

Increasing diversity

Populations, communities and workplaces are becoming more diverse in many ways due to changing social norms and demographics. This is challenging traditional views and practices. Workplace diversity and inclusion strategies and policies are a start to making organisations more inclusive, but unconscious biases, prejudices, and reluctance to share power mean that sustained efforts are still required to create more inclusive communities.

What we're seeing

Ethnic diversity

NZ has more than 160 ethnic groups. Those with European ethnicity are declining from 70% of the population in 2018 to an estimated 64% by 2043. The Asian ethnic group is forecast to surpass Māori in the next two decades, increasing from 16% to 26% of the population. The proportion of people with multiple ethnicities are also increasing.¹

The silver tsunami continues

The "silver tsunami", which started at the end of the last Century, may lead to 21-26% of the population being over 65 by 2048. The number of people aged over 85 may increase 3-to-4-fold over the next two decades. This mirrors the trend in other Western countries.² On the other hand, the proportions of Māori and Pasifika in younger age groups will rise substantially.

A multi-gendered world

A diversity of gender identities and sexual orientation preferences is emerging.^{3,4} This isn't perhaps as novel as many imagine. In earlier centuries, some societies had gender pluralism, but there was also a backlash against them too so many didn't persist.⁵

Neuro- and physical diversity

Neurodiversity and physical diversity are also being increasingly recognised in work and leisure settings.⁶ Neurodiversity includes people on the autism spectrum, as well as those with ADHD, dyslexia, dyspraxia, or brain injuries. It is difficult to determine if the proportion of neurodiverse children and adults is increasing, or recognition of the differences is just getting better. People with physical disabilities are a significant fraction of the population has physical disabilities. This is expected to increase further as the population ages and more people develop chronic health conditions.^{7,8}

Improving diversity & Inclusion

The importance, and benefits, of having a more diverse workforce is increasingly emphasised. Improvements in productivity and financial performance from more diverse workplaces are usually noted. While evidence of benefits may not be apparent for individual businesses, costs for, and social media backlash against, workplaces with discriminatory and non-inclusive practices are increasing.⁹ Diversity Inclusion strategies and consultants are proliferating, although progress can be slow, especially for people with neuro and physical ability differences.^{6, 10}

Recognition ≠ Acceptance

While there is growing acceptance of diversity, sexism, racism, ageism, and other prejudices against differences remain. Social and mainstream media can both support and oppose more diverse communities. Physical and verbal abuse, as well as discrimination, can persist or even increase as social norms change.^{11,12}

Potential implications

Create

- More diverse communities and workplaces
- More innovative and successful businesses

Relate

- Growing potential for multi-diverse sports and recreation activities

Consume

- Increased marketing directed toward particular groups

Degrade

- Conservative push-back against changing norms
- Power no longer residing largely with "pale, stale, males"

Connect

- Sport and active recreation as means to strengthen community cohesion
- Growing acceptance of differences

Define

- Moving beyond labels to define a person
- What are the barriers inhibiting diversity & inclusion?

More information (links)

¹ [Population projected to become more ethnically diverse](#)

² [National population projections: 2020–2073](#)

³ [The gender-fluid generation](#)

⁴ [2017 GLAAD survey](#)

⁵ [Are trans and gender nonconforming identities new 'trends'?](#)

⁶ [The neurodiversity gap in our workplaces](#)

⁷ [Disability prevalence and trends](#)

⁸ [Key facts about disability in New Zealand](#)

⁹ [The impact of diversity: A review of the evidence](#)

¹⁰ [Diversity – its bigger than gender](#)

¹¹ [The 2022 SDG Gender index report](#)

¹² [Social media continues to amplify white supremacy & suppress anti-racism](#)