

## Patricia Reade, Auckland Council

### *Walk the Talk*

Every day, Patricia Reade asks herself this question. "Who is sitting at the table and who isn't?" She believes in tackling bias and breaking down barriers to make Auckland Council a diverse and inclusive organisation, serving Auckland's diverse communities.

Her leadership has been influential in setting the direction for Auckland Council's diversity and inclusion goals and commitment to employing diverse talent within an inclusive culture.

Patricia became the Chief Operating Officer (COO) for Auckland Council when it was established in 2010. As COO, with responsibility for an \$800m operating budget and leading 5000 staff, Patricia was responsible for all service delivery across Auckland. In 2016, she was appointed Director of Transformation at the council. In 2017, that role was consolidated with the People and Performance Directorate. Patricia is responsible for all people and capability functions across the council's 8500 staff, along with driving all aspects of corporate strategy and culture development.



Despite the scope of the job, Patricia has not only succeeded at a strategic level, but has made a personal impact on the people she works with across all levels of the organisation. Principal Advisor Maori Responsiveness Helen Te Hira says Patricia motivates others to create their best work.

"She genuinely has an amazing ability to motivate people to want to do better and is not afraid to show sincere emotion" says Helen.

Auckland Council Chief Executive Stephen Town has worked with Patricia for four years. He says, "Patricia leads from her heart, as well as her head - she has been willing to share her personal story with staff and others as part of walking the talk and her contribution to Council over the years has been immense. Her leadership has been influential in setting the direction for Council's culture and performance; she has a visionary understanding of the way that culture impacts on performance and her leadership has resulted in several innovative changes at Council.

"Patricia regularly holds ELT to account around the impact of inclusive culture on performance. Her leadership was key to our recent uplift in staff engagement scores and to the development of our charter, with strong guiding principles for staff about the behaviours we expect and the bottom lines that we won't cross."

As People and Performance Director, Patricia has direct accountability for the implementation of all initiatives in the 'Our People, Our Culture' section of the council's Inclusive Auckland (diversity and inclusion) Framework.

Significant culture change actions under Patricia's leadership have included:

- Empowering female and ethnically diverse leaders at executive level: Models of inclusive recruitment are being piloted, including ground-breaking work to address the gap in female ethnic diversity within leadership through a programme to ensure that high-potential female leaders have the best opportunity to succeed.
- Unconscious bias e-learning module for all staff: Following its launch in August 2017, the module was completed by more than 230 staff.
- Advocacy for Māori staff: Patricia championed local government's first comprehensive Māori employment policy for Māori staff (MAHI – Measures and Actions for High Impact). Council's refreshed 'Leadership Compass' for all people leaders also includes components of Te Ao Māori.
- Rainbow Tick accreditation
- Flexible working policy: This includes the goal of all roles at the council being able to be flexible.
- Equal pay and living wage initiatives: Patricia has sponsored pay audits on equal pay and pay equity. This year Auckland Council was recognised as a finalist in the 'emerging' category by the YWCA.
- Changes to graduate, cadet and intern recruitment programme: Patricia has championed changes to successfully increase the number of applications and placements of Māori and Pasifika candidates. A robust recruitment process places emphasis on diversity competencies, community involvement and values. Decision makers involved in the selection process receive unconscious bias awareness training, employees are welcome to participate in whānau/aiga interviews, and the process builds in Māori tikanga and diverse assessment panels.



These changes have been received positively by staff. The 2018 staff engagement survey has asked two questions to date; how staff feel the organisation values diversity, and how comfortable staff feel to be themselves at work. Both showed a significant increase from previous years.

Head of Strategy and Capability Shameel Sahib has been directly influenced by Patricia in that regard. "Patricia is very proud of her heritage and her story as a migrant from Fiji raised in a multi-cultural context. She has had such a highly successful career and is a great inspiration for others, myself included. As a Fijian myself, her stories have encouraged me to bring my whole self to work and realise that I don't need to minimise my cultural identity to succeed in a large New Zealand organisation."

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YOUR WORKPLACE MORE INCLUSIVE

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