

An aerial photograph of a river with clear, turquoise water flowing through a dense forest of tall, green trees. The riverbed is visible in some areas, showing a mix of sand and gravel. The overall scene is bright and natural.

# Our Contribution to Aotearoa New Zealand Tō tatou ki Aotearoa

ESG overview 2022

[russellmcveagh.com/ourcontribution](https://russellmcveagh.com/ourcontribution)

Russell  
McVeagh

# Welcome

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// *At Russell McVeagh we strive to make a positive difference to Aotearoa New Zealand through the work we deliver for our clients, the way we support our people, our contribution to the wider community and our steps to protect and care for the environment. We take seriously our responsibility to ensure we contribute positively to the long-term health and wellbeing of our country.* //

Allison Arthur-Young, Board Chair and Partner

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This environmental, social, and governance (ESG) report aims to share our progress and commitments to a sustainable and thriving Aotearoa New Zealand. It seeks to capture our collective efforts to care for, protect and support our people, communities and the environment.

We aspire to make a positive impact on the people, organisations and communities we interact with. This begins with our commitment to having a respectful and inclusive culture where we ensure our people are supported to develop and succeed, where we give back to our communities and where we are mindful of the footprint we leave on our environment.

We are proud of the progress we have made so far and recognise there is more to do. We will continue to report on our progress as we go.



Allison Arthur-Young  
Board Chair and Partner



Jo Avenell  
CEO

# Environmental, Social and Governance areas are a key focus for us

Our ESG framework guides our efforts in caring for our communities, our people and our environment.



## To help shape Aotearoa New Zealand's future

We have a role to play in driving our country forward and creating an enduring today for tomorrow. Our commitment to building trust and doing the right thing is brought to life through living our firm's values. Our ESG framework guides our decision-making to ensure we are making an impact for our clients, society, the legal profession, business, and wider communities more broadly.

### Community



We give back to, and care for our communities, providing our people with the opportunity to contribute their time, skills and resources towards making a difference.

To do this we:

- Use our skills and knowledge to provide free legal support to make a difference.
- Enable our people and our firm to establish meaningful relationships, connections, and partnerships in our community.
- Encourage and support our people to give back – including through our pro bono programme and fundraising initiatives.

### People



Our people make us who we are and we're committed to providing a safe and supportive environment where everyone can thrive.

To do this we:

- Continue to create and embed practices that promote a diverse and inclusive workplace, to enable our people to thrive.
- Provide our people with access to opportunities to support their career goals and develop their leadership capabilities.
- Offer a full range of benefits that matter most to our people.

### Environment



We are committed to understanding and managing our environmental impact, as well as helping to support our clients to do the same.

To do this we:

- Explore opportunities to help reduce carbon intensity and support our clients to enable a smooth transition to a net zero carbon economy.
- We are working with Toitū Envirocare to achieve certification by taking climate action.
- Adopt new sustainability practices and educate our people on how to make a positive difference.



# Our Community

## Tō tātou hapori

From our work with our community partners and pro bono clients, we help widen access to justice, education, a healthy environment, and sustainable economic opportunities.

### Our Pro Bono work

#### Promoting access to legal advice

We are committed to leading the profession and making a demonstrable difference within our communities. Through our Pro Bono Committee, led by partners Polly Pope and Jesse Fairley, we are proud of our relationships with our pro bono clients, some of whom we have featured here:



A global community of women and non-binary people working alongside each other, making real progress on the World's To-Do List.



RainbowYOUTH work towards creating social change by providing support, information, resources and advocacy for queer, gender diverse, takatāpui and intersex young people across Aotearoa New Zealand.



Zealandia, a 500-year vision of restoration that is radically changing the way people live with nature.



A movement that represents and advocates for legislation that removes accessibility barriers to enable people with access needs to fully participate in society.



**Mahi for Ukraine.**  
Advocating for immigration measures, sanctions, humanitarian aid and diplomatic relations, set up in response to the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine.

### Community Law Centres



Each week many of our solicitors volunteer their time at the Māngere and Wellington and Hutt Valley Community Law Centres, both of which we have worked with since the 1980s. We provide members of the community with advice on a wide range of civil matters such as debt disputes, protection from cyber-bullying and finding solutions to resolve consumer issues.



*"The opportunity to use our legal skills to give back to the community, and to have that engrained in our firm's culture, is a privilege."*

**Aleisha Robertson, Solicitor**

### Cure Kids cure kids

Cure Kids invests in research to transform the health of children across Aotearoa New Zealand and we are proud to have a long-standing relationship with them. Some of our recent work for Cure Kids includes contract negotiation and review with several high-profile entities, including:

- The Government in Fiji and the NZ Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade (in relation to Cure Kids' investments in research to help children in Fiji).
- The University of Auckland (where Cure Kids funds two Professorial Chairs and a range of research projects, including co-funding with the NZ government for research to give children "A Better Start").

