Constellation Brands](#), which made a significant investment into its manufacturing processes to address design of work barriers for women in the industry. “It’s a great example of thinking differently.”

Mahsa McCauley says lack of female representation in STEM is an issue in many countries not just New Zealand.

But it’s important we do the mahi to shift the dial now.

“Stats show that in 2017, only three per cent of 15-year-old girls were considering a career in STEM. It’s no wonder we have a shortage of female talent now. But hopefully the current interventions will have a real impact in five or six years.” ■



# Case study

## Fisher & Paykel Healthcare

A community based on the premise that 'empowered women empower women' is helping women in STEM roles at Fisher & Paykel Healthcare bolster each other and provide the tools needed to enable their growth.

Fisher & Paykel Healthcare (F&P) designs, manufactures, and markets products and systems used in acute and chronic respiratory care, surgery and the treatment of obstructive sleep apnoea. Of its 670 engineering roles, 22 per cent are filled by women.

Its WiEng group was established in October 2020 by employees to act as a support circle for 10 women early in their career in engineering roles so they could speak freely about adversity, seek advice and grow professionally. It has since grown to become a company-wide initiative committed to supporting women in STEM roles at the company, with more than 200 members.

"Support circles are a common method of overcoming obstacles, creating a safe environment for women to share experiences and foster valuable relationships for life," says WiEng President and Product Development Engineer Eugena Au.

"WiEng is a community to support and empower women in STEM at F&P. Our vision is that every woman in STEM will feel empowered and enabled to fulfil their potential to succeed in their roles. We aim to provide the necessary tools to enable their growth. We value empowerment, relationships, and equality; we believe behind every successful woman is a tribe of other successful women who have her back."

Each calendar quarter a workshop explores common barriers experienced by women in the workplace. Past themes have included overcoming imposter syndrome, developing a growth mindset, and mentorship.

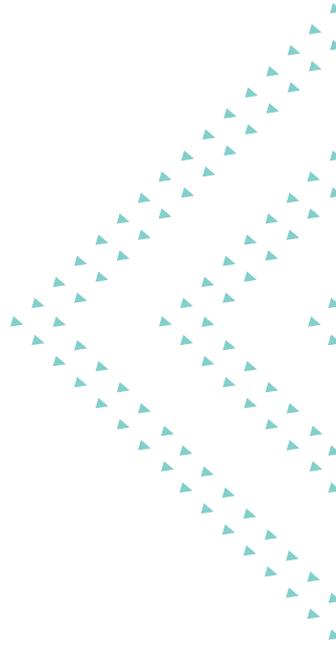
Support from the VP of HR and the Learning and Development team has contributed to the exponential growth of WiEng.

"Our connections have also assisted in beginning to address two key issues: visibility and deep-rooted bias within the STEM industry."

Fisher & Paykel Healthcare was a finalist in the Inclusive Workplace category of the 2022 Diversity Awards NZ™. [Read the full case study here.](#)







# Unveiling the power of socio- economic diversity

Researcher Amanda Reid explores the role of workplaces in recognising and navigating how socio-economic factors intersect with diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. →

→ In today's dynamic world, the impact of socio-economic divides extends far beyond mere statistics; it shapes the course of your life and defines the essence of equality. Think about the stark contrast between opportunity-rich environments and those entrenched in economic disparity. This disparity extends beyond financial status; it ripples through every aspect of opportunity, shaping experiences for individuals from diverse backgrounds.

Economic hurdles are an everyday reality for many individuals, especially those marginalised within our communities. From persons with disabilities to women, Māori, Pacific Peoples, and refugees, the battle against economic disadvantage is all too familiar.

Social mobility, a conduit to equal opportunities, encompasses a myriad of factors, including parental socio-economic status, gender, age, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and birthplace. Research found that it took anywhere from two to 11 generations for children from low-income families to match the average income of their country. ([Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development \(OECD\). \(2018\). Broken Social Elevator? How to Promote Social Mobility](#)). In Aotearoa New Zealand, it's four generations.

Diversity isn't just a buzzword; it's the heartbeat of our workforce. Those from varying socio-economic backgrounds bring a rich tapestry of experiences, perspectives, and unique opportunities and challenges to the table. Recognising and navigating how socio-economic factors intersect with diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) is pivotal.

### **Educational divide: A gateway to socio-economic diversity**

Access to quality education and training opportunities is profoundly influenced by your socio-economic background. Your social mobility is significantly impacted by not only your level of education or type of educational institution, but also your parents.

Inequality of opportunity shapes both a child's ambitions and access to learning, with these disparities in goals and resources having a lifelong impact. Children and young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds face significant barriers to accessing higher education opportunities, which are often readily available

to their more privileged peers. This creates disparities in the skills and qualifications that young people bring to the workplace.

The barriers can persist across your working life; if you're in a higher paying job, you are more likely to receive workplace training and professional development opportunities. These opportunities can contribute to career development and progression. But if you did not receive the benefit of higher education or receive ongoing training and skill development in your workplace, you're at risk of being trapped in a job considered "low-skilled".

There is also a link between socio-economic status and industry. Because of the educational divide and high barrier to entry, high-paying, high-value industries, such as those related to STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), may be inherently more likely to attract people from higher socio-economic backgrounds, making these industries less diverse. This makes it harder to break the cycle, both from an individual and institutional perspective.

