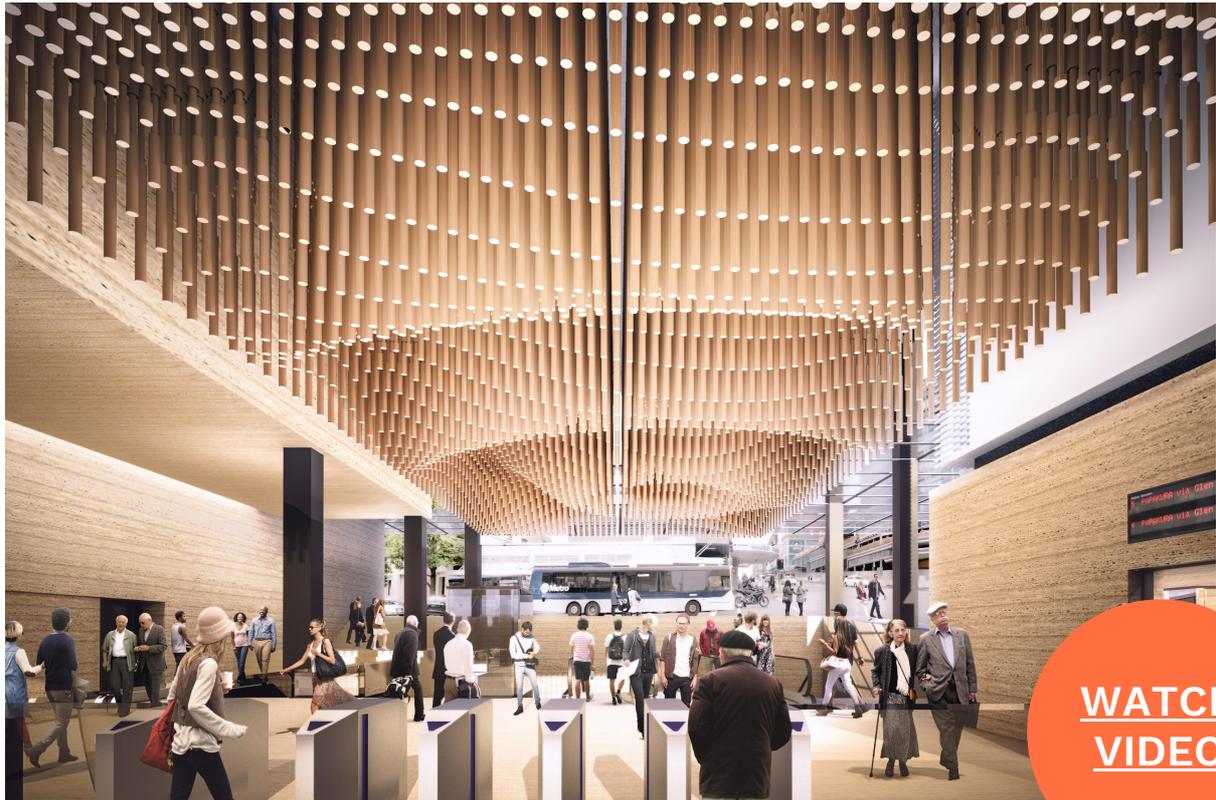




Jasmax

CULTURAL CELEBRATION WINNER



THE STORY

Recognising New Zealand needed a stronger Māori voice in architecture and design, multi-disciplinary design practice Jasmax encouraged four young graduates to guide the organisation's bicultural design direction.

In 2015, a group of four young Māori architectural graduates founded Waka Māia a Māori cultural design and advisory team to provide an authentically Māori design voice within Jasmax.

Principal Architect and Head of Knowledge and Innovation Sue Marshall says Waka Māia's rōpū provides skills, integrity and expertise in Māori design and engagement processes that benefit projects across Jasmax. Waka Māia is integral to the education and development of cultural capability and understanding of te ao Māori within Jasmax, and builds on a history of involvement with culturally significant projects.

Since its inception, Waka Māia has worked closely with many iwi and hapū from around Aotearoa, and has a proven track record and expertise in cultural design, consultation and facilitation. One recent key project is The University of Waikato Tauranga Campus, completed in 2019, a campus unique for its bicultural focus on tertiary education.

Senior Deputy Vice Chancellor Alister Jones says, "Jasmax demonstrated a strong understanding of the importance of robust and genuine engagement. Jasmax brought genuine experience and commitment to working with iwi, communicating with a high degree of fluency to ensure the design of the building honoured and reflected the University's commitment to the iwi of Tauranga and the Bay of Plenty."

Waka Māia has operated as an incubation unit for Māori architecture graduates, enabling Jasmox to nurture the design skills of Māori architects and future leaders. Last year, it partnered with the University of Auckland to offer a scholarship for Māori and Pacific students for up to five years of support for their Bachelor of Architecture studies.

Waka Māia has the full support of the senior leadership team. In 2019 the organisation launched a bicultural manifesto, reaffirming its bicultural design direction with Waka Māia embedded at the heart of the practice.

CEO Sjoerd Post says, “At Jasmox we believe that the Tiriti o Waitangi between mana whenua and tangata tiriti offers a powerful opportunity to create architecture and design that is unique to Aotearoa. Waka Māia are our kaihautū in that quest.”

Initiatives have been introduced to upskill staff in their knowledge of and understanding of tikanga and te reo Māori, including a bespoke Jasmox Te Ao Māori Guide, created to support staff using the language in their day-to-day work life. Cultural design workshops and lecture series with guest speakers are also offered.

Kaiurungi - Strategic Relationship Manager Apenti Tamanui-Fransen says these initiatives ensure the bicultural strategy sits at the core of the business as opposed to ‘a nice to have’.

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THE CHALLENGE

Historically, the New Zealand architectural domain is white and male, and while the number of women in architecture is starting to increase, the same cannot be said for Māori and Pacific architects.

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

- Four Māori architectural graduates at Jasmax founded Waka Māia, a Māori cultural design and advisory team to provide an authentically Māori design voice within the architectural firm
- Waka Māia's ropu provides skills, integrity and expertise in Māori design and engagement processes to the benefit of projects across Jasmax
- Waka Māia operates as an incubation unit for Māori architects enabling their design skills to be nurtured
- A bicultural manifesto was launched with Waka Māia embedded at the heart of the company
- All staff encouraged to engage with te ao Māori, including te reo Māori lessons and cultural design workshops
- Jasmax entered into a partnership with leading Māori cultural development specialist Karl Johnstone, from Haumi, to provide guidance to Jasmax around developing and maintaining cultural design leadership within New Zealand

RESULTS AND BENEFITS

- Jasmax has partnered with the University of Auckland to offer a scholarship for Māori and Pacific students. The scholarship is worth \$5,000 per annum for up to five years of study
- In 2019, Jasmax's City Rail Link project received the WAFX prize for Cultural Identity at the World Architecture Festival – the world's biggest international architecture awards
- Waka Māia has been integral to shaping positive, long-lasting relationships between government and developmental agencies and mana whenua in support of critical development across New Zealand

KEY LEARNING

The business is not only striving to create better cultural design outcomes, but is embedding a bicultural strategy at the heart of the practice.

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

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