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# TAURA



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

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[www.diversityworks.nz](http://www.diversityworks.nz)



# Editor's letter

## Kia ora

**Ko te taura whiri, he whiri i te tangata**  
**Like a braided rope, braid the people together.**

Welcome to the first edition of Taura, Diversity Works New Zealand's new digital magazine.

When we were planning this issue, we wanted a title for our new publication that reflected our vision of creating a hub where everyone who is part of the workplace diversity, equity and inclusion ecosystem could share their ideas and their kaupapa.

Collaborating with Ariana Stone, the Pou Ahurea Māori (Cultural Director) for creative agency Run, we chose the name Taura, which in te reo Māori means rope, cable or cord.

This name links to the idea of coming together to form one – the taura is made by plaiting kāwiriwiri (strands) made from rolled muka (scraped flax strands). Braiding these strands creates a stronger rope than the aho could on their own, ensuring the taura is robust enough to pull us forward.

It's the taura that lashes the waka together or attaches it to the tumu (mooring pole) or punga (anchor).

As the national body for workplace diversity, equity and inclusion, our role is to bring together everyone who is working in this space to form a cohesive movement for change. We know that the journey to a more inclusive Aotearoa requires the strength of unity.

Creating a platform for the diverse perspectives of the expert professionals and the organisations committed to this work will help us all to learn and grow and I would like to thank everyone who generously contributed to our first issue.

It covers a variety of topics including pay gaps as a symptom of disadvantage, faith in the workplace and why organisations need neurodiverse mindsets to unlock business and societal sustainability. We also launch a series which will look at the various industry associations playing a key role in advancing a culture of inclusion within the sector they operate in.

Future issues of Taura will include workplace inclusion trends, new research, opinion pieces and case studies of best practice – if you have any ideas for content or would like to contribute, please get in touch with me at [communications@diversityworks.nz](mailto:communications@diversityworks.nz)

Nga mihi



**Sheryl Blythen**  
**Head of Marketing and Communications**



# Bridging the gaps

Why the spotlight is on the inequities pay gaps perpetuate, the impact they have on social cohesion in Aotearoa and the work we all need to be part of to address this issue.



Pay gaps are arguably the most objective metric we have available to demonstrate the inequities impacting the people in our workforces, says Diversity Works New Zealand Chief Executive Maretha Smit.

“They are one of the most tangible, quantifiable symptoms of many small instances of disadvantage over the employment life cycle of employees from non-dominant groups.”

Discussion around pay gaps has reached a critical mass in this country, with the issue the subject of new research and reports, petitions to Parliament and work by a number of groups advocating for change. It’s not just the gender pay gap that’s come under scrutiny – the Pacific and Māori pay gap, the migrant pay gap and the disability pay gap are also under review, highlighting issues such as structural bias and discrimination.

“Pay gaps are not a new phenomenon,” says Smit. “What we are seeing now is that by exposing these gaps as inequities, we are starting to reflect on this issue and take steps to address it. It’s a movement that’s time has come.”

Reducing pay gaps builds more equity across all groups of society. “For instance, we know that caring responsibilities fall disproportionately on women and members of the Māori and Pasifika communities. Statistics show that these are also the groups that have been most disadvantaged when it comes to earning levels.

“They are carrying the biggest cost of additional care responsibilities and receiving the lowest remuneration. The result is a group of people who don’t have the financial means to support themselves, let alone all the people they look after.”

“What we are seeing now is that by exposing these gaps as inequities, we are starting to reflect on this issue and take steps to address it. It’s a movement that’s time has come.”

How we pay people also reflects our values as a society, Smit says. “We say we value people and care for people, but if we look at those who fulfil caring roles for a living, they are not remunerated or valued in a similar way to those working in traditionally male-dominated roles or industries.”

Historically, ‘good business practice’ meant keeping costs, including salaries, as low as possible. In reality, that meant groups who were more vulnerable in the workforce or had lower negotiating power were paid less. Today, these are the groups who are negatively impacted by pay gaps and we can see the intergenerational knock-on impact of those decisions.

“Now, we understand that paying people as little as possible is not sustainable due to shifts in our family and societal structures, the huge burden of care some groups face and the fact it simply perpetuates inequities across generations, negatively impacting outcomes in areas such as health and wellbeing, education and housing.

“Part of our job as good corporate citizens is to look at long-term sustainability and we need to understand the risks that come with ever-increasing inequity. Paying people fairly is not just the right thing to do, it also has a massive downstream impact on social cohesion.” →



### Where do we start?

The first step, says Smit, is that organisations need to better understand inequity and checking pay gaps is one way to do that.

It's a sentiment echoed by Nina Santos, Delivery Manger for the MindtheGap campaign, which was launched in tandem by Strategic Pay and the Gender Tick to increase pay gap reporting in Aotearoa.

The campaign has three pillars, demanding action from three different groups.

"We're calling on the Government to introduce new pay gap reporting legislation and make reporting mandatory for businesses with 50 or more staff. International evidence shows that the simple act of reporting pay gaps has been successful in reducing those gaps," Santos says.

In the United Kingdom, where pay gap reporting is required by the Government, the gaps have been reduced by 20 per cent. In Finland, 56 per cent of companies found pay gap issues they hadn't identified after they were required to report.

"We're also calling on businesses to be leaders in this space by reporting their pay gaps voluntarily. In March, we launched New Zealand's first [Pay Gap Registry](#). More than 50 of New Zealand's larger employers are reporting their gender pay gaps but less than 10 are reporting their

pay gaps for Māori and Pasifika. We applaud all the businesses who have shown their commitment to fighting pay discrimination, but it's clear that legislation is needed to keep the momentum going."

Lastly, says Santos, the public has a role to play by asking their employer and any businesses or shops they frequent about pay gaps. "The culture of pay gap secrecy in New Zealand has made pay a taboo topic, and we need a collective effort to put it in the spotlight.

"This is an urgent issue. Women's wages are critical to the wellbeing of children, families, and whānau. The Māori and Pacific pay gaps represent substantial income and resources that are not available to Māori whanau and Pacific families."

Earlier this year, Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO) Commissioner Saunoamaali'i Karanina Sumeo presented a petition to parliament calling for pay transparency legislation.

"Pay secrecy and unequal employment opportunity that result in pay inequity contribute to and exacerbate wage deprivation, sex, gender and ethnic inequality, disempowerment, denial of rights, and barriers to a dignified life especially for those already socially and financially disadvantaged and in precarious work arrangements," she says. →

# The Migrant Pay Gap

Research into the migrant pay gap in New Zealand released this year has revealed concerning inequities between migrants from different countries of birth.

The report, commissioned by Diversity Works New Zealand, shows that migrants from South Africa, Northern America, the United Kingdom and the rest of Europe all earned a higher average hourly wage than migrants from Asia, the rest of the Americas, Polynesia, Melanesia, and Micronesia.

Even when the data was adjusted to compare migrants with similar levels of skills, English language ability, time spent in New Zealand and age, those born in places such as Asia and South America earn significantly lower average wages than migrants from Europe and Northern America, says Diversity Works New Zealand Chief Executive Maretha Smit.

“In 2018, engineering professionals from the UK, South Africa, and Northern America all earned an average wage above \$45 an hour. In contrast, engineering professionals from India, China, and Polynesia all had hourly wages below \$40.”

