



# **NEW ZEALAND WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME**

Diversity in leadership, promoting  
better sector performance

NZWIL





# Ko te Pūāwaitanga o ngā Moemoeā, me whakamahi

Dreams become a reality, when we take action – Te Puea Hērangi

Can two women who did not previously know each other serendipitously meet and come up with a good idea almost simultaneously?

We believe that an embryonic NZWiL crystallised from idea to action when we first met. Both of us were concerned at the time in our different capacities as Pro Vice-Chancellor (Equity) at the University of Auckland and as Equal Employment Opportunities Commissioner at the New Zealand Human Rights Commission about the very low percentages of women in top leadership positions in the university sector. At the time we first talked at Auckland University in 2006, only 16.91 per cent of senior academics at associate professor and professor levels across the eight universities were female.<sup>1</sup> New Zealand had neither a national leadership programme, nor a national strategic framework for university women's advancement, with only a couple of universities offering institutional programmes.<sup>2</sup> Senior New Zealand female academics were travelling to Australia to look at university leadership activities across the Tasman.

As former Prime Minister Rt Hon Helen Clark once said: "Do we want to keep seeing women in leadership positions? If we do we're going to have to do something about it because it won't happen of its own accord".<sup>3</sup> Both of us wanted to do something about it, we had a vision of what was possible and that it needed to be different to be successful. We realised it would not happen of its own accord.

We also knew that without other committed men and women, the idea for a pan-university transformational leadership programme for women would not move from concept to action. For a start, there was money to be found. Our strategy was to find some seeding resources and then convince key influencers within the sector. Appropriately, funding and commitment came from the Kate Edger Educational Charitable Trust, a trust that takes its name from the first woman to graduate with a Bachelor of Arts degree in the British Empire. Traction came from the University of Auckland Vice-Chancellor Professor Stuart McCutcheon who was immediately supportive. His influence encouraged other Vice Chancellors to see the potential of NZWiL when it began. The Vice Chancellors remain pivotal supporters of NZWiL.

A third partner came aboard in 2006 from Massey University's Centre of Women and Leadership, through Dr Susan Fountaine and Dr Sarah Leberman. Sarah becoming the second chair of the NZWiL Steering Group.

Integral to the first programme was Sarah Schulz of People Development who helped us operationalise our ideas to be different from existing women's leadership programmes that largely focussed on training women to be like men at the top. Her brief was to help us make NZWiL for women, by women, and with women, acknowledging that traditional gendered patterns of leadership may have inhibited female aspirations. She helped us identify strategies, think about understandings and propose the skills needed for a special 'hot house' experience for tertiary women that would build on their commitment and contribution to the sector.

Sarah has been the backbone of the programme ever since and as the facilitator has encouraged over 300 academic and professional women through the week of motivation, stimulation, excitement and hard work that constitutes the residential component of the NZWiL programme.

<sup>1</sup> McGregor, J. and Fountaine, S. (2006). New Zealand Census of Women's Participation 2006. Wellington: New Zealand Human Rights Commission.

<sup>2</sup> Ramsay, E., McGregor, J. and McCarthy, D. (2014). New Zealand's experiment: closing the gender gap in higher education leadership through cumulative culture change. Eighth European Conference on Gender equality in Higher Education, Vienna, Austria. 3-5th September 2014.

<sup>3</sup> McGregor, J (2012), New Zealand Census of Women's Participation 2012. Wellington: New Zealand Human Rights Commission.

In our vision for NZWiL we wanted to promote women's self-belief, to challenge both the 'gender games' as Sandra Acker calls them in academic leadership<sup>4</sup> and women's own conception of their capabilities, and to convert aspirations into expectations and action.

We also wanted to challenge women to think beyond gender biases and the deficit focus of women's leadership. What about new and visionary ways of working and the contributions they could make? Professor Eleanor Ramsay, Adjunct Professor from the University of Tasmania, was a significant overseas contributor to these conversations during NZWiL programme sessions.

Our vision included the idea of senior women in universities networking outwards from their own institution, with both alumni from other universities and

more extensively in the public and private sectors. Both of us used our wider New Zealand networks to invite guest speakers from politics, corporate life, and the public and community sector to talk about their lives as women leaders. A key element in the design of the programme was to expose university women to knowledge of the wider social, economic and cultural context that surround the tertiary environment in which they work.

There was a strong sense by the first NZWiL Steering Group that gender equality and equity were synonymous. We introduced a programme for professional / allied staff to complement the programme for senior academic women, and scholarships for Māori and Pasifika women are provided at both academic and professional courses.

We believe NZWiL has delivered beyond its vision. We both feel a huge sense of pride in the success of all of the NZWiL alumni.

At an instrumental level NZWiL has been pivotal in incrementally improving the percentage of women promoted to associate professors, to professorial positions, and to senior administrative and academic management within universities. The programme showcases superb talent and provides academic women and professional staff with the skills and self-confidence to apply for promotion both in academic and professional life. Many NZWiL graduates have used other alumni as a wider reference group to vet their promotions applications and suggest improvements.

The power and influence of the NZWiL graduates has yet to be fully harnessed by New Zealand universities. When it is, NZWiL will have played a significant role in women's leadership and gender equality in New Zealand universities. In feminist Sonja Davies' words: "Nothing is too difficult to achieve. Only inertia can defeat us..."

*Professor Judy McGregor*

*Dianne McCarthy CRSNZ ONZM*

<sup>4</sup> Acker, S. (2010) Gendered games in academic leadership. *International Studies in Sociology of Education*. 20(2), 129-152.

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# The challenge and solution

## – NZWiL Programme

### HAVING TOO FEW WOMEN LEADERS IS A CHALLENGE FOR UNIVERSITIES —AND SOCIETY

For any country to prosper and thrive, it needs to make full use of all of its human capital.

Diversity brings rich benefits economically, socially, and to organisations. Having a gender balance in leadership brings positive consequences at many levels.

- It harnesses women's talents and abilities
- It allows for representation and 'voice' at the decision making level, thereby increasing trust and confidence in the system
- It provides role models to other women who aspire to leadership
- It makes universities attractive to talented female staff, and in doing so retains these women
- It increases productivity, success, and innovation.

New Zealand universities share a challenge with universities and organisations worldwide – they have too few women in leadership positions. Despite pressures on universities to make better use of their talent pool, and despite the fact that more women now study at university than men, women are still seriously underrepresented at higher levels—in both senior academic and general staff roles.

In New Zealand, the latest data shows women hold only about a quarter of senior academic positions in the country's eight universities. This suggests the higher you go up the levels of seniority the fewer women are present. New Zealand has also recently dropped in the world standings to 13th in 2014 in the World Economic Forum's global gender gap ratings.

