

Cadetships

Award Winning Māori Leadership Programme
 Recognised through Cadetships

In total Te Puni Kōkiri has supported 1767 cadets through the Cadetship Programme which was implemented in 2010.

The Cadetship programme came about following the Māori Economic Summit and the Prime Minister's Job Summit. It was a specific response to the Global Financial Crisis and provides opportunities for Māori (especially young Māori) to upskill and progress their career and development pathways, and supports employers to recruit, retain and develop Māori employees.

For contact details visit
www.tpk.govt.nz



Last year Downer was awarded the Emerging Diversity and Inclusion Award at the 2016 Diversity Awards for their Māori leadership programme. We talk more with Downer about how the Cadetships programme through Te Puni Kōkiri has assisted them along the way.

Downer has been helping shape the landscape of Aotearoa New Zealand for over a century, building key infrastructure including roads, telecommunications, water, power and gas networks. Now one of the largest employers in the region, Downer employs almost 60,000 people globally with over 5,500 in New Zealand.

General Manager, Commercial and Finance for Downer's Transport Services business, Evan Jensen (Te Whānau-a-Tuwhakairiora) says that while Downer's Māori workforce around 800, the ratio of Māori leaders to represent this workforce is very low.



Evan Jensen (Te Whānau-a-Tuwhakairiora) pictured at the Ngā Kaitiaki o Te Ara Whanake meeting.

"In the organisation close to 20% of our workforce is Māori, if we look at the number of Māori workers on the road it doubles that. So Downer recognised the need of better representation in our leadership, in order to support the recruitment and development of Māori employees," he says.

“For Downer it is really important to develop our Māori leaders. I think more and more people in the business are understanding the benefits of this programme and how it can contribute to not only the business but the worker’s whānau, communities – it has been hugely successful and we’re really proud to have it.”

Downer applied to Te Puni Kōkiri for funding from the Cadetship Initiative to pilot its first Whakahiki i Ngā Rangatira Māori (Empowering Māori Leaders) programme, which has subsequently been renamed Te Ara Whanake.

The goal was to identify and develop Māori employees at all levels of their business to become influential leaders and role models both within Downer and the wider community.

The content was designed by Downer Māori leaders, with input from Downer’s operational business and human resources, and included visits and stories from influential Māori leaders, marae kaumātua sharing their vision for Māori, sessions on developing strong support networks, tikanga and te reo Māori, mentoring, self-awareness and career planning.

The programme takes place over a six-month period and consists of three two-day workshops – two marae-based.

They committed to launching three courses across the North Island, partnering with Te Puni Kōkiri on the first one and fully funding the second two.

A Māori advisory board was formed – Ngā Kaitiaki o Te Ara Whanake to provide support and guidance to the programme and the wider Downer diversity strategy.

Employees were nominated for the course by managers and the referrals assessed by Ngā Kaitiaki o Te Ara Whanake.

The executive leadership at Downer are supportive of this initiative and have taken an active role in its development to ensure that it is successful at all levels within the organisation.

Throughout the programme, participants are supported by their line managers and are assigned a mentor, often a previous participant, to support them on their development journey.

Downer Executive General Manager, People and Culture, Jan O’Neill says the programme has been regularly profiled in the company communications and is well known and supported around the business.

“Our goal is to be an employer of choice with a reputation for promoting inclusiveness and diversity and having a workforce reflective of the communities we work within,” she says.

“The Māori Leadership programme helps to meet these objectives. Downer is specifically targeting and attracting Māori to our workforce through this programme.”

It’s also helping keep our people. The retention rate of employees who have completed the programme is higher than our overall retention rate.”

“Downer is ‘lifting’ concepts and practices that are experienced as part of this programme and applying them to the everyday business environment. Time is being taken to establish relationships and get to know the people around the table rather than delving straight into business. The wider Downer teams are learning the value of understanding a person’s story,” Jan says.



Jonno Webster (Ngāpuhi) standing talking with the driver Darryl Takerei (Raukawa) onsite at a job near New Plymouth. Both graduates of Te Ara Whanake.

