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TAURA



**DIVERSITY
WORKS^{NZ}**

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Editor's letter

Kia ora

One of the most rewarding aspects of working in the diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) space is witnessing the positive impact this mahi has on the lives of real people. It could be a greater sense of belonging and security for a migrant new to this country, a leadership opportunity that will be a source of pride for a Māori kaimahi and deliver better outcomes for their whānau or the confidence boost that comes from a connection with peers for a woman working in a STEM role... it never fails to generate a warm, fuzzy feeling.

Looking at data may not feel as satisfying as hearing about the meaningful experiences of people in the workplace, but it's no less important. In this edition of Taura magazine, we talk to Diversity Works New Zealand's Head of Research and Development Pete Mercer about why good intentions and creative inclusion initiatives are not enough on their own. Achieving progress in DEI requires ongoing systemic change to address historic inequity and exclusion, and the only sure way organisations will understand whether they are making progress in implementing change is to collect data across a range of different indicators.

A trend we observed at the 25th Diversity Awards was the growing number of entries from organisations focused on improving Māori representation and addressing historic inequities in career development.

Some of the case studies featured in our Growing Gains: Māori in our mahi wahi article showcase initiatives that also serve to uplift Pacific peoples in our organisations. However, this article looks at this issue through a Māori lens specifically, with commentary from Minister of Māori Development Willie Jackson and Indigenous Growth founder and director Michael Moka.

This second issue of Taura also asks us to consider whether we are in demographic denial about the impact an ageing workforce is having on our organisations and introduces a cohort of Auckland design students exploring creative solutions to challenges faced by diverse groups in the workforce.

Enjoy the magazine and please share the link with anyone who might be interested in trends, research and news relating to workplace diversity, equity and inclusion.

Ngā mihi



Sheryl Blythen
Head of Marketing and Communications



Making inclusion count

Why collecting diversity data is essential, barriers to measurement, how to get started and what to look out for.

Achieving progress in diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) requires ongoing systemic change to address historic inequity and exclusion.

“As important as good intentions are, deep-level change will not be made unless there is a proactive and sustained effort driven by a strategic vision – in this way, DEI is no different to any other workplace imperative,” says Diversity Works New Zealand Head of Research and Development Pete Mercer.

The only sure way organisations will understand whether they are making progress in implementing change is to collect data across a range of different indicators, including both qualitative and quantitative measures, to form a more well-rounded evaluation of their DEI mahi,’ Mercer says.

“Ultimately what gets measured gets done. Collecting pertinent information and tracking your organisation’s progress over time not only provides the evidence base that you need to further your work, it also serves as a form of accountability, whereby the organisation can be more transparent about its progress with its people and any other stakeholders.

“Measuring your work helps you to better understand trends across your organisation, but it also demonstrates your commitment to DEI as an organisation and helps you to stay focused on your journey.”

Given the strategic importance of collecting data, it’s concerning that almost half of respondents to the 2022 New Zealand Workplace Diversity Survey reported that their organisations don’t formally measure and evaluate the effectiveness of diversity initiatives, Mercer says.

“Measuring your work helps you to better understand trends across your organisation, but it also demonstrates your commitment to DEI as an organisation and helps you to stay focused on your journey.”

Another 26 per cent of respondents indicated they were not aware of any measuring process in place, with only 28 per cent reporting their organisation formally measures and evaluates initiatives.

Failing to collect data and evaluate it can result in progress stalling or a situation where inclusion initiatives are seen as tokenistic rather than something that requires sustained effort and the achievement of tangible outcomes, Mercer says.

“Your people insights risk being informed by assumptions, rather than accurate information, and there is potential for your leadership team to become out of touch with the lived experience of employees, hampering their ability to support an inclusive working environment.”

In the worst-case scenario, the organisation’s values or what it says it stands for becomes very far removed from the day-to-day reality of staff.

“Without focused measures of success, we also see organisations expending lots of time, money and energy on a wide range of DEI initiatives in an attempt to ‘do the right thing’ →

→ “While this usually doesn’t hurt, and we would never discourage organisations that are investing in DEI work, throwing things at the wall and seeing what sticks is rarely beneficial in the long-term, because it lacks clarity of purpose and often results in fatigue.”

Reluctance to measure

Mercer says there are several reasons organisations may be disinclined to collect data on their diversity mahi.

Sometimes it comes down to a lack of understanding of the need for a strategic approach.

There can also be an unwillingness to distil meaningful experiences into quantifiable metrics or to give the impression of simply “ticking a box”.

“This is an entirely understandable perspective because it’s important that this work is meaningful and authentic. Rather than negating the need for measures of success, however, it highlights that metrics should reflect the real needs and experiences of your people and for there to be a good balance between output and impact measurement. It also calls for a transparent leadership approach that is honest about limitations and shortfalls exposed by the data, while remaining aspirational and optimistic in vision.”

Another barrier for organisations is a lack of data or even the mechanisms needed to acquire the right data. In this case, it’s important for workplaces to start with what they do know, use this information to create initial targets, then set out a plan to expand their data collection and analysis.

“It also calls for a transparent leadership approach that is honest about limitations and shortfalls exposed by the data, while remaining aspirational and optimistic in vision.”

Smaller organisations can find it more challenging to collect data due to available resources. The solution is not to try to emulate the approach of larger organisations, but to find different means of collecting data and information and using different kinds of metrics to measure success – ones that don’t rely on large data sets, Mercer says.

“Quite often though, in general organisations don’t measure their DEI work simply because they don’t know where to start.”

Getting started

The first step is for organisations to have a clear sense of what they want to achieve, by developing their vision and rationale for DEI, Mercer says.

This means having conversations with colleagues about what ‘good’ could look like for their organisation.

“Working backwards from there, organisations can translate this wider vision into a coherent strategy, identifying the key objectives that should be met for the vision to become reality, then building in realistic and pragmatic measures of success to define when those objectives have been met.”

Undertaking any data collection has potential pitfalls, Mercer says. →

Te Taunaki | Public Service Census

Data that offers a better understanding of the diversity of public servants is helping Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission build a unified Public Service that reflects the people it serves and fosters an inclusive workplace.

The Commission has publicly reported on diversity demographics based on human resources administrative data since 2000, however it wanted to better capture information across more diversity dimensions and understand how people felt about inclusion.

To achieve this, it developed Te Taunaki | Public Service Census, a survey of approximately 60,000 public servants working in 36 Public Service agencies, including New Zealand employees based overseas.

It was designed with help from a range of agencies and groups across the Public Service, including Stats NZ, Te Puni Kōkiri, Te Arawhiti, Te Taura Whiri i te reo Māori, the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment as well as the Office for Disability Issues.