## THE NEW ZEALAND WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME —RISING TO THE CHALLENGE

In 2006, women from three partner groups designed a programme by women, for women.

They were:

- the Pro Vice-Chancellor of Equity at the University of Auckland, Professor Dianne McCarthy
- the Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO) Commissioner at New Zealand's Human Rights Commission, Dr Judy McGregor
- the Co-Director of the New Zealand Centre of Women and Leadership, Dr Sarah Leberman.

The result was a strategy to fund, develop, and deliver a specialised leadership programme for senior women within universities: the New Zealand Women in Leadership (NZWiL) programme.

The programme set a clear goal: to recognise and enhance women's leadership capacities and influence within universities. It would build on existing programmes in two universities, and be directed at university women in upper-middle level roles (both academic and general staff). The target groups were women who aspired to be leaders, and those who were already in leadership positions, but wanted to advance.

NZWiL is designed to help participants in five key areas:

1. To examine what makes a leader in the tertiary education sector
2. To reflect on the strategies needed to promote and support leadership
3. To increase knowledge of the skills and competencies women need to be leaders
4. To develop strategies for increasing research and leadership capabilities
5. To build personal and professional networks nationwide.

## THE STORIES AND LESSONS LEARNED FROM THIS SUCCESSFUL LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME

In the eight years it has operated, NZWiL has successfully run 16 one-week residential programmes, for 20 women at a time.

Women attending these programmes came from each of New Zealand's eight universities, and from different disciplines and sections within these universities.

Since 2008 NZWiL has also run a two-day alumni symposium every two years, each time hosted by different alumni groups around the country. In addition, since 2012, a regional alumni road show has been held in the alternate years.

The NZWiL Steering Group understands the importance of rigorous evidence and research. In addition to their own programme evaluations, it commissioned independent evaluations in 2011 and 2014. These evaluations highlighted that NZWiL is of enormous value to its participants, and to the universities these participants work in.

The evaluations also demonstrated that NZWiL succeeds in:

- unlocking participants' leadership potential
- making women visible for leadership roles
- increasing participants' confidence and influence

- making participants clearer and more focused on their goals
- creating and strengthening participants' networks.

The independent evaluations helped reinforce the factors that ensure the success of the NZWiL programme. This information was further supported by:

- articles and publications on the NZWiL programme
- the experiences of NZWiL advisors and facilitators
- survey feedback from 171 NZWiL alumni.

Feedback obtained from interviews with 25 women who had taken part in the programme further added to this information, and served as an excellent resource to draw on. These women talked about what the programme meant for them individually.

In this publication, NZWiL has drawn together its past and present experiences, as well as its future goals. The publication outlines NZWiL's history, the model used to achieve its goals, and details of how the programme works. Quotes and stories from participants reinforce key points.

## THIS BOOK IS FOR THOSE WHO WISH TO LEARN MORE ABOUT NZWiL OR SEEK TO DEVELOP THEIR OWN SUCCESSFUL PROGRAMME

The central challenge that NZWiL was set up to address—the need for more women leaders—is not confined solely to universities. Nor is it a problem unique to New Zealand. NZWiL's programme is a tried, tested, and true model. It is an effective, collaborative, 'real world' approach. Most leadership courses are focused on individuals. NZWiL has a broad national coverage, and a university sector-wide approach.

NZWiL focuses on encouraging women into leadership. The NZWiL programme model applies equally well to any area that would benefit from greater diversity. The programme could be a valuable model for others who want to increase and encourage more diverse leaders in their sector or locality. The model can be adapted and shaped to the needs of groups such as:

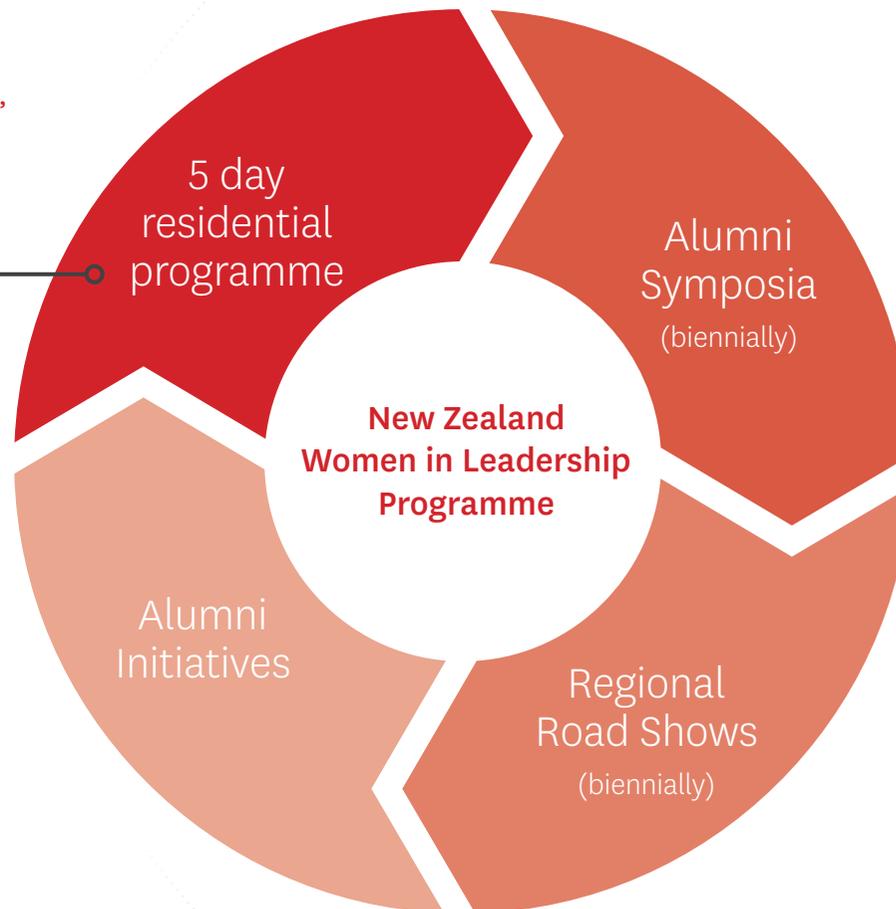
- clusters of universities
- regional groupings of educational institutions
- ethnic and other minorities
- sector groups.

# NZWiL Model

The model developed for NZWiL is tried, tested, and true. It's unique in its effective, collaborative, 'real world' approach.

## Core Programme

- Day 1** Strategic Leadership Context
- Day 2** Leadership Development and Career Advancement
- Day 3** Change Management
- Day 4** Research Leadership or Communication and Planning
- Day 5** Leadership in Action



## Sector Support

- Universities New Zealand
- All '8' Universities

## Governance

### Steering Group:

- Strategy
- Programme Design
- New Initiatives

## Research & Evaluation

- Longitudinal
- Internal and Independent

# Success factors

## DEVELOPED BY WOMEN, FOR WOMEN

‘We knew, both from our own experience and from studying the research, that there are definite barriers holding women back from leadership. Our vision was to do something completely different—something that would tackle those barriers in a fresh, women-focused way, to encourage women to step up to leadership.’