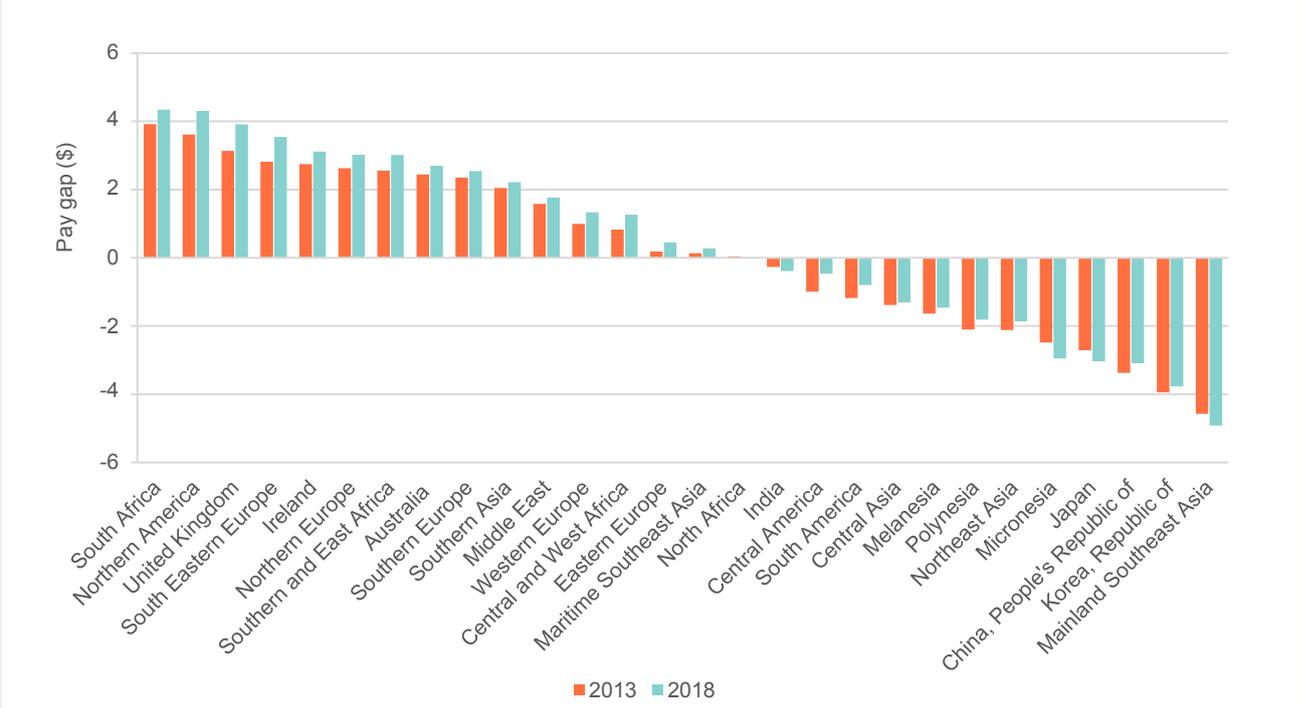
Smit says contributing factors to the migrant pay gap include cultural and language differences, institutional barriers, structural bias and discrimination.

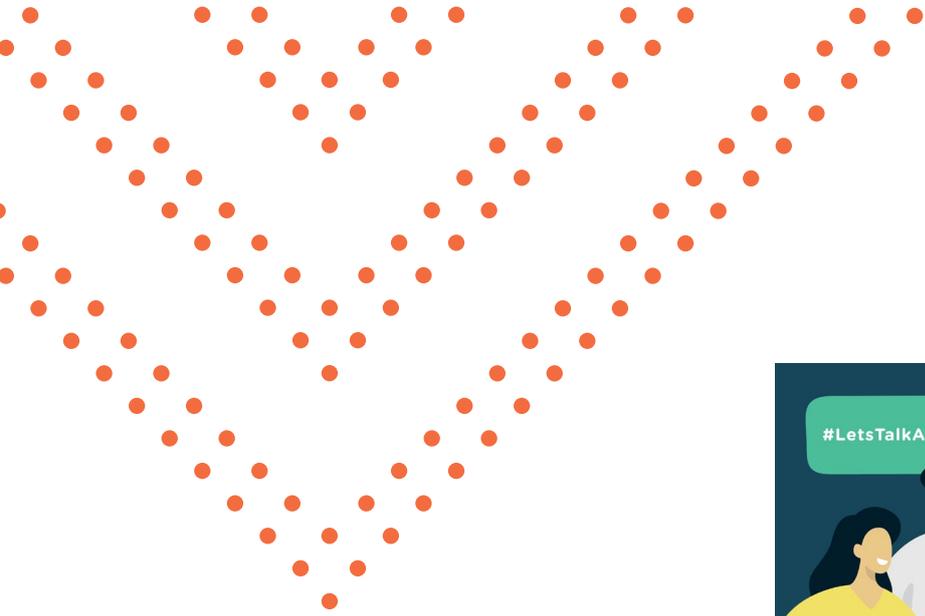
“Large pay gaps between migrant groups with the same occupation, level of education, and industry roles indicate that despite there being several pieces of legislation in New Zealand covering unjust treatment in the workplace, discrimination and bias persist.”

Smit says the Government is currently looking at pay transparency policies and she expects the migrant pay gap to be part of those conversations.

Diversity Works New Zealand will continue its research in this area, with phase two looking at the extent to which migrants experience underutilisation in the workforce (including data from migrants not currently employed), the causes of that underutilisation and the impacts it has on migrant wellbeing and prosperity.

**Graph: Pay gap by place of birth, compared to NZ-born, average hourly wage**





“If you don’t create a space for people to be their best, you create a performance deficit that will impact promotion and remuneration and eventually exacerbate pay gap issues.”

Currently, there is no legal requirement on businesses to capture pay equity data and report on their gender pay gap, or the pay gap experienced by other equity-seeking groups such as Māori, ethnic minorities and disabled peoples.

“Pacific peoples generally do not negotiate their pay and simply accept what is offered. If pay rates were advertised with jobs, then Pacific people would be able to better assess the market and whether or not they wish to apply for a job. It would also prevent any pay discrimination being imported from their previous roles,” Sumeo says.

When it comes to moving the dial on pay gaps, reporting and transparency are not the only tools available.

Adjusting salaries as part of a regular review process can also reduce pay gaps, Smit says, but employers must look at how they are recruiting, promoting, assessing performance and providing a space for people to work the best way they can.

“If you don’t create a space for people to be their best, you create a performance deficit that will impact promotion and remuneration and eventually exacerbate pay gap issues.”

### Working in sectors, not silos

Work to reduce pay gaps is more powerful when it’s done across sectors, rather than by individual organisations, Smit says.

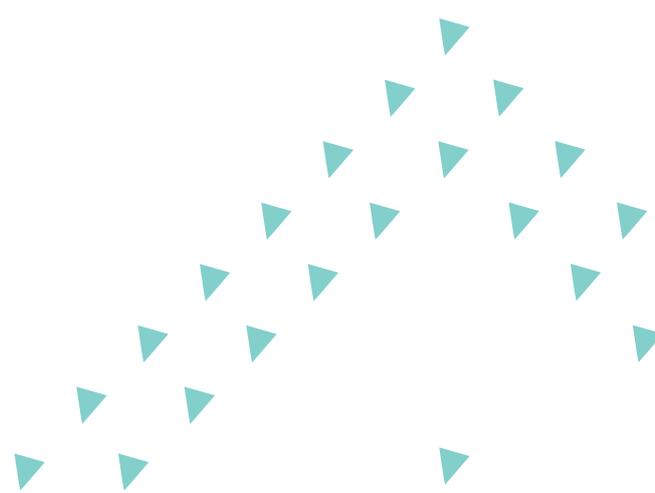
“Individual organisations are exposed if their direct competitors are not also doing the right thing. If you are keeping your costs down by not paying people fairly, you may be able to offer products and services at lower price points in the market.”

We see an example of how this plays out globally via human rights issues in workplaces in some of the world’s biggest producers of cheap goods.

Furthermore, it is, at times, difficult to achieve pay equity across an organisation because pay gap metrics are unable to provide the complete picture – the size of some minority groups within organisations, particularly small organisations, skews the data.

“But if we look at the results across an industry sector, there is more data, which gives a more accurate picture. Then we can encourage organisations to see how they stack up against industry benchmarks and look at how they can do better.”

“So, unless sectors are going to tackle this together, through industry accords or agreements, we won’t see the movement we need.” ■





## The Disability Pay Gap

One of the biggest contributors to the disability pay gap is people perceiving deficits, rather than the strengths and resilience of disabled individuals, says Phil Turner, Managing Director of Accessibility Tick and the NZ Disability Employers' Network.

“This is followed by employers not knowing how to provide disabled people with opportunities to progress in the workplace and unnecessary barriers in systems and processes.”

Stats NZ data shows the median weekly income from wages and salaries for non-disabled people aged 15 to 64 is \$1,106, compared with \$962 for disabled people. That's a gap of \$144 or 13 per cent.

Even if disabled people do get into the workforce (only 43 per cent of disabled 15 to 64-year-olds are employed, compared with 79 per cent of non-disabled people in the same age group), they often get entry-level jobs and get stuck there, Phil says.

“It's not because disabled people don't have the ability to move forward in their careers, but because there are systemic barriers that prevent them from doing so.”

If workplaces want to help close those gaps, Turner has a few starting points:

- Employ disabled people. Having them in your team starts to break down cultural barriers.
- Avoid the trap of thinking you have done a disabled person a favour by employing them. They bring value to your organisation and are employed for that value. Or in other words, think about their strengths rather than what you perceive as their deficits.
- Be prepared to positively discriminate for a period, wrapping around the careers of disabled people and supporting and mentoring them to move through an organisation.