The survey questions focused on diversity, inclusion and wellbeing at work, a unified Public Service, and strengthening Māori-Crown

relationships. Diverse groups throughout the organisation were engaged via its employee-led networks.

The survey response rate reached 63 per cent, meaning about 40,000 public servants participated. [The findings are available on the Commission’s website](#) and have been viewed more than 15,000 times.

“Te Taunaki established the system-wide baseline that we can use to drive change. Getting a better understanding of the diversity of public servants, their experiences, sense of belonging, views and motivations is helping us build a unified Public Service that truly represents the people we serve, where public servants feel they can be themselves at work,” says Te Kawa Mataaho Deputy Commissioner, Strategy and Policy Hannah Cameron.

The initiative was awarded a highly commended accolade in the Leadership category of the 2022 Diversity Awards NZ™. [Read the full case study.](#)

Te Kawa Mataaho is working on the next survey, planned for early 2024, which will include questions on public servant’s experiences in the workplace, such as negative workplace behaviours.





Census collects new gender and sexual identity data

The 2023 Census will be the first to ask everyone in Aotearoa New Zealand about their gender identity and sexual orientation.

“People’s sense of their gender and sexual identity is really important to them and can impact their lives and experiences. The census touches everyone and will provide a detailed picture of how people with diverse genders and sexual identities experience life in Aotearoa New Zealand,” says Stats NZ Social and Population Insights General Manager Jason Attewell.

Diversity Works Head of Research and Development Pete Mercer says it’s really encouraging to see that the Census will collect this data.

“The changes normalise collection of data on these identities and should encourage workplaces to expand their own data collection.”

It also represents a move towards the establishment of national benchmarks, which will allow organisations to see how their workplaces compare to wider population statistics.

However, he warns that workplaces still need to consider carefully expanding data collection - it’s essential to understand why you want the new information and how it will be used. “You should only collect data that you intend to use to measure your diversity, equity and inclusion outcomes. It’s also important to prepare staff if you intend to expand the data you ask them to provide.”

The changes are part of a commitment made by the Government Statistician and Chief Executive of Stats NZ, following the 2018 Census, to update information collected across the topics of gender, sex at birth and sexual identity.

New statistical standards were developed through review processes with extensive public consultation, input from government agencies and international peers, and the support of subject matter experts.

Celebrating small wins over time is important because this is a marathon not a sprint – it can take a long time to achieve substantial progress, so people need encouragement along the way.

→ When collecting demographic data, organisations need to take into consideration:

- Personal demographic information is sensitive and for some it’s private information that they wouldn’t normally disclose so there must always be a ‘prefer not to say’ option to respect this, and demographic data returns should always be voluntary, not mandatory (unless it’s required for an organisation to fulfil its statutory obligations). If disclosure rates are low, despite best efforts to encourage returns, or if a considerable number of team members are selecting the ‘prefer not to say’ option, this is telling. It usually means that more must be done to create an environment in which people are comfortable to disclose their identities and characteristics.
- With any data collection that involves the collection of demographics, you must be clear about your intentions (i.e. if you are going to collect any form of data, you need to be able to articulate why you need that data and how it will aid the organisation and its employees) and explicitly state that the data will be used for this purpose.
- Privacy considerations - information must always be stored confidentially and securely. This means that access should be restricted to personnel with the designated responsibility for handling demographic data, and it also means that the way any data is reported must not allow for the identification of any individuals.
- The importance of transparency - when you have the data, be clear about what action will be taken as a result of any findings. If people return their demographic data but fail to see

any outcomes or communication following the collection exercise, they may become distrustful, or perceive it as a wasted effort.

With general metrics or performance measurements remember:

- It’s important to be realistic regarding outcomes and timeframes. If you set yourself goals that are too lofty, then people may become despondent, or make ill-judged decisions to artificially meet objectives or targets. Change will be incremental, not overnight, so the intention and commitment of the organisation should be emphasised.
- Celebrating small wins over time is important because this is a marathon not a sprint – it can take a long time to achieve substantial progress, so people need encouragement along the way.
- Emotional resilience is key – the very act of discovering hard truths may be a trigger for individuals, especially those from marginalised communities or those experiencing exclusion, inequities or under-representation. It’s important to create safe spaces for people to be able to discuss and deal with anything that emerges for them personally.

Diversity Works New Zealand is launching a series of guides on diversity data which offer advice to organisations on what data to collect, how to collect it, how to analyse the data and what to do with it, Mercer says. These will be available later this month in the member area at diversityworks.nz ■



Growing gains: Māori in our wāhi mahi

More and more, our workplaces are focusing on improving Māori representation and addressing historic inequities in career development. We explore this trend, look at what the change will mean for Māori whānau and communities and showcase some of the organisations doing this work well. →

Mā te kahukura ka rere te manu, ka rere runga rawa

Adorn the bird with feathers
and let it soar

Māori are an increasingly important force in our economy and improving Māori representation and capability not only improves organisational culture, it also makes business sense, says Minister for Māori Development Willie Jackson.

“In the past 20 years the Māori economy has grown from about \$16 billion to \$70 billion and with it steadily growing at five per cent per annum, it’s expected to reach \$100 billion in assets by 2030.”

Additionally, according to Te Ohanga Māori The Reserve Bank, the Māori workforce is the fastest growing demographic, and organisations that are responsive to the needs of Māori and inclusive of Māori leadership are going to be better placed to attract and harness the talent and perspectives kaimahi Māori can bring, Jackson says.

“It’s great to see organisations recognising the strengths Māori bring to their workplaces, and improving their representation accordingly.”

Jackson says the changes are happening at a time when organisations and people in Aotearoa are getting better at recognising the role of the Treaty partnership, and the contribution Māori values and tikanga can make to workplaces and our society more broadly.

As outlined in the New Zealand firms: Reaching for the frontier report, released in 2021 by the New Zealand Productivity Commission, Māori ways of working are valued internationally and will increasingly become the norm.

“Business practices that emphasise community, social outcomes, and environmental sustainability are increasingly important as we respond to climate change. Looking at more holistic indicators of success, besides purely economic, is something Māori are already well-versed in.”

Michael Moka, the founder and director of Indigenous Growth Limited, agrees that addressing inequities in Māori representation is a good business decision.

“In all honesty it has always been the right thing to do but, just like sustainability, it’s now the smart thing to do.”

The Māori economy is a billion-dollar industry, government organisations are all looking at indigenising spaces and ensuring they meet their Te Tiriti obligations and children of all cultures are taking Māori culture home, Moka says.

Indigenous Growth has been working with organisations across the motu since 2013, highlighting Māori role models in workplaces and developing their leadership capabilities.

