

INFRASTRUCTURE WOMEN IN FOCUS



WIN NZ is open to women of all levels working in infrastructure and has been established to grow the visibility of women in the infrastructure sector. Every month we will be profiling a different woman working in a different part of the sector. If you would like to be involved, please answer the questions and send your picture through to [Natasha](#).

We'd like to introduce Adrienne as our next Woman of Focus. In addition to her role at Watercare, Adrienne also sits on the WIN Advisory Board and is a trustee on the Board of Diversity Works (the old EEO Trust).



ADRIENNE MILLER

GENERAL MANAGER,
CORPORATE SERVICES



1. What company or organisation do you work for and what is your role there?

I currently work at Watercare Services Limited as General Manager Corporate Services. I'm responsible for a number of business support portfolios including People & Capability, Health & Safety, Technology (including Cyber), Legal and Facilities. Watercare is a council-controlled organisation, wholly owned by Auckland Council that provides water and wastewater services to 1.4 million people in the wider Auckland region (and laboratory testing of water supplied to 1/3 of NZ's population). We supply around 354 million litres of water to Auckland every day drawn from 23 sources. We collect, treat and dispose of around 392 million litres of wastewater daily, including trade waste from industry. We are NZ's second largest asset owner and implement significant capital works programs to maintain, upgrade and grow our assets.

2. Tell us about your career background and how you got to this position/role?

I am a lawyer by training and in the five year period prior to joining Watercare, was the GC running the legal function for Downer here in NZ. I have also headed up the legal function in Carter Holt Harvey's Woodproducts business (for five years) and at Waste Management N.Z. Limited (for nearly ten years). Before that was in private practice at Chapman Tripp in Wellington in general commercial and financing teams. I have enjoyed being involved in "gritty" roles in heavy industry and infrastructure and working for organisations that do things and deliver concrete and tangible outcomes. The approach from Watercare in late 2015 came at the right time for me. I saw an opportunity to broaden my expertise beyond my core technical competency by leading a larger team (70 plus staff report indirectly to me in this role) and developing a deeper understanding around Health & Safety and Technology - all through the lens of a utility owner in the public sector. This role has delivered that and more for me.

3. Tell us about a project are you currently working on and why it interests you?

So hard to pick one! We've been doing a lot in the safety space (around leadership and other training, H&S Toolkits, inspection suite ...etc) and in technology (including rolling out a cybersecurity system), but I think if I had to choose just one, it would be what we've been doing in the people space. We all know one of the critical issues for the infrastructure industry right now is labour. As well as lifting our leadership bench strength to become a high performing organisation able to better deliver on strategy, we've very consciously thought about culture and future workforce and what we need to do to become an employer of choice. I've personally championed a broader approach to engaging with potential future staff and building our employment brand. As a result, we have signed up to the Youth Pledge, been an active participant in the #BuildAKL campaign (looking to attract youth to the construction and infrastructure industry) and enhanced our presence at Job fests, career days etc. With millennials predicted to make up over 50% of the working population by 2020 it makes sense to be seeking to better understand this group and putting in place the support and guidance needed for development and career progression. We've taken a similar approach to making the industry more accessible to other demographics. We've participated in work experience schemes and campaigns like the Connexis Girls with Hi-Vis to showcase the industry to young women and to give visibility and profile to the women leaders already in the industry. Our aspiration as an organisation is greater customer centricity, and having a workforce that reflects the diversity of our customer base, helps us better deliver that (as well as D&I being the right thing to do!).

4. What's the hardest job you've ever done and why?

All my in-house roles have been challenging and my role at Downer was particularly intense given the need to apply rigour but deliver at pace to meet tender timeframes. I think the hardest (but also most stimulating) thing in my career to date has been the various moves into new industries and having to relearn the "landscape". One of my CEOs once gave me some good advice about that though and that was just to apply my analytical skills and curiosity to any problem whether inside or outside my core expertise, because you never knew what the result might be. As it happens that segues quite nicely into the next question.

5. Can you think of one example where your "diversity" has materially affected the outcome of a work situation or project, either positively or negatively?

I think diversity of thought - having a different perspective on things - prompts discussions that wouldn't otherwise happen. Sometimes a seemingly dumb question is the one that prompts another train of thought or discussion that eventually leads to a solution. I'm a curious person that sees connections between seemingly diverse things. Therefore I ask a lot of questions. What they might lead to dictates whether they were good ones or not, but an inclusive and broad discussion unconstrained by convention is one that's most likely to lead to innovation.

To learn more about opportunities for a career with Watercare please [click here](#).

Or, you can view [Adrienne's LinkedIn](#) here.