“When disabled people start to take leadership roles, you will see opinions about their strengths and capabilities shift in your workplace.”

[The Accessibility Tick programme](#) helps New Zealand organisations realise the true potential of disabled and neurodiverse people, to the benefit of everyone. They assist organisations to establish and implement a continuous improvement plan.



# The Pacific Pay Gap

For every dollar a Pākehā man makes, a Pacific man makes 76 cents, and a Pacific woman makes 73 cents. That equates to pay gaps of 24 per cent and 27 per cent, respectively

Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO) Commissioner Saunoamaali'i Karanina Sumeo says Pacific pay gaps are substantial and have not changed significantly for more than 10 years. At the current rate, it will take 110 years for the gaps to close.

“The marginalisation of Pacific workers has been persistent and chronic for many years. The inequities continue to widen against a backdrop and history of racial discrimination against Pacific peoples. We cannot continue to tolerate this level of inequity. It must end with us.”

Sumeo is leading the Human Rights Commission's inquiry to better understand what is preventing pay equity between Pacific workers and the rest of the workforce. It has a special focus on private sector Pacific workers in the manufacturing, construction and health industries.

More than 800 people have engaged with the inquiry to date and some of the emerging themes include:

- Pay secrecy as a barrier
- Ongoing bias and discrimination in hiring and promotion
- The absence of cultural sensitivity or consideration in processes for promotion and advancement among supervisors, managers and senior management
- The need for sponsorship and role modelling by a 'senior' within organisations
- The significant cost to raise a claim or complaint about pay inequity or inequality

The full report, due this month, will provide findings on the causes of and, more importantly, the solutions to the Pacific pay gap, with recommendations for both Government and businesses.



**Saunoamaali'i Karanina Sumeo,  
Equal Employment Opportunities  
(EEO) Commissioner**

# WHERE ARE YOU AT ON YOUR INCLUSION JOURNEY?



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# The value of neurodiversity in the workplace

Kate Bruce from Brain Badge looks at why organisations need neurodivergent mindsets to be able to unlock business and societal sustainability.

In business, innovation refers to the creation of more effective processes, products or ideas. Its outcome is growth, the ability to adapt and gain a competitive advantage.

The word may have entered the meaningless realm of jargon, but the practice is as relevant today as ever before.

It's a prickly subject, mostly because innovation hasn't delivered the expected results. (How many incredible design sprints have petered out over time?)

The reason is two-fold, because:

- Innovation is incredibly hard.
- The wrong people are spearheading it.

Innovation is doing things differently, not inventing new things; and looking at the same challenge from many different perspectives is incredibly hard, especially when it's people with similar qualifications are looking at that challenge.

And to top it all, business is trying to do things differently without changing processes, systems, teams or people.

To put it in context:

Business believes that its star players will continue to shine wherever they are placed; as though being extremely successful in business is an attribute in and of itself, regardless of context.

In fact, the polar opposite is true. Star performers shine because they find themselves in a sweet spot where their particular skill set, brain function and personality thrives. Contrary to business belief, performance has everything to do with context.

Nobody has ever shifted Serena Williams from tennis to squash, although both are ball and racquet sports with similar enough criteria. Yet in business, we constantly expect our best to be good in any area; after all, it's still business, isn't it?

And even more incongruous, we expect these star players to change the way they do things for the same successful outcome, whilst operating in vastly different areas... madness!

If what we desire is difference, then what we need is a different way of looking at things.

But what if we don't need to upskill people to think differently? What if we don't need to train people to think outside the box but had immediate access to a group of people who make it think in different a box or do not see a box to begin with? What insight and new outcomes might they bring to the table?



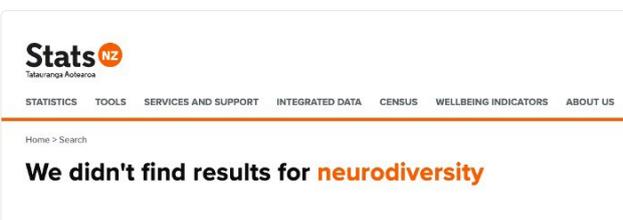
Enter neurodiversity.

Enter difference, opportunity and new outcomes.

At Brain Badge, our mission is to disrupt the narrative of neurodiversity as a “disorder” and “disability” and demonstrate that these are valuable and necessary mindsets able to unlock business and societal sustainability. We believe that anyone with an innate sense of their own value is naturally resilient, healthy and productive. And we’re on a mission to help businesses recognise this value.

We have countless meetings with executives who ask us for the data and return on investment (ROI) on neurodiversity when in fact, very little exists.

**Exhibit A: A search for neurodiversity on the Stats NZ website reveals there are no results available.**



“Star performers shine because they find themselves in a sweet spot where their particular skill set, brain function and personality thrives. Contrary to business belief, performance has everything to do with context.”

“With an estimated 15 to 20 per cent of employees in the workplace being neurodiverse (whether they know it or not), can you imagine this same innovative potential that business is sitting on?”

In the absence of statistical data, the thing that most often strikes a chord with the organisations we talk to is this:

Science has revealed that neurodiversity is passed down through generations, making it a neurological variation that has endured evolution to flourish today. What that suggests is that neurodiversity is a very necessary and positive genome that has evolved with us **for the benefit of society**.

It should come as no surprise that the greatest inventors, artists, designers and drivers of advancement were and are neurodiverse: Darwin, Da Vinci, Curie, Einstein, Gates, Jobs, Branson, Musk... all are either diagnosed as neurodiverse or displayed behaviours similar to those associated with neurodiversity.

With an estimated 15 to 20 per cent of employees in the workplace being neurodiverse (whether they know it or not), can you imagine this same innovative potential that business is sitting on?

The magic lies in leveraging this value. And it's really very simple: it's not total business reorganisation, it's not a transformation roll out; it's understanding problem spaces or challenges and matching them with the people who thrive in those different spaces.

We cannot stress it enough, innovation is hard. It's dreaming ridiculously big, and delivering minimal viability; it's testing vigorously, modifying, accepting feedback, and then doing it all over again. And it exposes the soft underbelly, not only of business, but of the individuals involved in innovation. It's frustrating, and emotional, and confronting and above all, risky. And for a group of people who thrive on risk and uncertainty, it's bliss.

And in that group of risk takers, some may be neurodiverse and some not. In fact, the most successful innovation teams are a mixture. As with everything: success lies in diversity.

In this case, cognitive diversity.

And there is no cognitive diversity in business until neurodivergents are included.

### What is the ROI of neurodiversity?

Easy, it's:

- Difference
- Innovation
- Happiness
- Wellbeing

Recognising the value of neurodiversity is a vital and necessary step for business from an innovation and employee wellness perspective: the fact is, when the needle moves for the marginalised, everyone benefits. ■

Brain Badge is a project of The Observatory Charitable Trust, committed to delivering sustainable models for change. As Brain Badge, the organisation is currently co-designing a Neurodiversity Education and Awareness Certification for Business. It also offers consultancy services and delivers experiential innovation workshops.

Please contact [kate@brainbadge.org](mailto:kate@brainbadge.org) or visit [business.brainbadge.org](https://business.brainbadge.org) to find out more



**Kate Bruce,**  
**Brain Badge**

# Petition calls for better deal for neurodivergent people

More than 5000 people have signed a petition calling for the Government to initiate an inquiry into the services and supports provided for people with dyslexia or other neurodiverse conditions in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The man behind the petition is Mike Styles, a dyslexia consultant, author, researcher and trainer, who provides services to government agencies, education institutions and corporates.

“Dyslexia and related neurodiverse conditions affect employers and employees all around New Zealand. There are few people who do not have a colleague or family member who has dyslexia. Most workplaces will have employees with dyslexia. Sadly, many hide their condition for fear of embarrassment. Many others do not even know. In short, dyslexia suffers from invisibility,” Styles says.

## His petition is calling on the Government to:

- Initiate a public education programme to increase awareness and visibility of dyslexia/neurodiversity.
- Commission research into the cost to social cohesion and the New Zealand economy of undiagnosed and unsupported dyslexia and related neurodiverse conditions.
- Consider changes to the Education Act and other key legislation to ensure that the government agencies and education providers they fund (schools, polytechnics, and universities) are following best practice with respect to service provision for dyslexic/neurodiverse Kiwis.

The petition will remain open until a date is secured to present it to MPs who will take it to the Petitions Committee in Parliament. This will likely be in August or September 2022.

