

Tools, resources and ideas for decision-makers to support the participation and success of women in trades where they have historically been under represented

These resources provide a rich source of information and data for use by industry, policy makers, standards-setting bodies and other researchers. They inform local and central government policy and regulations, standards, industry practice, public education campaigns and further research. The following information highlights the ways four of the ITOs in the Research Consortium have applied the research outputs within their sectors.

BCITO



Across the construction, engineering and manufacturing industries, the number of women working in trades is extremely low, ranging from less than 1 per cent to almost 10 per cent. Only 17 per cent of male employers employ women tradies.

Workforce Development

We are leading a significant cross-sector project to increase the number of women in construction. [Read the research findings.](#)

BCITO's Strategic Workforce Development Framework

BCITO's Strategic Workforce Development Framework will help Construction Industry businesses and employers to develop strategies that support their mid to long-term business plans and the sustainable development of a better-skilled workforce.

<https://bcito.org.nz/news-and-publications/strategy-documents/bcito-strategic-workforce-development-framework/>

BCITO's Workforce Development plan and targets for Women in Construction:

https://bcito.org.nz/documents/280/BCITO_Womens_Workforce_Development_Plan_2018.pdf

Women in Construction: Resources for businesses

The BCITO landing page for Women in Trades information and resources:

<https://bcito.org.nz/resources/women-in-construction/>

Supporting Women in the Trades branding

Show you're a company or individual that is inclusive and diverse.

Tell New Zealand you're a business or person who supports women in construction across all your channels. You can use the Supporting Women in the Trades icon to help promote your support of diversity and inclusiveness in your business on any of the following business-related promotional material:

- Company website
- Stationery — letterhead and business cards
- Vehicle decals
- Advertising in print and online
- Site signage
- Workwear



<https://bcito.org.nz/resources/women-in-construction/support-women/>

Help to Employ Diversity

BCITO have put together some useful resources and links to other published information that may help employers make their workforce more diverse and assist in growing their business.

Do your job adverts use gender-biased language?

Without realising it, we all use language that is subtly 'gender-coded'. Society has certain expectations of what men and women are like, how they differ, and this flows into the language we use. This linguistic gender-coding shows up in job adverts as well, and research has shown that it puts women off applying for jobs that are advertised with masculine-coded language.

[This site](#) is a quick way to check whether a job advert has the kind of subtle linguistic gender-coding that has this discouraging effect.

[Find out more and test your adverts.](#)

Pre-employment Guide

The Human Rights Commission has compiled this handy [A-Z Guide for pre-employment](#) based on actual questions that both employers and employees have asked. It's got loads of valuable answers for business owners who wonder about what conforms with Human Rights legislation.

BCITO can help you find your next apprentice

We offer a [dedicated job-matching service](#) for putting capable and willing career seekers in touch with employers looking for apprentices.

Flexible working arrangements - how they work

Employment New Zealand has published this comprehensive guide for both employers and employees. It explains how the "right to request" under Part 6AA of the Employment Relations (Flexible Working Arrangements) Amendment Act 2007 works. [Read it now.](#)

Parental leave

Employment New Zealand has published [everything you need to know about parental leave](#) and employment law, including who is eligible, associated entitlements such as government-funded parental leave payments and how, as an employer, you should respond to a request for parental leave.

Resources for Women

BCITO - Building Women Facebook page

A group for female BCITO apprentices and qualified professionals to connect, share stories plus experiences and more importantly have peer-to-peer support with others going through the same journey as they are. It currently has 315 members.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/BCITOBuidingWomen>

Building Women Campaign

The BCITO ran three Building Women Campaigns. The key objectives were to create an authentic and lasting 'women in building' campaign to position and grow 'the building trades' as an inviting and viable career option for women, and increasing the number of women registering their interest in the building trades, leading to more women apprentices and qualified professionals. The driver, a

national campaign with local relevance, bridging the gap in local labour shortages. See Appendix 1 Building Women Campaign for more information.

The campaign targeted two specific audiences:

1. Female career-seekers, aged 25-45, returning to work after child-rearing or looking for a career change.
2. Employers open to women joining the construction workforce and those who have shown their support by hiring women apprentices already.

MITO



Women are hugely under-represented in the trades, offering a significant opportunity to reduce skill shortages by encouraging more women to enter careers in trades industries. Across the automotive, construction, engineering and manufacturing industries, the number of women working in trades jobs is low, ranging from less than 1% to nearly 10%. Only 17% of employers in these sectors employ women and MITO, along with other vocational education organisations, wanted to know why.

A research project funded by Ako Aotearoa and the Ministry of Women has highlighted a number of opportunities for women and employers. The research outlined five key barriers for women joining trades careers, including lack of knowledge about opportunities and pathways, lack of work experience, finding employers willing to work with women, male-dominated workplace culture and the lack of workplace support for women.

