

Auckland Transport Tomorrow's Workforce

With almost a third of its workforce aged 50 and over, Auckland Transport saw the need to support older employees, and secure their knowledge and expertise by developing an age-friendly workplace.

Auckland Transport (AT) employs 1700 people and is responsible for the region's transport services including roads and footpaths, cycling, parking and public transport. Currently, more than 500 of its staff are aged 50 and over. Of those, 300 are aged 55 plus and 70 are aged 65 and over.

Organisational Development Manager Anna Paris says AT recognised it could potentially lose a significant part of its workforce in the near future.

"Many of our mature-aged workforce are engineers, planners and project managers who have significant technical knowledge, experience and tacit community knowledge. If these people left, the risk to the business was a potential skills shortage, a significant loss of knowledge and experience, and the associated impacts on productivity and service delivery," she says.

Given the major transport projects currently underway and planned in Auckland, this comprised a significant business risk.

After engaging a specialist age and work consultant to undertake a comprehensive review of the organisation and develop a Mature Aged Workforce Strategy and Action Plan, AT implemented Staying On®, a programme designed to help the organisation and its people adapt to the challenges of an aging workforce.

"This initiative conveys a clear message to our employees that we want them to stay on, to stay engaged and keep contributing, to stay healthy and safe, and when they do leave, for whatever reason, to stay connected. The focus is clearly on retention, engagement, wellbeing and contribution, and staying connected when they do transition out," says Anna.

Staying On® draws on best-practice research from around the world and includes a number of components providing:

- Flexible work options where possible
- Access to health and wellbeing information and advice
- Assistance in managing the often-conflicting demands of different life stages
- Workshops to explore what life beyond work might look like or what the next stage in your career might be
- Access to financial and retirement planning and wellbeing information and advice
- The opportunity to talk with managers and team leaders about plans for the next stage of life - to have a Staying On® Conversation
- Career opportunities aligned to one's life stage, including job rotation and re-design
- Workshops and other sessions on topics of interest.



Information, workshops and advice is also provided to managers and team leaders so they can effectively lead and support the Staying On initiative and assist employees in their team.

After pilot workshops were developed and tested, the programme was launched to senior leadership, then rolled out to the whole organisation. It has been well-supported by the Executive Leadership Team and the Diversity and Inclusion Leadership Team.

Feedback from staff has been positive:

“Impressed we're planning for this, especially given how many people are going to be forced to work for longer because they can't afford to retire young.”

“It really made me think and crystallised how I imagined myself in my retirement. I now have a plan for the type of work and things I really like doing that will keep me re-energised and motivated in the future.”

“This should be for everyone regardless of age. It helps individuals position themselves on the right track.”

Workplace results have also been supportive, with a reduction in the loss of skilled and experienced staff since the programme was put in place. In the past year, 15 per cent of transfers and promotions have been for staff aged over 50, and 16 per cent of new starters have been aged over 50.

“The Staying On® programme aims at ensuring AT remains a great place to work, no matter what life stage, and that our business risks are managed,” says Anna.



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