– Professor Sarah Leberman, Chair of the NZWiL Steering Group.

The barriers identified by NZWiL include:

- lack of time to build and plan careers
- not enough mentors and sponsors
- lack of self-confidence, leading to lower career goals
- low trust in the system supporting and promoting them
- low visibility, meaning women are less likely to be ‘shoulder-tapped’ for leadership roles.

The NZWiL programme was subsequently designed in an effort to help women overcome these barriers. It aims to do this in a way that makes participants feel supported and empowered to seek leadership roles and to exercise leadership.



‘There is something very supportive and nurturing about being in an all-women environment. There are a lot of unspoken assumptions, and friendships are made very quickly.’

– Professor Giselle Byrnes, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Faculty of Law, Education, Business and Arts, Charles Darwin University, formerly Professor of History and Pro Vice-Chancellor Postgraduate, at the University of Waikato when a NZWiL participant.

For some women, the prospect of a week with only women was rather frightening. Professor Kate McGrath, now Vice-Provost (Research) at Victoria University of Wellington, spends most of her working life surrounded by men. She admits to 'some trepidation' about the female-oriented programme, but found it powerful to have a lot of senior women backing her up.



‘A woman’s world is still very different, and the things that matter to women are still very different. Women, in order to be successful, have had to be more like men and they haven’t had the chance yet to be women. **We need to achieve an equality of understanding of what both sexes can contribute, and a balance of power drawing on the best elements of the different psyches.**’

– Dr Elizabeth Aitken-Rose, appointed to Head of School, School of Architecture and Planning, University of Auckland following the NZWiL programme.

## A COMMITTED STEERING GROUP TO MAINTAIN AND DEVELOP THE PROGRAMME

A successful programme needs a dynamic and committed group to steer it.

NZWiL's Steering Group is made up of women in senior academic and general staff roles at New Zealand universities. This strong governance team plans, organises and oversees all aspects of the NZWiL programme, ensuring that the initial spirit of the programme is not only maintained, but strengthened.

Specifically, the Steering Group:

- selects the presenters and programme content
- evaluates participant feedback from each programme, and makes changes accordingly
- monitors the programme's administration, budget, and processes
- ensures continuous quality improvement of the programme
- liaises directly with Universities New Zealand Te Pūkai Tara the body for university Vice-Chancellors and other key stakeholder groups
- endorses the NZWiL alumni symposia and regional roadshow initiatives.

Steering Group members volunteer their time, and the group is always mindful of the need for geographical and ethnic diversity. If Māori and Pasifika women are not part of the group, they are invited to be advisors and included in the programme. Since 2008, membership of the Steering Group has included recent programme participants to ensure their experience of the programme informs proposed changes to content and programme structure as well as other NZWiL initiatives and developments.

The Steering Group's chair is preferably an academic at professorial rank. This gives the programme legitimacy and a high profile within the universities, particularly as the initial focus was improvement in the numbers of academic leaders.

Past participants of NZWiL regularly step up to join the Steering Group. Two founding strategists, Dr Dianne McCarthy and Professor Judy McGregor, have remained on the group as advisors.

The group meets formally three times a year to discuss and collaborate, with other meetings held via teleconference.

NZWiL employs a facilitator to guide each programme, and to provide essential continuity. Sarah Schulz, from People Development Limited, has facilitated all 16 programmes, and is described by the Steering Group as 'the glue holding the programme together.' The programme also has a part-time administrator.

## SUPPORT FROM THE TOP

Support from the highest levels within universities is vital.

Universities are still largely male-led, and those leaders, as well as their female counterparts, need to be serious about and committed to increasing women's leadership.

Participants need to know that leaders see NZWiL as important. The opening session of the residential programme is always by a Vice-Chancellor. Where possible, a second Vice-Chancellor is included in the weekly programme.

The presence of top leaders sends an important signal to participating women. It confirms to them that the programme has high status within the universities and that the leaders – both male and female – support and sponsor increasing women's leadership.

Hearing from leaders at the highest levels in the university can help participants accept that it is valid and important to take time to focus on their professional and personal development.

In 2014, Professor Stuart McCutcheon, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Auckland, spoke to an international gathering on women's progress towards leadership at his own university. He described his interest in promoting more women leaders as 'enlightened self-interest.' 'Why deny yourself access to half the talent pool?' he asked.



**'Because of NZWiL, Vice-Chancellors are much more aware of the women in their universities and the potential these women have. That was always obvious in one-off cases where women were exceptional and did amazing things, but I think we look at women across the board now as really strong contributors to the university mission.'**

*– Associate Professor Sharon Harvey, Deputy Dean (Research), Head of the School of Language and Culture, AUT University, formerly Associate Dean (Research and Postgraduate) of the Faculty of Applied Humanities and Chair of the Ethics Committee, when a NZWiL participant.*

## FUNDING AND SELECTION PROCESS TO BOOST DIVERSITY

NZWIL was initially funded with a grant from the Kate Edger Educational Charitable Trust.

Since 2007, the New Zealand Vice-Chancellors Committee (now Universities New Zealand Te Pūkai Tara) has committed that each university will fund at least two participants to attend each programme.

Ensuring this minimum of two women on every programme helps to establish an alumni network for participants. This alumni plays a vital role in supporting past participants in the years following the programme, and in developing the direction and content of future programmes.

There are 20 participants per programme. Funding for the programme covers the administrative and accommodation costs. All speakers willingly provide their time freely, which fulfils our philosophy for presenters to contribute as part of 'paying it forward', with the programme covering any travel and accommodation costs as required.

Women are selected to take part in NZWiL through an internal university nomination process. Supporting guidelines, including suggested selection criteria, and an application form are provided by NZWiL.

Pre-programme work and post-residential programme initiatives ensure that NZWiL continues to bring lasting benefits to participants and their universities. Pre-course meetings help participants to clarify their personal and professional goals. Participants can meet with their Vice-Chancellor, line manager, or other senior staff after the programme to discuss their future plans. They are also strongly encouraged to get involved in activities and networks with other past participants.

Different cultural perspectives add richness and diversity to the programme. Women discuss the experiences they share as women and as working professionals, as well as those that differ between cultures.

### NZWiL Māori and Pasifika Scholarships

To increase NZWiL's ethnic diversity, two scholarships per programme were introduced for Māori and Pasifika women in 2011. The aim of these scholarships is to:

- improve equity outcomes for Māori and Pasifika women
- reflect the diversity of eligible future leaders in academic and general staff roles
- encourage and assist increased participation of Māori and Pasifika women in NZWiL programmes.