We have an opportunity to raise awareness among employers about the benefits of hiring women. The research identifies several actions that employers can take to attract women including advertising jobs online and showing support for women in trades, offering flexible work arrangements, partnering with schools and providers of work experience placements and broadening the base of people employers talk to when recruiting. <https://ako.ac.nz/knowledge-centre/what-are-the-characteristics-of-an-effective-learning-journey-for-women-entering-trades/part-1-research-programme-overview/>

Women in Trades Success Stories

Andrea Thompson doesn't believe that the automotive refinishing industry is as male-dominated as people may think. In fact, she says, she is constantly seeing more and more women entering the industry – something that she thinks is “awesome”.

<https://www.mito.org.nz/get-qualified/success-stories/>

Self-confessed petrol-head, Sophia Humphris, has always had a love for cars. The 23-year-old apprentice collision repair technician from Peter Simons Panelbeating, Auckland, was named the 2018 IAG Top Apprentice of the Year in Collision Repair and is making her mark on an industry that is in need of more female advocates.

<https://www.mito.org.nz/get-qualified/success-stories/top-apprentice-eager-to-enact-change/>

Other examples include:

<https://www.mito.org.nz/women-in-trades-success-stories/top-award-for-passionate-apprentice-2/>

<https://www.mito.org.nz/get-qualified/success-stories/annelise-kick-starts-her-career/>

<https://www.mito.org.nz/get-qualified/success-stories/startup-sets-up-shontae/>

Companies are actively targeting women to recruit into teams because of the positive benefits gender diversity brings to the teams and the companies.

Female representation in the infrastructure industry has been raised from 2% to 8%. Although this is small, we have to remember that while companies are recruiting more women, they have not stopped recruiting men – and neither do we want them to. So, the percentage increase is gradual.

Girls with Hi-Vis

For Infrastructure companies across New Zealand, Girls with Hi-Vis® (GWHV) events provide the opportunity to open their doors for a day to promote their industry and company to women who may not have considered a trade or technical career in infrastructure.

GWHV events give young women the opportunity to gain exposure to the infrastructure sector while at school. They provide a hands-on experience so young women can gain a clear understanding about what's involved in the many and varied roles available to them in infrastructure's Civil, Energy, Telco and Water industries.

The objective of Girls with Hi-Vis® initiative, led by [Ultimit: Women in Infrastructure](#), is to raise awareness and increase the number of women working in trade and technical roles in the Infrastructure Industries.

These events are also supported by the Ministry of Education, as part of their endeavour to provide opportunities for young people to connect to the world of work and explore industry-specific careers while in school to enhance their perspectives on vocational education.

<https://www.connexis.org.nz/girls-with-hi-vis/>

2019 was the biggest year for GWHV yet! 22 events with over 450 attendees.

Ultimit: Women in Infrastructure

Encouraging, inspiring and supporting women into trade and technical roles in the infrastructure industry. Ultimit: Women in Infrastructure is a Connexis initiative, supported by industry partners.

<https://www.connexis.org.nz/ultimit-women-infrastructure/>

Skills



The trades are for everyone

At Skills, we believe a career in the trades is open to anyone – regardless of gender, ethnicity, or any other criteria.

Female participation in the trades remains low, but there is plenty of potential. For example, females make up half of the population, but only 2% of electrical apprentices are female. Clearly there is room for improvement in many of our sectors.

With more women working in the trades, we can add more skills, perspective, and diversity into the workforce – a win-win for everyone involved.

What Skills does

Skills plays an active role in encouraging more women to enter the trades. Some of the initiatives we have run include get-togethers for women from various trades to meet and connect with each other.

Our female ambassadors regularly visit schools and speak at events to share their experiences. Skills also works with other ITOs and industry partners to promote careers for women in trades and to promote their success. Having the same goal means we can share our resources and energy to create outcomes that benefit the whole industry.

Resources for women: Our women in trades

Need inspiration? Click [here](#) to read some real stories of real women making waves in the trades.

The trades are for everyone

Case study document on 12 women employed across five of the Skills Organisation's industry sectors.

<https://skills.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/skills-Women-in-trades-Case-Study-Mag.pdf>

Who said that trades are just for men?

Every day, Kiwi women across the country pick up their tools to go about their plumbing, electrical, and roofing jobs. They're out there, breaking stereotypes and showing the world that if men can do it, so can women. Each of the women within these pages has a story to tell about how they started their journey in the trades. There's a great mix of backgrounds, but they all share one thing in common – they know they made the right career choice. And if they can do it, so can you.

<https://skills.org.nz/community/women-in-trades/>



Skills Women in Trades Facebook page

Be part of our [Skills Women in Trades](#) community and share your insightful thoughts and ideas with other tradies. This is the Skills Organisation's group for New Zealand-based Women in Trades.

