

Westpac New Zealand Limited

Tomorrow's Workforce

A major bank is working to educate and empower its Millennial employees through personal and professional development, and community engagement.

Westpac has 4,000 staff and offices all around the country. In 2017, the organisation made a nationwide appeal to employees under the age of 30 to join the Westpac New Zealand Youth Networks (NZYN), which now has 215 members.

NZYN's vision is "to engage, educate and empower Westpac's youth to be their best". This is achieved through a focus on personal and professional development and creating a positive impact for the community. Regional leads were nominated to engage local staff and empower them to host their own NZYN events.



This renewed focus on encouraging young people to participate has grown the network by 358 per cent, from 60 in 2016 to 215 by the end of 2017.

NZYN programmes include:

- Reverse mentoring, where NZYN's brightest talent are paired up with senior leaders from around the organisation. Ten members shadowed and mentored 10 senior leaders for a whole day, and then joined Sir Peter Leitch (The Mad Butcher) and Sir John Kirwan (former All Black and mental health advocate) for dinner. These mentorships continue through the year.
- 101 Masterclasses: NZYN set up nine speaker sessions in Auckland and three around the country where members could hear from senior leaders from the Westpac Group.
- Toastmasters: Thirty participants meet fortnightly, and there is a waiting list to join the group, which aims to empower individuals to become more effective communicators and leaders
- A Millennial workshop with Vodafone and IBM employees
- Youth Network Summit: In October 2017, eight highly engaged members of the network travelled to Sydney to participate in the Westpac Youth Network Summit. They joined workshops and panel discussions, engaging with a number of empowering speakers.
- Volunteering: Westpac New Zealand gave nearly 20,000 volunteer hours to a variety of causes in FY17. Every Westpac employee is entitled to and encouraged to use one volunteer day a year, and NZYN members set up days for the teams.
- Future Olympics, a hackathon/boiler room-styled event held in Christchurch which brought together staff of all ages that were passionate about making a change.
- Code Club, an opportunity for employees to learn how to code

Business Development Manager Max Thomson says, "Over the past 18 months the NZYN has exponentially exceeded the targets we set for ourselves. We truly are living our vision. The NZYN is ultimately creating New Zealand's future leaders and preparing them to embrace change now, and into the future."

The network now has senior leaders lining up to be advocates, to the point that NZYN created a new member category for advocates. Other areas of the business actively reach out to NZYN to get a youth perspective on work being done, which helps to ensure that lots of different views are represented in the organisation's moves.

The past 18 months have been hugely successful for the NZYN, and as Max says, "If this is what we can do in 18 months, imagine what we can do over the next five years!"



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