Since the introduction of these scholarships, the ethnic diversity of the group has increased significantly and the contribution of these women to the programme has proved invaluable.

**‘Traditional Māori leadership involved a harmonious partnership between male and female. If we want to improve the socio-economic, cultural, and spiritual position of our Māori nation, then we need to address this imbalance.’**

*– Herearoha Skipper, Business Manager, Te Kotahi Research Institute, University of Waikato.*

### Alumni Symposia and Regional Roadshows

NZWiL has offered a two-day alumni symposium, biennially since 2008, facilitated by alumni from a number of universities and held alternately in Auckland, Wellington, and Dunedin. In addition, NZWiL alumni ongoing support includes one-day Regional Roadshows, started in 2012, and held in one of the four main centres – Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch or Dunedin. Each of these alumni events provide an opportunity to network with Vice-Chancellors' and senior executives from the respective host institutions.

After eight years of NZWiL, the number of past participants is large and vibrant. Over 300 women have taken part—a growing group with the dynamism, drive, and desire to influence and improve university leadership throughout the country.



‘I’m aware that I’m in a position of leadership, and what I do and say reflects either positively or negatively on my institution and my own Pacific community. I continually remind myself to ensure that I honour the university’s faith in me, and lift my community’s hopes and aspirations.’

‘O le ala I le pule le tautua.’ A Samoan proverb meaning ‘the pathway to leadership is through service.’ My journey in leadership and academia is shaped by this proverb.’

– Faumuina Associate Professor Faafetai Sopoaga, Associate Dean (Pacific), Division of Health Sciences, University of Otago, formerly Senior Lecturer – Pacific Health when a NZWiL participant.

## PROGRAMME STRUCTURE—TWO LINKED PRINCIPLES

At the heart of the NZWiL programme structure are two separate, but closely-linked, design principles that interweave and reinforce one another.

1. Self-reflection
2. Collective learning

Women participating in the programme are given time and space to think about their own lives and careers, and what they most need and want to learn about leadership. They are given a chance to reflect, away from the usual demands and pressures of their busy lives. This individual reflection is encouraged by required reading, before and during the programme. The space and time to reflect is something many participants value highly.

‘The programme allowed us to have space away from our busy lives to focus on something really important. You had space to explore big strategic thinking, big goals, and really let that side of your creativity flourish with a group of like-minded women who wanted to do exactly the same. It was an incredibly empowering environment.’

– Dr Carol Smith, Senior Lecturer, Department of Soil and Physical Science, Lincoln University.

Throughout the programme, participants also share their thoughts, insights and understandings of leadership with the group. Their reactions are inspired and challenged by carefully chosen presenters from many different spheres. Some presenters come from the higher education sector, while others come from the wider public and private sector. Presentations, panel discussions, workshops, and informal occasions form part of a rich and stimulating programme.



‘It has made me value networking, and prioritise that in my approach. It has also made me think about how I support and mentor other women – I have 300 staff, many of them young women. It’s also increased my desire to be involved and to give something back. I’ve learned to speak up and speak out—knowing I have something to say that’s of value.’

– Sue Roberts, CEO and State Librarian, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia formerly University Librarian at Victoria University of Wellington when a NZWiL participant.

## A 5-DAY RESIDENTIAL PROGRAMME AS THE START OF A JOURNEY —WITH FOLLOW-UP BUILT IN

Women still usually take prime responsibility for home and family—even when they are also working in paid employment.

The need to juggle a number of different roles means that many women struggle to find time to step back from their busy lives. It is therefore challenging to make the time to focus and think about their big picture goals—including how to advance as leaders.

For that reason, the heart of the NZWiL programme is a 5-day residential programme that takes place at a quality boutique conference and accommodation venue in New Zealand's capital city. Twenty women stay at a hotel in central Wellington, where the surroundings create a space for them to reflect, share, discuss, and form networks.

Holding the residential programme in a high-quality, executive venue is part of NZWiL's strategy. It signals to participants that they are respected, and that the programme is of high standing.



'It was the first residential course I had ever been on. All previous courses I'd attended, had provided some time for reflection, but at the end of the working day, you go and pick the kids up, life goes on and you're caught up in all that normal stuff. **The great benefit of the NZWiL course is that it provides ample space and time for people to think about themselves without feeling guilty and that for that block of time you are the most important person, because if you're a parent, the reality is that you're never the most important person.'**

– Professor Sonia Mazey, Pro Vice-Chancellor, College of Business and Law, University of Canterbury, formerly in an Academic Manager role when a NZWiL participant.

'I loved that it was residential. I remember that first morning coming to breakfast and realising that it was the first time in a long time that no small child had walked into the shower to talk to me. It was lovely!'

– Associate Professor Michelle Glass, Head of Department, Pharmacology and Clinical Pharmacology, University of Auckland.

## A FOCUS ON CONCEPTS RATHER THAN SKILLS

An important element of NZWiL is that it looks at the concepts behind successful leadership, rather than teaching women specific skills.

Core management training, the Steering Group believes, is the responsibility of the universities. NZWiL's role is to provide participants with the information and stimulus they need to examine what leadership means to them and the University sector as a whole.

NZWiL has broken new ground in the way it was designed and the concepts it covers. It has adhered to rigorously researched principles of leadership development, but has added to those a distinctly female perspective.

The design of NZWiL's programme is largely the same for its two audiences: academic and general university staff. The only difference is that academic women have a component on developing their research capability and leadership, while the programme for general staff has a component focused on communication: the managing of internal and external stakeholders.

Additional elements for both groups include building resilience and leadership diversity.

Many women used analogies of travel to describe their process of moving into leadership. They saw NZWiL as helping them on what, for most, is a difficult journey.

For some, the journey is around feeling accepted and valued.

For others, it is useful to see how other women leaders have responded to their challenges, so they are then able to plan for their own.

NZWiL was never intended to be a total solution to getting more university women into leadership positions. It's part of the journey towards leadership, but the Steering Group have always known that participants would need opportunities to 'refresh and engage' with colleagues following the programme, as evidenced in the alumni symposia and regional road shows.

### NZWiL core programme themes:

DAY ONE	DAY TWO	DAY THREE	DAY FOUR	DAY FIVE
Strategic Leadership Context	Leadership Development	Change Management	Research Leadership or Communication	Leadership in Action
	Career Advancement		Personal Planning	



‘It’s like I was trudging up the hill, but there wasn’t a roadmap and there weren’t any guiding stars. All of a sudden, I came away thinking ‘Right, I have a goal, I have a plan.’ Before this, I had drive and a desire to do something, but it hadn’t become an actual plan. **Within two and a half years of finishing NZWiL I had secured a Director’s position, and within 6 months of that I’d completed my Master’s.’**

– Deanna Riach, Campus Registrar, Massey University (Wellington Campus) and formerly Student Services Manager, Lincoln University when a NZWiL participant.