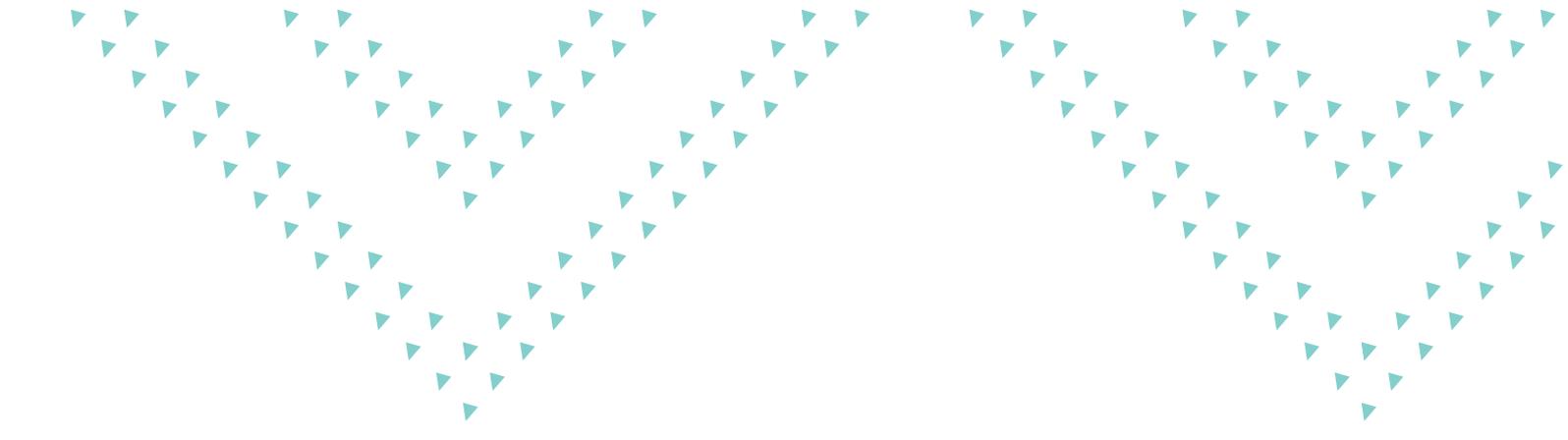
Styles recently released a book titled *You Have Dyslexia! Great Minds Think Differently*, aimed at changing people’s mindsets about the learning disorder – read more on [page 34](#).

# Thinking outside the box

Being neurodivergent in the workplace has its challenges and benefits. Ruth Muller shares her experience and advice for organisations wanting to be more inclusive of people who think differently.

“For me, one of the strengths of being neurodivergent is that I see solutions to complex problems or opportunities very easily.”





Frucor Suntory Chief Research and Development Officer Ruth Muller has chalked up an illustrious career, working in a variety of roles with global brands such as Dove, V Continental, and Arnott's in Sydney, Germany and at home in New Zealand. Less than three years ago, in her 40s, she was diagnosed with dyslexia and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

### **Sometimes I wish my brain would take a break**

I'm very open about being neurodivergent. I feel compelled to be as I feel so lucky to have many people who support me and to also feel confident in my abilities and what I can bring through a neurodivergent approach to life and work.

Dyslexia and ADHD have many overlapping traits but I tend to see dyslexia challenges and ADHD challenges.

ADHD affects the brain's executive functioning, which can mean "no filter" or "off switch". If something sparks my interest, I get very excited and enthusiastic, which can be quite intense for people. If someone talks about an idea, I can find myself waking up in the middle of the night thinking about it. It's a very positive energy but I always have so many ideas on the go that it can be exhausting for others and for me. Sometimes I wish my brain would take a break.

I think in pictures, not words. I am strong at conceptual thinking, combining disparate ideas, and I'm surprisingly good at putting together detailed execution plans and making things happen. But I struggle tremendously with the bit in the middle – the translation and explaining what I'm thinking and why.

I can find it painfully frustrating when the pace is too slow or not sufficiently complex or interesting. Or when my words can't match the pace of my thinking.

My dyslexia means that if I'm given something to read, process and discuss in a meeting, I can find that cognitively challenging to the point where it can become stressful. I keep reading the same paragraph again and again and don't absorb it. I prefer to pre-read material to take the pressure off and let my thoughts percolate.

I have poor short-term memory and have to take notes or use a whiteboard so I can write or draw diagrams to help me process information while I listen. I use techniques like making lists to remember things neurotypical people may do mentally.

I also have a poor ability to see errors – my emails are often riddled with mistakes and it may look as though I haven't checked them, but I have checked them five times! My brain is not programmed to see them.

### **Comfortable in ambiguity**

For me, one of the strengths of being neurodivergent is that I see solutions to complex problems or opportunities very easily. Because my brain works in pictures, I often see the solutions immediately as a whole while others need to work through the logic to get the solution. I am very comfortable in ambiguity and I can manage a high level of complexity.

When I'm interested in something, I have very high energy and capacity. I can work well into the night, night after night, week after week.

I have always felt, even before my diagnosis, that my conscious processing is below average but my subconscious processing is way above average. If I feed my brain with data, then create an environment conducive to subconscious processing, such as being in nature or doing something creative, my subconscious does the work for me and the connections and ideas just come. →



## **People believed in me when I didn't believe in myself**

Because I wasn't diagnosed until later in life, I have never officially been given support for being neurodivergent but I have received lots of support that has helped balance the 'spikiness' it brings.

When I first started working, I would be presenting, then stop because I had lost my train of thought and was not able to get back on track. I was given executive coaching in communication when I was about 22, which was unheard of at the time, and it helped me structure my thinking and deal with the confusion that occurs when I engage my conscious brain.

I was also always given lots of variety. I think my manager knew not to let me get bored so whenever it looked like I was becoming competent at something, she would give me another massive challenge or learning or training opportunity.

But perhaps the biggest one is that I have had people back me and believe in me when I have not believed in myself. Neurodivergent people can often lack confidence, especially women. You grow up comparing yourself to 'normal' and questioning whether you are good enough.

## **Take time to understand**

One of the best things that organisations that want to be inclusive of neurodivergent people can do is take time to understand what works for them. That's actually true for everyone! Help them work out what their strengths and weaknesses are. Then decide if their strengths are what you need and if you can balance out their weaknesses. If they are not a fit in the role they are in, look at whether there is another role they would be better suited to.

Challenge yourself to being okay with the weaknesses. Is it really a showstopper if they don't do their admin on time, or talk too much, or need an emotional download with someone once a week? When a neurodivergent person gets something wrong, be aware that no one will be as hard on them as they are on themselves. Be patient and kind.

**“One of the best things that organisations that want to be inclusive of neurodivergent people can do is take time to understand what works for them.”**

Back them - a tiny bit of encouragement will go a long way. Neurodivergent people will often hold back and question themselves or put energy into masking their condition or rewriting an email 20 times; energy that could be better spent adding value to the business.

Understand what accommodations are needed. Flexibility is a big one - if I have been working until 3am and have a meeting at 8am, then being able to work from home means I can sleep in.

I have learned to 'follow the energy'. I can be super productive if I feel like churning something out at 11pm, instead of at 3pm after eight hours of video calls. I am better to walk my dog then and reenergise.

People who experience sensory overload might need low lighting and sound environments. Text to speech aps, such as Speechify, and online writing assistance programmes, such as Grammarly, are brilliant.

Most importantly, bring neurodivergent and neurotypical people together at work. I am better surrounded by neurotypical people who might be calming or provide the 'black hat' view and tell me why something won't work. I've been told by neurotypical people they appreciate the agitation to think beyond current limitations or the injection of energy I bring.