### **The wage gap: Socio-economic disparities in earnings**

In Aotearoa New Zealand, addressing the wage gap is an ongoing challenge. Socio-economic background often plays a significant role in determining wage gaps by shaping access to educational opportunities, resources, and career advancement paths. Socio-economic disparities affect occupational choices and perpetuate inequalities, particularly for marginalised groups. Privilege amplifies wage gaps by granting preferential treatment in better-paying job access, career progression, and wage negotiations, widening disparities between diverse groups. Businesses play a crucial role in addressing wage gaps by implementing equitable hiring practices, fair pay and pay transparency measures and policies, and fostering inclusive work environments that prioritise diversity, fairness, and equal opportunities.

### **Recruitment practices can reinforce socio-economic bias**

Hiring practices play a crucial role in shaping the socio-economic diversity of the workforce and can also significantly impact the wage gap. Bias, whether conscious or unconscious, →



“In Aotearoa New Zealand, addressing the wage gap is an ongoing challenge. Socio-economic background often plays a significant role in determining wage gaps by shaping access to educational opportunities, resources, and career advancement paths.”





→ can lead to inequitable hiring decisions, hinder employment prospects, and perpetuate unequal pay structures.

Unconscious bias can lead employers to favour candidates from backgrounds like their own and can result in a lack of diversity in the workforce. Some employers may prefer graduates from specific institutions or with specific types of qualifications. Bias during salary negotiations or initial hiring decisions can contribute to disparities in compensation between individuals with similar qualifications but different socio-economic backgrounds.

Addressing these biases through standardised and transparent HR practices is vital to ensuring fair and equitable wage structures within organisations. Recruitment systems and processes also need to have standardised criteria that are consistently applied to end arbitrary and inequitable hiring decisions based on personal biases.

### **Career progression**

Career progression within the workplace can be influenced by socio-economic background. Socio-economic status influences professional networks, which are an implicit driver of social mobility. If you're from a more privileged background, you may have access to extensive networks as well as mentoring and sponsorships that help you advance in your career. In contrast,

if you're from a less privileged background, these critical supports and opportunities may not be available for you.

Workplaces in Aotearoa New Zealand must actively foster an inclusive environment. This includes implementing initiatives to address socio-economic disparities, such as mentorship programmes, skill-building workshops, and networking opportunities to support people from all backgrounds in their professional growth.

### **Inclusivity in leadership**

Socio-economic status, like gender identity, age, or ethnicity, is an integral component of an individual's identity, shaping their opportunities throughout their life. In an equitable world, the workforce would be representative of the community it operates in. The overrepresentation of workforce leaders with high socio-economic status reveals both our lack of social mobility and our bias.

Representation matters and promoting diversity in leadership positions is crucial for setting an example of inclusivity within organisations. Having leaders from diverse socio-economic backgrounds helps shape workplace cultures that value all perspectives and experiences. Leadership training programmes and mentorship initiatives can also improve equality of opportunity, and help develop the skills and confidence to pursue leadership positions.



“Unconscious bias can lead employers to favour candidates from backgrounds like their own and can result in a lack of diversity in the workforce.”

### Workplace inclusion and belonging

Socio-economic background can affect sense of belonging and inclusion in the workplace. This may hinder people’s ability to fully engage with and contribute to the work environment. Creating an inclusive environment where people from all backgrounds feel valued and supported is essential for fostering diversity and equity. Initiatives such as diversity training and employee resource groups are designed to create an inclusive environment. Offering flexible working arrangements to encourage a wider range of applicants also improves social mobility.

### Strategies for mitigating socio-economic disparities in workplace DEIB

The repercussions of socio-economic disparities extend far beyond financial implications, profoundly influencing access to a wide range of opportunities and shaping life experiences. The systemic influence of socio-economic background on education, career progression, and workplace dynamics highlights its significant role in shaping social mobility trajectories. This encompasses equitable HR practices, inclusive leadership, and fostering belonging in the workplace, and highlights the need for holistic strategies to address barriers and biases.

To achieve true diversity and equity, it is essential to acknowledge and counteract the biases perpetuated by socio-economic status, creating

an inclusive work environment that values and supports people from all backgrounds. Organisations must proactively implement DEIB practices that mitigate socio-economic disparities, including fair pay policies, transparent career pathways, and inclusive practices to foster a workforce that champions diversity, fairness, and equal opportunities for all. ■



**Amanda Reid is Principal Consultant at research consultancy BERL, and Chair of The Workshop. She uses research, evaluation and strategic methodologies to solve complex problems for businesses, industries, iwi, and NGOs.**



Te Tāpui Atawhai  
Auckland City Mission



# Embracing the spirit of Te Tiriti

Leonie Hayden sat down with Dr Nicola Ngawati, judging chair of the Ngā Āhukatanga o Te Tiriti Tohu category for the 2023 Diversity Awards NZ™, to talk about what makes a winning entry and the importance of increasing te ao Māori capability across an organisation. →

→ Ngā Āhuatanga o Te Tiriti Tohu or “the spirit of Te Tiriti” is an award that recognises an authentic commitment to Aotearoa New Zealand’s founding document, and organisations that strive to reframe day-to-day processes to reflect it as a living taonga.

As the director equity and engagement for Te Pataka Whaioranga Pharmac, and an expert in diversity and inclusion and Māori/Crown relations, this year’s judging chair Dr Nicola Ngawati (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Hine) was well-placed to guide her panel in sorting the outstanding applicants from those doing “the bare minimum”.

“I was keen to see examples of excellence,” she says. “And there was quite a common theme of going above and beyond the usual standard approach, which can often be focused on bilingual names, using Māori salutations on emails, but not thinking beyond that.”