“If you can see it, you can be it.”

When Māori are represented fairly in leadership roles and higher paying roles, the next generation won’t have to be a part of the working poor, he says.

Moka can understand why, for some, there may be little motivation to participate in the workforce. →

“It’s great to see organisations recognising the strengths Māori bring to their workplaces, and improving their representation accordingly.”

KPMG

Bringing Māori and Pasifika tertiary students into KPMG is essential to the firm’s aim to have a workforce representative of the communities it serves.

But to do that, the business needed to find a way for students to see themselves reflected in the various roles throughout the company and break down any preconceived ideas they might have about what a career in a corporate environment looks like.

One of its strategies was to change the focus of its Kiwa programme, set up to facilitate professional development of Māori and Pasifika employees, to include preparing tertiary students from these communities for a career in a corporate environment.

As well as one-on-one mentoring, there are workshops giving students valuable insight into potential corporate career pathways, the recruitment process, day-to-day work and networking across all divisions within the firm.

KPMG staff have supported 100 tertiary students through the Kiwa Mentoring Programme across its Auckland, Wellington, Tauranga, Hamilton and Christchurch offices.

The Kiwa Mentoring Programme also acts as a mechanism for recruitment. Kiwa members can provide ongoing support and mentorship to students throughout the application and interview process, which may include things like a coffee catch-up before an interview to calm the applicants’ nerves.

The success of the programme and the related growth in recruitment and retention of Māori and Pasifika staff is helping KPMG meet clients’ expectations.

Growth in the Māori sector has created a need for staff who are culturally competent and can work through a Mātauranga Māori lens.

“At KPMG New Zealand, we are committed to our vision of fuelling New Zealand’s prosperity. To be able to deliver on this vision, we must ensure that we have the right talent and level of diversity within the firm,” says Laura Youdan, KPMG’s National Managing Partner for Inclusion, Diversity and Equity.

KPMG was the Medium to Large Organisation Winner in the Diverse Talent category at the 2022 Diversity Awards NZ. [Read the full case study.](#)



Case study

→ “Working 60, 70, 80 hours a week on the living wage, too tired to go to children’s sports games or parent interviews... it’s another day, another dollar.”

Minister Jackson believes that bringing Māori into leadership roles and higher skilled work will build resilience in the Māori workforce, improving outcomes more broadly.

“Progressive procurement is also a policy that I am excited about. Investing procurement dollars into indigenous businesses delivers over four times the dollar benefit to the local economy. So addressing workforce inequities and bringing Māori into high skill, high wage jobs has benefits not just for individuals, but their whānau and communities as well.

“Investing in Māori skills and capability also builds regional economic wealth, as Māori are so often connected to their homelands through whakapapa.”

Jackson says the current government is already seeing some of the fruits of its mahi in this space.

Apprenticeship Boost has trained over 50,000 apprentices - around 9,500 identify as Māori; Mana in Mahi has supported more than 5,000 people into earn-while-you-learn jobs in three years - around 2,200 of those were Māori or Pasifika; and since the Training Incentive Allowance was restarted, it has been accessed by around 4,000 people, of which 42 per cent were Māori.

“While we know we still have plenty of work to do, we are moving in the right direction.”

Michael Moka has some advice for organisations in the private sector who are yet to start this work.

“If you want to achieve multi-culturalism you need to achieve bi-culturalism. Genuine intent is not enough – excellence is in the execution. ■



HEB

When HEB Construction identified that people from Māori and Pasifika communities were under-represented in qualified and leadership roles within its regional projects, it launched an initiative to change those statistics.

As part of identifying gaps in Māori and Pasifika inclusion in projects in locations such as Manawatū, Waikato and Bay of Plenty, the company realised that improving belonging and engagement for this group stretched beyond offering employment and career pathways and required a more nuanced, culturally relevant approach.

In 2020 HEB gained funding from the Provincial Growth Fund for Regional Apprenticeships to provide a wrap-around programme including life skills, literacy and numeracy, wellbeing (cultural programme), and pastoral care, as well as formal industry qualifications.

It is part of a suite of wraparound support that the organisation has created to enhance career development, and it’s proving to be life-changing for many of its people.

“MBIE research points to Māori being more likely to be employed in lower-skilled roles than non-Māori, and this is more pronounced in the regions. We want to help local communities to grow the skills of their people for sustainable careers in infrastructure,” says National Learning & Development Manager Leeann Clark.

Another strategy to provide career growth opportunities was amending HEB’s foundational learning programme to ensure it opened pathways to formal qualifications and leadership roles.

HEB launched a Safer People communication course several years ago to support staff to complete important health and safety paperwork, confidently ask questions in meetings and develop problem-solving skills.

Improving literacy and numeracy skills also provided more people in entry level positions with a pathway to achieving a trade qualification.

The learning and development team realised it could secure this pathway further by embedding a Limited Credit Programme (LCP) into Safer People.

Last year it linked Safer People to an LCP in Infrastructure Works, offering learners the opportunity to earn 24 New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF) credits.

This means as well as building learning in health and safety, communication and the basic skills, the programme also gives participants a taste of success through achieving credits, and, therefore, confidence they can achieve vocational qualifications or complete an apprenticeship at NZQF levels two to four.

HEB was the Medium to Large Organisation Winner in the Inclusive Workplace category at the 2022 Diversity Awards NZ – [read the full case study here](#). It was also a finalist in the Diverse Talent category – [read the full case study here](#).



Pūhoro STEMM Academy

By addressing Māori learners' inequitable access to science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), Pūhoro Charitable Trust is diversifying the STEM workforce and creating positive intergenerational impact for Māori. The trust delivers the Pūhoro STEMM Academy (the extra M stands for Mātauranga) in 48 schools throughout the country and supports more than 1,500 young Māori to actively pursue STEM pathways, working with a vast range of organisations to build a diverse and inclusive pipeline of STEM capability for Aotearoa.

Māori make up less than two per cent of the scientific workforce and Pūhoro Founder and CEO Naomi Manu says the disproportionate representation is an issue of equitable access, not capability.

“We know that by 2030 most jobs will require some level of STEM competency so it is critically important that we address the equity gap to ensure Māori have access to an education that will equip them for the future of work,” she says.

A by-Māori-for-Māori organisation, Pūhoro largely works with non-Māori organisations to disrupt the narrative that Māori youth can't participate and succeed in STEM.

The organisation set the foundation for collaborating with partners through their ManaŌrite agreement, a Tiriti Relationship Agreement where all parties aspire to create a future that benefits rangatahi Māori, STEM professions, and Aotearoa. Industry partners and groups actively participate in the academy,

walking alongside the youth from Year 11, through tertiary and into internships or full-time paid work. Part of Pūhoro's role is connecting the youth and partner network to ensure youth are 'work ready' and organisations are 'youth ready'.

