

## Ministry for Women *Emerging Diversity and Inclusion*

Despite having a diverse group of leaders with substantial potential, the Ministry for Women did not have a consistent approach to training and succession planning.

In response, the ministry developed The Diverse Leaders Programme in 2018.

The *Ministry for Women*, Minitatanga mō ngā Wāhine, employs 30 staff and is the Government's principal advisor on achieving better results for women, and wider New Zealand society.

The leaders invited into the programme were either in management positions already, showed substantial promise and/or had indicated interest in developing further and had the skills to do so. The five leaders were a mix of ethnicity, age and gender. The goals were to:



- Provide a consistent approach to management techniques across the organisation.
- Expose and involve diverse talent.
- Upskill and provide a platform for implementing those skills.
- Provide experience and opportunities and alignment to skills across the public service

The Diverse Leaders Programme had three parts: Impact training with the Leadership Team, attendance at leadership team and Minister's meetings and opportunities to lead projects.

Being a small organisation presented some advantages while developing the programme, including a flat hierarchy and the ability to provide opportunities that are not generally present in larger organisations (for example, attending Minister's meetings and events).

The programme was implemented alongside a broader focus on improving the diversity at the ministry.

Ministry Chief Executive Renee Graham explains further: "To us, diversity means ensuring that we have a broad range of views in our policy advice.

"This year as part of our diversity and inclusion approach, we took on a Tupou Tai Pacific intern, we launched an engagement tool, two of our staff were granted scholarships to deepen their system knowledge, and we sent staff to work in other Government agencies to gain a deeper perspective of views."

The programme is visibly supported by members of the leadership team, who appoint participants into acting roles when they are absent, identify organisational projects and opportunities that the participants can lead, and mentor and sponsor participants.

Benefits are beginning to trickle through, including more diversity in the ministry's business decisions and continuity of work. Previously if a director was ill or on leave, leadership meetings were deferred and work ceased until they returned.

Participants are more exposed to the strategic intentions and the bigger picture and can support other staff better as a result

Renee Graham says the five participants of the Diverse Leaders Programme are more confident, have higher awareness of context and, as a result, have more input into the strategic direction of the agency.

For example, a Principal Policy Analyst was frequently acting as policy director. Her leadership development enabled her to broaden her management techniques, and be consistent in her approach when acting and supporting colleagues.

Her colleague, another Principal Policy Analyst, has also had more opportunities to demonstrate leadership through acting role opportunities. Together, they saw an opportunity to promote diversity in regions and are developing a concept for presentation to other agencies.

The Principal HR Advisor took the lead on the ministry's Strategic People's Plan. Her involvement in this initiative led to her organising several workshops with the leadership team and she is also now leading the ministry's collective bargaining process.

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