 

# Te Korowai Whetū Social Cohesion guide

## What can businesses, local government and the cultural sector do to help?

### Belonging in business, local government and the cultural sector

We’re all different but we want to get along, celebrate our diversity and respect others when we disagree. This is important because not everybody feels that they can be who they are or trusts that their voice will be heard.

We are an increasingly diverse country with our businesses serving many different communities. We need to find ways to listen to each other and hear each other. We want to commit to understanding our differences and strengths and to work on what unifies us and what brings us closer.

### Belonging – what it looks like

In a society where people get along well, we know each other, know our neighbours, feel included in our workplace, our children feel part of our communities and know we know where to go to get help when we need it. We feel that we are able to talk to people we might not normally talk to, speak up when we hear people saying discriminatory things, and feel free to share who we are, where we are from, and how we do things. In a crisis we leave no one behind – everyone is included.

## Businesses

Businesses help to build social cohesion, help people feel like they belong, feel included, be themselves and take part in society. Businesses create an inclusive work culture through employment practices. They enable people to participate more fully in their communities and societies by paying an income to their staff and relieving the financial pressure to “make ends meet”. Evidence shows that diversity and inclusivity have economic benefits such as increased innovation in the workplace.

## Building more belonging – what you can do

So, what can we do in businesses do to help workers, customers and clients to belong, embrace diversity, take part, trust others, feel connected and respected?

## Belonging, trusting others

* Consider how to make jobs more accessible to diverse groups. For example, advertise jobs through community networks, organisations, radio stations, podcasts, social media platforms, a diverse range of media newspapers and television channels for specific audiences.
* Consider accessibility of services and goods provided.  If your business is conducted online, is it accessible to the disabled? If your business has a public-facing shop or office, is it accessible to people with mobility impairments?

## Embracing diversity, feeling respected

* Value workforce diversity and create initiatives to support diversity. For example, recognise celebrations and events that are significant to staff, encourage them to bring their whole selves to work, and provide opportunities for them to input into service and goods design.
* Support workers to get to know each other (whakawhānaungatanga). For example, set time aside in the day or week to come together as a team or as colleagues to get to know each other. This could be a morning or afternoon tea, or part of a business away-day.
* Promote best practice through an annual business excellence awards, where diverse contributions are valued, and inclusive workplaces are celebrated.

## Feeling connected

* Seek out and promote dialogue with communities that may share different views to grow understanding.
* Use focus groups to test new products and services and seek focus groups from different and intersecting communities.

### Taking part

* Facilitate further engagement with employee networks and unions.
* Ensure that all workers know their rights. For example, provide information on employment rights in induction handbooks, internal staff forums and intranets.
* Support workers to engage in cultural, community, civic and family events. For example, encourage or celebrate cultural, community or civic engagements in the office. This could be in the form of morning or afternoon tea events.  Also, encourage staff to take time off to attend family events and cultural or community celebrations.
* Promote employment of migrants in businesses – assisting with the preparation of CV writing, interview skills, NZ work experience and meaningful employment with follow-up mentoring.
* Promote employment of young people in businesses – assisting with the preparation of CV writing, interview skills, relevant training, access to gaining a driver’s license and meaningful employment with follow-up mentoring.
* Promote employment of disabled people in businesses – assisting with the preparation of CV writing, interview skills, and meaningful employment, with follow-up mentoring.
* Implement a programme like Chamber Drive – which supports 5,000 individuals to get their driver’s license. Someone with a driver’s license is seven-times more likely to find employment.
* Implement business mentor programmes to support the growing number of people wanting to start up their own businesses.
* Provide low-cost or no-cost promotional platforms for business owners to promote job opportunities among other business communities and their social media networks.
* Offer in-person, online and accessible events and activities for businesses to engage and network with each other and their communities.

## Local government

Local government represents local communities, it helps people feel like they belong, are included, can be themselves and take part in society. Local councils work directly with residents on local issues, including community-led solutions with specific community support programmes.  These programmes can include support for:

* housing, homelessness;
* accessibility for disabled people;
* community centres;
* volunteering;
* community safety;
* diverse, Māori, Pacific Peoples, senior citizens, youth, faith communities;
* arts and culture.

Whatever community you are in – whether it be your street, your neighbourhood, club, professional association, school, place of worship or cultural group – it feels good to belong, feel included, to be yourself and be part of something.

### Building more belonging – what you can do

So, what can we do in local government to help more people belong, embrace diversity, take part, trust others, feel connected and respected?

### Belonging, trusting others

* Collaborate with Iwi and pan-Māori organisations, and Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) to create locally-led approaches to helping people belong, at a local level.
* Take time to meet with communities in their spaces at times that suit them to build trust and relationships. For example, the Southern Initiative in Auckland Council brings together local council staff, families, communities, NGOs and businesses to find solutions to social and economic challenges in South Auckland.