Pūhoro youth are five times more likely to transition to tertiary schooling at degree level than other Māori school leavers.

“Already Pūhoro is seeing changes in terms of equitable access to STEM education. We have young Māori on a trajectory into high value careers,” says Naomi Manu.

Pūhoro STEMM Academy was the Small to Medium Organisation Winner in the Ngā Āhuatanga o te Tiriti category of the 2022 Diversity Awards NZ™. It was also named the Supreme Winner. [Read the full case study here.](#)



Are we guilty of demographic denial?

Geoff Pearman looks at why we need to start talking about the impact of an ageing workforce on available labour and skills, and what employers can do to retain and attract older workers to soften that impact

We are all experts on ageing. Every 365 days we age by one year; there is an inevitability. We see people close to us ageing and maybe as we reach mid and later life, we also feel the impacts of physical changes. But how much do we really know about ageing? For example, how the ageing of the population is affecting our local economies, the labour market and the provision of services? Then there are the subtleties of ageism; how aware are we of our own unconscious biases? As employers or managers do you know how to create an age inclusive workplace when there may well be five decades between your youngest and oldest employees?

We have known about what is called structural ageing for many decades. Essentially this means that the proportion of young people in the population is shrinking, while the proportion of older people is growing. We saw a rapid growth in the population after the Second World War, known as the baby boom. However, from the late 1970s the birth rate slowed due to oral contraception and the increasing participation of women in the workforce.

Demographers tell us we need 2.1 live births per woman to replace our population. Apart from a couple of blips we have not been above 2.1 since the late 1970s. By 2020 it had dipped to 1.61 live births. Life expectancy at birth over the period 1900 to 2018 has also increased by 22.6 years for males and 23.5 years for females. For Māori and Pacifica, average life expectancy rates have been historically lower. Many more people are living longer. →

Let's take a short quiz to check your current awareness. Answer each question true or false. The answers are at the end of the article.

- 1. By 2034 21 per cent of New Zealand's population will be aged 65+**
True | False
- 2. New Zealand's retirement age is 65**
True | False
- 3. Thirty-four per cent of the workforce is now aged 50 and over**
True | False
- 4. There are more people aged 50 to 64 registered for job support than people under 24**
True | False
- 5. Different generations have different orientations to work.**
True | False

→ If we look closely at workforce participation rates across a 50-year timeframe, we will have around 27,000 fewer workers aged 15 to 24 in 2038 than we had in 1988. On the other hand the number of workers aged 65-plus will have increased by 165,000. Today, more than 34 per cent of the workforce is aged 50-plus. This is structural ageing at work.

We are witnessing the convergence of three demographic trends; an ageing population, declining birth rates and increased longevity. Yet for some reason we are in demographic denial. The vast majority of our politicians, business leaders, and employers still have a 20th century mindset and act as if demographics don't matter. The current labour and skills shortages are blamed solely on immigration settings and Covid-19. There is an absence of any discussion about the impact of an ageing workforce on available labour and skills, let alone what employers can do to retain and attract older workers and soften the impacts of an ageing workforce.

Four things you can do

1. Take out your numbers

Do you know the age breakdown of your workforce? Look at your people profiles by workplace, location and occupation. Dig a little deeper and see if this has changed over time.

Identify your at-risk positions. Not by making age-based assumptions that people will retire at 65. Maybe look at the number of people aged 55 and over and ask what would happen if they were to leave, or stay but disengage due to your workplace culture, the lack of opportunity or the subtleties of ageism.

2. Challenge your assumptions about age and work

Many myths persist about age and work. Here are four common ones that have been thoroughly debunked.

Myth 1: Older workers are getting in the way of younger workers.

The consensus view among economists today is that the quantity of labour demanded varies with respect to many factors. Past policies to promote early retirement in the hope of lifting youth employment have been ineffective. A focus on keeping all people, whatever their age, at work is good for business and the overall economy.

Myth 2: Different generations have different orientations to work.

The belief that distinct generational categories exist based on a person's date of birth has been shown to be false. The evidence of substantial differences in work attitudes between generations is thin. While this approach aspires to address the needs of all generations it is based on unfounded stereotypes and can inadvertently pit generations against each other, thereby fuelling ageism. A more constructive approach supported by sound evidence is to focus on life stages.

Myth 3: Work performance declines with age.

Some physically demanding tasks become more difficult with age, but the number of such job roles is declining as we shift more to a service economy and, together with new technologies and contemporary health and safety practices, the result is that there are now relatively few jobs which cannot be done by a reasonably healthy person as they age. Performance problems which appear to be age-related may in fact be due to lack of support from managers, unmet training needs or disengagement due to ageism.

Myth 4: New Zealand has a retirement age of 65.

New Zealand does not have a retirement age. Currently at age 65 there is an entitlement to apply for National Superannuation. Increasing numbers of people are staying on through choice and from financial necessity. New Zealand already has a significant number of people working part time well into their 70s. Some leave work prematurely for health reasons, caring responsibilities, or maybe due to a lack of workplace flexibility. Transition is an option for many people. This could take place over 10 to 15 years.

3. Talk to your people

One of the common mistakes managers and team leaders make is to assume that all older workers are like their parents. This can get you into big trouble. We are all unique and negotiate life stages in different ways. Many people report that what they would value as they face the challenges and opportunities of different life stages, be it the arrival of the first child, care of a dependant family member or transition to retirement, is an authentic conversation that respects their life stage and their unique needs and concerns.

4. Integrate age into your diversity, equity and inclusion plan

In the 2022 New Zealand Workplace Diversity Survey, 31 per cent of respondents listed ageing as an important workplace diversity issue. Only 17 per cent of all respondents indicated they had a formal policy, programme or initiative in place to address this. This means that 83 per cent of respondents either had no programme (52%) or didn't know if they did (31%). This is concerning given that 71 per cent of respondents were in leadership roles (Executive/Senior Management 28.5%, Team leaders 22.9% and HR professionals 19.6%).

From denial to action

There are several ways in which you can move from denial to action. It is important that whatever approach you take speaks to the needs and core concerns of your organisation and makes good business sense.

In the current environment of labour and skill shortages it may be that you start by talking with your older workers about what it would mean to stay on, or you recruit from this population. Think about your retention and recruitment strategies and back these up with policies and programmes that support your people as they age at work.

On the other hand, if diversity, equity and inclusion are key drivers, then include age and life stage in your strategies and work to create an age-inclusive workplace that respects and values the contribution of people at different life stages.