### The Ākina Foundation

Ākina is a not-for-profit consultancy that provides capability-building support and coaching on how to achieve better social and environmental outcomes to social enterprises and other organisations. We have partnered with Ākina for over 10 years, providing advice in all areas of business and legislation.

*"The partnership between Ākina and Russell McVeagh allows us to facilitate pro bono legal support to impact-led enterprises across the country. This enables the businesses that we support to achieve greater positive social and environmental impact, working towards a prosperous and sustainable Aotearoa New Zealand."*



**Nicola Nation**  
Chief Executive Officer, Ākina

**Annually, we provide more than \$1 million pro bono in value of legal support**



## Our Community Partnerships

Through our partnerships, sponsorships, and fundraising initiatives, we are proud of our work with organisations that help to improve inclusion in the communities we live and work in, as well as the advancement of our profession.

### TE TĀPUI ATAWHAI AUCKLAND CITY MISSION

Each year our firm provides Christmas gifts and food to the Mission. In 2021 we donated bedding for the Mission's new apartments.



Our firm is a partner of Global Women, with partners Allison Arthur-Young and Mei Fern Johnson, and our CEO Jo Avenell, all current members.



We partner with IPANZ to help support public sector professionals and also sponsor IPANZ New Professionals to provide a platform for young professionals to network and develop their skills and knowledge.



Our CEO Jo Avenell is a member of Champions for Change where chairs and CEOs of major New Zealand businesses commit to D&I as the catalyst for the change they want to see. She also co-chairs the group's initiative to increase Māori and Ethnic diversity across Aotearoa's workforce.



We are a recent sponsor of Keystone Trust which supports students from disadvantaged backgrounds to study within the property and construction sector. For every \$1 invested by Keystone's sponsors, the Trust converts it to \$6 in social impact for Aotearoa New Zealand.



**ARBITRATORS' AND MEDIATORS' INSTITUTE OF NEW ZEALAND INC**  
Te Mana Kaiwhakataua, Takawaenga o Aotearoa

Our sponsorship of the Determinative Scholarship supports an up-and-coming leader in dispute resolution.



### Homework Club

Our people work with groups of students from Ōwairaka District School to help them with their homework and hang out after school.



### DIGNITY

As an Impact Partner with Dignity, we help to end period poverty in New Zealand by providing period products at workplaces, schools, and community and youth groups.

*"Since 2019, Russell McVeagh has gifted over 400 boxes or 5,200 period products, to those without access, ensuring people don't have to miss out on things like education, work and cultural activities."*

**Lisa Maathuis**  
General Manager – Dignity



**Tāmaki College**  
EAST AUCKLAND

Since 2008 we have delivered regular presentations to Tāmaki College students on subjects such as budgeting, applying for university scholarships, and CV writing.



To mark their 21st anniversary, we sponsored the Pacific Lawyers Association's (PLA) dinner. The PLA represents the connection between New Zealand's Pacific Island Community and the law.

### WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PRINCIPLES

Established by UN Women and the UN Global Compact Office

Our firm is part of the UN WEPs platform where we adopted the seven principles to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the workplace.



We are committed to improving the retention and advancement of women through active leadership and actions.



We work with NZ Asian Lawyers and recently hosted their event on Tikanga and Culture in the Supreme Court. Five of our solicitors are NZ Asian Lawyers - Young Lawyers Committee members.



We sponsored Aotearoa New Zealand's inaugural Women of Colour Conference presented by Authenticity Aotearoa. Partner Deemle Budhia was a keynote speaker and Law clerk, Ayesha Goel, was the Operations Lead.



We are a member of TupuToa's Internship Programme which aims to increase Māori and Pacific representation in business.



Since 2016 we have held the Rainbow Tick certification.



# Our People Tō tātou tira mahi

We are committed to an open and collaborative culture where everyone can thrive. We know that Diversity and Inclusion is a long-term focus, requiring ongoing commitment, and holding ourselves accountable to our goals.

