

Emerging Diversity and Inclusion: Fulton Hogan



Video link: <https://vimeo.com/album/4446506/video/229800088>

A leadership and development programme for high-potential female staff members is helping address gender diversity at Fulton Hogan, where just 14 per cent of the workforce are women.

Fulton Hogan has more than 80 years' experience in the transport, water, energy, road maintenance, and land development infrastructure in New Zealand, Australia and the South Pacific, and has a staff of more than 6,600 employees spanning these territories.

In October 2015, Fulton Hogan released a Group Diversity and Inclusion strategy to the business, designed to develop leadership capability within diversity groups and remove any existing barriers to achieving future success for those groups. Gender diversity inclusion was chosen as the focus for the first year.

Cherie Leckner (Project Director and one of Fulton Hogan's most senior operational females) approached Nicola Wilson (Group Learning and Development Manager) and Stephanie Donaldson (Group Learning and Development Lead) requesting help to develop a leadership development programme and network for high-potential females in Fulton Hogan, and "The Road to Success" project was framed.

The programme was designed to provide current and potential female leaders with the skills to develop their leadership capability and progress their careers, recognise barriers to career progression for women within Fulton Hogan and equip women with the skills to

address these, provide a supportive forum for individuals to share their experiences and give constructive solutions, increase women's confidence in their abilities and their contribution to the business and allow them to reach their full potential.

Fulton Hogan decided to partner with training provider David Forman to deliver the programme, which consisted of face-to-face workshops, group project work, post-workshop activities, webinars and mentoring during a 12 month period.

Fulton Hogan's New Zealand Executive Team funded the leadership programme and then Chief Executive Robert Jones sent information on the programme to key staff managers in the business and called for nominations. There were 31 nominations received for 16 places so a steering committee, made up of members of the Executive team, senior leaders and senior operational females in the business interviewed the nominees and made final selections.

Mentoring was a key part of the initiative and a process was drafted and approved by Robert to assign internal senior leader male mentors to the attendees. The aim of having male mentors was two-fold: The women would have a great mentor to learn from and the opportunity to build relationships with senior male leaders who would champion them, and the male mentors gained a greater awareness and understanding of diversity challenges women face.

The intake was split into four groups, and each group worked on a potential solution to improve gender diversity at Fulton Hogan and within the industry it operates in.

The group presented its solutions to the Executive Team when it graduated in June 2017.

Senior leaders throughout the business have supported the Road to Success project, with several presenting topics at the workshops. The Executive Team has also approved a second intake to commence in July 2017.

Fulton Hogan Group Learning and Development Lead Stephanie Donaldson says the programme has heightened the awareness of the subject of diversity and inclusion. "As our company operates in a predominantly male-dominated industry, it is important to raise the awareness of this topic and to highlight the conscious or unconscious bias that can occur in the industry."

It's also increased the pipeline of female candidates for future leadership positions, provided women with a trusted network where they can share their successes and challenges, given attendees a new toolbox of leadership skills, improved communication and increased their influence, profile and working relationships, she says.

And it's given the women participating increased confidence, Stephanie says. "From day one through to today, the change in the way these women hold themselves and interact is visible. They now feel they have the ability and confidence to step up to the next level. And they have gained relationships based on trust and common experiences that will support them into the future."