Some employers who have mature wellbeing programmes have approached the ageing of their workforce as a health and wellbeing challenge and are able to demonstrate that targeted life stage interventions increased levels of engagement, retention and productivity.

For those involved in workforce planning, whether it is at a national or regional level or for a particular sector or profession or as human resource professionals, the challenge is to better understand demographic trends and to factor these into your strategies.

We can no longer deny we have an ageing population and workforce; it is already impacting different regions within the country and occupations in quite different ways. ■

Quiz answers.

Q1 true, Q2 False, Q3 True, Q4 True, Q5 False.

Resources for employers: [Better Work in Later Life](#) provides evidence-based resources for businesses to realise the benefits of Aotearoa New Zealand's ageing population; [Business.govt.nz](#) also has a section for employers with a [Mature Workers Toolkit](#).

Geoff Pearman has worked in the field of age and work for more than 12 years, assisting organisations in New Zealand and Australia to adapt to the ageing of their workforce. He is recognised internationally for his work in the field and in 2020 he was recognised in the New Year's honours for his contribution to seniors and business with an MNZM. More recently he has undertaken research and developed resources in senior entrepreneurship and age friendly business. He designed the workshop [Creating an Age Inclusive Workplace for Diversity Works New Zealand](#).



Geoff Pearman



Designing for diversity

Using a design thinking approach, Auckland students have explored creative solutions to address challenges faced by diverse groups in the workforce.

Projects delivered by a group of University of Auckland design students have provided creative insights into ways businesses and workplaces could be improved through a diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) lens.

Fifteen Bachelor of Design students partnered with Diversity Works New Zealand during the final semester of 2022, tasked with designing products, services or experiences that addressed at least one diversity dimension.

It could include gender identity, sexual orientation, race and ethnicity, age, caregiving situation, religion, physical and mental ability, migrations status or class.

Diversity Works New Zealand Senior Research Associate Dr Nata Tolooui says the students identified existing challenges for diverse groups in organisations, businesses, or start-ups. Then, through the design thinking process, they explored creative solutions to address the needs of those diverse people.

“It was very interesting to see their project development process. In the midterm feedback session, I noticed that the context of the workplace was not sufficiently considered in many of the design projects. However, when I saw their final presentation, I discovered that the students addressed the feedback they had

received and, with support from their supervisors, developed their projects very well.”

University of Auckland Director of Undergraduate Design Dr Diana Albarrán González says the collaboration with the Diversity Works New Zealand team helped the students to develop projects based on real challenges.

“The lecture, feedback, and resources shared helped not only to give rich background information about the challenges of DEI in the workplace, but also to integrate the constructive feedback during their design projects.”

Dr Albarrán González says the university’s design programme aims to connect students with organisations that can help them further develop their initiatives – this is done with the support of UniServices, a not-for-profit, stand-alone company owned by the university that provides support to researchers by helping them secure funding and connections that can amplify and grow their endeavours.

Some of the students’ projects will be on display at the [Whiria Ngā Kaha Workplace Inclusion Aotearoa 2023](#) conference in Rotorua in February.

We talked to four of the students about the catalyst for their projects and how their work could support workplace inclusion. →



BONDS – sharing knowledge in the workplace

Starting with the question ‘How can we create a workplace environment where individual values can be respected and understood through sharing experiences?’, design student Terall Timoti has created a knowledge-sharing solution centred around colleagues asking and answering questions.

His vision sees organisations signing up to the BONDS online platform, then creating teams that individuals within the workplace can join.

Every day, users within the team are paired off and sent a question to answer relating to a particular diversity dimension – the questions are structured to help break down unconscious barriers and perceptions of one another, based on stereotypes created through differing values or experiences. Users are also encouraged to discuss the answers given. Discussions can take place online within the platform, making it suitable for remote working, or face-to-face.

Creating a one-to-one experience and facilitating more knowledge sharing creates a more personal connection between workmates, Terall says. This can facilitate an environment where team members not only understand the behaviours and values of one another, but also foster respect and empathy for those values, allowing for true bonds of trust and friendship to grow in the workplace.

His goal is to cultivate a safer working environment where trust and diversity can flourish, promoting greater collaboration and cohesion, and says it would be best to target organisations that are working alongside Diversity Works NZ and are seeking change.

Personal values and experience sharing can be a sensitive area and Terall says workplaces already comfortable in the inclusion space may be more open to implementing the platform.

This first iteration of the project offers questions relating to the diversity facets age and religion as Terall believes that the unconscious barriers that exist where ideals and values collide are often cultivated through spirituality or generational experiences.

But if Bonds is developed further, other diversity dimensions such as gender or ethnicity could be added. Users could opt in for one or more question streams, which would dictate how many questions they received each day.

Terall has also included a gamification aspect to the product to create an informal environment more conducive to creating meaningful connections. As users answer more questions, they reach checkpoints, unlocking fun activities such as teaching a colleague a game from their childhood.

Terall concedes there is still work to be done before the platform could go live. It needs testing with people outside the university environment and he would like to get feedback from experts in the fields of age and religion in the workplace to formulate questions that would be more effective and engaging.

Step two would be to develop questions for other diversity pillars or dimensions. Lastly the coding and programming work would need to be completed to create a functioning platform.

Terall is planning to spend summer interning with Auckland Transport before returning to university to study for a Masters in Design.

Te Rawenga – celebrating workplace diversity

Te Rawenga, the brainchild of Hannah Walton, is an online service that helps bring business owners and employees together to celebrate diversity. It aims to give workplaces a starting point and helps to avoid poor and offensive attempts at celebrating culture.