## Refreshed D&I strategy

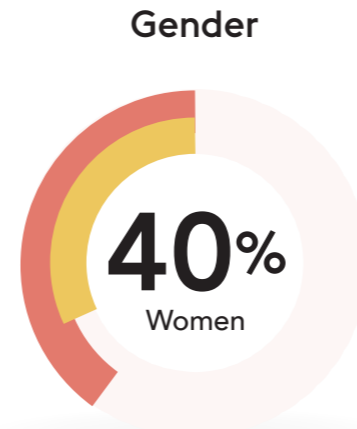
We recently refreshed our firm's D&I strategy for the next five years. The strategy is focused around three goals - gender, ethnicity and inclusion. Our D&I work programme focuses on embedding D&I into our processes and building our D&I understanding and capability. We are continually looking for new opportunities across our recruitment, hiring and onboarding, career management and advancement, succession planning, rewards and recognition, and support for new parents and whānau.

## D&I committees

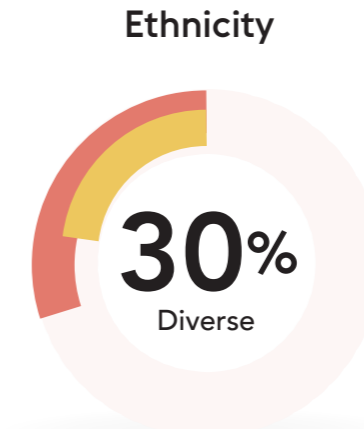
We support five, people-led committees who work collaboratively across our business to identify and address areas for improvement across the following areas:



## Five-year D&I goals



A partnership where at least **40%** are women  
CURRENT: **32%**



A workforce where at least **30%** are ethnically diverse  
CURRENT: **23%**



An environment where all of our people feel they belong and can thrive  
CURRENT: **86%**

Legend: ■ Goal ■ Current metrics (as of August 2022)

## MindTheGap

We share our gender and Māori pay gaps both internally and externally, and have registered our data on the MindTheGap registry. Paying our people fairly is important to us and we will continuously review and monitor this to work to close the gaps.



## White Camellia Award

Russell McVeagh has been recognised with a White Camellia Award 2022 for our work in promoting equality through community initiatives and advocacy. The White Camellia Awards celebrates excellence in UN WEPs signatories' adoption of the seven principles, in workplaces across Aotearoa. WEPs is a UN Women campaign, administered in New Zealand in collaboration by UN Women Aotearoa NZ, NZ Federation of Business and Professional Women, Human Rights Commission, and Zonta International District 16.





## Embedding Tikanga Māori

Developing cultural competency and ensuring we are further embedding Tikanga into our firm's culture is a key priority supported by a range of programmes including:

- Te Reo Māori lessons and cultural competency workshops available to all of our people;
- Te Wiki o te Reo Māori (Māori Language Week) participation;
- Te Reo Māori Court Procedures training available for our legal teams.



## Growing exceptional leaders

We support our people to grow and develop both their professional and personal skills, knowledge, and leadership capabilities to make a lasting difference in their careers. We aim to develop talented leaders who provide outstanding advice to our clients and our communities. Some examples of how we grow exceptional leaders include:

### Continuing Professional Development

To help develop exceptional solicitors in the profession, we support our clients and our solicitors with their professional and learning and development. Our solicitors spent, on average, almost double the amount of required hours by the New Zealand Law Society on CPD in 2021.

### Junior Solicitor Advancement Programme

For our solicitors in their second year, we run a programme facilitated by partners and senior legal team members which helps to increase junior solicitors' understanding of legal issues that can arise throughout the lifecycle of a business and provide insight into other areas of law.

### Law Scholarships

Each year, we offer scholarships to a number of third-year law students to help them to get ahead early on in their careers. Participants in the scholarship programme receive financial assistance, work experience, mentoring, and the opportunity to summer clerk in their penultimate year of study.

*" I felt like the firm really invested in me - they offered support through the buddy programme, library services, and external personal development programmes. During and after my clerkship the firm has continued to check in and provide support to me. As a summer clerk, I felt trusted in my abilities and listened to when I gave original ideas."*



**William Morrison**  
Scholar and Summer Clerk 2021/22

## Checking in with our people

Our people engagement 'Pulse' survey is a regular barometer of how our people are feeling and offers a way to provide anonymous feedback and ideas.

Findings from our May 2022 Pulse survey include:



Our people tell us they feel engaged and that they feel like they belong at our firm, however there is always more work that we need to focus on. Our people also tell us they would like opportunities to connect more, have more transparency over pay as well as our D&I work programme, and greater clarity around our approach to flexible working. These are the areas we are currently focusing our efforts on, to make Russell McVeagh an even better place to work.



## Supporting our People

Here's a snapshot of some of the different ways in which we support our people through programmes and initiatives that focus on wellbeing and building a sense of belonging.

