

**Cultural Celebration Award Entrant:**  
**Work Life Balance Award Entrant:**  
**Emerging Diversity and Inclusion Award Entrant:**

**MUMA Mahi**



After considerable planning and canvassing of local businesses, an inspirational woman, Kylie Morgan, set up the only marae-based employment service in New Zealand. Starting in August 2015, the initiative MUMA Mahi was developed to place whanau and individuals into meaningful employment and to give people a chance to break the cycle.

Manukau Urban Māori Authority (MUMA) has delivered services to the South Auckland community for more than 20 years, specialising in reintegration, restorative justice, education, whanau ora and training and employment services.

MUMA responds to the challenges of poverty and low-income, which are major contributors to a lot of the problems faced by the whanau. Despite the efforts of MUMA's kaiarahi and social workers, gaining traction in placing whanau and individuals into meaningful employment has always been hard to successfully achieve.

The South Auckland-based whanau ora provider, under Willie Jackson, believe they've found the answer to that - Business Development Specialist Kylie Morgan, who has an infectious smile and 'never-back-down' attitude.

Kylie is a keen, determined single Māori mother of two teenage boys advocating for the rights of urban Māori whanau, most of whom are disadvantaged from the get go.

Based at Nga Whare Waatea Marae in Mangere, Kylie saw people coming to the marae in search of something to enable them to enhance and change their lives.

"The one thing that most of our people are wanting is a job or a trade or tertiary training, something that they want to do and enjoy doing, not something they are told they have to do.

"Everybody has a passion which needs to be explored; not always do you need an accreditation to start, but somewhere along the way it has to be gained," says Kylie.

So Kylie investigated local businesses and skill-gaining opportunities and gathered a pool of employers to send people to once the MUMA Mahi initiative was launched. Starting in the area where most of her clients lived, she visited construction sites, landscaping companies, builder's worksites... you name it.

MUMA Mahi took off and now has more than 1000 people on its books, with more than 296 in full-time employment.

Clientele include released offenders for low-risk offences, individuals with little or often no formal qualifications, and high-needs whanau where violence, drug and alcohol abuse are prevalent.

Kylie's passion for helping whanau in need drives her commitment to shaping more hopeful futures for whanau living in Tamaki.

She boasts a dossier of more than 20 employers, including the likes of Aotearoa Fisheries, Pemberton Construction, Unique Services, Fulton Hogan and Hick's Brothers Construction. This list of employers is likely to grow within the medium term with the avid support from Māori Development Minister Te Ururoa Flavell and Te Puni Kokiri set to help this programme take off.

MUMA Mahi's model of delivery is focused around cultivating high-trust, high-responsibility relationships between employers and their potential employees, which MUMA Mahi facilitates.

"This means that we're open and transparent with employers about the guys and girls we help to find jobs for, and offer full wrap around support so that they can keep those jobs," Kylie says.

MUMA Mahi assists with CV development and interview skills, helps clients gain basic qualifications, and provides key resources such as work uniforms, transport and childcare options when there's tamariki in the picture.

MUMA Mahi match whanau with roles, ensuring they have the correct uniforms requirements, drug tests and pre-screens, organises pick-up and drop off for the first 14 days and takes them to a trial day. Liaising continuously with the employer, the MUMA Mahi team also arranges with the employer anything that may be needed for the job.

"After three months of the whanau member being onsite with the employer, I will retire the file to the employed drawer and create the outcome in our database," says Kylie.

A candidate's opinion: "When I met Miss Morgan I filled out her paper work, met with her

and in 24 hours I had a job, first time I've worked in 20 years. She made it like I was going to a family BBQ. I've been a patched member for 20 years and really didn't know how to earn a wage other than what I had been brought up on for years. She changed my life and my kids' and my partner's lives."

Since starting, things have grown immensely to the point now where the MUMA Mahi service is national.

MUMA Mahi is one of many MUMA programmes that aim to break the cycle of domestic violence, gang affiliations and troubled youth by providing culturally responsive programmes that contribute to character building and engagement with support services, and provide a te ao Māori basis for healing and moving forward.

Says employer Robyn Schoch, director of Unique, "Throughout the last three months Kylie and MUMA Mahi have been there for me, for Unique and for our wonderful new family members.

"Our wonderful workers may have chequered pasts; I am not here to judge. We are in business to provide for every Unique family member and their families. If and when we help one person rise up, we are successful.

"How amazing it was to be blessed with Kylie who has the same attitude towards people who just need that second chance. After all who hasn't needed a second chance at something in their lives?" she says.