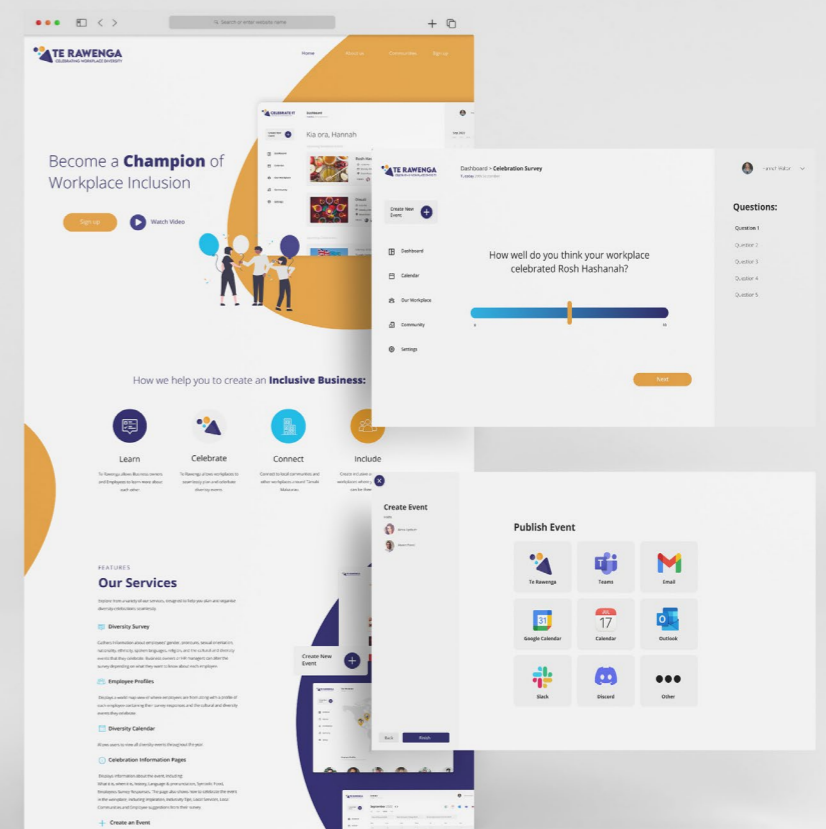
For her project, Hannah looked at 2021 research by Inclusive Aotearoa Collective Tāhono that found that overseas migrants often felt there was a lack of awareness and respect for their cultural differences. This has created misunderstandings, isolation and feelings of exclusion. The survey also found that people felt there was a lack of cultural activities and celebrations within the community of Aotearoa.

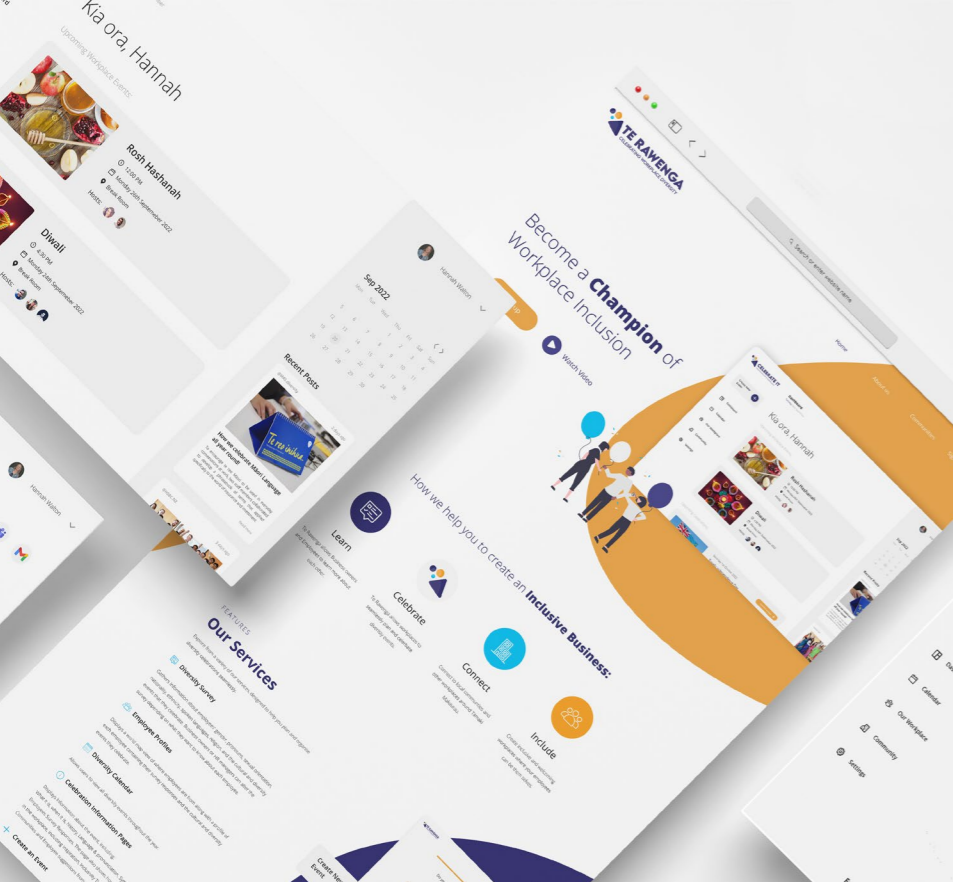
She also surveyed fellow students about their experience of diversity celebrations in the workplace when they had been in jobs or internships.

“Due to our increasing population, we also have an increasingly diverse workforce, where cultural celebrations are becoming essential,” Hannah says.

“Celebrating and learning about someone’s culture makes them feel welcome and valued. Employees will feel more comfortable, think more creatively, and bring more of their ideas confidently to the table. Celebrations build respect, relationships and inclusion within a workplace, helping ensure employees are happier and more engaged with their work.”

She designed the Te Rawenga online product to provide business owners with resources to help them learn more about their employees’ diversity and make the process of celebrating seamless. →





→ There are several different aspects to the service.

A survey tool would allow workplaces to gather information about their employees' gender, pronouns, sexual orientation, nationality, ethnicity, spoken languages, religion, and the cultural and diversity events that they celebrate. It could also collect feedback on diversity celebrations held throughout the year.

The Our Workplace feature displays a world map of where employees are from, along with a profile of each employee containing their survey responses.

A diversity calendar offers an overview of diversity events throughout the year while celebration information pages provide more detail on the history of the event and ideas on how to celebrate it in the workplace.

Users could organise and post workplace celebrations to the calendar, which could also display on an employee's dashboard.

"I would love to see the platform developed into something that can be used in workplaces, even if we can bring to life one or two of the components," Hannah says.

But it would require help from experts. "I'm not a software developer and I can't create code so I would need support from other people passionate about this work."

Currently, Hannah is applying for graduate roles in user interface or user experience design to become more proficient developing websites and apps.

one & all adaptive clothing

Design student Mia Allan has been sewing since she was nine and is a self-confessed fashion lover. With her mother working in the disability sector, Mia is also very aware of the challenges faced by people who identify as disabled.

"Often the only garments available for people with a disability is something like trackpants that are stretchy and comfortable," she says.

In some workplaces, that kind of casual wear might not be acceptable or might create another point of difference for someone with a disability.

"It doesn't seem fair that people with a disability or special clothing needs don't get to wear the same clothes I have access to."

Mia's project, one & all, is an adaptive clothing website aimed at creating a community that supports ready-to-wear clothes with adaptive features, helping people with disabilities address their functional, expressive and aesthetic needs whilst also eliminating the stigma of adaptive clothing.

She began by researching what was already available and found it was bland and offered little opportunity for personal expression by the wearer.

