

INFRASTRUCTURE WOMEN IN FOCUS



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

We'd like to introduce Nicky as our next Woman of Focus. In addition to her role at Kensington Swan, Nicky also chairs the Wellington WIN chapter committee.



NICKY MCINDOE

PARTNER

KensingtonSwan *

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

I am a partner at the law firm Kensington Swan. I head the Environment and Planning team in the firm, which has 3 partners and 10 staff.

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

I completed my law degree at Otago University, and then went to work in the Auckland office of a large law firm. I had always wanted to work in the environment and planning space, although I had no idea back then what a diverse and interesting practise area it is (and that I'd still be fascinated by it 20 years later!) After a few years in Auckland I transferred to Wellington where I continued to practise environment and planning law before heading overseas. In the UK I worked in a firm which had the lion's share of legal work associated with the development of wind farms in the UK. I appeared at planning inquiries for wind farm developments in Kent, the Lakes District, Scotland and Wales. This experience highlighted the public law nature of environment and planning law; the choices which societies need to make if they are going to combat climate change, and the values placed on landscape and amenity values. I learnt a lot. After a few years in the UK, and plenty of travelling in Europe, I headed back to Wellington, slotting back in at my previous firm. Then, 4 years ago, I jumped at a partnership opportunity at Kensington Swan. This role has allowed me to grow my skills and expertise, while continuing to work for clients I have known throughout my career.

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

One of the projects which I'm currently working on is a water reservoir project for Wellington Water Limited. It's a particularly interesting project because of the contribution it will make to Wellington's ability to withstand and recover from earthquakes, and because it's prompted me to learn about the fascinating world of water supply networks. As with most projects, it's the people which make the experience enjoyable, and there is a great team on this project. The people who live near the proposed project (and so will be affected by the construction works) are also inspirational – they have worked together to support each other, carefully considered the information provided to them, and always been willing to engage. Communities like these are an example of what makes New Zealand a special place to live.

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

I represented the NZ Transport Agency at the Board of Inquiry which considered the Transmission Gully Project, which is currently under construction. At the time, it was to be Wellington's largest ever earthworks project, in the catchment of a particularly sensitive coastal environment, requiring non-complying resource consents. We had over 30 witnesses, and the inquiry lasted about a month. It was complex and tiring, but fascinating.

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?

Our experiences in life influence what we can bring to a project, and those experiences will be different, depending on our gender, race, age and upbringing (amongst other factors). Many years ago I acted for the Rotorua Regional Airport, which was seeking to extend its runway. My 'diversity' meant I could better understand the concerns of neighbouring submitters, than the project manager, who had only lived in New Zealand for a short time. The neighbouring submitter was an iwi organisation responsible for a marae and kohanga reo which were direct neighbours of the airport, and were affected by aircraft noise. Having worked in environment and planning for some years, and having grown up in rural Hawkes Bay, I was much better equipped than the project manager to understand the concerns of these submitters, and look for solutions.

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

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