Judges for each category were tasked with site visits to all the finalist organisations to experience firsthand how they were giving life to the words in their entry. She says the report from one of the judges who visited this year’s Supreme Award winner, Te Tāpui Atawhai Auckland City Mission, blew them all away.

“It had such an impact on her, the aroha and the real thought behind it from the kaimahi at the Mission. She felt really welcomed and embraced the minute she came in the door. It was genuine. The judge could see, hear and feel the meaning of the Mission’s words in their application.”

Ngawati herself visited Toi Mai, one of six Workforce Development Councils that was founded with joint-governance leadership when it was established in 2021. She recalls one tāne Māori who became emotional while talking about the support he was getting to learn te reo and to step into his identity. “It was really powerful.”

She adds that she asked some “probing questions” of the tauwi staff too. “About their level of comfort and were they being supported as Tangata Tiriti in that environment. All of them just loved working there, they felt supported at whatever stage of the journey they were on.”

“On the journey” is a phrase that gets used by Māori and tauwi alike in Aotearoa, to describe how far along someone is in learning about te

**“A treaty is meant to benefit both parties. For tauwi, it should be about ‘connection to place.’”**

reo and tikanga Māori. But where exactly is the destination? Ngawati says that for some of the leaders and CEs she has encountered in her work as an equity expert, they often don’t have a clear answer.

“I recently led an exercise for a public service leadership course where they had to pretend they were taking a new staff member from overseas up in the elevator. Each had five minutes to tell them what Te Tiriti means for their organisation.” She says she was shocked at how many merely repeated the company’s strategic plan. “When they went off the kaupapa I said, ‘Stop!’”

“You’ve got to be able to relate Te Tiriti to your work on a really simple level.”

A treaty is meant to benefit both parties. For tauwi, it should be about “connection to place,” she says.

“It’s about learning the history of our whenua and our stories so they can locate themselves here. For people of other cultures, it can highlight some amazing connections, especially the whakapapa connections we have with tāngata Moana Nui a Kiwa.”

Ngawati says there are plenty of examples in this year’s finalists to inspire the ‘why’ for other organisations on their journey. “I’ve shared some of the learnings from the winners and finalists in my workplace and in the governance space,” she admits.

She adds that some of the initiatives she saw from this year’s winners would have been transformative for her younger self.

“I would have felt valued, I would have felt seen.” ■



**Leonie Kapea Hayden (Ngāti Whātua, Ngāti Hine) is the senior writer for RUN, an independent creative advertising and design agency based in Tāmaki Makaurau**

# Case study



## Te Kāhui Tātari Ture Criminal Cases Review Commission

Indigenous peoples are over-represented in the prisons of every colonised country in the Western world, and Aotearoa New Zealand is no exception. More than half of our prison population are Māori and the considerable disparities across the criminal justice sector are well documented.

Established in April 2020, Te Kāhui Tātari Ture Criminal Cases Review Commission is the independent Crown entity for investigating possible miscarriage of justice cases.

“We are set up to serve those disproportionately affected by the criminal justice system – Māori, Pasifika, women, and youth,” says Chief Executive, Parekawhia McLean. “Research indicates that people who have been or are incarcerated have low trust in the current justice system, which has periodically shown bias and subjected many people to racism and discrimination.”

Te Kāhui Tātari Ture staff, of whom nearly 50 per cent are Māori, need their own professional wellbeing systems in order to support those who

seek their services, so over the past three years the organisation has developed a multifaceted approach to support and upskilling. Beginning with recruitment, the organisation focuses on creating a workforce pipeline that recognises the importance of incorporating te ao Māori expertise and capability within its operations.

Co-design with employees, senior leaders, and Commissioners, and a set of values and pillars based on Sir Mason Durie’s Te Whare Tapa Whā, guide decision making at all levels. Additionally, a specialist Kairaranga Tāngata team has developed Te Pou Tarāwaho, an outreach programme for engaging with Māori and Pacific public sector agencies such as Māori Women’s Welfare League and Te Hunga Rōia Māori, to work with those who have been affected by the justice system.

A 13-week internship programme was introduced, which to date has solely appointed Māori students studying law. Te Kāhui Tātari Ture is also increasing usage of te reo Māori across its premises, branding, social media channels, and operating procedures and policies, as well as offering te reo classes, and karakia and waiata practice.

“The focus is on fostering workplace inclusion, and ensuring a cohesive working environment,” says Parekawhia. “We believe these are essential markers of our journey as an organisation.”

Te Kāhui Tātari Ture Criminal Cases Review Commission was highly commended in the Ngā Āhuatanga o te Tiriti category at the 2023 Diversity Awards NZ. [Read the full case study.](#)

# Case study



## Te Tāpui Atawhai Auckland City Mission

There would be few people in Tāmaki Makaurau that aren't aware of the work Auckland City Mission does supporting people in need.

In 2021, the organisation was gifted the name Te Tāpui Atawhai. On the night of its unveiling, the Board Chair and Missioner acknowledged the Mission's role in colonisation and apologised for the harm it had caused. They pledged to improve Māori outcomes and intentionally privilege Māori development, starting with the establishment of a new executive role.

Joanne Reidy was appointed General Manager Māori in June last year, and soon after a new Māori caucus – Manurau – was created, consisting of 10 Māori team leaders from across Te Tāpui Atawhai.

“Manurau has set three goals to promote Māori values and practices within the organisation,” says Joanne. “Influencing the organisational culture, campaigning for best practices in tikanga and te reo Māori and delivering effective services to Māori.”