## A SURPRISING MIX OF EXCEPTIONAL PRESENTERS

The programme brings together exceptional presenters and speakers from a wide variety of backgrounds, not just from the tertiary education sector.

The Steering Group searches out inspiring leaders from spheres as diverse as can be imagined. They are usually high profile, and often surprising.

The women who speak and present on the programme share with remarkable honesty their strategies for arriving, achieving and surviving at the top. Their range and scope means participants learn from diverse role models, and witness a wide range of leadership styles.

‘I never expected to encounter such fascinating people. I met a woman leading the charge for the Olympics and another running Wellington Zoo—people I wouldn’t have encountered otherwise, and I was inspired.’

– Dr Elizabeth Aitken-Rose, Head of School at the University of Auckland’s School of Architecture and Planning.

## RESEARCH AND EVALUATION—KEY COMPONENTS OF NZWiL

University women know better than most how important it is to produce solid research and clear evidence of results.

For that reason, research and evaluation have always been an essential part of NZWiL.

The programme itself was based on extensive research and literature searches by its founders. This research is ongoing, to ensure that NZWiL reflects the latest thinking and knowledge about leadership.

By seeking continuous feedback on the programme, both internally and independently, the Steering Group has been able to keep NZWiL relevant, respected, and responsive. This is best summed up in the following quote about NZWiL from one of the Vice-Chancellors, captured in the 2011 Lumin independent evaluation review, ‘this is the best thing that the university has done for university leadership development ever.’

All women who attend the residential programme complete a written evaluation, and this information informs the Steering Group’s planning and governance work.

An independent evaluation of the NZWiL programme, including enhancements, was carried out by Lumin in 2011 and 2014. Of the 76 women who participated in the 2011 evaluation, 29 women had applied for promotion

since attending the programme and 28 had gained promotion. A further 10 had gained promotion through a new appointment. In both the 2011 and 2014 evaluations participants also highlighted the key things they gained from the programme:

- unlocking of their leadership potential
- being sought for leadership roles
- greater confidence in their ability and contribution
- being clearer on their career aspirations and the steps they needed to take
- a stronger network of support and encouragement.

A total of 171 alumni responded to the quantitative self-completion survey, which was part of the 2014 Lumin independent evaluation, representing a response rate of 56 percent.

‘I certainly drew on NZWiL when I applied successfully for a promotion,’ says Dr Elizabeth Aitken-Rose, from the University of Auckland. ‘I had to go back and think about those rigorous leadership and management matters; things that are hard to put into words.’

– Dr Elizabeth Aitken-Rose, Head of School at the University of Auckland’s School of Architecture and Planning.

‘The programme pushed me into aspiring to a leadership role within my institution and even nationally. Previously I had always done a lot of committee work and service to the university, but I suddenly shifted my view to seek positions of influence, rather than just positions of service.’

– Professor Vicky Cameron, Research Professor, Christchurch Heart Institute, Department of Medicine, University of Otago, Christchurch, formerly an Associate Professor when a NZWiL participant.

In addition to this, 25 women who had participated in NZWiL were interviewed during 2014 as part of longitudinal research, independent to the Lumin evaluation. They were asked what they had learned and passed on from the programme, to reflect on women and leadership, and what advice they would give younger women. Those interviews provided a wealth of useful information, much of which we have drawn on here.

Many of the women interviewed also talked about how NZWiL had specifically helped them to gain promotion.

The number of women succeeding in becoming leaders in New Zealand universities appears to have increased since 2007, when NZWiL began. While causal links between the programme and increasing numbers of women leaders in universities have not been quantified, the positive change was backed up by 171 alumni who responded to the Lumin Survey in 2014. These people reported that they considered NZWiL to have increased the number of women in university leadership roles.



‘NZWiL helped me get a promotion. It made me think strategically about what I needed to do to get promoted. It also gave me a network of people to talk to about that, and to help me with the decisions about when it was the right time. Applying for promotion is quite a big step and it’s not one where you want to be knocked back. I wanted the confidence, when I went forward, that I was going to be successful.’

– Professor Lisa Stamp, Academic Rheumatologist, Department of Medicine, University of Otago, Christchurch, formerly an Associate Professor when a NZWiL participant.

# Themes

## TIME AND SPACE TO LEARN ABOUT TRUE LEADERSHIP

Leadership has tended to be defined narrowly, and in a way that suits the current majority of male leaders. This makes it hard for many women to believe they fit the mould, or to see themselves as potential leaders.

Through NZWiL, participants could explore more broad-ranging ways of leading.

Many women, even those in senior positions, suffer from Imposter Syndrome: the feeling that they really don't deserve such a senior position, and may one day be found out.

'I saw that you could be a leader without necessarily being in a leadership position—you can lead from your desk. I think it's still really stereotyped: you're either too soft or just a bitch. Being taken seriously as somewhere between the two can still be challenging—though I think that's changing.'

– Associate Professor Michelle Glass, Head of Department, Pharmacology and Clinical Pharmacology, University of Auckland.



'When I look around, I don't see many senior role models for me. I'd go into board meetings and try to assimilate to that male identity, but I felt "This is not me". If we can have a variety of female role models higher up, so that people can see themselves reflected, that will help.'

– Professor Kate McGrath, Vice-Provost (Research), formerly Director, McDiarmid Institute, Victoria University of Wellington and prior to this Associate Professor in the School of Chemical and Physical Sciences when a NZWiL participant.

‘Because of predominantly male role models in my career, I had previously only seen what they call the transactional style of leadership, which is quite dictatorial. I found out about an alternative, transformational style, where you inspire people, lead by example, and try to communicate a shared vision – much more in keeping with my personality and style. It was a huge relief and a huge impetus to learn more about how to lead that way.’

– Professor Vicky Cameron, Research Professor, Christchurch Heart Institute, Department of Medicine, University of Otago, Christchurch, formerly an Associate Professor when a NZWiL participant.



‘You can just get so busy with busyness that you don’t take the time to think about what direction you want to go in, whether that’s research, management, or looking for different opportunities.’

– Professor Margaret Hyland, Deputy Dean, Faculty of Engineering, University of Auckland, formerly an Associate Professor when a NZWiL participant.

‘I still surprise myself because here I am occupying a significant position in the university, I’m on the Senior Leadership Team, I’m an opinion-leader in New Zealand, and I still feel the whole “one day someone is going to discover that I don’t really know what I’m doing” thing. I don’t think of myself as a woman leader, even though I think it is critically important to have leaders who are women. There’s still a men’s culture – when men get together they have an unwritten set of behavioural and cultural expectations of each other.’

