

Cross Agency Rainbow Network



ANNUAL REPORT

23



Address from our Sponsor



On behalf of the Cross Agency Rainbow Network, I am pleased to share this year's Annual Report and celebrate their achievements this past year.

It has been another important year for CARN, including the delivery of the third bi-annual conference in Christchurch. Intersectionality as Empowerment was a powerful and challenging theme and I know attendees came away inspired, educated, and empowered to drive change.

Publishing the 'Transitioning and Gender Affirmation in the New Zealand Public Service' best practice advice was a labour of love from many people across CARN, who came together to give back to their communities and make life easier for those who follow. This tool uses best practice from within and outside the Public Service to assist leaders, managers, and teams to have conversations about transitioning and gender affirmation.

Creating safe and inclusive work cultures and environments not only aligns with the values of the Public Service, but it is the responsibility of each organisation and team member. The people at CARN embody this and make a conscious choice each day to improve the Public Service for all.

Thank you to CARN and its volunteers for the work you do to support an inclusive public service.

“Hapaitia te ara tika pumau ai te rangatiratanga mo nga uri whakatipu – foster the pathway of knowledge to strength, independence and growth for future generations.”

CAROLYN TREMAIN
(SHE/HER)

**Secretary for Business,
Innovation and Employment and
Chief Executive CARN Sponsor**

About CARN



In 2017, a group of volunteers from different public sector organisations came together and formed the Cross-Agency Rainbow Network (CARN) as a way to share information and support each other to build internal rainbow networks.

Since then, CARN has grown into a thriving forum for collaboration to raise the profile of rainbow communities and inclusion within the Public Service.

Our purpose

CARN aims to create a wide, deep and sustainable shift in strengthening the participation, representation and respect of people with diverse SOGIESC (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression and Sex Characteristics) throughout the public sector.

As a network, CARN endeavours to be accessible, inclusive, welcoming and representative of all SOGIESC-diverse communities. CARN stands by members of our rainbow communities, and strives to promote the dignity, respect, and safety of these people in our network, across our public sector, and in the communities we serve.

Terms used throughout this document



Rainbow

Rainbow is an umbrella term for a wide range of persons with sexual orientation, gender identity, and/or gender expression that differs from societal norms. Persons in this group often identify as sexual and gender minorities.

SOGIESC

SOGIESC is an acronym for 'sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics'. 'SOGIESC diverse' or 'those with a diverse SOGIESC' are umbrella terms like Rainbow and LGBTTQIA+.

Umbrella terms

Rainbow and SOGIESC diverse are umbrella terms. They include but are not limited to people who identify as: lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, takatāpui, queer, intersex, asexual, transsexual, non-binary, pansexual, whakawahine, tangata ira tāne, māhū (Tahiti and Hawaii), vakasalewalewa (Fiji), palopa (Papua New Guinea), fa'afafine (Samoa, American Samoa and Tokelau), akava'ine (Cook Islands), fakaleiti or leiti (the Kingdom of Tonga), fakafifine (Niue) or two spirit.

Governance of CARN

CARN created a number of governance roles in 2020. As the network has matured, the need for additional roles has emerged.

→ **Co-chairs (Toihau-Takirua)**

(must be of two different agencies and will, where possible, represent more than one diverse SOGIESC identity)

- Responsible for ensuring the annual report is completed and distributed
- Holds the various subcommittees accountable and on task
- Function as the spokespeople for the network and liaising with key stakeholders such as Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission, Rainbow CEs, Papa Pounamu and the CARN sponsor
- Represent CARN at Tui Raumata meetings and liaise with other cross agency Employee Led Networks (ELNs)
- Where matters involve Te Tiriti, co-chairs will engage meaningfully with the Intersectionality and engagement lead and/or seek views of Takatāpui before making any decisions or taking action.

→ **Communications lead (Kaiarataki Pāpāho)**

- Raises the profile of CARN externally and engages members within the networks, through the use of various channels and platforms
- Update the ELNs and ELN site, updates and maintains any social network sites on behalf of CARN and leads any communication and press releases on behalf of CARN.

→ **Intersectionality and engagement lead (Kaiarataki Pāhekoheko)**

- Actively supports and encourages the inclusion, representation, and contribution of marginalised voices within CARN. These rōpū include but are not limited to: disabled members, ethnic minorities, takatāpui, and gender minorities, etc
- Liaise with other ELNs and stakeholders that represent these various rōpū
- Actively engages with community groups and entities that represent these rōpū to ensure CARN's mahi is representative and inclusive of these communities. Acts as the liaison between CARN and community groups.

→ **Membership experience lead (Kaiarataki Wheako)**

- Responsible for onboarding and offboarding of CARN members
- Responsible for maintaining membership and email list
- Identifies gaps in our membership experience and how to better engage with members across the country and with less flexible working conditions.

Governance of CARN

→ Resource management lead (Kaiarataki Whakahaere Rauemi)

- Manages budgets, finances, people and resources
- Completes funding proposals and supports co-chairs, and sub-committees as needed
- Identifies and creates resources as needed for CARN activities
- Responsible for the CARN membership survey and associated findings.