I've been told that HR professionals can be reluctant to open the Pandora's Box of neurodiversity inclusion because they don't know what they are getting into and they don't want to get it wrong. But it's ok if it's not perfect straight away. The first thing that needs to happen is education and awareness; then training, policies and practices can evolve. Helping a neurodivergent person feel more understood and less alone is not going to immediately fix everything, but it's the first step. ■

**DIVERSITY  
AWARDS**  
NZ<sup>TM</sup> 2022

# Book your tickets now!

Wednesday 31 August 2022 from 6pm  
Cordis Auckland

Book at [diversityworks.nz](https://diversityworks.nz)

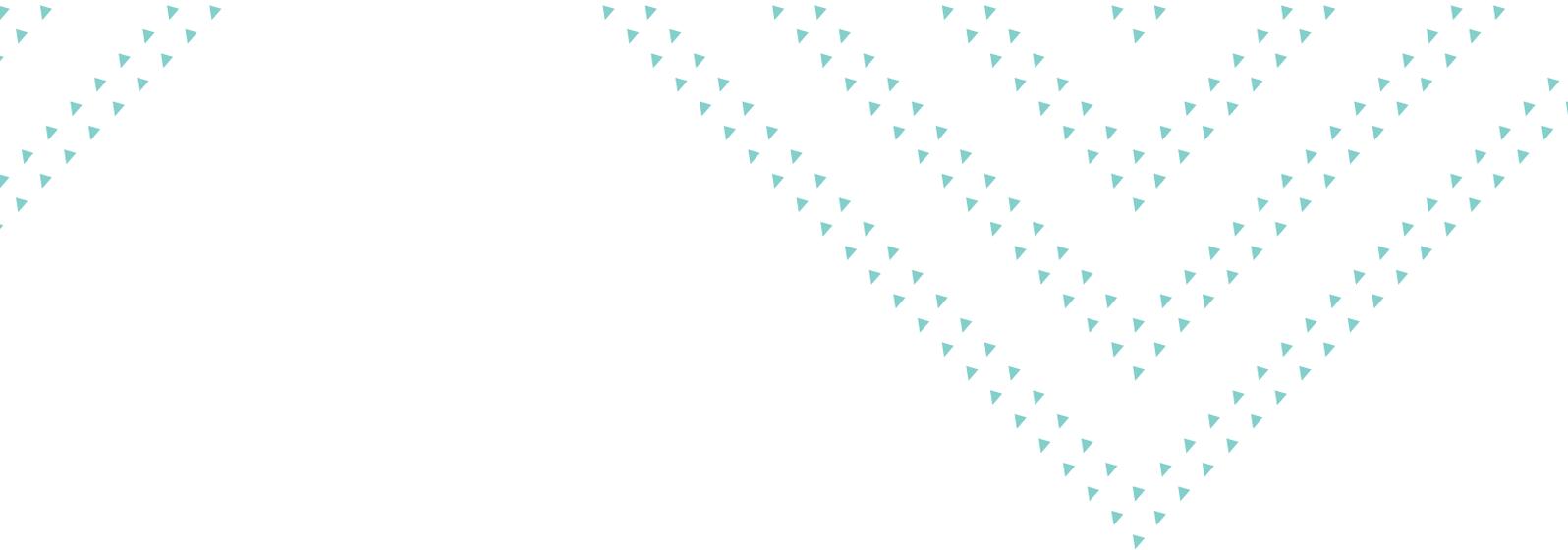


# Diversity Works New Zealand turns 30!

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the creation of Diversity Works New Zealand (formerly the Equal Employment Opportunities Trust). Anne Knowles CNZM was there at the beginning, chairing the Ministerial Inquiry on Equity in Employment, then acting as a Trustee of the newly formed organisation for 10 years. We asked her to share her memories of the workplace diversity climate at the time and how this partnership between the public and private sectors was formed.



Anne Knowles,  
CNZM



“The Labour Government’s Employment Equity Act (EEA) came into effect on 1 October 1990. It created an Employment Equity Commissioner whose functions were twofold: to receive and monitor equal employment opportunity (EEO) programmes required of government departments and private sector employers of a certain size, and to undertake pay equity assessments between female-dominated occupations and male comparator occupations (eg clerical workers v carpenters; childcare workers v zoo keepers).

The general election of 27 October 1990 saw National come to power with its clear policy of dismantling national occupation-based collective agreements which were fundamental to any pay equity exercise. On the evening of 22 November 1990, the Minister of Labour (Hon Bill Birch) and the Minister of Women’s Affairs (Hon Jenny Shipley) convened a meeting of invited participants to discuss the implementation of National’s ‘Breaking Down the Barriers’ policy. Given the decision to repeal the EEA before Christmas, which would remove the requirement for EEO programmes as well as the pay equity assessments, work was needed urgently to identify barriers to women, Māori, ethnic minorities, and the disabled from taking a full part in employment.

Once the barriers were identified, then positive recommendations for practical steps to eliminate them were needed. At that time, I was Legal Adviser and Industrial Executive for the NZ Meat Industry Association and the advocate for the Freezing Companies in national negotiations with the unions (a very male dominated industry!) as well as being Vice President of the NZ Federation of Business and Professional Women.

I was asked to chair a Working Party on Equity in Employment to undertake this task along with two other private sector representatives (Roseanne Meo, GM, Corporate NZ Forest Products and Lesley Miller, Director, Lesley Miller and Associates) and two Members of Parliament (Max Bradford, Chair, Caucus Labour Committee and Gail McIntosh, Member, Caucus Labour Committee).

“Work was needed urgently to identify barriers to women, Māori, ethnic minorities, and the disabled from taking a full part in employment.”

The first meeting of the Working Party was convened in Auckland on 27 November 1990 and two days later, 310 letters were sent inviting all those groups and individuals who had made submissions to the Employment Equity Bill to put their views to the Working Party.

Written submissions on suggestions for practical implementation were called for by 12 December 1990 with the opportunity being given in Auckland and Wellington for oral submissions to be made. Five full-day sessions hearing 45 oral submissions were held and 63 written submissions were received.

The submissions made were wide-ranging, resulting in a report that contained 47 recommendations. The submissions – both



written and oral - from those representing people with disabilities struck a particular chord with us. The Human Rights Act 1977 did not include disability as a ground for unlawful discrimination, making the EEA the only legislation in the private sector recognising their particular status. Mainstreaming of children in schools only started from 1989 and sheltered workshops remained in existence until 2007!

It was clear to us that many members of the public had never had any experience of disability – people with disabilities were simply invisible. We therefore made 11 recommendations in this area – ranging from the need to add disability as a ground for unlawful discrimination in the Human Rights Act (which happened in 1993) to encouraging advertisers and the media generally to portray people with various disabilities taking part in common, everyday situations. It is my view that this area is where the biggest changes have occurred over the past 30 years. Although much more is needed to be done, no longer are people with disabilities simply out of sight and out of mind.

Two of the recommendations most relevant to the establishment of the EEO Trust were Recommendation 18: **That legislation be enacted requiring employers to develop, implement and monitor EEO programmes;** and Recommendation 24: **That the Minister of Labour consult the private sector with the intention of establishing a well-resourced Council for Equity in Employment funded jointly by Government and the private sector.**

Before either of these recommendations could be considered by Government, several companies, supported by the NZ Employers' Federation (NZEF), strongly urged that the private sector be given the opportunity to develop and implement EEO policies voluntarily without the need for legislation but supported by the recommended jointly funded and governed body. The Government agreed to give this approach an opportunity to succeed.

Coincidentally, I was employed by NZEF as Labour Market Manager in February 1991. One of my first tasks was to write to a number of large employers requesting their support for the establishment of a body that's broad area of work would be to develop and disseminate education material promoting EEO, commission research, co-ordinate resources, and develop and promote EEO policies. Of the 34 companies I wrote to, 28 agreed to contribute \$5,000 each year for three years to ensure the body's initial sustainability.

As the public sector employer, the Government agreed to match the establishment contributions to a level of \$100,000 and to provide similar annual grants. It also agreed to introduce a contestable fund above its 'employer' contribution to promote EEO programmes.

The newly named Equal Employment Opportunities Trust was launched on 28 November 1991 and incorporated on 31 March 1992. In keeping with the public-private partnership approach, four senior Government officials were appointed to the Board (Judith



 EEO TRUST

## New Zealand Diversity Survey:

Findings from the first four quarters

AUCKLAND  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
*Business Vitality*

NEW ZEALAND  
WORK  
RESEARCH  
INSTITUTE

“The organisation and the work it does has come a very long way since that first, hopeful, November 1990 meeting.”