– Professor Claire Robinson, Pro Vice-Chancellor, College of Creative Arts, Massey University, formerly Head of Institute and Senior Lecturer when a NZWiL participant.

## CONFIDENCE AND AMBITION TO DRIVE YOUR OWN CAREER AND MAKE IT HAPPEN

Women frequently do not aim as high in their careers as they could because of a lack of confidence—something that came through in every programme evaluation and in the interviews.

Taking control of your career is also about working out what kind of leader you want to be, as Professor Alison McIntosh, from the University of Waikato, found.

‘I needed confidence to be an Alison McIntosh professor, rather than a clone of my senior male colleagues.’

Boosting women’s confidence to be braver about taking control of their careers is something many women mentioned as a key benefit of the programme.

‘I think about what my aspirations were and I exceeded them a million times, because my expectations were quite low.’

– Sue Roberts, CEO and State Librarian, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia, formerly University Librarian, at Victoria University of Wellington when a NZWiL participant.



‘The course blew me away. When I look back over my life I think it was one of those marked life-changing experiences for me. It gave me immense self-confidence in my own ability, because my background dictated that you didn’t push yourself forward. A lot of self-effacing goes on, so the course enabled me to catch myself when I do that.’

– Dr Lorraine Petelo, Director, University Studies and English Language Division, Lincoln University, formerly Manager Bridging Programmes at Canterbury University when a NZWiL participant.

‘The culture of modesty here is very strong, and I had internalised that culture to the point of actually subsuming my own personal ambition.’

– Tracy Huntleigh-Smith, ICT Director, Health Sciences, University of Otago, formerly Strategy and Planning Manager when a NZWiL participant.

## LOW VISIBILITY MEANS WOMEN ARE LESS LIKELY TO BE ‘SHOULDER-TAPPED’ FOR LEADERSHIP ROLES

A revelation for some programme participants is that nobody is likely to single them out for leadership roles—they would need to take control of their career path themselves.

‘I really understood that you need to own and drive your career, and that was an important message for me. If you’re going to sit there and wait to be noticed or promoted, you are going to be waiting a long time.’

– Associate Professor Candice Harris, Department of Management, Faculty of Business and Law, AUT University, formerly a Senior Lecturer when a NZWiL participant.

‘The biggest thing I gained from NZWiL was confidence. As a Head of Department, I’m a lot more willing now to speak out, and voice dissent if I feel like it. I think that’s good for the university overall.’



– Associate Professor Michelle Glass, Head of Department, Pharmacology and Clinical Pharmacology, University of Auckland.

## BUILDING RESILIENCE AND ABILITY TO TAKE RISKS

Resilience is the ability to be flexible enough to bounce back and recover quickly from difficulties.

It implies a certain degree of toughness, and women have sometimes interpreted that toughness as a largely male characteristic. NZWiL helps women to define resilience in a way that means more to them.

Guilt is often a default position for successful women, according to participants.

‘Most of my life I have felt guilty that if I’m at work I should be at home, and vice versa. I think it’s corrosive. Whatever choices you make as a woman, especially around children, you’ll be criticised for. That’s why mindfulness and resilience, learning to let go of things that went wrong, is so important’, says Professor Sonia Mazey, University of Canterbury.

Many women on the programme admitted that fear had often held them back; they were afraid of being seen as pushy, unfeminine, inadequate, or inappropriate. One of the participant’s on the programme shared a way to dispel the fear that many women feel of pushing themselves forward to be leaders. Think of FEAR as an acronym, she said: False Evidence Appearing Real.

One of the key messages that many women took from attending NZWiL was that they do not need to wait to be 100 percent ready before they move into leadership. ‘I was struck by the fact that you don’t have to have it all worked out, and you don’t have to be perfect at everything. Just do it!’ says Professor Giselle Byrnes, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Faculty of Law, Education, Business and Arts, of Charles Darwin University.

‘Resilience has always been important and it certainly came to the forefront after the Canterbury earthquakes. I can honestly say it was the hardest time of my career. I realised how important relationships with colleagues are, and we should nurture them. The NZWiL programme made me realise that I need to work on my personal resilience.’

– Julia Innocente-Jones, Director, International Victoria University of Wellington, formerly at Lincoln University when a NZWiL participant.



‘One thing that was reiterated time and again was making sure that there’s time for yourself as a person. I have a full-on job as well as a partner, three children, parents and friends. So it’s important to know it’s not about being selfish, but about being realistic and building resilience.’

– Anna Brown, Director, Open Lab; Senior Lecturer, School of Design; College of Creative Arts, Massey University.

## THE NEED FOR WHOLE-OF-LIFE BALANCE

Achieving a realistic balance between work and the rest of life has been described as the ‘elephant in the room’ for many university women.

With the multiple pressures and demands they face, many feel that they are expected to cope, and to get on with doing everything quietly and without complaint—that’s just what women do.

Setting realistic expectations of yourself is difficult, says Dr Carol Smith, a Senior Lecturer at Lincoln University’s Department of Soil and Physical Sciences. She advocates asking yourself tough questions about what really matters to you. ‘Academia is what we do, but how does my academic life fit into the bigger picture: what am I trying to achieve? Do I want to be remembered for a bucket-load of publications when I die, or is part of my legacy my family and my balanced lifestyle? My life has more dimensions than just academia.’

‘I came back to work from my postdoc when my children were still at pre-school. I was working part-time, sharing child rearing with my husband. A male colleague said to me I don’t think you can do science part-time; it’s just not possible.’  
I thought ‘Says who?.’ That was the challenge. I wanted to prove him wrong.’

– Professor Vicky Cameron, Research Professor, Christchurch Heart Institute, Department of Medicine, University of Otago, Christchurch, formerly an Associate Professor when a NZWiL participant.

Everyone’s life contains more than work, yet the term work/life balance tends to suggest that work is not part of life. Some of the women who have participated in NZWiL objected to this artificial division.

‘The whole thing is life—my life—and I love working. I don’t want to give work a negative connotation’, says Julia Innocente-Jones, Director, International Victoria University of Wellington.

Some women actively resist the pressure to conform to work stereotypes or limiting expectations.



‘Having familial care responsibilities across various ages and stages is the complexity of women’s lives. Caring responsibilities can be viewed as a distraction to academic work. **We need to remind people how acknowledging our roles outside of work can enable us to bring our whole selves to work.** But you do have to put boundaries in place yourself. We’ve got the types of jobs that are never done.’

– Associate Professor Candice Harris, Department of Management, Faculty of Business and Law, AUT University, formerly a Senior Lecturer when a NZWiL participant.