These recognise the needs of kaimahi Māori as well as those accessing Te Tāpui Atawhai's services, of whom more than 50 per cent are Māori. As such, specific programmes are aimed at strengthening and healing.

One is the introduction of romiromi and mirimiri practitioners, who spend one day a month providing breathing and body work to staff. This was initiated after the loss of six street whānau within a two-month period. “We offer EAP counselling and support services to our staff,” says Joanne, “But given the heaviness and magnitude of loss, we felt a te ao Māori approach was important.”

Another popular addition was te reo Māori classes, introduced in two streams – one for Māori and one for Tāngata Tiriti, which acknowledges that the experience of learning te reo is quite different for Māori, who carry generational grief for its loss.

Importantly, says Joanne, the partnership between Manurau and Te Tāpui Atawhai is viewed as equal, so that they are able to address historical injustices and inequities.

“It all creates a workplace where Māori are empowered to be unapologetically Māori, which in turn will allow Māori solutions to be developed and offered to the people who we support.”

Te Tāpui Atawhai Auckland City Mission was the Medium to Large Organisation winner in the Ngā Āhuratanga o Te Tiriti category, and the Supreme Award winner at the 2023 Diversity Awards NZ. [Read the full case study.](#)

# Case study

## Toi Mai

Aotearoa has six Workforce Development Councils, or Ohu Ahumahi, whose job is to set standards and shape programmes that lead to industry qualifications. Toi Mai is the collective WDC for Ngā Peka o Toi, the six groups that oversee our creative, cultural, recreation and technology industries – think developers and web design, hairdressing and makeup artistry, parks and museums, journalism, and sports sciences.

Ohu Ahumahi are mandated to improve access, equity and success in vocational education but Toi Mai has gone beyond its mandate to ensure its workforce also enjoys the same opportunities.

“So they’re able to ‘walk the talk;” says Toi Mai CEO Dr Claire Robinson who, along with Pou Matua Tama Kirikiri, created a co-leadership model at the outset. “This starts from the top down. Toi Mai was established in October 2021. Starting a brand-new organisation from the ground up meant that we could ask: what does a Te Tiriti-honouring organisation actually require?”

“That’s the only way you can really be Tiriti led,” adds Kirikiri. “When you have two people at the top making decisions in a joint, mana-to-mana relationship.”

The goals they set themselves were ambitious – the first being to employ 50/50 Māori and

non-Māori kaimahi to ensure the burden of transformation does not fall on a few Māori staff. Starting with recruitment, they introduced a process where multiple candidates engage in a wānanga/talanoa-style conversation with senior staff, ensuring unsuccessful candidates leave with their mana acknowledged and intact.

They began applying mātauranga Māori concepts to the organisation’s structures and processes, and normalising tikanga, te reo and mātauranga Māori in daily mahi. This is supported by a group of kaimahi Māori within Toi Mai, as well as groups that work across all six Ohu Ahumahi councils.

Within 12 months of establishment, 30 per cent of kaimahi, 57 per cent of the executive leadership team and 57 per cent of the Toi Mai board identified as Māori.

“In a mature organisation, any one of those goals would be ambitious,” says Robinson. “What Toi Mai has achieved in a short space is a testament to the transformational power of having these goals up front and non-negotiable.”

Toi Mai was the Small to Medium Organisation winner in the Ngā Āhuatanga o Te Tiriti category at the 2023 Diversity Awards NZ™. [Read the full case study.](#)



# Case study



## Plant and Food Research New Zealand

Since 2020, Plant and Food Research New Zealand's Te Rito programme has exposed more than 1,000 rangatahi to education and career pathways that weave science and mātauranga Māori together.

"Māori are severely under-represented in the research, science and innovation workforce," says principal advisor Te Aue Addison, a strategist with more than 10 years' experience working in central government, local government and the private sector.

The programme offers a number of pathways, starting at year 10 right through to post-graduate students. They include outreach within schools, horticultural programmes, cadetships and 12-week summer internships, which reserve 50 per cent of intake for Māori students.

By setting ambitious targets, providing wraparound support and catering for different learning styles, Te Rito is already starting to show promising results. Since 2019, Plant and Food Research has seen an increase from 22 to 42 Māori staff, with an additional eight post-graduate students on stipend within the organisation.

The programme is a result of a co-design of initiatives between science staff supervisors working with the Māori Strategy, Partnerships & Enterprise Team for guidance. It has also been informed by former Te Rito participants, who gifted Plant and Food Research a set of values that were integrated into the organisation's wider student recruitment approach.

Additionally, the Crown Research Institute set about improving Māori capability in the senior leadership team to ensure it was fit to partner with Māori through its TONO strategy. It recognised that mātauranga Māori and the huge stores of indigenous knowledge around te taiao and sustainable practice is crucial in food and plant research.

"The TONO strategy is a 10-year evolving strategy split into three phases, Tono, Wheako, and Huatahi, to authentically strengthen relationships with Māori and champion diversity and inclusion from leadership down," says Addison.

"These programmes contribute to the wellbeing of all who engage in the different pathways. It creates opportunities for Māori staff to authentically express themselves, as well as for our non-Māori staff to experience the value that Māori contribute to the workplace."

Plant and Food Research New Zealand was highly commended in the Ngā Āhuatanga o Te Tiriti category ([read the full case study](#)), and Medium to Large Organisation winner in the Leadership category ([read the case study](#)) at the 2023 Diversity Awards NZ™.



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**Don't** get frustrated with someone when they can't complete or understand something. Give them time.