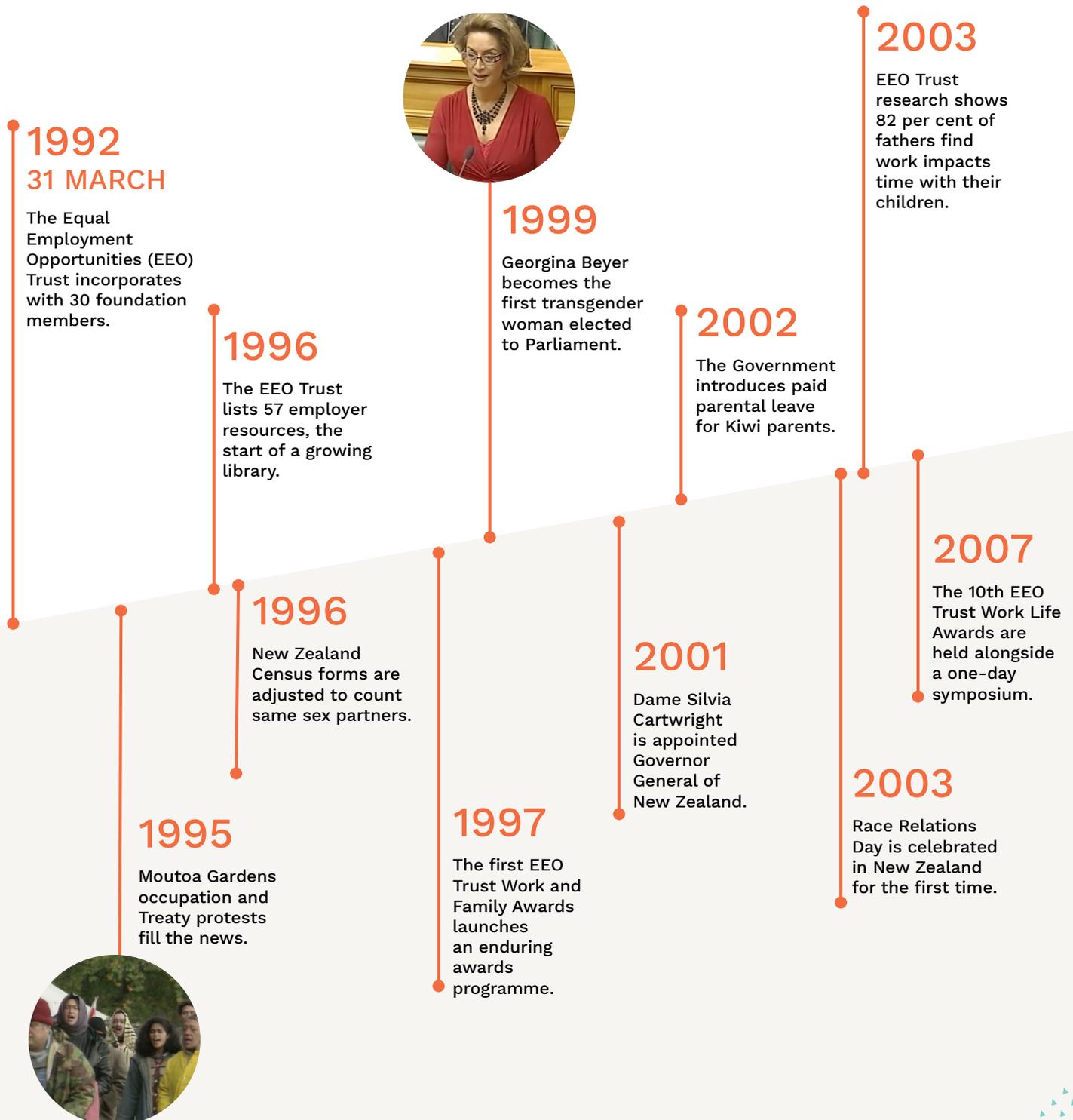
Aitken, Chief Executive, Ministry of Women’s Affairs; David Oughton, Secretary of Justice, Department of Justice; Hekia Parata, General Manager Policy, Housing Corporation; and David Henry, Commissioner, Inland Revenue Department). An election was held for the five private sector positions with Jacinta Calverly Fletcher Challenge Ltd, Ken Bania, Magnum Corporation Ltd, Barbara Chapman ANZ Banking Group, Elisabeth Robertson, Goodman Fielder Wattie (NZ) Ltd, and me being successful for the first three-year terms.

Guided by its successive chairs - initially Jacinta Calverly and Barbara Chapman - and with the wise stewardship of its Chief Executives of whom Trudie McNaughton was the first, the EEO Trust thrived in fulfilling its mission to promote EEO policies and workplace diversity - something growing participation in its Diversity Awards NZ™ clearly demonstrate. The organisation and the work it does has come a very long way since that first, hopeful, November 1990 meeting.” ■

# Marking change: 30 years of working for inclusion

When New Zealand's employment equity legislation was thrown out in 1990, it fell to a group of committed people and organisations to fight for those disadvantaged in our workplaces.

It was the start of an enduring partnership between the government and the private sector, played out against a background of change in Aotearoa.



## 2016

The EEO Trust changes to Diversity Works New Zealand, better reflecting our mahi.



## 2019

“We are broken-hearted but not broken.” Diversity Works New Zealand supports workplaces as Aotearoa unites after the Christchurch mosque attacks.

## 2019

The Workplace Diversity Case Model reviews evidence of the advantages of inclusion.

## 2017

New Zealanders join people around the world marching for women’s rights.



## 2021

The EEO Trust deed is modernised to reflect a new Aotearoa. This was done alongside a review of the designated groups in the community that may be disadvantaged by workplace inequalities.

## 2021

The Diversity Awards NZ™ get a revamp with new categories and judging criteria.

## 2021

The Aotearoa Inclusivity Matrix framework launches, measuring workplace maturity.

## 2022

A public holiday is introduced in New Zealand to mark Matariki, te tau hou Māori, the Māori new year.

## 2022

Diversity Works New Zealand celebrates its 30th birthday, acknowledging an amazing 30 years of support from diversity champions in the private and public sectors.



## 2006

New Zealand Sign Language becomes an official language in Aotearoa.

## 2013

Same sex marriage is legalised in New Zealand.



# Aiming for excellence

Discover how your organisation can use a new suite of tools to benchmark your workplace practices against the Aotearoa Inclusivity Matrix, the national standard for workplace diversity, equity and inclusion



The launch of AIM Insights has given organisations access to a suite of online tools they can use to assess their diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) maturity, identify key gaps and opportunities, and create a roadmap to progress their mahi in this space.

Diversity Works New Zealand Head of Research and Development Pete Mercer says its exciting to be able to support organisations to benchmark themselves against the Aotearoa Inclusivity Matrix (AIM)

AIM, an evidence-based framework developed specifically for Aotearoa New Zealand workplaces and launched last year, allows organisations to identify the maturity of their diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) practices across seven components: leadership, diversity infrastructure, diverse recruitment, inclusive

career development, bi-culturism, inclusive collaboration and social impact.

The objective of AIM is to help organisations better understand their current capabilities as well as existing gaps and to empower them to decide where to direct their investment in DEI to provide the best return for their people and their business performance.

The AIM Insights tools, launched in May, are designed to support this analysis. After answering a series of questions aligned with the AIM framework, organisations undertaking an assessment will receive a report that incorporates insights across all seven strategic components, providing a maturity assessment outcome ranging from one to five (from starter to advanced) for each of those components.

“The objective of AIM is to help organisations better understand their current capabilities as well as their existing gaps.”

**You can take an assessment of your DEI practice in two ways:**

**Self-Assessment**

A survey is completed by one person on behalf of your organisation, providing an overall assessment of your DEI maturity in the form of an automated report. Use of this tool is a service provided free to all Diversity Works New Zealand members.

**Qualified Assessment**

This is a consultancy service in which a member of our team will support you to complete the survey or qualify your responses and provide a more detailed level of analysis and recommendations.

An AIM Insights Qualified Assessment uses the same questions as the Self-Assessment, however there are a number of additional benefits received by completing a Qualified Assessment, Mercer says.

“You will receive advice and guidance in responding to the questions to make sure you are correctly interpreting what’s being asked. You will also have the assurance of knowing that your assessment and recommendations have been verified by a member of our team.

“The assessment report you receive will also be substantially longer, including not just headline recommendations but much more detailed advice on how you might implement those recommendations and get that all important work done.”

The Diversity Works New Zealand team is working on a Employee Perception Survey, which will become part of the AIM Insights suite. This will be completed by your employees to determine their perceptions of DEI within your workplace.

