

# *Growing your trades workforce*

– attracting women to your jobs

## *Te Whakatipu i tō taiao mahi ā-rehe*

– te whakapoapoa i ngā wāhine ki āu tūranga mahi



“A mixed-gender team can bring a different approach and can deliver a better result than a single-gender team. They make up 50 percent of the population, so why not have 50 percent of them in our workforce?”

**Matt Southhorn**

Chief Executive, Independent Lines Services Christchurch



**Manatū  
Wāhine**

**Ministry  
for Women**



"I'm really loving it, I would highly recommend it to all other girls. I think they shouldn't let gender or strength put them off, especially because...we mainly do renovations so there's a huge variety in the work – it isn't as harsh on your body as you might think."

**Haylee Lemon**  
Apprentice, Kevin Goodall Builders Ltd

"Having a woman around sometimes moderates other people's behavior, I think it moderates their language, which is a good thing. I think it adds to the professionalism of the building site."

**Kevin Goodall**  
Managing Director, Kevin Goodall Builders Ltd

## *Trade worker shortages*

### *Te kōpakatanga o ngā kaimahi ā-rehe*

Infrastructure investment will play a pivotal role in New Zealand's post-COVID-19 pandemic economic recovery. New Zealand's construction and infrastructure industry has an acute skilled labour shortage and the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to exacerbate that shortage.

Half the working age population are women but only about 13 percent of people in construction are women and just 2.5 percent of construction

tradespeople are 'women on the tools' or in apprenticeships. The infrastructure industry has made more progress, from a female workforce of 3 percent in 2012 to 9 percent in 2020.

The COVID-19 recovery provides a great opportunity to look beyond traditional labour forces and it makes good sense to attract women to your jobs.

#### *Top 5 reasons to consider diversifying*

#### *Ngā take matua e 5 me whai whakaaro kia whakarerekēhia te taiao mahi*

- 1** Choosing from a bigger pool of people helps you find the best person for the job, meaning that you waste less time and money hiring the wrong person.
- 2** Diversity in the workplace means different ideas on how to approach a task and find solutions to problems.
- 3** Increased customer satisfaction. Having diverse employees gives customers a choice given women make up 80 percent of all home purchasing decisions.
- 4** Diverse teams are more productive which improves your bottom line.
- 5** Being a woman in a male-dominated industry takes drive and determination – great attributes that you want in a worker.



## *Getting a competitive edge*

### *Te whai taumata eke anō*

Businesses we spoke to said companies that employ women in their workplace have a competitive advantage. Many customers choose businesses that employ women. In addition businesses said:

- different perspectives and lateral problem-solving skills mean that women on the site generate non-traditional solutions and fresh, creative ideas.
- women are motivated, efficient and highly productive, and motivate others in turn.
- customer satisfaction is increased with strong communication skills.
- many workplaces that have women working in them experience a reduction in injury rates.

## *Invest in your future workforce*

### *Taupuatia te taiao mahi o āpōpō*

Create new opportunities to employ women in your business, both on site and off site.

- Look for women outside the industry with skills which are relevant and will add value to the diverse needs of your business.
- Re-think the on site roles in your business in terms of the transferable skills they involve in addition to industry knowledge.
- Think about different ways of working on-site to familiarise and train new workers.
- Create new roles to cross-over a diverse skill set, particularly with opportunities for management and leadership.
- Bring in multiple women, where possible, rather than one – create a more welcoming environment for new employees.



“It just helps having a diverse group of people and you learn different things from different people, and how they do things as well, so you pick up on all of that and then you just work it together. So it’s good that there’s a diversity there with the guys, having the 50/50 for girls and guys, because girls do think a bit differently.”

**Jess Anderson**

Construction Co-ordinator, A1homes Wairarapa

“We’re 50% [gender diversity] on our team here... and everybody has their strength, so from an employer’s point of view they’ve got to understand that it’s about... being brave enough to step outside the square and say ‘ok let’s do it!’”

**Paul Southey**

Master Builder and Owner, A1homes Wairarapa



"I think it's a really good opportunity for everyone, including the male bosses and colleagues, I think it works both ways."

**Pearl Baker**

Apprentice, Battli-yon Builders Roofing Specialists

"It's about getting our wāhine experienced, and getting Pearl to pass it on to the next lot of rangatahi and then she can lead the way for the rest of our wāhine."

**Albie Matthews**

Owner, Battli-yon Builders Roofing Specialists

“Marlane was a really good apprentice because she was willing to learn, had a good attitude to work and wanted to make something of herself. She was one of the easiest apprentices to teach because she listened.”

**Ken Fredricksen**

Engineer, Ravensdown Fertiliser

“Women can tend to think differently about some approaches... which adds great diversity to a workplace.”

**Marlane Harmer**

Mechanical Engineer, Ravensdown Fertiliser



“[In terms of mental health we are] trying to break down those barriers around males talking. Jess is out there talking to them and helping to break down those barriers.”

**Paul Southey**

Master Builder and Owner, A1homes Wairarapa

“Everyone’s just accepting now, the times are changing. We don’t do all the lifting anymore. We have to work smarter, so strength’s out the window, and there’s no reason not to hire women.”