**Don't** overload with text. Refrain from overloading with excessive text.

**Don't** make employees with dyslexia feel like a burden or inconvenience. Support and encourage them to be embraced, not resented.

**Don't** allow employees with dyslexia to feel like a burden. Make your workplaces cater for every brain.

**Don't** enforce standard formatting for every employee. Allow flexibility in font styles, sizes, and spacing to cater for individual reading preferences.

**Do** encourage employees to disclose their dyslexia if they are comfortable doing so. Respect their privacy and confidentiality where disclosure is voluntary.



# Young minds reshaping our workplaces

A second cohort of Auckland university students has tackled making workplaces better through a lens of diversity, equity and inclusion. Diversity Works New Zealand Head of Capability Sarah Macdonald takes a look at their work and reports back that the future looks promising.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in the workplace is evolving in Aotearoa New Zealand, with fresh ideas and innovation taking centre stage. So it makes sense that this mahi should be a focus for some of the brightest young minds coming through our tertiary institutions.

The University of Auckland's Advanced Design Methods Capstone course is emerging as a catalyst for creative thinking, and last year a new cohort of students delivered their final semester project designing products, services or experiences that addressed DEI in the workplace.

It was the second year that Diversity Works New Zealand has worked with the course participants and the collaboration had made a significant impact, producing

DEI projects marked by an intersectional approach, astute consideration of individual positions, and a focus on systemic change.

The collaboration between Diversity Works New Zealand and the students took place over several months and included three key phases.

Firstly, students were introduced to Diversity Works New Zealand's AIM framework, gaining a comprehensive understanding of DEI in the workplace. The training encompassed themes such as intersectionality, positional identity, and a commitment to systemic change.

Secondly, the students presented their project ideas to Diversity Works New Zealand, opening the door for feedback and refinement. →

→ Finally, the students' presentations were showcased in front of an expert panel from Diversity Works New Zealand.

The course is expertly led by Diana Albarran Gonzalez, a seasoned professional in creativity and design collaboration.

"The collaboration with Diversity Works New Zealand has been very rewarding for me and the students; we appreciate the careful teaching and guidance provided throughout the semester."

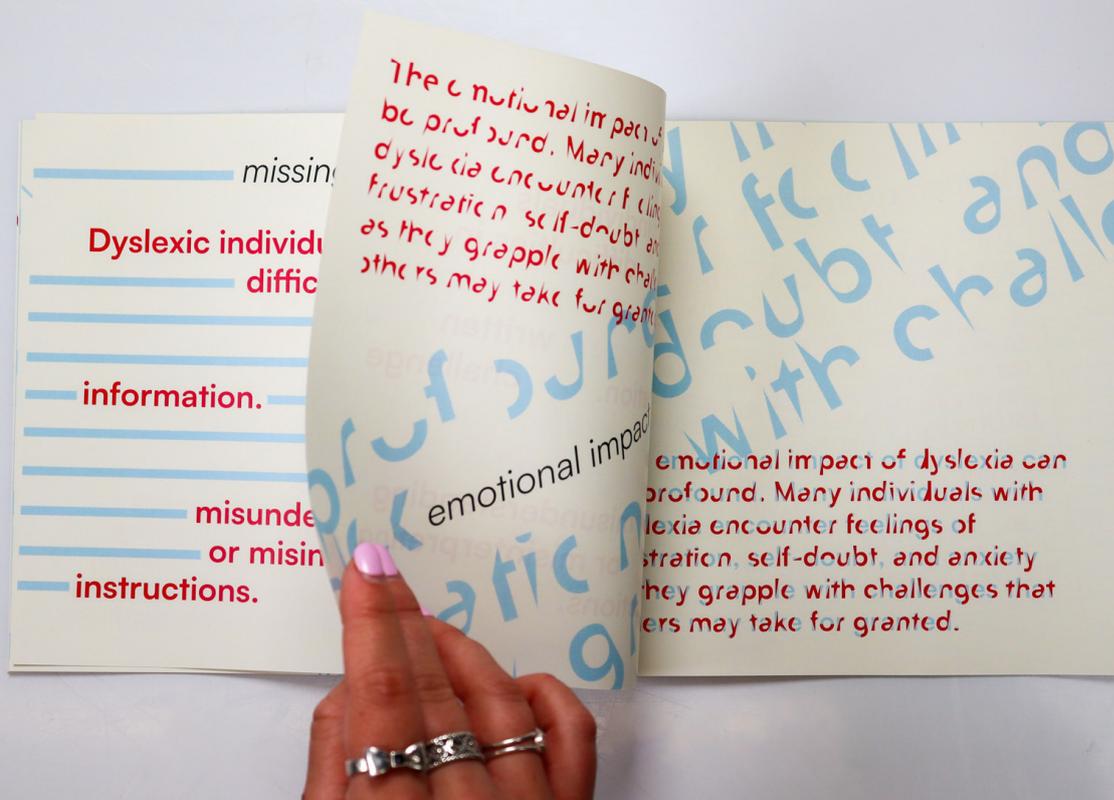
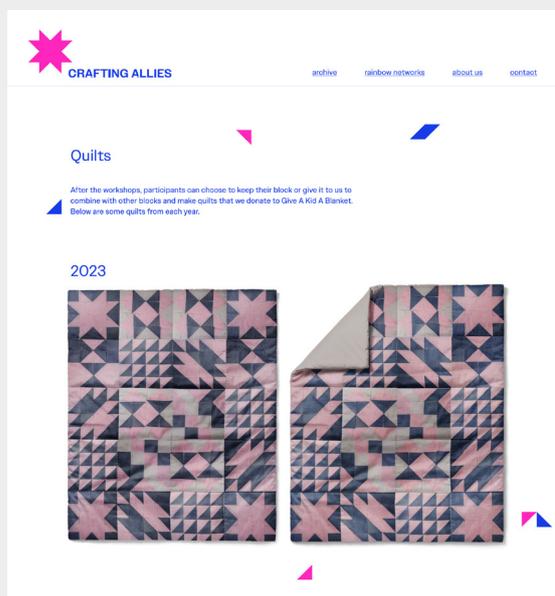
Diana focuses on empowering students to enhance mindsets, communities, and businesses through positioned, intersectional and pluriversal design, while challenging prevalent Western-centric and industrial philosophies which often prioritise extraction and exploitation over collective wellbeing.

