



## Heartland Bank

### CULTURAL CELEBRATION FINALIST

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#### THE STORY

Heartland Bank's Manawa Ako internship programme is a two-way street, giving rangatahi Māori the opportunity to explore an industry where they are significantly underrepresented, and the bank a chance to learn from the new perspectives the participants bring.

As the bank explored its strategy for becoming an employer of choice for Māori, it considered whether its environment reflected a bicultural society and identified ways to improve the reach, recruitment and retention of its workforce to better serve Māori.

This was addressed with the development of Manawa Ako, an internship programme to provide opportunities for the next generation of Māori and Pasifika to experience working in the financial sector and a corporate environment.

Pou Ārahi - Kaupapa Māori Joanne McNaughton says, "Heartland sees this as a business priority for a variety of reasons. We believe it is the right thing to do, mahi tika, and Māori are a skilled yet underrepresented talent pool available to the financial services sector. Māori need to be part of the solution to creating equitable outcomes for Heartland's customers and the wider community."

The programme started in 2017 with 10 high-achieving Year 13 students from the InZone Education Foundation, an organisation Heartland sponsors through the Heartland Trust. Since

then 50 young people have participated in Manawa Ako, coming from a variety of schools and organisations.

Rangatahi are placed in almost all business units and a tuakana is assigned to each intern. Managers go through a workshop to help them prepare for the intern, which includes learning the correct pronunciation of their names. The executive leadership has a hands-on approach, attending events, talking to interns about their career journey and making time for the interns to meet the Board of Directors. Interns also spend time with the CEO.

Intern Tiana Manukia appreciated the way Manawa Ako was an opportunity to learn, contribute and pave the way for others.

“I’m young, I’m a female and I’m a proud mixed Polynesian. I can contribute new and improved ideas that’ll have a positive impact on the Bank, as well as hopefully inspire and or encourage those who ‘look like me’ that they too can work in such an environment and can chase their career aspirations with more hope than fear.”

Te Whaiora Te Maapi Pene is a previous intern who is now an operations analyst with Heartland and says Manawa Ako opened doors she may not have considered previously.

“Being comfortable to be myself at Heartland is important for me. When I started the Internship in 2018, because this was a new environment for me, I wasn’t sure what parts of me and my culture would be accepted within the bank. Through doing the programme alongside other young Māori and Pasifika this really allowed me to feel comfortable to be myself within this new environment. Māori opinions and perspectives were encouraged and sought after for certain projects during the internship programme which gave me a sense of value and purpose within Heartland.”

The programme acted as an impetus for Heartland to refresh its corporate values and incorporate Māori language and culture throughout.

Group Chief of Staff Laura Byrne says, “Becoming an employer of choice for Māori is an ambitious goal and we wanted to ensure our workplace culture would support us to achieve it. Refreshing our corporate values was the first step we took, enabling us to express the mātāpono (values) that are unique to Heartland. Weaving a Māori perspective into how we articulate our mātāpono signals our intention to create a workplace and financial service that enables Māori to succeed as Māori.”

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## **THE CHALLENGE**

Statistics indicate that there is inequity in the financial sector. Representation of Māori working in the financial sector is 2.3 per cent and Māori have lower levels of household income, assets and rates of saving than non-Māori households in New Zealand. Heartland sought to have a positive impact on these statistics.

## **STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS**

- The Manawa Ako internship programme was developed to give rangatahi Māori and Pasifika the opportunity to see the broad range of roles and opportunities available within banking.
- Rangatahi are placed in almost all business units and a tuakana assigned to each intern.
- The initiative is sponsored by the CEO, who spends time with every intern.
- Interns who aspire to gaining further employment at Heartland are identified and added to the talent pool for future roles that become available.



## RESULTS AND BENEFITS

- Since it began, 50 rangatahi have participated in Manawa Ako, 38 Māori and 12 Pasifika. Ten are currently employed at Heartland, 35 are in tertiary study and four have graduated with a degree.
- Heartland's workforce has shifted from three per cent Māori in 2018 to five percent in 2020.
- The programme has seen a significant increase in the use, understanding and normalisation of te reo and tikanga Māori in the workplace.
- The bank's corporate values have been refreshed to incorporate te ao Māori and a cultural guarantee document created to provide a workplace and financial service that enables Māori to succeed as Māori.

## KEY LEARNING

Unlike many traditional internships where the programme is usually a one-way learning opportunity, Heartland recognises that Manawa Ako provides its people with an opportunity to gain insights from the diverse thinking and perspectives the participants bring to the organisation.

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