



## GHD

### POSITIVE INCLUSION FINALIST



#### THE STORY

Operating in an industry facing a talent shortage, GHD is constantly looking for ways to ensure that it is an attractive workplace both for current employees and prospective ones. One way that the company is doing this is by ensuring it has robust and supportive structures for diversity and inclusion. After a review of its diversity and inclusion strategy, GHD has been focusing on building a strategy for support of LGBTQI+ employees.

GHD is a global professional services company which is employee-owned. It employs more than 500 employees across 10 offices in New Zealand. The company has a dedicated Diversity and Inclusion Committee, made up of 13 employees from across the business, and in 2017 the company initiated a review of its diversity and inclusion strategy, expanding upon its prior focus on gender equality.

In a staff survey as part of this review, 20 per cent identified LGBTQI+ inclusion as a challenge for the business, which was an area that had not been specifically addressed by GHD prior to the review. In response to this, GHD established a Rainbow Committee which developed a three-year strategy to improve company-wide inclusion and understanding of the LGBTQI+ community.

The first year of the strategy focused on benchmarking where the company was concerning LGBTQI+ inclusiveness, then raising awareness and communicating a commitment from management to support the Rainbow community. This was launched during Pride celebrations in February last year, with an email to all staff from General Manager Al Monro launching the committee and explaining the strategy.

GHD's Rainbow Committee is now in the second year of this strategy, with a focus on increasing engagement through celebrating a number of LGBTQI+ events, including Pride, International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia, and Wear It Purple Day.

As well as participating in supportive events, GHD is also making changes with day-to-day improvements for LGBTQI+ staff members. The company has changed its parental leave policies to incorporate same sex couples and has introduced a new policy for staff members undergoing gender transitions. GHD is also launching a Rainbow Allies network this year, a group of people with whom anyone can discuss issues around Rainbow inclusivity, and is working towards gaining the Rainbow Tick.

Sarah Mason, GHD's Marketing and Communications Manager, says, "Whether part of the Rainbow community or not, our people have benefitted from the more inclusive environment our Rainbow Committee has created." This has been evident for the company both for existing staff and in the competition for new hires.

GHD's support of the LGBTQI+ community has been positive for Diane Gavin, whose daughter is a part of the community: "It has made me feel supported, knowing my colleagues are being educated around some of the challenges members of this community face daily."

Natassja Arnott, now a Technician and Junior BIM Manager, says that the strategy played a role in her decision to join following the interview process: "It's not something that all companies have. Working for a company that takes diversity and belonging seriously, whether it is gender, sexuality, culture, age or race is important to me."

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## **THE CHALLENGE**

GHD had worked on gender equality in the past but had no specific strategies around LGBTQI+ inclusion in the company. In an industry facing a talent shortage, it is important to ensure that all people feel comfortable and included in the workplace.

## **STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS**

- The company launched a Rainbow Committee to develop strategies around LGBTQI+ inclusion and engage employees.
- The committee introduced a three-year strategy for creating a safe and inclusive workplace:
  - Year 1: Raise awareness of the committee and GHD's commitment to providing an inclusive culture, benchmark where the business stands with regard to Rainbow inclusiveness.
  - Year 2: Engage the business in Pride activities and events. Improve on previous year's benchmarks.

- Year 3: Achieve/maintain Rainbow Tick certification, look into external messaging about LGBTQI+ inclusion and have an increasingly engaged workforce.



- Introduced a Rainbow Allies network to provide a safe space to discuss issues around LGBTQI+ inclusion.
- Introduced specific LGBTQI+ policies, covering issues such as same-sex couple parental leave and gender transitions.

## RESULTS AND BENEFITS

- Topics of sexual orientation and gender expression are now discussed in a much more open and positive manner in the workplace.
- The organisation's commitment to all areas of diversity is positively impacting recruitment
- Pride celebrations have provided an atmosphere of inclusion, fun and colour.
- Positive support for people who are in the LGBTQI+ community and those who have family members in that community

## KEY LEARNING

All employees benefit from a more inclusive environment, whether or not they identify as members of the LGBTQI+ community.

**DO WORKPLACE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION WELL  
AND DO WELL BECAUSE OF IT.**

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