### Embracing diversity, feeling respected

* Encourage inclusive leadership and cultural competency training for staff and provide accessible community spaces for communities to connect.   
  Examples include**:**  joining Immigration New Zealand’s Welcoming Communities Programme, using Taituarā’s (formerly the Society of Local Government Managers) diversity and inclusion competency building programme ‘Leap’ and using Taituarā’s Community Wellbeing Data Service to understand the current state of wellbeing in your community and where you could focus your efforts to improve it.

### Feeling connected

Encourage diverse groups to work positively together to provide:

* Accessible grant funding for community events with proportionate reporting requirements.
* Free or discounted community centre hire services.
* Free community events.
* Funding or a free space for neighbourhoods and communities to run Neighbourhood Day events.

### Taking part

* Have simpler and more accessible consultation events at times that work for people (after 5pm on weekdays, and weekends), reach out to ‘hard to reach’ communities, strengthen Māori representation in decision-making, and provide free civic education workshops in the lead up to elections or provide funding for civic education more broadly.
* Hold weekend drop-in sessions on the development of a long-term local government plan for social cohesion.
* Learn more about Te Reo Māori, the history of Aotearoa New Zealand and Te Tiriti o Waitangi, using free online apps such as Kōrerorero, Kupu and Ako Tahi or sign up to a course through Te Wānanga o Aotearoa, visit the history exhibitions at your local museum, or borrow books on NZ history from your local library.
* Have a courageous conversation with someone who is displaying discriminatory behaviour. Resources on the Human Rights Commission website can be helpful, such as [Responding to Racism](https://www.hrc.co.nz/resources/responding-racism/) also (<https://tinyurl.com/39by5rcp>)
* Look at training initiatives for staff and other representatives.
* Apply for funding applications to government agencies to fund your community project, [COGS](https://www.communitymatters.govt.nz/community-organisations-grants-scheme/) (<https://tinyurl.com/yp6rwrjp>) or [Lotteries](https://www.communitymatters.govt.nz/lottery-grants-board/) (<https://tinyurl.com/yv68ffkm>) through the [grants management system](https://www.communitymatters.govt.nz/ask-us/view/1804?t=308216_363764) (<https://tinyurl.com/4m6au336>) or through the [Community-Led Development Programme](https://www.communitymatters.govt.nz/community-led-development-programme/) (<https://tinyurl.com/d4advfbc>).

## Cultural sector

The cultural sector includes the media and the arts, culture and heritage sector, such as the screen industry, performance arts and museums. Public perceptions of social cohesion, inclusion and diversity are often shaped by the content produced by the cultural sector. The sector plays a key role in building social cohesion through content reflecting diversity and different impacts for different people in Aotearoa New Zealand. Storytelling at all levels, from feature films to news articles, provides a vital element in reflecting our diverse culture and helping us all connect.

### Building more belonging – what you can do

So, what can we do in the arts, media and sport, to help more people, their workers, customers, clients, belong, embrace diversity, take part, trust others, feel connected and respected?

### Belonging, trusting others

* Enhance digital inclusion, including education about risks and staying safe. For example, consider pay walls, discounted subscriptions, zero-rated websites or webpages on educational and topical information that pertains to public health.
* Challenge stereotypes and responsibly engage with the stories of communities. For example, consider how a story pertaining to a community is likely to be received by the community.
* Enabling education that will improve cultural competency in the sector and challenge stereotypes and discriminatory practises.
* Support, commission, and program works of art and initiatives that promote anti-discriminatory messages.
* Support, commission, and program works that challenge stereotypes and antisocial norms.
* Preserving and making digitally available audio-visual heritage that shows past social norms, allowing researchers, documentary makers and New Zealanders to identify the evolution of discrimination and cultural norms.

### Embracing diversity, feeling respected

* Encourage positive attitudes and behaviours that value diverse contributions. For example, create places or activities that encourage belonging and reduce loneliness.
* Ensure coverage of diverse life experiences and population groups across all art and media. For example, engage community leaders or attend community events for community stories.

