

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 Marija as our next Woman of Focus.



MARIJA BATISTICH

**PARTNER,
ENVIRONMENT & PLANNING**

KensingtonSwan *

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

As of 1 January 2018 I am the newest partner in Kensington Swan's Environment & Planning team, joining existing partners Christina Sheard and Nicky McIndoe.

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

I joined Kensington Swan a year ago following more than a decade at another leading national firm on my return from working in London. I started working in resource management as a law clerk in a top NZ law firm soon after the Resource Management Act first came into force. It was exciting times in the world of major infrastructure and lots of work to do as everyone needed guidance in working under the new regime. Since then everyone has upskilled in working under the RMA, so strategic and practical advice is key to obtaining approval for major projects. There is a lot currently on the horizon in Auckland, particularly with the new Government, so we live in exciting times.

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

Several of the major projects I am currently working on are on hold pending further Government directions. However our team recently completed the Northern Corridor Improvements project Board of Inquiry, a multi modal project involving upgrades to State Highway 1 and 18, the extension of the Northern Busway and the construction of new shared use paths. This project provides a good example of the outcomes that can be achieved by working collaboratively with multiple stakeholders including Auckland Transport, Watercare, North Harbour BMX, Rosedale Pony Club and Auckland Council.

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

As a very junior solicitor being sent to a council hearing to represent a community group opposing a service station, with a team of experts and emotionally charged locals. It was in the days when the oil companies opposed each other consistently on the location of new service stations, usually to try and delay a new one being built near to an existing one but under the very veiled basis of 'environmental effects'. At least trade competition is no longer a ground of objection under the RMA – so the focus is intended to be on actual effects.

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 remember attending meetings as a junior lawyer and always being asked to pour the tea. I didn't think anything of it until I worked for a partner who always offered to do it first and then realised what a great equalising step it was in a meeting. I do not think that gender alone adds diversity, there are many other aspects too. However, it is my experience that women, particularly senior ones, are often able to demonstrate a depth of relationship with their client counterparts that many (usually men) tend to underestimate. The reality is that senior women in this day and age often have shared experiences on their career path, and this can create a certain collegiality. I personally don't mind pouring the tea, but since I only drink coffee I am usually pretty rubbish at making it!

To learn more about opportunities for a career with Kensington Swan please go to

<https://www.kensingtonswan.com/careers/>

Or, you can [connect with Marija on LinkedIn](#).

