



Let's take advantage of our diversity



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In the wake of the tragedy that unfolded in Christchurch on 15 March, I thought it was high time that we address the issue of cultural diversity in society and within our industry.

With every day that goes by, New Zealand is becoming a more culturally diverse nation. The last credible census that was undertaken, back in 2013, showed that New Zealand's population is made up of significantly large ethnic groups from all around the world.

Seventy-four percent of people in 2013 identified as European, 14.9% as M ori, 11.8% as Asian, 7.4% as Pacific peoples, and 1.2% as Middle-Eastern, Latin American, and African. In Auckland, our most multi-ethnic region, 59.3% identify as European, 23.1% as Asian, 10.7% as M ori, and 14.6% as Pacific Islanders.

From being a fairly bi-cultural nation at the end of the Second World War, New Zealand has, within a couple of generations, become a place where people from all over the world are able to live, work, and raise a family.

This new diversity has brought so many advantages to our country: new ideas, new experiences, and different outlooks on the world.

It has in many ways brought the world closer.

For those of you with a few grey hairs will remember a time when going overseas on your big OE was a once-in-a-lifetime experience that was intended

to open our eyes to the world. Well, for our kids, it certainly doesn't feel like that anymore. They are exposed to such a variety of cultures and people at home that when they do head overseas, they are already far more worldly people and can take advantage of that and thrive in the global community.

When it comes to the workforce of the road transport industry, hiring people from a variety of backgrounds and cultures that reflect the makeup of our society is simply the only way forward. Having staff with different perspectives and ideas and a company

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that embraces diversity will, it has been proven, lead to better employee satisfaction, retention, and productivity.

One of the most practical ways for road transport companies to address the ongoing driver shortage is to focus more recruiting efforts on groups of people outside of the traditional industry demographic. Women, millennials, and those from different ethnic groups may initially require more mentoring and assistance through obstacles such as

the driver licensing system but making those investments now will pay off by having staff that enjoy where they work and go the extra mile for the employer who gave them a chance.

Finally, I have been made aware of an upcoming event that may interest many women out there in the industry—the New Zealand Women's Leadership Symposium.

The symposium is a national event focused on the experiences of women leaders in the contemporary workforce.

Taking place on 28 and 29 May, the event represents an unparalleled gathering of the best and brightest female talent. Keynote speakers include Her Excellency The Right Hon. Dame Patsy Reddy GNZM QSO, Dame Valerie Adams DNZM, Traci Houppapa MNZM, Rochelle Martin MNZM, Paula Tesoriero MNZM, Jackie Clark, Assistant Commissioner Tusha Penny, and more.

The principal themes that will be tackled at this year's event include:

- resilience within the workplace
- enabling women to lead
- the power of networking
- being bold, being brave, being new
- leading through change
- getting comfortable with the uncomfortable

An attendance discount of 25% is currently available by entering code ANSY19 at the time of booking (available until sold out). For more information and to book, visit womenandleadership.co.nz/symposium. ■