### Feeling connected

* Run and promote diverse events in art and media spaces. For example, create community outreach programmes that may include holding free arts and music events or activities in places such as art galleries and museums, provide free meeting spaces and communal areas to community groups and NGOs to hold social gatherings, hui and workshops and consider participation issues in the cultural sector. For example, identifying representation issues in arts and media and reaching out to NGOs and community groups that work with underrepresented groups to learn how to increase participation.
* Collaborate with organisations that work with the Deaf and hard of hearing people about art and multi-media content relating to them.
* Treasuring, honouring, and preserving taonga from the past and present for future generations.
* Better education regarding cultural capacity and understanding.
* Run and promote diverse events in the art and media space. For example, create community outreach programmes that may include holding free arts and music events or activities in places such as art galleries and museums and provide free meeting spaces and communal areas to community groups and NGOs to hold social gatherings, hui and workshops.
* Support, commission, and program works reflecting underrepresented communities. For example, <https://pantograph-punch.com/categories/pacific-arts-legacy-project> (https://tinyurl.com/232rkp6h).
* Support storytelling and music from a diverse range of communities and cultures.
* Preserving and making available audio-visual materials that report on diverse life experiences and population groups through the history of New Zealand since the early 1900s.
* Enabling historians, researchers, documentary makers, producers of content and other New Zealanders to connect with and identify similarities and differences in social norms as they have evolved in Aotearoa New Zealand.  For example, Chinese Languages in Aotearoa New Zealand is an ongoing project using language to highlight complex issues of cultural identity within various Chinese New Zealand communities. (See website: [Chinese Languages in Aotearoa | Te Papa](https://www.tepapa.govt.nz/discover-collections/read-watch-play/chinese-languages-aotearoa) (<https://tinyurl.com/37e76npf>), LGBTQI+ Histories of Aotearoa New Zealand: Kōrero takatāpui ki Aotearoa explores queer objects, artworks, and stories in Te Papa’s collections and covers the rich histories of Aotearoa New Zealand’s LGBTQI+ communities and icons (see website: [LGBTQI+ histories of Aotearoa New Zealand | Te Papa](https://www.tepapa.govt.nz/discover-collections/read-watch-play/lgbtqi-histories-aotearoa-new-zealand) (<https://tinyurl.com/3fax4nms>) and fashioning ourselves: clothing, identity and culture explores stories that highlight the influences, industry, and imagination of fashion in New Zealand through collections, exhibitions and research.
* Ensuring positive representation of diverse experiences and community ownership of stories and taonga.
* Promoting language and cultural diversities through different mediums.

### Taking part

* Talk to [community advisers](https://www.communitymatters.govt.nz/how-we-can-help-and-where-to-find-us/) (<https://tinyurl.com/2mw48bbz>) community leaders or NGOS about ideas related to social cohesion as part of cultural sector projects.
* Apply for funding applications to government agencies to fund your cultural sector project, [COGS](https://www.communitymatters.govt.nz/community-organisations-grants-scheme/) (<https://tinyurl.com/yp6rwrjp>) or [Lotteries](https://www.communitymatters.govt.nz/lottery-grants-board/) (<https://tinyurl.com/yv68ffkm>) through the [grants management system](https://www.communitymatters.govt.nz/ask-us/view/1804?t=308216_363764) (<https://tinyurl.com/4m6au336>) or through the [Community-Led Development Programme](https://www.communitymatters.govt.nz/community-led-development-programme/) (<https://tinyurl.com/d4advfbc>)
* Tackle barriers to participation in the cultural sector. For example, identify underrepresented demographics and intersections reach out to NGOs and community groups that work with or represent those groups to learn how to increase participation.
* Use arts programmes as a vehicle for building transferable skills such as leadership, teamwork, and cultural capability that can benefit other sectors. For example, [www.sistemaaotearoa.org.nz](http://www.sistemaaotearoa.org.nz/).
* NZ On Air supports a range of community groups, including the disabled community, by providing programmes, captioning and coverage of events. Targeted funding initiatives across screen, news media, kids content and the music sector increase the participation of various groups (such as Māori, Pacific peoples, Asians peoples, youth and women).
* Increase diversity in sports governance boards, and opportunities to participate for players, coaches and administrators.
* Provide content for event planners, organisers, artists and others involved in cultural events that enables participation.
* Contribute as a partner in the Tāhuhu programme (involving Archives NZ, National Library and Ngā Taonga Sound & Vision) to promote activities that foster belonging and participation.
* Facilitate behind-the-scenes access to art collections and multimedia content for descendants, researchers, learners, artists, makers and practitioners.
* Answer questions and requests for information about collection items and topics of interest from the public.
* Provide positive interactions and safe spaces for communities to participate.
* Improve access for communities to engage with art collections and multimedia content.

### Te Korowai Whetū Social Cohesion

Te Korowai Whetū Social Cohesion comes from the whakatauāki, “Whatua te korowai i ngā tini whetū”, meaning: “to weave the korowai (cloak) from the myriad stars”.

The name ‘Te Korowai Whetū Social Cohesion’ reflects the vision of social cohesion in Aotearoa New Zealand described in the social cohesion strategic framework, where we can support each other to thrive and shine bright like whetū or stars together.

### End of: Te Korowai Whetū Social Cohesion guide | What can businesses, local government and the cultural sector do to help.