→ Governance members (Kaiarataki Mana Wakahaere)

- Actively supports across all governance work streams
- Responsible for maintaining the action plan for the year ahead.

Governance members moving on

Theresa Peters has played a leading role in the formation and governance of CARN since its inception in 2017. While they have decided to step down and allow the opportunity for fresh perspectives, we are fortunate that we will not be losing them entirely. They will continue to be active in a governance/advisory role.

Luc Powell joined CARN in 2020 and has taken on both the co-chair role and the membership lead position during their time. Luc will be leaving Aotearoa in 2024 and therefore will be stepping down from governance.



We are incredibly lucky to have had both Theresa and Luc's expertise and institutional knowledge and we have valued everything they have done for CARN and our community.

Election of co-chair and governance members

Governance roles are to be elected yearly and we encourage and prioritise diverse co-chairs however it can be dependent on the applications submitted.

Co-chair roles will be for two years and the election for these roles will be staggered. The purpose of this is to ensure institutional knowledge is not lost and ensure that a new incoming co-chair will be supported by someone who has been in the role for at least one year.

Our Governance

Co-chairs (Toihau-Takirua)



Theresa Peters
(they/them)
Ministry of Social
Development



Bridget Murdoch
(she/her)
Ministry for the
Environment

Communications lead (Kaiarataki Pāpāho)



Jaimee Matthews
(she/they)
Inland Revenue

Intersectionality and engagement lead (Kaiarataki Pāhekoheko)



**Rāwiri Te Hurinui -
Haumaha**
(they/him/ia)
Ministry of Business,
Innovation and
Employment

Membership experience lead (Kaiarataki Wheako)



Luc Powell
(he/him)
Ministry for the
Environment

Governance member (Kaiarataki Mana Wakahaere)



Jen Wilde
(she/her)
Inland Revenue

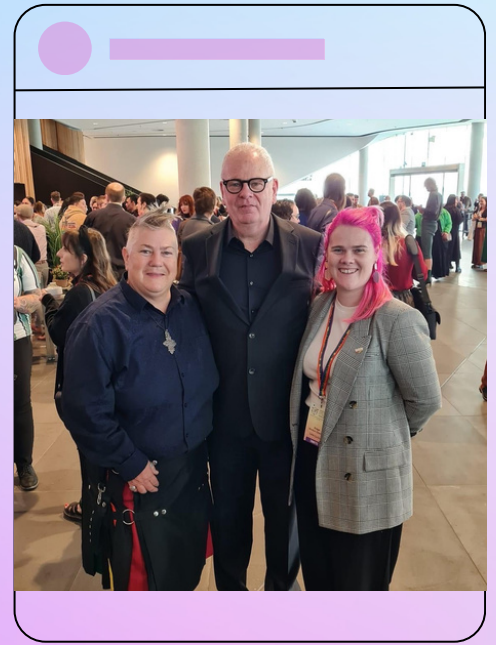
Whakamana Ira Tangata

Whakamana Ira Tangata has been incredibly successful this past year with a growth of members by 19%, now with a membership of 78 people. This has been achieved through active engagement within our space and promoting in person events or meetings in Wellington where the largest numbers of our members are located. Our meetings are held monthly and are now hybrid so people from across the motu can connect with those in Wellington who meet kanohi ki te kanohi.

Members have fed back the importance of having this rōpū and space to be themselves, discuss topical issues and socialise with their peers. The ability to raise their concerns, suggestions and voice through CARN, to our Rainbow CE's and the wider public service, is also greatly appreciated. A key aspect for the group is the privacy available for our members. This allows questioning members to meet others and experience themselves in a safe space and see that there are others like them. A few of our members have reached out for support on how to come out within their workplace and helping them through this has been an amazing experience for Whakamana Ira Tangata.

The group sends out a monthly newsletter which often features a members story and is a good way to reach out to those who cannot attend the meetings. Moving forward the rōpū intends to invite guest speakers from the Gender Diverse and Transgender Communities.





Our mahi

CARN Conference 2023

The CARN Conference 2023 was a huge success with its theme of Intersectionality as Empowerment: celebrating the strength in our diversity | Ka rere te kōpere. This was the third biennial CARN Conference, with the first being held in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland, and second at Parliament in Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington.

Following the kaupapa of the conference to be as accessible as possible, and to provide opportunities to the southern region public servants, the 2023 conference was held in Te Waipounamu South Island. Ōtautahi Christchurch was selected for being cost effective as a travel destination, the number of local rainbow groups, venue options, and to encourage participation from across the South Island.

Held online on 1-2 June 2023, where most speakers presented in person, the result was good in-person attendance. There were 364 attendees and presenters which was made up of 322 in person and 42 online. Recordings of those who agreed can be accessed by everyone registered to attend the conference. As at August 2023 the platform had been accessed 380 times by 107 individuals since the end of the conference.

