

Auckland Council Cultural Celebration

Auckland Council's key diversity goal is that its senior leadership team will reflect the make-up of Auckland's working population within the next three years.

Auckland is home to people from more than 200 different ethnicities, making it 'super-diverse'. In just over 20 years, Asian, Pacific and Māori peoples will together make up the largest share of Auckland's population.

Auckland Council is the local government council for the Auckland region, employing more than 8,500 people. It is the biggest council in Oceania.

Currently the council employees are 48 per cent European, six per cent Māori, 14 per cent Asian and eight per cent Pacific. At management level 75 per cent are European, 11 per cent Māori, two per cent Asian and two per cent Pacific.

Auckland Council's leadership and diversity programme includes two key initiatives aimed at achieving its diversity in leadership targets, the Moana Pasifika Mentoring Programme and the Māori Leadership Programme. Both programmes were developed in partnership with staff.

The Moana Pasifika Mentoring Programme was a response to Pasifika staff requests for group mentoring which reflected their cultural values. The key components are to enhance understanding of pan-Pacific culture regarding leadership and mentoring and improve advocacy for, and link strategic planning to, goals for Pacific communities.

The programme began with a survey of all members of the council's existing Moana Pasifika Network members in 2011. It showed that more than half of the members had long tenures and were often involved in extra-curricular work activities but sat at the lowest tiers of the organisation, with limited progression during their tenure.

"The survey results showed that there was a desire by members to progress but a clear gap between desire and action," says Principal Advisor, Diversity and Inclusion Fezeela Raza. "As a result, the Moana Pasifika Mentoring Programme was born."

The programme has two main components.

The first took the form of workshops delivered by Le Va, (a national Pacific organisation specialising in Pacific approaches to health, mental health and cultural competency training). The workshops focused on culture and leadership and a development plan for participants. They identified opportunities for Pacific staff to gain experience in other areas of council and provided a chance to share individual insights and experiences around success.

The second was group-based mentoring. Mentees were placed into a group of three, which met regularly with a group mentor. This was one of the unique attributes of the mentoring programme. It



was identified by the Moana Pasifika Committee that a traditional one-on-one mentoring relationship would not work for Pacific staff.

The programme led to comprehensive and culturally appropriate inductions of new staff, the development of a Pacific Responsiveness Strategy and opportunities to integrate Pacific concepts of leadership into the mainstream leadership model. These three areas are being scoped by the Diversity and Inclusion team.

Overall, upon completion of the mentoring programme participants said they found the workshops illuminating and empowering.

Ten of the 2015 participants received internal job promotions and strong connections were made between Pasifika mentors and senior leaders across the council. Increased involvement in the Moana Pasifika staff network is feeding the pipeline for succession for Pasifika employees.



The Māori leadership initiative's aim is to establish a capability development programme that would reflect Te Ao Māori principles, values and experiences. It began with a pilot. The cohort was made up of Māori demonstrating behaviours of a rangatira (regardless of their roles in the council hierarchy) The programme was developed in partnership with Neuropower and Hexagon Group, a management consultancy based in Aotearoa and Australia.

The pilot created mini projects carried out across eight months that resulted in some ground-breaking initiatives. Key among these is local government's first comprehensive Māori employment policy for Māori staff (MAHI - Measures and Actions for High Impact).

MAHI supports the council's commitment to growing and developing a talented and thriving Māori workforce and to strengthening this voice at all levels of the organisation. MAHI will improve responsiveness to Māori through staff recruitment, training and development that strengthens its Māori workforce.

As a result of the programme three participants received internal job promotions. Participants were elected into leadership and representative roles on the council's Māori staff union rūnanga, for the PSA and on the Board of Unitec.

There is strong support by senior leadership at Auckland Council for increasing diversity at leadership levels.

"Our CEO has specific measures in his performance agreement around inclusion which will be cascaded into the senior leader accountabilities," says Fezeela. "And all line managers supported participants to take part in the programmes, including committing their time to meet the requirements of their chosen programme."

Auckland Council has included new questions in its regular engagement survey to measure progress. Results were positive. The response to 'I feel this organisation values diversity' shows an increase in nine points from 2016 level.

'I feel comfortable to be myself at work' scored at 83. Both of these indicators were in the top 10 of the council's improvements in the engagement survey.

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