She has a firm belief in design's potential to shape a brighter future for individuals, communities, organisations and the planet. Diana's passion and design lens are evident in the quality of her students' work.

We have selected four outstanding projects that deserve special recognition to showcase.

Each of these case studies represents a significant contribution to fostering DEI in different workplace contexts, and they all stand out for their innovative and effective approaches.

The creativity and thoughtfulness displayed by the students signal a promising future for DEI in New Zealand. ■





## Crafting Allies

Bee Fourie’s “Crafting Allies” is a unique and innovative approach to fostering allyship in the workplace. By organising quilting workshops, Bee encourages participants to engage in a creative process to explore their lived experiences and connect with colleagues from diverse gender identities. These workshops provide a safe and creative space for employees to express themselves and build connections.

There are several key DEI outcomes in this initiative.

**Identity empowerment:** Participants gain a sense of control over their identities, which can be particularly empowering for marginalised groups. Through the act of crafting and storytelling, employees can embrace and express their authentic selves.

**Broadened perspectives:** The quilting workshops encourage individuals to engage in open and meaningful conversations. This exposure

to diverse experiences and stories broadens their perspectives, fostering a deeper understanding of the challenges and triumphs of their colleagues.

**Building connections:** The workshops facilitate relationship building and camaraderie among colleagues. Bee’s approach helps bridge gaps and encourages mutual support, thereby enhancing inclusivity and cohesion in the workplace.

**Inclusivity:** Bee’s approach effectively promotes inclusivity in the workplace by acknowledging and celebrating differences. By providing a creative outlet, the initiative helps break down barriers and stereotypes.

Bee’s idea is particularly noteworthy due to its intersectional approach, as it recognises the importance of various gender identities and backgrounds. The incorporation of creativity into allyship makes the concept both refreshing and enjoyable for participants.



Patching together the clashing fabrics of my queer existence and whānau’s quilting tradition helped me find harmony and express joy in my identity.

## Beyond Words

Kate Missen’s project focuses on creating a publication that highlights the challenges faced by individuals with dyslexia in the workplace. The publication offers practical strategies that organisations can implement to make the workplace more accessible and supportive for dyslexic individuals. It also provides valuable information on the different types of dyslexia.

There were several key DEI aspects included in this initiative.

**Awareness and education:** Kate’s publication raises awareness about dyslexia

in the workplace. By providing information on different types of dyslexia, it helps educate both employers and employees, reducing misconceptions and stigmas.

**Practical strategies:** The publication offers actionable strategies for organisations to create a more accessible and supportive environment for dyslexic individuals. This can lead to improved job performance and wellbeing for dyslexic employees.

**Inclusivity and accommodation:** Kate’s work underscores the importance of workplace

inclusivity and accommodation, highlighting the need for environments where individuals with diverse abilities can thrive.

Kate did a great job of addressing dyslexia in the workplace and deserves praise not only for her project’s dedication to supporting the workplace but also for recognising the individuals who may be on their own journey of realising and embracing their neurodiversity and how it plays out in a workplace environment.



## Visual Communication Tool for Gender Inclusion

Helen Jiayi Peng's project focuses on fostering gender inclusion in customer-facing industries through the use of discreet pronoun pins. These customised pins, reflecting each workplace's brand and culture, serve as a means of communication between coworkers and customers.

This initiative has several key DEI advantages.

**Respectful interactions:** The discreet pronoun pins encourage respectful and inclusive interactions. Coworkers can easily convey their preferred pronouns, reducing the risk of misgendering and promoting an inclusive environment.

**Teamwork and cooperation:** The use of these pins promotes effective teamwork, as employees are better equipped to understand and acknowledge each other's gender identities and pronouns. This leads to better collaboration and harmony within teams.

**Brand reputation:** The use of pronoun pins can positively impact the overall brand reputation of a company or organisation. By visibly promoting gender inclusion within the workplace, organisations can build a reputation for being socially responsible and inclusive. This can, in turn, attract a more diverse customer base and top talent, as individuals are more likely to support and work for organisations that actively promote inclusivity and respect for diverse identities. The tool becomes a symbol of the company's commitment to diversity, further enhancing its brand image.

Helen's project stands out because of its deep understanding of the layers of safety required for effective gender inclusion. It also recognises the importance of intersectionality and provides a straightforward yet powerful tool to support inclusivity within teams.