Female tradies are out there, breaking stereotypes and working hard - connecting with each other in this group is a great way to get the support, conversation and laughs you need from other women doing the same as you. Use this group to ask questions, vent about your day, share pics of your work and whatever else crosses your mind. It currently has 307 Members.

Appendix 1- Building Women Campaign [BCITO]

The campaign focused on 3 key regions within the country (Hutt Valley, Bay of Plenty (Tauranga) and Central Otago including Queenstown) and included partnering with Mitre 10 Trade, a national trade merchant, which operates in these regions and supports local community and women in the trades. There were three key components to this campaign:

Local Community Activity

Working with the local community to celebrate local businesses that employ women tradies and talking to them to celebrate how together they are working toward the needs of the community.

This was carried out by:

- Naming and celebrating the local businesses who partnered with us for the campaign, and the women tradies and their employers, with a full-page advertorial in the local print and targeted digital advertising.
- Promotion of other employers who support women in the trades.
- Promoting packages offered by the Ministry of Social Development (MSD).

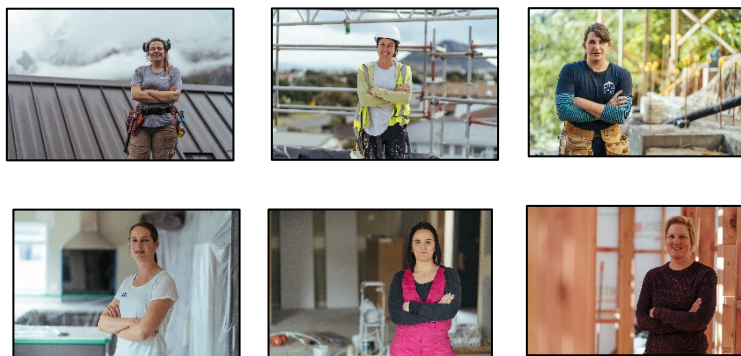
A local career-seeker event

- A locally run event where employers, BCITO staff and women career-seekers met to talk about trade opportunities, apprenticeships and job matching.
- This enabled career-seekers to talk with actual employers and apprentices, ask their burning questions and, more importantly, broke down barriers so that career-seekers could form networks to visit a site, or meet with an employer for more advice after the event.
- Ministry of Social Development were at each employer and career-seeker event, promoting the packages they could offer employers for those looking to return to work.

Note: an employer's event took place prior to the career-seeker event in Lower Hutt and Tauranga to enable us to enlist employers to participate in the career-seeker event. In Central Otago a more direct approach was used where a group of employers were visited by the local BCITO Training Advisor and staff working on the event to discuss the value of them being involved in the event.

Communications

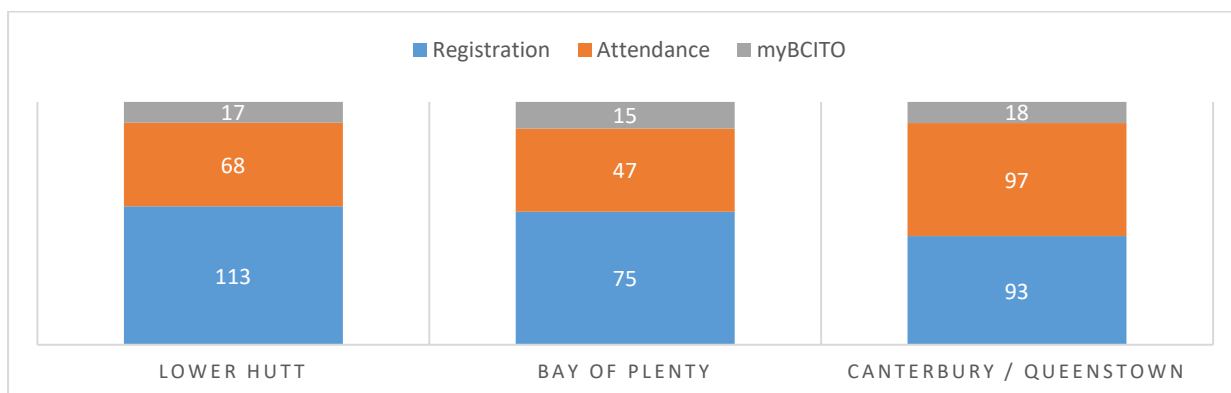
The campaign itself involved local media and digital advertising to celebrate and promote the heroes.



- The promotion took place over a six-week period, staggered across the three regions and included editorials, case studies and real stories, with real people who were local to their region.

- the regionally-targeted campaign used all of BCITO’s social platforms and included a personal approach with user-generated stories by our women heroes.
- The call to action was to attend the career-seeker event and sign up to myBCITO.