## BEING YOURSELF AND KNOWING YOUR VALUES

A recurring theme is the importance of exploring your own personality and motivations, and finding ways to reflect those in your work. Professor Giselle Byrnes talks about how important it is to have alignment between your personal values, and those of the institution you work for. 'At the end of the day, institutions are the people who comprise them.'

Several NZWiL participants indicated that knowing how your personality impacts on others, how to be collegial, and how you can influence people, is vital – not just for self-awareness, but also for making an organisation work effectively and strategically.

For many, seeing themselves as part of a larger picture helps to clarify their values.



'NZWiL challenges you to understand what you want to achieve in the future, and how that sits with your values, your direction, and your challenges. I had never been in a position where I had such a singular focus, so it was quite a revelation.'

– Deanna Riach, Campus Registrar, Massey University (Wellington Campus), formerly Student Services Manager, Lincoln University when a NZWiL participant.

'I think it's so important to show humility and vulnerability as a role model. You don't see enough senior people reveal their vulnerability. At our Women in Leadership conference day here once a year, I stand up and tell my story. I nearly died of a ruptured ectopic pregnancy and the Women in Leadership programme changed my life. It's about putting your life and your values first, rather than the silos and expectations and 'should' words that cost so much in our daily lives.'

– Professor Alison McIntosh, Waikato Management School, University of Waikato.



‘One of the sessions I remember most was Raewyn Dalziel from the University of Auckland telling us that **we absolutely had to be aware of the strategic and political place of tertiary education**, and our place in that strategy. Up until that point I hadn’t given that a thought.’

– Professor Claire Robinson, Pro Vice-Chancellor, College of Creative Arts, Massey University, formerly Head of Institute and Senior Lecturer when a NZWiL participant.

## SPEAKING UP AND PASSING IT ON

Professions have long had structures for mentoring younger members into positions of leadership. But these were established when women were excluded from such walks of life. They were developed to suit men, and are still, even in today’s workplace, often maintained by men.

The NZWiL programme helps women to explore ways of helping other women to succeed. Women who have taken part in the programme strongly feel the need to become mentors and role models.

‘I purposefully try to be a positive role model, to support and empower my staff. I take that responsibility very seriously’, says Massey University’s Wellington Campus Registrar, Deanna Riach. Those sentiments were repeated by most NZWiL participants.

‘You do have a responsibility to pass any learning on. You need to be reflective, watch what others do, and try to learn from it. You also have to realise you’re being watched, like it or not, and really should model good behaviour.’

– Peta Goldsworthy, Group Manager Communications, Public Relations, University of Waikato.



‘NZWiL was like a refreshing breeze. I learned how I could **change the things I was doing to make more of a contribution: make changes, support change, support people**. Something I learned was the idea of sending the elevator down. As you go up, you have to make sure you send it back down for others.’

– Associate Professor Cheryl Wilson, Director, Consumer and Applied Sciences, Department of Applied Sciences, University of Otago.

## LEARNING TO SET LIMITS

The ability to set boundaries, and keep an eye on the professional and personal goals, is important too. One of the dilemmas many women face is the classic yes/no dichotomy: when to step forward and put their hand up, and when to say no.

‘Where possible, you should always say yes and take opportunities that come along. That creates opportunities to learn and progress. But when you take on more responsibility, then something else has to drop off. Women have a tendency to think we should be invincible. Nobody is asking us to do everything.’

– Professor Claire Robinson, Pro Vice-Chancellor, College of Creative Arts, Massey University, formerly Head of Institute and Senior Lecturer when a NZWiL participant.

‘Don’t be a sucker for all the service roles that pop up. Learn to say no to things that are not going to be career-building. That’s something I probably learned a bit late in life.’

– Professor Vicky Cameron, Research Professor, Christchurch Heart Institute, Department of Medicine, University of Otago, Christchurch, formerly an Associate Professor when a NZWiL participant.



‘We as women have historically sold ourselves short by putting everyone else before ourselves: our children, our whānau, our men, our colleagues, our communities. **We need to change drastically by not undervaluing ourselves and allowing anyone to make us feel inferior.** The message to Māori women is to stop pandering to our male counterparts, and step up to the challenge of tribal leadership.’

– Herearoha Skipper, Business Manager, Te Kotahi Research Institute, University of Waikato.

## LEARNING FROM INSPIRING MENTORS AND BEING A ROLE MODEL

Many university women have found it difficult to find people who can help them to develop their careers—especially those that work in traditionally male-dominated areas, such as science.

‘When I look around, I don’t see many senior role models for me. They often seemed masculine, and I’m a pretty girly chick,’ says Professor Kate McGrath, Vice-Provost (Research) formerly, Director, McDiarmid Institute, Victoria University of Wellington. ‘I’m the only female director of a Centre of Research Excellence. Ultimately, I’d like to see the population demographics reflected in every single career type and stage.’

Many university women find it hard to identify someone they can relate to as a mentor or sponsor. Several NZWiL participants say they would advise young women to find a good mentor—someone who can help them to broaden their experience and outlook.



‘For me one of the challenges is actually to be an exemplar out there, in society...showing society that this is what the world looks like when women are given opportunities. This is the contribution a woman can make if she’s given the opportunity, she’s treated with respect and supported.’

– Hayley Schnell, Director of Faculty Operations, Faculty of Engineering, University of Auckland, formerly Manager of Tamaki Campus Services when a NZWiL participant.

‘I learned at one of the sessions to consider a male mentor, because they see the system with different eyes and have different ways of navigating the university systems. I did that, and within two years I was promoted to a position similar to my mentor. He helped me rethink my approach, to not take things personally, and think of situations from the perspective of the leaders I’m engaging with.’

– Faumuina Associate Professor Faafetai Sopoaga, Associate Dean (Pacific), Division of Health Sciences, University of Otago, formerly Senior Lecturer – Pacific Health when a NZWiL participant.

‘I work in a pre-degree area, which in the hierarchy of the university is sometimes considered less important. But you can still be a successful leader within that, so that all parts of the system are valued. To become a successful woman in those roles is really good, because you are a role model for others.’

– Dr Lorraine Petelo, Director, University Studies and English Language Division, Lincoln University, formerly Manager Bridging Programmes at Canterbury University when a NZWiL participant.

## BUILDING NETWORKS

Many women who have made it to the upper echelons of leadership find it a lonely position to be in. Others have adopted the dominant male culture.

‘The norms, the paradigms are wrong’, says Professor Sonia Mazey, Pro Vice-Chancellor, College of Business and Law at the University of Canterbury. ‘If male colleagues say they can’t go to a meeting after 3 pm because they have to pick the children up, people think that’s wonderful. With a woman, they think she should get over it, because that’s how it is. The further you get from the male norm, the harder it becomes.’

