



## Glenn Cornelius, Harrison Grierson WALK THE TALK FINALIST



**A more gender-balanced workforce and greater diversity of thought isn't just desirable, it makes good financial sense says Glen Cornelius, Managing Director of Harrison Grierson.**

Since his 2012 appointment to the role, Glen has led the 134-year-old engineering and design consultancy and 388 staff in eight offices through a period of massive change, leading to significant growth in size and revenue, industry awards and accolades, and high engagement levels from staff.

At the heart of Glen's leadership is a commitment to ensuring growth, through building a diverse and inclusive workplace.

"It's especially important to me as MD to commit to promoting diversity within the company to improve business outcomes and create a strong, resilient company. Ensuring we are inclusive and flexible is why I champion our Diversity@HG group and our systems and policies such as equal employment opportunities, anti-discrimination and harassment. And it's why I support industry groups and networks, such as Engineering New Zealand's Champions for Change, who are likewise committed."

In 2018, Harrison Grierson became a founding member of the Diversity Agenda, an industry-wide campaign aimed at achieving 20 per cent more women engineers and architects by 2021, addressing the retention and promotion of women to leadership roles and ensuring pay equity.

Announcing the company's support of the initiative, Glen said, "We're not only lending our voice to the cause, we're committed to real, actionable change. Not only do we want a more gender-balanced workforce and greater diversity of thought, it also makes good financial sense to do so. Research shows that companies with

more women were 15 per cent more likely to financially outperform their industry, while those with women on their boards were 26 per cent more profitable than those with all male boards.”

Last year Glen supported four of Harrison Grierson’s mid-career women into the Diversity Agenda’s Growing Greatness programme, which helps participants cultivate clarity of focus, grow in confidence and enhance their already-proven capability to become ready for more influential leadership roles.

Maria Johnson was one of the participants of the programme. “Taking part in Growing Greatness has given me the tools to back myself more and to identify what I’m passionate about and where my strengths lie. I’m grateful to Glen and HG for giving me this great opportunity,” she says.

This year Glen is supporting 13 mid-career women into the programme and the number of women in leadership positions far exceeds industry norms in New Zealand and internationally. Initiatives introduced by Glen empower people to manage their time and workload. A number of his direct reports, including Chief Operations Manager Richard McIntosh, have flexible working arrangements in place which range from early start and finish times to accommodate school pick up, to condensed weeks and flexible hours.

Says Richard, “I have a young family and no wider family here in New Zealand; they are all back in Scotland. Despite being in a senior role at HG, Glen makes it easy for me to balance my work with spending quality time with my wife and kids. He’s focussed on outcomes rather than me being at my desk a certain number of hours a day. I really value being able to be part of HG’s senior leadership team without it having a negative effect on me being present as a husband and dad.”

A Parental Leave Return Bonus programme established by Glen assists new parents with the transition back into work and, amongst other things, enables parents to choose the amount of hours they wish to work. General Manager Clare Tolan has taken parental leave twice since working for Harrison Grierson.

“Both times, when and how I’ve returned to work has been in my hands, as was how much I wished to stay in touch while I was off work. Most of the time when I talk to friends and family about the flexibility I have at HG they say ‘I wish my boss was like that’. He expects the work to get done, but how/where/when I do it is over to me.”

Communication is an important part of Glen’s leadership style, and he frequently visits each of the eight offices. His weekly blog is the most widely read item on the intranet and after requests from staff for more opportunities for open communication he introduced Glen@10 – one-hour meetings where eight to 10 people can discuss issues and ask questions.

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