It was also very gendered, not size inclusive and expensive. There was very little variety in clothing options and the garments often used materials that were not environmentally friendly.

The platform started out as a place to sell adaptive clothing, designed by Mia, that offered timeless fashion and was

sensory friendly, size inclusive, gender neutral and didn't use materials from non-renewable sources.

Aiming for a capsule wardrobe line of fun outfits that functioned well and were multi-purpose, Mia began with a cargo-style midi skirt that could be converted into a mini skirt or dress as an initial garment. Her vision is for the website to allow people to buy her designs as finished garments or patterns so they can make the clothes themselves.

It will also act as a marketplace for other sewers to sell specialised adaptive clothing or for people to sell pre-loved adaptive clothing.

A how-to video section would show disabled people ways to adapt their existing clothing to fit their needs and a forum would offer a community aspect where people could ask questions or get advice on adaptive clothing.

The platform would also be a place that corporates could get information on how to adapt uniforms or dress codes to cater for the individual needs of people with disabilities.

"I would love to see corporates consider the needs of people with disabilities when they design their uniforms," Mia says.

Although she has finished studying and is looking for a fulltime graduate role in design, Mia would like to keep one & all going to sell her own line of adaptive clothing. But if the project is to develop further, she needs to do more market research and prototype testing to ensure her designs are suitable for people with disabilities.



Cultural Ties marketplace

Cultural Ties is an online NFT (Non-Fungible Token) marketplace platform designed to combat cultural appropriation of Māori and Pacific cultures within Aotearoa's fashion industry.

Its creator, design student Tovia Boyle, says it could have applications for any industry or commercial entity wanting to access cultural imagery and designs in a fair and respectful way.

“As an individual of both Pacific and European descent, I wanted to create something that would raise awareness of the improper use of cultural designs, symbols, and artworks of my communities.”

The solution needed to give businesses or individuals the ability to learn, co-create, or acquire cultural concepts through cultural communities and individuals to prevent cultural appropriation.

“Rather than taking another culture's intellectual property, I envisioned a platform where cultural communities and creators can give to each other, in ways that benefit both parties appropriately,” Tovia says.

He designed a platform that is a standard webpage marketplace except that it operates through cryptocurrency. While customers could pay using common digital payment options, the transactions would be done using cryptocurrency exchange rates.

Cultural Ties would allow cultural designers, artists or communities to publish work on the marketplace, providing an individual or business the opportunity to purchase that work in an appropriate manner.

A smart contract between the creator and the purchaser would establish boundaries and opportunities around the use of the work.

The platform would also provide an avenue where individuals or businesses could commission designers, artists or cultural communities to create a piece of work for a specific context.

Most of the purchase price would go to the creator of the work, and Cultural Ties would receive a commission to continue to fund the platform. Within the platform structure there would also be the opportunity for a commission to go to the cultural community or non-governmental organisation of the creator's choice, in essence as a koha.

Tovia is keen to develop the platform further, however he acknowledges he would need support to bridge some skill gaps when it comes to running Cultural Ties as a live platform. It would also require consultation with representatives from Pacific and Māori cultures to ensure they were happy that the work created by people from their communities was being acknowledged and respected.

Meanwhile Tovia hopes to continue studying in 2023, working towards a Master of Design. ■

WHIRIA NGĀ KAHA

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More than 40 international
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—
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—
The launch of the Global Inclusion
& Diversity Alliance (GIDA)

—
The launch of Diversity Works
New Zealand's professional
accreditation programme

Register now at workplaceinclusion.org

Creating a community of inclusion professionals

Maretha Smit explores how accreditation for workplace diversity, equity and inclusion practitioners will create verified levels of expertise, support for those doing this mahi and raise the profile of the profession.

In a recent conversation with a friend I was left speechless. Having shared some of the insights from my day-to-day work, I was astounded about the downright denial of the facts that I presented. I was taken aback by the refusal to consider that the world might have moved on post the context that informed their opinion.

During the weeks that followed, I replayed that conversation often, reflecting with concern on the biases that ran so deep that consideration of any alternate views seemed to pose an existential threat.

There is no denying that working in diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) is complex and confronting. We invest our energy at the sharp end of social and behavioural change – often at the point where change stands in tension with short-term economic returns. Dealing with ambiguity is our daily bread, and we work in the knowledge that any DEI playbook available to us is already based on yesterday's social context, and that we must adapt as we go.

“We’ve realised that while representation matters, it fails to achieve the equal outcomes that we need, such as equal pay and distribution of power.”



The making of a profession

When the Equal Employment Opportunities Trust was established, 30 years ago, the purpose was to “assist designated groups to achieve equality of opportunity in all forms of paid employment”, and to “encourage businesses to eliminate the causes of inequality of opportunity for designated groups”. For many years, we advocated for, and measured our success through, increased representation across the workforce, especially in senior leadership roles.

The DEI kaupapa today looks very different to what it did in 1992. Our understanding of marginalisation and impacted communities has become more nuanced. We’ve realised that while representation matters, it fails to achieve the equal outcomes that we need, such as equal pay and distribution of power. We’ve grown our maturity in understanding the structural barriers that keep inequities in place, and we’ve built resilience in the face of resistance when attempting to dismantle exclusive structures.

In this context, organisations in all sectors are looking for DEI champions with a set of competencies, skills and technical expertise far beyond what was required a few decades ago. Without this, organisations run the risk of continued inaction by appointed committees, poor workplace culture, deteriorating client engagement, slow pace of innovation and expensive litigation due to complaints.

There is an ever-growing demand for professionals who can effectively implement and lead this mahi and many organisations are creating new roles to serve this need. Global data reflects that the number of diversity roles increased by 71 per cent between 2015 and 2020, and diversity leadership roles such as Head, Director and Chief of Diversity increased by 107 per cent, 75 per cent, and 68 per cent respectively in the same period (Business, LinkedIn). →

“DEI will only succeed as a sustainable force in organisations if we are able to cultivate an engaged community of workplace inclusion professionals.”

→ But the DEI discipline is still early in its development. Globally, DEI is an emerging body of work, only slightly more than 50 years old, and the field does not have the level of standardisation and structure required to ensure that outcomes are delivered. As such when hiring a DEI practitioner or leader, organisations often rely on lived experience, advocacy and passion for DEI as evidence of competence.

While lived experience of marginalisation is important, without the behavioural competencies to drive change and an understanding of the nuanced DEI landscape in Aotearoa, it is common for practitioners to overlook key elements of DEI practice, rush the process of organisation-wide change, and miss important underlying issues, leading to resistance and defensiveness within organisations.