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**SELECT PIN TYPE** NEXT ▶

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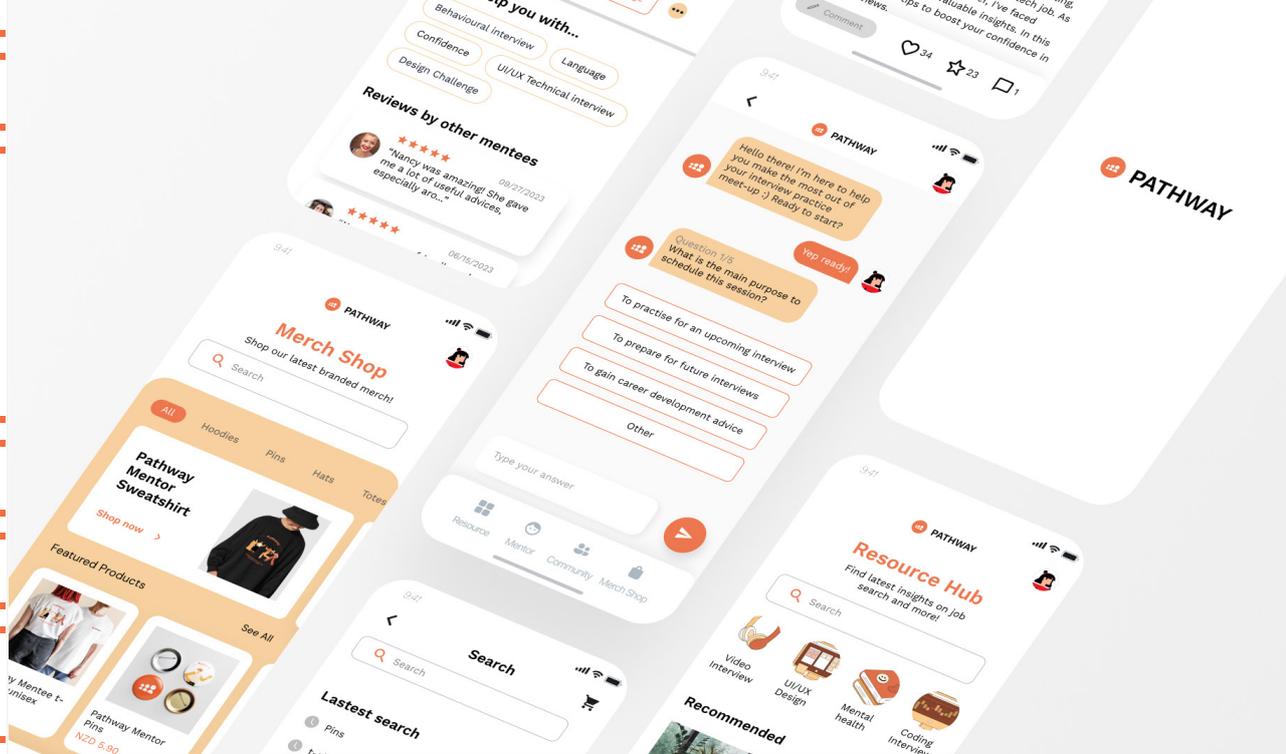
**SELECT PRONOUNS** NEXT ▶

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## Pathway

Judy Jin's "Pathway" is a digital platform designed to empower East Asian women in the tech industry by providing interview preparation support. This initiative addresses the gender gap in tech and fosters authentic relationships and networks within the community.

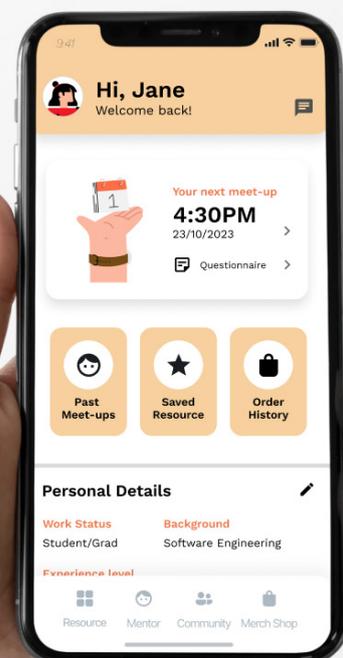
It stood out for several reasons.

**Streamlined mentorship:** The platform simplifies the mentorship and peer-finding process, making it easier for East Asian women to access support and guidance. This streamlining is essential in breaking down barriers and encouraging their participation in the tech industry.

**Emotional and mental health support:** Judy's project recognises the importance of addressing emotional and mental health needs. This holistic approach promotes the well-being of the community while fostering diversity in tech.

Diverse revenue streams: Judy's consideration of alternative revenue streams, such as merchandising, indicates a commercial as well as social inclusion lens to her work. This dual focus on sustainability and social impact is commendable.

"Pathway" deserves praise for offering a framework that was well thought out in relation to Judy's positionality, and could be adapted to other diversity dimensions, showcasing its potential to create a more inclusive tech industry across various underrepresented groups.



# FOCUS ON National Association of Women in Construction

Across Aotearoa, there are many advocacy groups and not-for-profit organisations that play an important role in advancing cultures of inclusion in our workplaces. We've put the spotlight on the **National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC)** and the work it does to ensure women have a place in the construction industry.

## What is NAWIC's mission?

NAWIC was founded in Texas in 1952 by a group of 16 women and has grown to become an international organisation. The New Zealand group has been active since 1996 and now has more than 1700 members with chapters in Auckland, Waikato, Bay of Plenty, Manawatū, Wairarapa, Wellington, Canterbury, Queenstown Lakes and Otago.

Our membership base is diverse and includes professions such as quantity surveyors, project managers, suppliers, planners, designers, architects, engineers, tradespeople, students, apprentices, health and safety managers and lawyers.

We exist to encourage women to pursue, establish and sustain successful careers in the construction industry. Our vision is to be the leading voice for women in this sector and to make construction a safe, inclusive and inviting sector to work in for everyone, regardless of gender or background.

