

Tauranga City Council

RESPECTFUL CULTURE

MEDIUM-LARGE ORGANISATION FINALIST



THE STORY

In line with Tauranga City Council's strategy to create a city where residents feel safe and connected, it wanted to make sure its employees worked in an inclusive and respectful environment.

Tauranga City Council (TCC) serves a population of more than 162,000 residents, providing and maintaining infrastructure for the city and delivering services to its communities. The council has more than 1000 employees.

In June 2023, TCC updated its Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Policy, aimed at ensuring that all employees work together in an inclusive, respectful, and productive environment, honouring the organisation's values and vision of having diversity, inclusion and equity encouraged and embraced in everyday operations.

The internal policy complements the council's Tauranga Matarauui – Inclusive City Strategy, introduced in August 2023, which strives to ensure residents of all ages, belief, abilities, and backgrounds are included, feel safe, connected, and healthy.

To support the implementation of the DEI Policy, a diversity advisor role was created to work alongside other strategic advisors responsive to the needs of the city's diverse communities.

The diversity advisor is responsible for the implementation of the DEI Policy, promotion and advocacy of DEI issues, but also for demonstrating to staff that the organisation recognises the value and benefits of a diverse and skilled workforce. In addition, the role works to amplify the voice of the Rainbow community across other internal work programmes and support the community to ensure their needs and aspirations are being met.

The diversity advisor works in the Inclusive Cities team that sits within the Community Development and Emergency Management team. Strategic Advisor: Diversity & Inclusion Jane Massey says, to date, the role has focussed on implementing the updated internal DEI Policy and helping to develop a work programme and action plan that has included a raft of both short and long-term initiatives.

They have included:

- Formalising an internal DEI Committee
- Setting up diverse internal network/support groups
- Creating terminology guides and identifying and highlighting DEI resources
- Inviting community stakeholders to present to staff on creating inclusive workplaces

“Unconscious bias and inclusive leadership training has been rolled out to staff, and new recruitment procedures have been developed. These procedures look at expanding our sources to attract talent, so we can reach new targeted audiences, and using more diversely integrated interview panels and processes,” says Jane.

“Results from a DEI staff survey conducted this year will support our DEI learning journey and demonstrate to employees that Tauranga City Council is committed to creating the most inclusive working environment possible for all staff,” she says.

TCC adopted My Team Pulse (MTP), an engagement tool for leaders to build highly trusting, aligned, and unified teams. It provides leaders with regular insights into team engagement, including mojo, leadership, productivity, and team effectiveness, and is repeated every three months.

In a recent 2023 MTP staff survey, 96 per cent of staff considered themselves to be either moderately or highly productive and stated that the culture was ‘80 per cent empowering’.

THE CHALLENGE

Tauranga City Council wanted to make sure its employees worked in an inclusive, respectful and productive environment, honouring its city vision.

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

- A specific diversity advisor role was created and a raft of initiatives introduced including:
 - Formalising an internal DEI Committee
 - Setting up diverse internal network/support groups
 - Creating terminology guides and identifying and highlighting DEI resource

“Unconscious bias and inclusive leadership training has been rolled out to staff, and new recruitment procedures have been developed.”

- Inviting community stakeholders to present to staff on creating inclusive workplaces
- The diversity advisor worked closely with other Community Development advisors to foster a culture of respect (both internally and externally) and demonstrate commitment and resilience throughout all the diversity strands
- The implementation of the programme was sponsored internally by the Community Services general manager
- Unconscious bias training was introduced to all staff, and new recruitment procedures were developed.
- A DEI staff survey was developed to support further learning.

RESULTS AND BENEFITS

- A recent staff survey found 96 per cent of staff considered themselves to be either moderately or highly productive and stated that the culture was 80 per cent empowering.



- TCC has been accredited as an Established Welcoming Community through Immigration NZ, hosted a Multi-Ethnic Forum to support ethnic voices and community leadership, and supported Accentuated, a leadership programme for ethnically diverse TCC staff and community members.
- An internal LGBTQIA+ staff networking and support group was created, paving the way for other groups to be established. The LGBTQIA+ launch was attended by two general managers and other senior leaders.
- A DEI intranet page has been developed, featuring advice on gender transition, engagement toolkits, information on DEI policy, and link to the LGBTQIA+ staff network group.
- Employees report feeling safe and more able to be their authentic self because of the DEI work programme.

KEY LEARNING

Establishing a dedicated diversity advisor role has helped create a workplace where everyone feels respected, valued and empowered.

