

Fletcher Building Cultural Celebration

Increased Māori representation at a higher level and better staff engagement are two of the principle benefits Fletcher Building has seen as a result of its Māori leadership programme, Whakatupu.

Whakatupu means “to grow” or “to plant the seed.” The main aims of the programme are to allow participants to explore and embrace their background and abilities and to bring a Māori perspective to leadership. This helps participants to bring all of their cultural strengths to Fletcher Building.

In return, Fletcher Building reports it has now started to see a higher representation of Māori in leadership roles, staff who can engage with diverse clients, and increased satisfaction at work. Since the Whakatupu programme launched, Fletcher Building has seen an increase in the engagement of Māori employees, backed up by its 2018 staff engagement survey where strong, positive feedback stood out in the “inclusive leadership” and diversity and inclusion,” categories.



Fletcher Building is a global organisation with around 20,000 employees across 34 different businesses, operating in 40 countries. The Fletcher Building businesses cover construction, manufacturing and distribution industries. In Aotearoa, the total whānau (workforce) is around 10,000.

To ensure Whakatupu is authentic and effective, the programme was designed around a Māori framework. Fletcher Building partnered with Indigenous Growth LTD (IGL) and Centre of Vision and Leadership (CVL).

One hundred and seven employees have completed or are currently completing Whakatupu.

The programme began with a pilot in 2016, with 15 participants from varying business units. Following the success of the pilot, Fletcher Building launched the programme in full in 2017 with a total of 38 participants across two rōpū (groups).

In 2018 the programme is bigger and better, with 54 new participants split across three rōpū. Previously the programme ran only in Auckland, with those out of Auckland travelling to attend, however this year Fletcher Building has taken it to the regions and have one Wellington-based rōpū. The participants are always from a range of different business units and various locations around New Zealand and, in one case, Australia.

In the three years its run Whakatupu, Fletcher Building has received funding and support from Te Puni Kōkiri.

Whakatupu consists of four modules each delivered in a two-day workshop. All modules are held on a marae with overnight stays during module one and four. Between modules participants receive one-

on-one coaching sessions to develop a personalised development plan and a group project relating to building a Māori network within Fletcher Building. During model three, chief executives and senior leaders speak at the programme on their specific areas of expertise, and, in turn, the participants get a chance to present their initial ideas for their projects.



Fletcher Building is committed to seeing the rōpū projects implemented within the business. In order to see this happen, a new secondment position has been created. The position is 'Kaitohutohu o Te Kaupapa' (Whakatupu Projects Coordinator) and is filled by a Whakatupu alumni graduate tasked with ensuring project ideas are implemented across Fletcher Building's business. The plan is for the role to continue on a rotating basis, with new Whakatupu alumni each year.

Some examples of the projects that have emerged from Whakatupu include increasing the use of Te Reo across the business, Māori culture and networking events, site pepeha and an intranet page to network, collaborate, share successes and motivate each other.

A number of Whakatupu participants have been promoted or further developed through working on additional projects. Some have taken on further education following the programme. Demand to take part is now so high that there is a waitlist for Whakatupu.

Below is some feedback from Whakatupu participants.

"Although I was quite a confident person who considered myself a leader, I had a few things that were holding me back to be the best person that I can be. I have now stopped making excuses for my weaknesses and have built up the courage to conquer them. For example, I used to accept that I was a shy person as it was part of my personality, therefore, would not always promote myself and introduce myself to people. But now I know that to best help my whanau, hapu and iwi I need to get out of my comfort zone and be bold when I am around people. Tū whitia te hopo - Feel the fear and do it anyway."

"Whakatupu helped to define a clearer path within my professional career, using my voice, and asserting myself and skills within the business especially. And be more patient and listen more at home."

"Whakatupu gave me a better understanding of my culture and ways to use that in my work and at home. Also, to be a better communicator and leader with my team."

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