

The Triple Shift

Wāhine Māori WEAP engagement

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Participants

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Meeting purpose

To discuss the following questions, in order to inform the development of the Women's Employment Action Plan.

1. What would successful employment look like to you?
2. What are the ways government should be supporting wāhine into better paid work?
3. How can the work you do outside paid work be better recognised and supported?
4. What are the main ways that wāhine Māori manage childcare and paid work?
5. Are there childcare improvements government could make?

Key themes

What does successful employment look like for wāhine Māori?

Successful employment is about having work with dignity and purpose; the best value of your time to create wellbeing for you, your whānau and the world. If work doesn't release the potential within us, then the world is missing out. An ecosystem that honours us and allows us to grow. Māori women supporting Māori women. Not only to feed our family but to thrive.

Work is about sustainable incomes (e.g. governance, entrepreneurship) not just getting a job. Many women have opted out of jobs and set up businesses so they can earn an income while also looking after whānau.

Time to spend with whānau

Wāhine Māori want work that allows us to spend time with whānau and support whānau. We want work life balance. We want more flexible work (including four day weeks, working evenings, working from home), flexible leave in contracts so we can use leave as we need to. Covid has taught us that we can be flexible and efficient at work; the traditional way of working is not the best. Covid has also increased the demands on women. We want to be able to prioritise whānau as mums, and also as nans to support our kids.

Support and value rangatahi

We should bring young people's voices through earlier. E.g. we used to take kids along to the marae to learn, but in the business world young people are shut out. We want diversity of thought, but by excluding young people we're cutting out a big section of the population.

Some young people need practical support and pastoral care as well as training. E.g. how do we help rangatahi who don't want to engage in training or get into a trade. Example of a training programme focusing on NEETs that was delivered with lots of pastoral care; young people didn't know a lot of stuff you'd expect them to know. Young people want to move forward but don't have support mechanisms and knowledge.

Support for young mums

Young mums don't have parents, nans, and aunts around like they used to. They need support in the home. Want ability for mums and nans to work flexibly to be able to support the next generation.

Need a housing subsidy and childcare assistance for young women getting into, or back into, work.

Families need help negotiating the system – e.g. secondary tax; how to balance one partner not working or one partner retraining.

Transition back to paid work for mums – e.g. mentoring, flexible work, part time work.

We need more support for young women transitioning back to work after having babies e.g. flexible work, support and mentoring, extended paid parental leave, ability to do a staggered transition, part time work, and support to slowly get back into full time work. The system needs greater flexibility for women to keep a hand in while on parental leave and then slowly transition back to work.

Unpaid work expectations on wāhine Māori

"Everyone wants a piece of you". Wāhine Māori have high unpaid work responsibilities – e.g. unpaid community work, marae committee etc. Expectations have increased on wāhine Māori e.g. expectations to know Xero, have treasurer skills – there is an opportunity to provide more support to community organisations.

Value wāhine Māori cultural skills and work

Value needs to be given to the cultural skills wāhine bring to work and the cultural work they do – e.g. ability to speak te reo or cultural work you do outside your official role. When market value of roles is assessed there is bias about roles carried out by wāhine. No value is given to cultural skills.

Wāhine Māori have added responsibilities in the workforce. There is the concept of a cultural 'double shift' (where you do a technical shift and then a shift as a Māori). When applied to wāhine it's a 'triple shift' (a technical shift, a shift as a Māori and a third shift as a wāhine).

Work is underway on tikanga-led HR to try to solve problems we encounter with corporate HR structures.

Need an ethnicity lens as well as a gender lens

We need to apply an ethnicity lens as well as a gender lens – e.g. pay equity – women are not doing well, but it is horrifying when you then look at Māori women.

Wider issues relating to work

The age of eligibility for kaumatua housing needs to come down to 50 years, not 65 years. It is very difficult for women aged over 50 years if they don't own a house. There are links between work, housing and health issues for wāhine Māori aged over 50 years.