Objectives & Results



The initial results for engagement were promising with 60% (281) of those who registered to attend an event attending, which is within normal attrition levels. From here, 38% of all attendees signed up to myBCITO indicating a commitment towards looking for a career in the trades.

We are initiating a follow-up survey of participants to identify what support we could provide to women who are not yet employed or in training; but as at the end of September 2020:

- 14 women who attended the Building Women nights are currently working in the construction industry and studying as apprentices.
- 92 are classified as ‘starters’; they are engaging with industry, building contacts and experience but not yet in training and probably not employed in the construction industry.
- 2 are ‘rookies’ meaning they are still at school or in full-time learning.

Looking to build the next generation

HANNAH DICKSON

There's the typical nature table and crafts station, but thanks to Rachel Corbett, her six-year-old daughter's Wellington classroom also includes a workshop table set up with toolboxes and timber so the kids can experiment with construction and gain confidence using tools.

It's one of the many perks of having a qualified builder for a mum. Corbett finished her apprenticeship last year, and although she was in a minority, with women making up just three percent of trainees and apprentices in the building industry and associated trades, neither Corbett nor her daughter see it as a big deal.

Lennox is just as happy hanging out at the construction table with all the other girls as her mum is at work on a building site.

"It's just normal for her," says Corbett. "That's the way they are growing up."

While she was never encouraged into the building industry at school, Corbett grew up with strong role models of her own. As a solo parent, her mother was happy doing whatever was needed around the house, and her engineer granddad happily passed on some of his skills to his curious granddaughter.

Corbett originally qualified as a landscape gardener and spent 11 years in that trade. But after



Wellington builder Rachel Corbett and colleague Dimitri Pouloupoulos.

spending time on sites with builders, she realised theirs was the job she really wanted. After a few conversations with the right people, she started an apprenticeship with a business owner she met on a job.

Leaving an established career to start over again as an apprentice was definitely a

gamble, but Corbett hasn't looked back.

"I really enjoy it. I'm not stuck in an office, every day is different, and I get to see something through from start to finish."

While retraining meant a temporary pay drop as she completed her apprenticeship

with the Building and Construction Industry Training Organisation (BCITO), she still brought home an income while training and there was no need to take out a hefty student loan. Her landscaping experience also meant she could sign off some modules ahead of schedule.

"Sometimes you have to start

Learn More

To find out more about a career in the trades, be sure to attend the BCITO & Mitre 10 Building Women Night on Thursday, September 26. Meet employers and women already working in construction. Book your spot now at www.buildingwomen.nz.

at the bottom to get to the top," she says.

Corbett loves that each day brings something different, but what she really values is a supportive boss who recognises her family commitments and is happy for her hours to allow for school pick-up and drop-offs.

"A few of the guys at work share drop-offs with their partners too, so I'm not the only one doing it."

Corbett laughs that she lives in a typical "builder's house", with lots of jobs waiting to be done. But there's time for that in the future, which holds plenty of options, including running her own business one day. Career progression is one of the big assets to the industry, which is why she encourages other women to check it out.

"Don't be scared. Don't worry what anyone else thinks. Go for it."

“I’M A PERFECTIONIST. I PUT MY ALL INTO EVERYTHING.”

**RACHEL CORBETT,
MARTIN GOULDEN LTD**

**QUALIFIED CARPENTER,
FROM LOWER HUTT**

Rachel is pretty hard-core, not only in the physical sense but mentally. Having worked as a qualified landscaper for 15 years, she says the change to carpentry is much less physically demanding but even more mentally rewarding for her. She just completed her apprenticeship last year, and loves it.

Rachel is one of those people who never does things by halves. When she started her apprenticeship, she said the biggest challenge was wanting to show the guys she can do it all. But “it sunk in pretty quickly that I was capable of doing anything they put in front of me”. She just had to realise what everyone else already knew.

She thinks her attitude comes from her upbringing. Growing up with a solo mum who did it all, she says “it was normal for me, seeing that women do that stuff”. Stuff like stripping and painting a whole house on her own, or mowing the lawns. This do-anything attitude is what Rachel wants to pass on to her six-year-old daughter. And that she most definitely is.



BCITO
building people

If you're a woman interested in the trades, register for **The BCITO & Mitre 10 Building Women Night**. You'll get to take that first step and meet local employers who are all about the right attitude apprentice.


Got the right strengths for the trades?

buildingwomen.nz

PHOTO: JIM BENTON

BIG SHOUT OUT TO OUR LOCAL FIRMS SUPPORTING WOMEN IN THE TRADES





This project was funded through the Ako Aotearoa National Hub Project Fund. More information is available at <https://ako.ac.nz/knowledge-centre/what-are-the-characteristics-of-an-effective-learning-journey-for-women-entering-trades/>

Published by

Ako Aotearoa National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence | www.ako.ac.nz

Date: December 2020



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94042, USA.