

## Cultural Celebration Award Winner:

### Bupa

Video Link: <https://vimeo.com/137552475>

#### Person-centred care at the heart of Bupa philosophy.

In New Zealand Bupa is the largest aged care provider with three aged care businesses; rest homes and hospitals; retirement villages and personal medical alarms plus a rehabilitation business, touching the lives of more than 20,000 New Zealanders. Bupa has over 4500 employees representing over 60 differently cultural backgrounds all delivering on Bupa's purpose of longer, healthier, happier lives.

Championing the diversity of voices within the organisation is at the heart of Bupa's culture. Bupa is proud to deliver 'person centred' care, a service that considers and respects the whole person including their cultural needs, and depends on individual and personal connection between employees and clients.

The Personal Best initiative is one of Bupa's initiatives designed to help employees explore the ways in which they are uniquely capable of delivering person-centred care. This involves recognising the importance of the cultural background of clients, residents and customers, and celebrating what individual employees have to offer. Through Personal Best employees can identify their own unique skills and passions which are not necessarily employed in their day-to-day responsibilities, and celebrate perspectives that may enable better connections with those they care for.

Many of Bupa's employees enter the workforce facing obstacles to being fully able to contribute their strengths and skills, such as language issues, difficulties in matching previous skills and experience in this employment market, or entering a new or different career from the one they had in their home country. Bupa has several ground-level training programmes that enable many migrant employees to advance their employment prospects.

One such programme is Career Force, which enables people to achieve New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) unit standards on the job and is offered in the areas of health, disability and cleaning.

An example of an employee who has benefitted from the Career Force programme is Subha Ray who was trained as a physiotherapist in India but is unable to use her qualification in New Zealand because of registration issues. She was employed as a caregiver, then became an activities coordinator and was encouraged by her manager to complete Career Force Units in diversional therapy. As a result of her training, Subha's confidence has increased and she is now a Career Force assessor. With the support of her manager, Subha is also working towards the NZ physiotherapy registration.

Subha is not the only employee who has benefited from Bupa's emphasis on nurturing a skilled multi-cultural workforce. Bupa also runs an in-house competency assessment programme (CAP) for internationally-qualified nurses who are required by Nursing Council of New Zealand law to demonstrate their ability before being registered in this country. CAP, which is approved by the Nursing Council New Zealand, offers financial assistance to support nurses with course fees and living expenses, as well as registration and immigration costs once the course is complete.

Bupa also demonstrated its dedication to skilled migrants by working with government departments to implement the Approval in Principle scheme (AIP). AIP is a conditional approval of employment which supports current employees on work visas to be re-hired when their current visas are expiring. AIP enables Bupa to retain current and valued employees and build a culturally diverse talent pipeline.

"The AIP is essential to Bupa's sustainability," says Recruitment Manager, Natalie Yakas. "It is vitally important in maintaining an acceptable level of experience of carers within our workforce for the safety and care of our residents."

Bupa's vision is that all employees are accepted, valued and empowered. Initiatives to ensure that cultural diversity is valued at every level of the organisation are employee-led to a great extent, implemented by managers and teams on the ground in a way that best suits them.

Local events to celebrate cultural diversity are encouraged and often include cultural music or dance performances from employees, their families or local social groups. In order to address employee morale, Rossendale Care Home Manager, Adriana Turica, set up a regular "Cultural Day" where employees could share their culture and customs at work through dress, food and stories.

"In the field of specialist dementia care a supportive team is essential, as carers can often face negative responses from residents, despite offering the best standards of care," says Adriana.

"When I was appointed in 2007, employee morale was low and the team was not united. I quickly realised the need to foster inter-cultural recognition and respect among my diverse workforce by celebrating diversity."

Alongside encouraging her staff to take up training and development opportunities, Adriana also offers literacy and numeracy support, including one-on-one sessions. Celebrating diversity has vastly improved Rossendale and Adriana and her team have been able to achieve the prestigious maximum four-year certification through the Ministry of Health audit which only 12.7% of aged care providers have achieved across the country.

Bupa as an organisation recognises that nurturing and valuing a multi-cultural workforce enables employees to have the confidence to bring their unique skills and perspectives to their work, allowing them to better connect with their clients and provide a truly person-centred service.