The costs were greater than expected for the conference, we have taken the opportunity to learn from this to ensure we run a more cost-effective conference in the future.

We are grateful for the support we received from the ELN team hosted by Te Kawa Mataaho.



Conference feedback

After the conference a survey was sent out to attendees to understand how we could make improvements for the next conference.

We were astounded by overwhelmingly positive feedback.

Overall, **70%** of respondents to the survey rated the conference as excellent

350 people attended the conference as delegates, speakers, or volunteers

Attendees mentioned they loved hearing from senior leadership, their passion and personal stories resonated

Attendees suggested more Kaupapa Māori perspective, Takatāpui, Te Tiriti / Indigenous knowledge and more disability including neurodiversity and rainbow communities for the next conference



"Loved the conference overall, was wonderful, we never get to connect with rainbow staff like that and I found it incredibly empowering."



"I haven't been in such a queer space in years. It was a wonderful experience being amongst your own, sharing so much knowledge and passion. Thank-you for making that possible."



"This conference left me feeling empowered, strong, and proud of who I am. Kia ora!"



Transitioning and Gender Affirmation in NZ Public Service

In early 2022 a working group of CARN members was formed to create Transitioning guidelines for the public service.

Many of our CARN member agencies were asking for, or creating a guide for their own use. It was agreed ‘best practice’ guidance was needed in a format that could be picked up by any agency, no matter what size, and be adapted for use. The intention of the work is to support people who have transitioned or who are transitioning gender in the workplace and the managers and teams supporting them. The all-volunteer rōpū was made up of different agency members, many with lived experience having transitioned within the public sector. The working group also consisted of those with policy, human resource, organisational development, Te Tiriti o Waitangi and leadership experience or expertise. The group came together and reviewed a number of existing guidelines including: NZDF, NZIC, IR, Cornell University, Australia Airforce etc.

As a rōpū, it was decided what topics would need to be covered and the format to use. Those holding expertise in a particular area/subject were assigned a section of the guide and some formed sub-groups. These writers conducted further research and began to write their sections. The working group met regularly to review each other’s work, identify gaps in knowledge and information, discuss and test the content and set targets.

“It was great to work with people from across the public sector to develop something with the potential to make meaningful positive change”



As writing progressed the ELN team at Te Kawa Mataaho joined our meetings and offered assistance and advice where needed. Volunteers came and went depending on capacity within their own substantive work commitments.

Others joined to help review content, check for continuity of language and flow and to work on the design of the guide. A long editing process took place and the structure, wording and layout was revised based on feedback and advice. A valuable part of the process was having an external peer review, these external voices included the Human Rights Commission and Gender Minorities Aotearoa.

It was important that the guide reached a large audience and was accessible for all public service agencies. Our CARN sponsor, Carolyn Tremain and wider CARN membership were kept informed of progress and further support was sought where needed.

Te Kawa Mataaho supported the guide and reviewed several versions adding comment and feedback. It was decided that it would be called 'advice' rather than a guide to distinguish between the other mandatory guidance published on the Te Kawa Mataaho site. The document took on a new name to reflect this and went through a rigorous sign off process through Senior Leadership at Te Kawa Mataaho.

A soft launch was hosted at MBIE on 18 April to thank all the volunteers. After several revisions and nearly 16 months of mahi the Transitioning and Gender Affirmation in the New Zealand Public Service document was published on the ELN website ahead of the CARN conference on June 1st 2023.

To date feedback has been positive and also identified some areas for improvement. A review and revision is planned for 2024.

"I reached out to two of my colleagues, excellent writers in their own right and with lived experiences different to my own. We would write things together before going back to the writing group and compiling the lived experiences, professional knowledge and overall writing together. After much redrafting we pulled together a concise guide, that although would almost certainly have blind spots for such a wide community, nevertheless came from within the community and their close allies. I am proud of what we collectively pulled together and am forever grateful for Te Tari Taake for allowing me the time to contribute."

Looking forward

We have lots of exciting mahi underway and plans for the future, including:

01 Rainbow four-point plan

Work alongside the Rainbow CE's and the working group made up of key stakeholders to implement and monitor the Foundational four-point plan to embed opportunities for Rainbow people in the Public Service.

02 Reviewing the Transitioning and Gender Affirmation advice

Continue to review and update the impact of the Transitioning and Gender Affirmation advice across the public service.

03 Rainbow best practice guidance

Create a working group to explore what a rainbow certification programme could look like for the public service.

04 Grow our member base

Continuing to grow our member base in a diverse way and subgroups like Whakamana ira Tangata.

05 Relationships with stakeholders

Continue to work with and nurture our relationships with stakeholders such as rainbow chief executives, the public service commissioner, and external organisations.

06 Reward and recognition

Working with Te Kawa Mataaho and Chief Executives across the Public Service to support active participation in CARN and ELN's. Acknowledging the mahi as professional development and building time to attend meetings and participate in governance into position descriptions where possible.

07 Collaboration with employee led networks

Working intersectionally across the public service, participating and holding events with other cross-agency networks.