

# **SKYCITY Entertainment Group**

## *Cultural Celebration*

Nine per cent of SKYCITY Entertainment Group's Auckland workforce identify as Māori, but this statistic is not reflected in the company's senior leadership.

The Tahuna te Ahi leadership programme is aiming to change that figure and ensure the voice of Māori is heard at senior level and that Māori world views, values and leadership are contributing to the organisation.

SKYCITY Auckland includes a casino, two hotels, 25 restaurants and bars, a convention centre, theatre and the iconic Sky Tower. It has 3,000 employees, across 72 departments.

SKYCITY partnered with Indigenous Growth Limited to deliver the programme. Twenty five approved nominations were received for 16 available spaces. Individual selection interviews were conducted to achieve the best mix of participants.



Participants work in small groups on business projects to enhance the standing of Māori at SKYCITY and apply their learning in a practical way. All four projects were endorsed by senior leaders and are being advanced.

The first project argued for recognition and inclusion of Māori values as part of SKYCITY's corporate value statements, based on the natural fit between the organisation's hospitality and tourism business and concepts such as manaakitanga, and how this could drive a culture that supports the success of business. This team will be involved in a project reviewing SKYCITY's corporate value statements.

Another project aims to unlock the potential of Māori at SKYCITY through mentoring. This group recognised that some Māori have modest roles at work but are leaders on the marae and in the community, organising large events or coordinating community effort for example. By bringing a Māori lens to transferable competencies, it is believed it will empower people to fully utilise those strengths at work. This project is supported by Human Resources and commences shortly.

The third project advocates for in-house advice on effective engagement with Māori and use of Māori culture at SKYCITY. A specific example included guiding the opening protocols for the New Zealand International Convention Centre and Horizon Hotel.

The final group proposed a series of authentic Māori experiences for customers. This included an augmented reality Māori experiential initiative including information on the Māori connection to Auckland, and the cultural and historical significance of different places in Auckland City, and all its surrounding islands - ideal for use in the Sky Tower.

The participants on the programme complete anonymous evaluations.

"Collectively they reported a high degree of relevance and practical application to their work," says Group Learning and Development Manager Jaime Walker. "They talk about powerful personal development and the confidence to be more effective in their role, and recognise the importance of

the connections they have formed with each other as Māori. The drive to make a meaningful contribution for, and through, this internal community is clear.

“The graduation and project work has also given them profile and recognition with senior leaders.”

Some reconnected with family, and marae that have been distant for a long time.

Managers report that engagement, productivity, and positive energy among this group is at an all-time high.

An example of one participant who was received life changing support is below.

“My partner had died suddenly June 26th of this year and I was really lost, and felt like I had lost my purpose. After attending the first wananga it was a lightbulb moment for me in the realisation that I still had a purpose. It gave me hope. Since then I have realised that whilst things have changed for me drastically in some aspects of my life, I still have the same drive and passion for injury prevention that I have always had. I can't thank SKYCITY enough for this course as it truly has impacted my life, both personally and professionally.”



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