

Tomorrow's Workforce Award Entrant: Fletcher Building



Video link: <https://vimeo.com/album/4446506/video/229801933>

A sophisticated development programme at Fletcher Building is ensuring that graduates entering the workforce are given top level personal and professional development to support them through the initial stage of their careers.

Fletcher Building launched the group-wide graduate development programme in 2015. The programme is now in its third year, with two cohorts (consisting of 59 graduates) having successfully completed the programme.

Cohort three, consisting of another 59 graduates, are currently going through it. The graduate roles available are across all disciplines, ranging from engineering, construction management and quantity surveying, to human resources, finance, marketing and technology.

Fletcher Building is a global organisation with around 20,000 employees across 34 different businesses, operating in 40 countries. The Fletcher Building business covers construction, manufacturing and distribution industries. In New Zealand, the workforce is around 10,000. The breadth of roles Fletcher offers makes them unique in New Zealand.

The graduate development programme has three main arms.

Personal - Supporting the transition between tertiary education and work in order to create a confident and high performing workforce.

Business - Providing a diverse pipeline of talent for Fletcher Building businesses, especially those with an aging workforce, in order to create an innovative and future-proofed

business. As the programme grows, more managers are seeing the business benefits of having young people in the organisation, and are advocates of the programme.

Society - Role modelling the need to mitigate youth unemployment in New Zealand (as one of New Zealand's largest employers) with a range of job opportunities. The programme grows each year and offers an accessible process for young New Zealanders to join a home-grown organisation with a global footprint.

The initiatives have top level support. Kate Daly, Chief People Officer, is the executive sponsor of the programme, and her enthusiasm filters down through the organisation; chief executives and senior staff are consistently involved in all aspects. A dedicated programme manager role for all youth development programmes was created mid-2016.

The programme process starts with a focus on attracting and recruiting a diverse group of graduates.

Using blind recruitment, Fletcher Building took away the demographic data of candidates in the screening process. All those involved in the selection process for graduates (and interns) also complete unconscious bias training.

The development programme had a solid base to grow from. Implementation focused first on a few of businesses. This helped build manager support and refine an efficient on-boarding process, which includes support on managing millennials.

The programme then opened up to more businesses in the following two years. This year Fletcher Building is extending the programme to a number of Australian businesses to create a trans-Tasman network of graduates.

The programme focuses on a range of skills completed over a year and undertaken alongside a graduate's full-time role.

It consists of: six and a half contact days, focusing on presentation skills, team strategy, business stimulations, resilience, and career building; 18 hours of remote learning; six months of mentoring; site visits and Health and Safety; behavioural insights and ongoing networking.

Graduates also complete technical development that is aligned to their specialist discipline. This can last anything up to three years, depending on the graduate role.

Graduates report solid benefits: "The networking within our group was awesome, as well as the access to people sitting within the top tier of Fletcher Building's organisational team, the guest speakers. Also getting an understanding of the breadth of Fletcher Building's work and investments, and the different opportunities it has to offer," says one participant.

Work and initiatives carried out within the programme by graduates has also benefited Fletcher Building in other ways.

A team of graduates created and implemented a new mentoring pilot across New Zealand and Australia, with 30 mentors and 35 mentees in New Zealand and 14 mentors and 14 mentees in Australia.

The mentoring programme has expanded, and was recognised as winner of the in-work youth mentoring award as part of the Young at Heart Awards 2016.

A team of construction graduates working on the \$630million Mackays to Peka Peka expressway project on the Kapiti Coast developed a mobile phone app to address the lack of timely access to operator competency assessment (OCA) information on site. They developed M2PP Verifi with the health and safety team and introduced it site-wide. They came up with a database of OCA information which can be easily verified on site in real time preventing incidents due to incompetent use of plant and equipment.