**Max Byl**

Foreman, Battli-yon Builders, Roofing Specialists



“The opportunity is out there for heaps of learning for a start because I definitely don’t stop learning. I think you build your confidence up as you go and with commercial [building] it’s a bit more of a challenge because you’re dealing with so many different elements.”

**Larena McGregor**

Painter/Decorator,  
Jeff Dermott Painting and Decorating



## **Take action;** **how to get women onto your team**

### ***Kōkirihiā ngā mahi;*** ***he pēhea rā te tonono wāhine ki tō tīma***

#### **What to do on your work sites**

- Get the gear that means women will be safe on site and 'fit in'.
- Support women as they join a new team through a change of culture.
- Make it clear when promoting your business that you welcome applications from women.
- Think about the words you use, for example, use tradesperson instead of tradesman.
- On promotional material include pictures of both men and women working in your business to set the scene.

#### **Ask around – word of mouth**

- Contact industry bodies and businesses you know that employ women and hear first-hand how they brought women into their teams.
- Use your family, social and work networks and ask around for women who are keen to train, or are already trained and are keen to work.

#### **Tell training bodies or industry groups you are keen to employ women**

- Talk to your local Te Pūkenga, or industry training organisation (ITO), wānanga, or private training establishment (PTE) to find out about women who will soon be qualified and let them know you want women on your team.
- Talk to your industry training bodies about women trainees and apprentices.
- If you already employ women as tradespeople, let people know. Highlight your great stories in trade magazines and events.
- Have women speak at careers events and schools.
- Participate as a speaker at 'taster courses' at your local Te Pūkenga, or ITO, wānanga, or PTE to find your future employees.

## Get more ideas from... *Me whai whakaaro anō i...*

### **Building and Construction Industry Training Organisation (BCITO)**

New Zealand's largest provider of construction trade apprenticeships. The BCITO's training advisors develop training programmes specific to each trainee and their training environment.  
[www.bcito.org.nz](http://www.bcito.org.nz)

### **Connexis**

Connexis is the infrastructure industry training organisation for civil, energy, telecommunications, and water offering nationally recognised qualifications. With an active Ultimit (Women in Infrastructure initiative), Connexis is available to support more women join the infrastructure industry.  
[www.connexis.org.nz](http://www.connexis.org.nz)   [www.ultimit.co.nz](http://www.ultimit.co.nz)

### **Skills.org**

Skills.org plays an active role in encouraging more women to enter the trades through initiatives with other ITOs and industry partners to promote successful careers for women in trades, and promote networking across various trades.  
[skills.org.nz/community/women-in-trades/](http://skills.org.nz/community/women-in-trades/)

### **Māori and Pasifika Trades Training**

A group of training and industry organisations working together to help Māori and Pasifika become leaders in the trades.  
[www.maoripasifikatrades.co.nz/](http://www.maoripasifikatrades.co.nz/)

### **National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC)**

NAWIC informs and upskills women in construction and promotes networking and information sharing.  
[www.nawic.org.nz](http://www.nawic.org.nz)

### **Civil Contractors New Zealand (CCNZ)**

Formerly the New Zealand Contractors' Federation, CCNZ members are engaged in civil engineering construction and general contracting.  
[www.civilcontractors.co.nz](http://www.civilcontractors.co.nz)

### **Women in Road Transport**

This group was created in 2014 and provides success stories and networking opportunities for women.  
[www.rtfnz.co.nz/women\\_in\\_road\\_transport](http://www.rtfnz.co.nz/women_in_road_transport)

### **Women in Engineering**

A programme for women in engineering which works to improve the gender disparity and pay gap in the engineering industry.  
[www.engineeringnz.org/resources/women-engineering/](http://www.engineeringnz.org/resources/women-engineering/)

### **Women in Roofing**

This is a volunteer-based organisation that provides networking, mentoring, education, and recruitment opportunities to support the careers of woman roofing professionals.  
[www.nzwomeninroofing.org.nz/](http://www.nzwomeninroofing.org.nz/)



“Employers need communicators, need people who can manage time, and need people who can think laterally.”

**Heather Harding**  
General Manager,  
Harding Construction, Timaru

“Coming into it I wasn’t quite aware of the big role that communication plays, but it’s something that I find is enjoyable. I like being intuitive, finding ways to support people along the way, to improve the project or whatever it may be. I knew communication was going to be part of the role, but at the moment it’s a really big focus.”

**Jess Coleman**  
Quantity Surveyor Cadet, Harding Construction, Timaru

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**E mihi ana ki ngā rōpū i tā rātou tautoko  
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- Building and Construction Industry Training Organisation (BCITO)
- Connexis Infrastructure Industry Training Organisation
- Skills.org
- Master Builders
- Women in Trades
- Stuff.co.nz

**Reference group:**

Haylee Lemon, Kevin Goodall, Kevin Goodall Builders Ltd; Jess Anderson, Paul Southey, A1Homes; Pearl Baker, Max Byl, Albie Matthews, Battli-yon Builders; Larena McGregor, Jeff Dermott Painting and Decorating; Marlane Harmer, Ravensdown Fertiliser Works.



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