“We know that New Zealand organisations are passionate about creating inclusive workplaces but sometimes struggle with establishing a structured approach to this work. These tools will support them to get those structures in place so they can take advantage of the benefits diversity, equity and inclusion bring for our people and for business sustainability.” ■

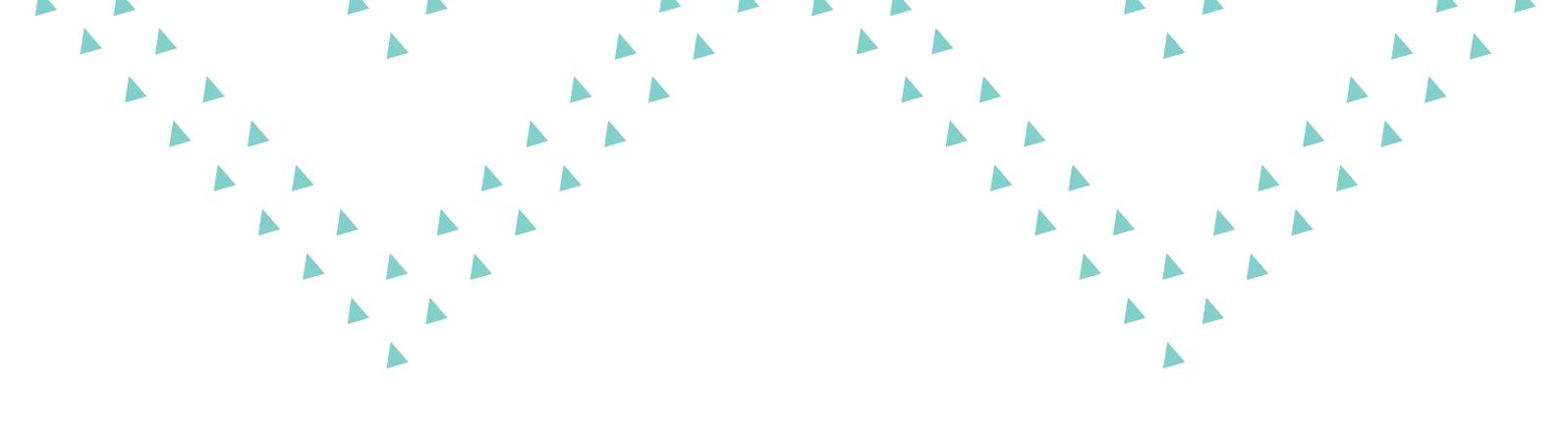
**So where to from here?**

- If you are a Diversity Works New Zealand member, login to our website to complete the AIM Insights Self-Assessment to receive an automated report on your current DEI maturity
- Talk to our Membership team about taking an AIM Insights Qualified Assessment
- If your organisation is not yet a member but you would like to access the AIM Insights tools, head to our [join us](#) page or contact [membership@diversityworks.nz](mailto:membership@diversityworks.nz)



# Faith in the workplace

Professor of Diversity Edwina Pio looks at why faith in the workplace requires us to rethink and remould our organisations to allow individuals to think and talk about faith in a more deep and meaningful way and to bring their sacred selves to work.



A central conundrum of our time, the dynamics of faith at work are poorly understood and there is a deep tension around how this is manifested in the workplace. Today, we inhabit a world of wonder, racism, rational compassion, financial meltdowns, ecological disasters, forced migration, refugee crisis, #metoo, and global pandemics. How do we hearken to and act on the words of the woman on our \$10 note, our famous suffragette Kate Sheppard – “All that separates whether of race, class, creed or sex is inhuman and must be overcome”?

What role does faith play in the business world in these pandemic-ravaged times? Against today’s backdrop of fear and uncertainty, the need to entwine these two seemingly disparate schemas of faith and work is greater than ever. The long-standing dichotomy of faith versus business needs to be replaced with a business model that recognises and celebrates the myriad possibilities that come from diverse, inclusive and economically robust system approaches to business and faith traditions.

For many individuals, faith encompasses religion and spirituality and the visible expression of their beliefs. This may mean wearing a cross, a crescent, a veil or turban and wearing these visible symbols of their faith in the organisations where they work. Moreover, faith also encapsulates an individual’s world view and connection with community.

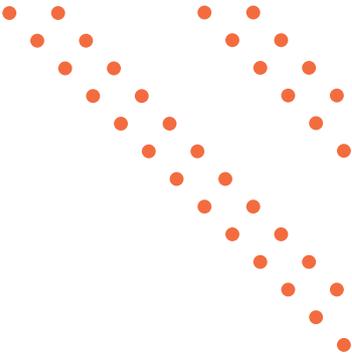
Yet faith is a double-edged sword, and some individuals may create toxicity in how they represent their faith, but this can be contained by courageous policies. Hence with this in mind it is crucial that management must be bold in crafting policies in the realm of religious diversity which focus on the day-to-day realities while also cognisant that such policies and processes can enable optimal functioning of individuals.

The reality of faith is that it is a complex weave of history, colonisation, empires and socio-economic legacies which organisations have to contend with. Therefore, faith in the workplace calls for developing a new organisational repertoire, to rethink and remould our citadels of work... A repertoire, lexicon and vocabulary that allows individuals to think and talk about faith in a more deep and meaningful way, and that gives permission for people to bring their sacred selves to work.

**“The reality of faith is that it is a complex weave of history, colonisation, empires and socio-economic legacies which organisations have to contend with.”**

The fingerprints of faith must be embossed and embodied in the workplace, for it serves as the understated wind beneath the wings of management, in the service of balanced prosperity and flourishing of diverse stakeholders. The 2019 Statement on Religious Diversity, released by the New Zealand Human Rights Commission in partnership with the Office of Ethnic Communities and the Religious Diversity Centre, notes that New Zealand upholds the right to freedom of religion and belief and the right to freedom from discrimination on the grounds of religious or other belief.

Importantly, faith communities and their members have a right to safety and security and reasonable steps should be taken in educational



“We are in the world together and we all want welcoming workspaces.”

and work environments and in the delivery of public services to recognise and accommodate diverse religious beliefs and practices. While organisations do not want to fall foul of their humanitarian and legal obligations, including good faith and reasonable accommodation, tolerance is inadequate for approaching faith – we do not tolerate a delicious ice-cream on a warm summer’s day, neither do we tolerate a beautiful sunrise or the unfurling of flowers. Tolerance often connotes an unfortunate aspect which we must manage and which we must bear like noisy neighbours.

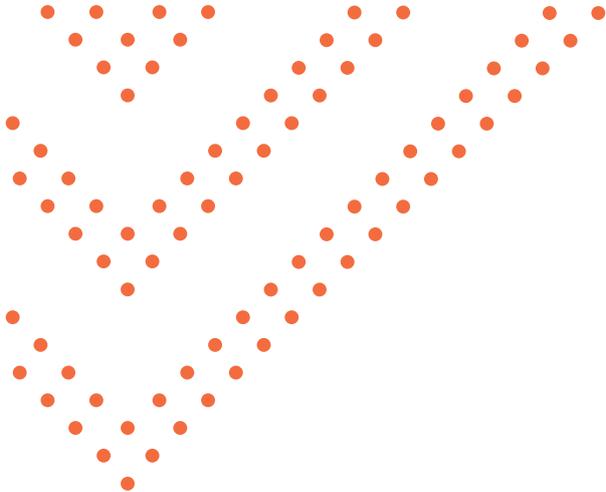
What are the patterns of the past that we need to keep, and which ones do we need to discard? What are the betrayed promises and broken hopes and what can organisations do about them? What are doors of opportunity how do we access them, how do we create them and how do we open them... as a famous Uruguayan writer Eduardo Galeano said: “Many small people, doing many small things in small places can change the world.”

In a shifting world of heterogeneity and diasporas, we have choices - do we want to continue the orthodoxies or do we want to weave new mental cartographies that discern detail and contribute meaningfully, ethically and sustainably to ourselves, our organisations and the communities we live in?

What strategies can organisations implement to honour religious diversity. As individuals, many move between the sacred and secular in a complex choreography of daily life within the family, society and organisation. Based on the major influx of migrants and their eventual settlement in New Zealand, the country over many decades has proved that it is a religiously tolerant nation, but faith in the workplaces is often another matter.

Many organisations are seeking to tackle and invest in faith in the workplace. I offer you a suite of recommendations. Think of crafting policies specifically for faith in the workplace; check your data on talent management, socialisation





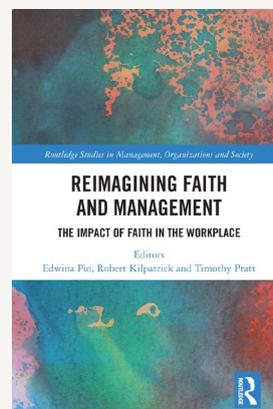
processes and the importance of legitimising difference; engage and listen to a polyphony of voices including the importance and clarity around norms for dress code, etiquette and symbols; include faith traditions in the learning and development sessions with mindful negotiation and civility; augment your internal and external media channels for inclusive, respectful, supportive information on faith traditions and incorporate a calendar of festivals; create opportunities for exposure to tales of difference.

