

Glenn Houpapa, CPB Contractors

Walk the Talk

Arrive at a project site run by Glenn Houpapa and you can't help but notice the more than 30 flags flying that represent each nationality in his team.

That's just one of the ways the project manager for CPB Contractors celebrates his highly diverse workforce. CPB Contractors is the CIMIC Group's construction company, with a team of around 23,000 people working at operations across New Zealand, Australia, Papua New Guinea, Asia and India.

Glenn has worked for the company for more than a decade, progressing from senior project engineer to project manager. In his current role as project manager on the Southern Corridor Improvements project, Glenn works closely with his team to empower a highly diverse workforce that includes 25 percent Māori, 10.9 percent Tongan, 7.8 percent Samoan, 6.7 percent Indian and 5.6 percent Filipino.



"I want to engage with people to make them feel valued and important, and to stress that everyone plays a key role in the delivery of our project - and that we are one team," he says.

Glenn encourages his team to celebrate their cultures and share their traditions. Karakia are frequently said onsite, and discussions about what such practices mean are frequently held.

Site Engineer Ururora Kainamu Wheeler says, "Glenn will discuss issues that affect different cultures, such as ceremonial or family obligations, as well as traditions that must be adhered to. By regularly discussing different cultures and traditions with the team it raises awareness and helps everyone understand and respect the different ethnicities, and therefore, encourages greater diversity."

During their induction to the project, new employees are shown a pie chart reflecting the different nationalities to instil knowledge and pride right from their first day on the job.

Health and Safety Manager Laurence Wickens says, "Glenn includes the chart as an important point - that our diversity is an important reason why we're a successful and awesome team."

Keeping the lines of communication open is an integral part of Glenn's leadership style. He works to keep morale high on the project by engaging with workers, and is often seen walking around the project, shaking hands and asking people to share their opinions.

Superintendent Paul Morgan says Glenn's commitment to communication has created an atmosphere of respect and transparency on the project. "When Glenn started as the project manager, he brought with him a structured approach to communication, including frequent toolbox talks with employees and a reward and recognition programme that encourages high performance and improved safety. Structured communication has made the employees feel safer and happier."

Employee Peter Fa'apoi says he feels greatly encouraged by the working environment. "From my level, looking up at the movement, it helps support me to work towards my aspirations and strive towards

better things. This helped concrete me to stay with the business and work towards my aspirations, by looking at Glenn.”

As well as forging relationships with his team, Glenn has worked closely on the Southern Corridor Improvements project. The area is culturally significant, with iwi occupation dating back more than 1000 years, and three different districts and cultural boundaries converging. By attending regular iwi liaison meetings, integrating iwi artwork on site, and giving open invitations for community representatives to attend project meetings, Glenn has created strong and respectful relationships, reflecting successfully on the project.

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