All participants highlighted that networks of women who can support women into leadership and challenge the norms are crucially important.

For many women, NZWiL provided a safe environment to be able to explore their common issues and challenges. Women did not feel pressure to be smart or brilliant, nor to perform.

‘For me, the networking was the best thing about the programme. It instilled in me higher aspirations than I’d otherwise have had’ says Associate Professor Sharon Harvey, Deputy Dean (Research), Head of the School of Language and Culture, AUT University

‘You’re with each other, living in close proximity for a week, so you build some wonderful support and networks. And those women are still very valuable colleagues today. For me, a key outcome has been how it has supported and encouraged cross-university collaboration. Women are very good at doing this, but often we don’t have the opportunity to cultivate these relationships. Between us we’ve moved some positive and significant programmes of work that would not have happened without those collaborative relationships.’

– Deanna Riach, Campus Registrar, Massey University (Wellington Campus), formerly Student Services Manager, Lincoln University when a NZWiL participant.



‘You need all the friends you can get professionally. Tap into networks of women, but also into networks of senior men. It’s daunting, but it can be done.’

– Professor Vicky Cameron, Research Professor, Christchurch Heart Institute, Department of Medicine, University of Otago, Christchurch, formerly an Associate Professor when a NZWiL participant.

‘I gained this incredible community of other women in academic institutions around New Zealand. Those connections and the ability to spend time with them was really fruitful and exciting. I came away with the sense that we had a strong mandate as a community of women to strive to be better leaders and to encourage other women to make time to attend the course.’

– Anna Brown, Director, Open Lab; Senior Lecturer, School of Design; College of Creative Arts, Massey University, formerly a Lecturer in the School of Design when a NZWiL participant.

## NZWiL Logo



### **Kōwhai-ngutu-kaka (red kōwhai)**

The red kowhai is unique to New Zealand and often identifies important women leaders in marae poupou used to teach the next generation. This pattern represents two leading Māori deities. Papa-tū-ā-nuku (Earth Mother) and Hine-nui-te-pō (Goddess of the Night).

Designed by Ranga Tuhi

## NZWiL Steering Group

### **Current NZWiL Steering Group Members**

Professor Sarah Leberman, Chair  
Michelle Jordan-Tong, Deputy Chair  
Annemarie de Castro  
Professor Gill Dobbie  
Associate Professor Candice Harris  
Associate Professor Jean Hay-Smith  
Julia Innocente-Jones  
Professor Sonia Mazey

### **Former NZWiL Steering Group Members**

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Kate Rawlings  
Professor Sarah Todd  
Dr Marianne Tremaine

### **NZWiL Advisors**

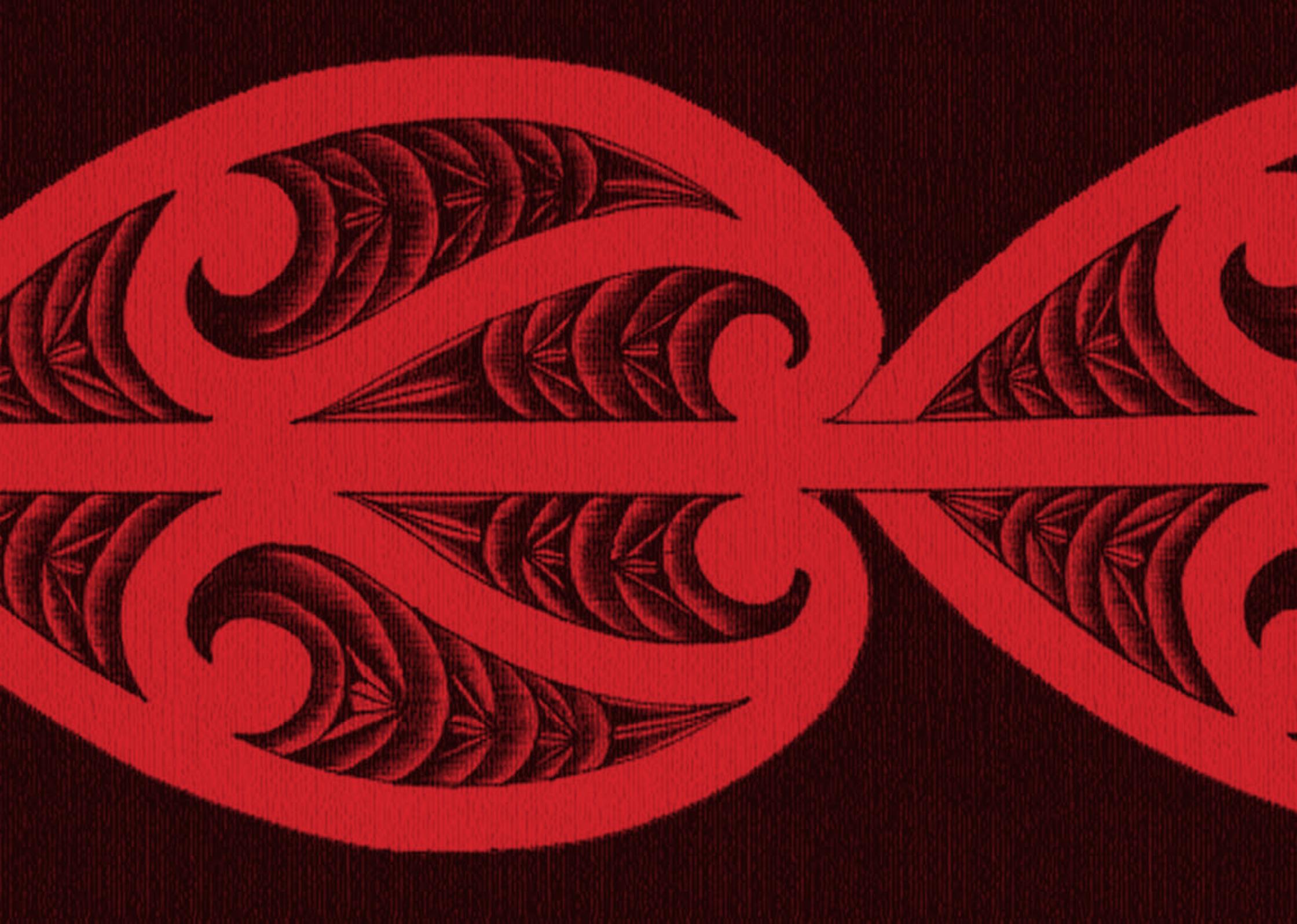
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Further information on the NZWiL programme including a list of the speakers and facilitators is available on the Universities New Zealand website at [www.universitiesnz.ac.nz/aboutus/sc/hr/women-in-leadership](http://www.universitiesnz.ac.nz/aboutus/sc/hr/women-in-leadership)

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