To future proof workplaces, organisations will increasingly require external verification of the expertise, knowledge, and interpersonal competencies of the people who they trust with driving change.

An opportunity for impact

In the post-2020 world we are witnessing a global recognition of social inequities. Increasingly, leaders are moving past the concept of DEI as a “progressive idea” into understanding that DEI is a conduit for transformation that needs to inform overall business strategy.

To be effective, DEI needs to be integrated into the fabric of organisational systems and processes, much like risk management or governance. DEI practitioners are increasingly expected to have enterprise-wide strategic impact, but such scope for impact comes with a high level of responsibility.

With a better-defined approach to the role of a DEI specialist, we have the opportunity to consolidate our expertise, research, and networks in such a way as to raise the national profile of DEI as a discipline. In examining the core competencies, skills and behaviours required to effect organisational transformation in the 21st century, we can identify the indicators for excellence and success that organisations need when recruiting in these roles.

An opportunity for community

If the pandemic years have taught us anything, it is that the people in our DEI whānau are passionate advocates, determined problem solvers and effective organisers. They are stepping up to engage effectively and respectfully with a wide range of stakeholders, internal and external to our organisations, and they are often at the forefront of dialogue about how to manage (sometimes conflicting) needs.

With the positive increase in influence, however, we’ve seen a commensurate adverse impact on the energy, emotional wellbeing and personal resilience of those who do this work.

Given that DEI is in its infancy as a professional discipline, we have not yet established the communities of practice that can contribute to the body of knowledge that will inform or validate our recommended strategies. We have not yet established the networks to support each other when the work takes a personal toll. And we have not yet built the trust to hold each other to account in doing this work in a manner that creates safe and sustained progress for organisations.

We need to change that. DEI will only succeed as a sustainable force in organisations if we are able to cultivate an engaged community of workplace inclusion professionals.

Professional accreditation

As the national body for DEI, Diversity Works New Zealand has taken the lead in designing a framework for the professional accreditation of people who are tasked with transforming organisations into places of belonging for a workforce that is increasingly diverse.

In partnership with a reference group of established professionals in the field, we have developed a competency framework and assessment criteria for two streams of accreditation – one for DEI specialists, and another for leaders who are sponsoring and supporting DEI work.

The guiding principles for developing the programme were:

- Inclusive – providing pathways that stretch beyond formal qualifications and recognise lived experience, extramural/voluntary work and professional experience in developing competence
- Grounded in Aotearoa New Zealand – understanding that we live in a country that is shaped by unique world views that need to be reflected in our workplace cultures
- Globally informed – recognising that we are part of a global movement of social change and that our approach should draw from and contribute to a global conversation

This month, we will launch the specialist stream of accreditation, across two different options of proficiency – an operational credential aimed at those who lead and participate in DEI committees and employee-led networks, and a strategic credential aimed at those who have a dedicated DEI role which includes strategic outcomes and enterprise-wide influence. The stream of accreditation aimed at building DEI confidence in the next generation of leaders, will follow later in the year.

DEI accreditation in Aotearoa New Zealand will not only provide individuals with the evidence and confidence to lead as a diversity professional, it will also provide the credibility to encourage people to undertake organisational change.

Committing to meaningful change

Workplace inclusion is important, if not critical, to achieve social and economic outcomes, but the road is riddled with potholes and barriers to progress. It requires an understanding of one’s own biases, the courage to have difficult conversations, the energy to create space for marginalised communities to voice their needs, and the humility to not centre oneself in the process.

This takes a high level of skill and self-awareness. It takes the ability to think critically and constructively. It requires a commitment to hard, and ongoing work. But moreover, it needs the support of a team of likeminded humans to collectively lead the way.

Would a professional credential and community have helped me to better handle that difficult conversation with my friend? Maybe yes, maybe no. I will perhaps never know as we don’t have line of sight of another’s journey.

But it would provide those with similar experiences to mine with a community of support and collective wisdom to build the muscle of readiness and resilience to have another go at another time. ■



Maretha Smit is the Chief Executive of Diversity Works New Zealand

In brief

A quick look at workplace inclusion news and updates making headlines here and around the world.

DIVERSITY CRISIS IN THE SOFTWARE INDUSTRY

An in-depth investigation will look at why women are leaving software roles in New Zealand at twice the rate of men. Dr Kelly Blincoe, a senior lecturer in the Department of Electrical, Computer and Software Engineering in the University of Auckland's Faculty of Engineering will use her \$800,000 Rutherford Discovery Fellowship to look at why the sector continues to be dominated by men. Locally, less than a quarter of software jobs are held by women and 29 per cent of women working in the industry exit in their first five years. Dr Blincoe's research will focus on retaining women in software engineering.

INCOME GAP FOR TRANS AND NON-BINARY PEOPLE

Trans and non-binary people earn less than the cisgender population, according to a report from Stats NZ. The Household Economic Survey data for the year ending June 2021 showed that, even when adjusted for age, the annual average personal income for a transgender or non-binary person was 24 per cent lower than for a cisgender person (\$32,172 compared with \$42,611 for cisgender). Age-adjustment removed the income gap between the reported LGBT+ population and non-LGBT+ population, however those in the LGBT+ population were more likely to be highly educated than the rest of the population. The data showed 34 per cent held a bachelor's qualification or higher, compared with 28 per cent of non-LGBT+ people.

EQUALITY VICTORY FOR CROSS-COUNTRY SKIERS

The International Ski Federation (FIS) has announced that men and women cross-country ski racers will now compete over equal distances. Though female skiers often trained alongside their male counterparts, before the #SkiEqual campaign, their official races were always shorter. This is just one of the ways athletes worldwide are seeking parity in terms of pay and competition conditions. Starting in 2023, the European Cross-Country Championships will equalise running race distances for men and women. The US women's soccer team negotiated a \$33 million settlement last year after a long dispute over equal pay.

VIRGIN ATLANTIC ADOPTS GENDER-NEUTRAL UNIFORM POLICY

British airline Virgin Atlantic has announced it's scrapping its policy on gendered uniforms. The policy change will allow cabin crew, pilots and ground staff to wear the uniform of their choice, "no matter their gender, gender identity, or gender expression," the company said in [a news release](#). It's also introducing optional pronoun badges for all its people and those travelling with the airline. Air New Zealand Chief People Officer Nikki Dines says it's great to see the work Virgin Atlantic has done. "Air New Zealand is continuously reviewing its uniform and grooming standards to understand what is important to our customers, our people and the environment we are operating in."

WHERE ARE YOU AT ON YOUR INCLUSION JOURNEY?



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- Understand your organisation's diversity, equity and inclusion maturity
- Create a roadmap to develop your mahi in this space

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