Structural disadvantage resulting in a ‘shackled runner’ is a powerful force to consider when investigating faith for it may disadvantage a group through no direct fault of its own. In seeking to side-step faith penalties, a decision-making process that is premised on social justice and fairness can lead to transformative change with equality of access and outcomes.

To live compassionately and wake up to the wonder of each day in the land of suffragettes, artists, poets, innovators, movie makers, in one of the most peaceful countries in the world, – for we are diverse! Faith is a complex weave of historical and socio-economic legacies affecting the micro and macro policies, and practices of our university’s life.

We are in the world together and we all want welcoming workspaces to ensure proactive behaviours and confidence to achieve strategic objectives as we future proof our organisations. For we are known by our acts and life is too short and precious to be caught up in tragic timidity where we argue more and accomplish less. Faith in the workplace is an opportunity for each organisational member, but in particular the senior leadership teams, to engage with our common humanity and create luminosity in the alleyways of our minds and hearts... after all we are te ao marama, a woven universe in Aotearoa. ■

Recipient of a Royal Society medal, and Duke of Edinburgh Fellowship, Fulbright alumna, Edwina Pio is New Zealand’s first Professor of Diversity, University Director of Diversity, and elected Councillor on the governing body of the Auckland University of Technology. A prolific writer with over half a dozen books and publications in world-leading journals, her research, teaching, and doctoral supervisions encompass the intersections of work, ethnicity, Indigenous studies, religion, and pedagogy. She is a co-author of [Reimagining Faith and Management: The Impact of Faith in the Workplace](#). Edwina has been appointed to the Ministerial Advisory Group looking at recommendations following the Christchurch Mosque shootings and to the Rutherford Discovery Fellowship Humanities and Social Sciences Panel. She chairs the Academic Advisory Board of Te Kupenga the Catholic theological colleges of New Zealand and is trustee of the Religious Diversity Centre.



**Edwina Pio,**  
Professor of Diversity

# FOCUS ON Diversity Agenda

Industry associations have an important role to play advancing a culture of inclusion within the sector they operate in. We've put the spotlight on the **Diversity Agenda** and the work it does to help engineering and architecture firms become more diverse and inclusive through awareness, empowerment and action.

## How did the Diversity Agenda get started?

The Diversity Agenda came about through collaboration and a shared interest between Te Kāhui Whaihanga New Zealand Institute of Architects, Te Ao Rangahau Engineering New Zealand and the Association of Consulting and Engineering New Zealand. It was set up to support architecture and engineering firms to become more diverse, because change is needed in our sector. Not just to create diverse workplaces, but also to reflect the communities our members work in – to build better outcomes for Aotearoa.

In architecture, for example, despite strong representation of women as students and graduates, women in practices and practice leadership were underrepresented around the country. So, in 2018, the Diversity Agenda was launched with an initial target of 20 per cent more women in architecture and engineering across all career levels. Over time, we have broadened our scope to include other underrepresented groups, including ethnic minorities and the LGBTQI community. The Diversity Agenda has grown since inception to 115 organisations across the country and is held in high esteem within both industries as an initiative with integrity and purpose.





“ I believe the Diversity Accord is critical for our industries – architecture, engineering and construction. When I became CEO of BVT Engineering, signing the Accord was one of the first actions I took. To publicly declare our commitment to diversity and inclusion within our organisation, across the sector and the community we serve. ”

Ceinwen McNeil – CEO, BVT Engineering

**What are the biggest inclusion issues for the sectors you represent?**

While 50 per cent of architecture graduates are women, only 22 per cent of registered architects are women. Seventy-four per cent of engineers are male. On average, female engineers earn significantly less than their male colleagues across all stages of their career. Māori and Pasifika are still underrepresented in the profession, making up just four per cent of engineers.

Architecture and engineering practices in New Zealand have largely been influenced by Pākehā men. This is not a criticism, just an acknowledgement of the professions and how they have evolved. However, as New Zealand has changed and continues to change, the professions must also change and adapt. Architecture and engineering need to reflect and attract the diversity of our communities across Aotearoa New Zealand.

We need to encourage and support people from a wider range of cultures and backgrounds to become architects and engineers. If people don't see themselves represented in a profession, they may be discouraged from these important careers which are focused on the needs of people and future communities. We have seen some 'green shoots' of change in recent years, which is encouraging.

**What initiatives have you put in place to solve those issues?**

Creating the Diversity Agenda was our industry-wide call to action to address these critical issues in engineering and architecture. We raise awareness through training and events, best-practice case studies and informative news content. We empower members to make change by providing concrete tools and resources. In 2019 we established and launched the Diversity Agenda Accord to drive action by having business leaders commit to real, measurable change within their organisations.

**How do you hold signatories accountable for making progress towards your shared goals?**

The Diversity Agenda Accord is our key tool to achieving the change we want to see in the sector, as it sets out clear goals for firms to commit to. Signatories must provide regular reports to show how they have implemented these goals through actions, with data to back up their claims. We use a peer accountability model to make sure organisations are complying and have the right to remove Accord status if firms aren't putting into action the requirements they've signed up for.

**What shifts have you seen as a result of the mahi you and your member organisations have done?**

We've achieved some tremendous outcomes through the Diversity Agenda. We've raised the profile of the issue in our sector and created a forum for channelling action, and provided resources and content that has taken our professions' capability to create truly diverse and inclusive workplaces and professions to the next level. We've increased the number of women working in Accord firms to 41 per cent and we've decreased the pay equity gap and gender pay gap from 13.9 per cent to 5.5 per cent. So while there are some gains to celebrate, there's still much work to do across all engineering and architecture firms – to increase the number of women in leadership roles, fully close the gender pay gap and increase the number of rainbow community, Māori and Pasifika employees.

# In brief

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

## NEW LEAVE POLICIES SUPPORT INCLUSION

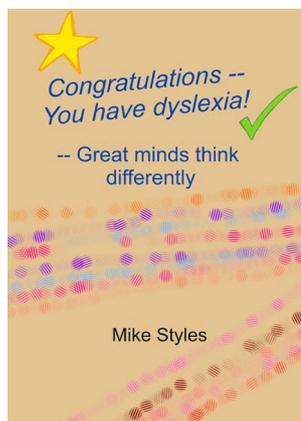
ANZ Bank has introduced six-weeks of paid Gender Affirmation Leave - a move the company said underscores its commitment to fostering an inclusive workplace culture. HRD reports that the leave can be used by staff when they need time to undergo gender-affirming processes, including medical procedures, legal processes and social affirmation such as adopting the dress and style of presentation that better aligns with their gender identity and expression. Auckland-based company Pacific Media Network (PMN) has announced a new menstrual and menopause leave policy. Newshub reported that the new policy will give 12 extra days of leave each year to E tū union members working at the company for period or menopause symptoms.

## BIAS AND RACISM DISCUSSION BANNED

A new law in Florida restricts how workplaces can discuss racism and bias, which its critics say will be a backwards step in terms of understanding people's lived experience and making progress on diversity issues. Fortune magazine reports that the Stop the Wrongs to Our Kids and Employees Act, or Stop WOKE Act, outlaws discriminating against certain people on the basis of race "to achieve diversity, equity, or inclusion". The Stop WOKE Act also designates the idea that "an individual should feel discomfort, guilt, anguish, or any other form of psychological distress on account of his or her race, color, sex, or national origin" as an unlawful employment practice.

## DIVERSITY IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

With local government elections taking place in New Zealand in October this year, there have been calls for more diversity amongst candidates. Stuff reports that local council candidates, experts and advocates say those at the top need to make local government more accessible and a safer space to be if the country's local bodies are going to truly reflect New Zealand communities. Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ) President Stuart Crosby told RNZ that as a 65-year-old New Zealand European, he's the poster child for everything LGNZ wants to change. Crosby was first elected to local government when he was 30, and said more younger people were needed.



## GO-TO GUIDE FOR DYSLEXIA

A book designed to be the go-to authority for anyone in New Zealand wanting advice and support around dyslexia is now available to order. Written by Mike Styles, a dyslexia consultant, author, researcher and trainer, it looks at how people will know they are dyslexic, practical steps they can take to understand what works best in their learning and how they can mobilise others to support them. Congratulations - You Have Dyslexia! Great Minds Think Differently is \$40 plus postage and can be ordered at [dyslexia-consulting.com](http://dyslexia-consulting.com).

W H Ā N A U





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