## What are the biggest gender inclusion issues for the construction sector?

It's not news that in some construction environments women have been subjected to gender discrimination and abuse for years. It affects women at all levels, from the newest female apprentice in their first week on the job through to the seasoned female construction worker. We acknowledge there are many people already working hard to make a difference across the sector and that improvements and steps forward have been made, however we still have a way to go.

The sexist comments and 'jokes', unwelcome touching, threats and assaults are still happening and it's simply not okay. In fact, when we hear and, at times, witness, what is still going on out there, we are disgusted.



It results in many women giving up on the job and the industry, deciding that construction is not for them. In some more extreme cases, women are traumatised, need counselling and support, and often carry the scars for a long time.

Everyone has a right to feel safe, welcome and valued in construction. When given the right environment, females can bring huge value to teams and organisations.

### **What has NAWIC done to move the dial on female representation and create safer environments?**

In our 27-year history we have put in place many initiatives, including:

- Supporting the [Keep It Decent Guidelines](#), launched by Waihanga Ara Rau and Hanga-Aro-Rau Workforce Development Councils to provide practical steps for employers to take to ensure women are safe from sexual harassment and bullying.
- Promoting the [Stand Up, Step In](#) guidelines to encourage bystanders to actively intervene if they see or hear something happen that's not okay.
- Running industry webinars that speak about and educate on tough topics such as sexual assault.
- Supporting women through various stages of their lives, shining a light on good practice in the sector around the recognition of things unique to women such as menstruation, menopause, childbirth and motherhood.
- Sharing stories of success and career paths through our YouTube channel and on other industry podcasts in the hope that it will encourage other women to join or stay in the sector.

“ Our vision is to be the leading voice for women in this sector and to make construction a safe, inclusive and inviting sector to work in for everyone, regardless of gender or background. ”

- Arranging site visits giving women the opportunity to visit construction projects they wouldn't otherwise see.
- Running Hands On With Hirepool events at some chapters, giving women the chance to use equipment such as diggers, power tools, scissor lifts etc.
- Making key changes on building sites around the provision of clean and appropriate toilet facilities.
- Attending career events to talk to young women about the opportunities in the sector and encourage them to take up construction roles
- Encouraging our members in leadership roles to hire more women across all construction roles.
- Providing mentoring and coaching for women in the sector who need it and inviting those keen to step into leadership roles to join the Governance groups, and chapter committees or take up other roles within our organisation.
- Running the NAWIC Excellence Awards to celebrate the amazing women in our

industry. These awards have doubled in size every year for the past three years and are designed to encourage, celebrate, shout out and showcase the vast skills of women across the sector.

### **What shifts have you since NAWIC was launched in New Zealand?**

We have seen more women enter the sector at all levels of the construction career journey, and the number of women in leadership roles is growing. Sites are becoming better places to work for all, and it is now 'cool' to be seen to have a diverse workforce. We have also attracted more male members over the years and some of our biggest financial supporters are men who understand the value of a diverse workforce. We all have a part to play in changing the industry and it's fantastic to have so many people working together today to build safer and more respectful workplaces.

Find out more about what NAWIC does and how you can support the organisation's work at [nawic.org.nz](http://nawic.org.nz)



# In brief

A quick look at workplace inclusion news and updates making headlines here and around the world.

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## BROKEN RUNG STILL BIGGEST BARRIER FOR WOMEN IN WORKPLACE

It's not the glass ceiling preventing women advancing in the workplace; it's the broken rung, according to the latest Women in the Workplace report from McKinsey. The 2023 report, which surveyed women in corporate America and Canada, showed that women face their biggest hurdle at the first critical step up to manager. Last year, for every 100 men promoted from entry level to manager, 87 women were promoted. And this gap is trending the wrong way for women of colour: last year, 73 women of colour were promoted to manager for every 100 men, down from 82 women of colour in 2022. [Read the full report here.](#)

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## COMPANIES THAT LEAD IN DISABILITY INCLUSION DO BETTER

Companies that lead in disability inclusion drive more revenue, net income and profit, according to a [report from Accenture](#). The research looked at 346 companies in the US that took part in the Disability Equality Index (DEI), a global benchmarking tool that scores businesses on their disability inclusion policies and practices. It showed that disability champions earn 1.6 times more revenue, 2.6 times more net income and double the economic profit than other companies listed in the index.

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## ADVERTISING LACKING DIVERSITY

Many people in New Zealand and Australia do not feel the images they see on advertising and media daily accurately reflect Asian representation in their communities, according to a report from Getty Images. The Asian population has grown sharply in New Zealand and Australia in recent years, now representing about 15 per cent and 17 per cent of both countries' overall population, [RNZ reports](#). However, visuals displayed on Getty Images websites in New Zealand and Australia reveal a lack of proportional representation of Asian culture, with only five per cent depicting Asian and Pacific peoples.

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## SURVEY: WORKERS RELUCTANT TO SHARE IDENTITY AT WORK

A global survey shows that more than half of workers feel they can't share, or are reluctant to share, dimensions of their identity while at work for fear of it holding them back. The findings from the EY Belonging Barometer 3.0 indicated that this number is even higher for LGBTQ+ worker respondents, with 77 per cent feeling uncomfortable sharing dimensions of their identity at work. Almost half the respondents, from companies in various industries around the world, said that their workplace is where they feel the greatest sense of belonging, second to home. Yet 75 per cent reported having felt excluded at work. [Read more on the EY website.](#)



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