### Wellbeing



#### Our Extended Hours policy

is market-leading and places a focus on wellbeing. It guarantees time off in lieu/catch-up days to people who need to work extended hours to meet client needs.

#### Annual wellbeing allowance

for wellness-related activities such as gym memberships.

#### Mental Health First Responder

training to create a network of internal mental health support to our colleagues.

### Career development & support



#### External coaching

for people across the firm including law clerks in their first year to ease the transition from student to a professional.

#### Mentoring

is available on request and includes a more formal 'buddy' system for new law clerks.

#### Breakfast & Supper Clubs

to facilitate connection, we have forums for junior and senior women to share their experiences.

#### Inclusive Leadership

programme for 100% of our partners across a nine month period to proactively advance the conversation and action on inclusion.

#### Te Reo Māori workshops

focused on tikanga, language and court procedures.

#### Learning & development programme

to support career development and learning for all our people.

### Reward & recognition



#### Exceptional Performance Awards programme

to recognise and reward our people for performance beyond the firm's normal expectations.

### Clarity & transparency



#### Sharing our Strategy

a full-day induction for all new team members delivered in-person by senior leaders covering our firm's values, practice areas, clients and marketing, diversity and inclusion.

#### Regular communications

from our leaders and across the firm, including Town Halls, firm-wide calls and regular email updates.

### Additional support



#### Flexible working & home office set up allowance

helps to support a leader-led approach to flexible working where our people discuss what approach works best given client workload, team member and development needs. Our home office allowance payment also allows our people to have the right tools to work seamlessly from home.

#### Independent EAP provider

to offer free and confidential support to our people when they need assistance.

#### Refreshed Parental leave policy & support for parents

to provide greater focus on gender neutrality and to celebrate the importance of whānau. This includes an enhancement in paid leave and a structured support package for all new parents and whānau.





# Our Environment

## Tō tatou taiao

We are focused on our firm’s environmental footprint and becoming carbon neutral.

### Managing our environmental impact

We are working with Toitū Envirocare to achieve certification by taking climate action. Our goals are to take responsibility for and reduce carbon emissions resulting from our firm’s activities, and to aid us in embedding international best practice sustainability principles. The insights gained from measuring and reporting on our carbon impact will enable us to strategically target opportunities for emissions reduction and engage our people in helping to meet the firm’s reduction goals.

During the 2021 financial year, our main emission sources were air travel, electricity, natural gas usage and refrigerants in our offices, road travel, ICT services, waste to landfill and compost attributable to our business operations.



### Five areas of focus

Our Sustainability Committee recently sought feedback from our people through a firm-wide Sustainability Survey. The feedback has allowed us to confirm five areas to focus our efforts around to ensure we are helping to drive sustainable change in our business that matters to our people.

- Recycling
- Reduction in energy
- Food wastage
- Travel emissions
- Community impact



### Our sustainability initiatives

Made up of people from across our firm, our Sustainability Committee has been in place for almost two decades and looks for opportunities to improve our firm’s environmental performance, challenging us to adopt new sustainability practices and educate our people on what we as a firm and as individuals can do to make a difference. Some of our initiatives have included...

#### Reusabowl

Joining forces with Reusabowl to eliminate single-use packaging waste by providing our offices with reusable bowls. The bowls are made from rice husk, an agricultural by-product that is fully compostable after hundreds of uses.



#### Aotearoa Bike Challenge

In 2021 our firm participated in the Aotearoa Bike Challenge run by Love To Ride. This nation-wide competition is for riders of all ages and encourages workplaces and other groups to support their people to ride a bike for 10 minutes or more per day. Of the participating law firms that are based in Auckland, we came first place by achieving the most points through our team’s cycling efforts.

#### Employer bike loan scheme

We have recently launched an e-bike scheme to help make it easier for our people to purchase e-bikes. The way it works is we negotiate a discount through the e-bike supplier and then provide a wage advance or loan to our people, paid back through salary reductions. With more of our people using e-bikes, we are reducing our impact on emissions and congestion issues to encourage a healthier, and cheaper transport option.



## Supporting Our Clients

With ESG issues core business priorities for companies, their boards and investors, we help our clients gain value through their ESG strategies, while addressing and mitigating risk.

### Infrastructure with impact

We regularly advise on the financing of our country's largest and most complex infrastructure projects including:

- Meridian on the Harapaki Wind Farm, a \$395 million wind farm in Hawke's Bay which will be the country's second-largest wind farm with 41 turbines, generating 176 MW of renewable energy annually – enough to power 70,000 households.
- Toitū Te Whenua Land Information New Zealand on a significant digital infrastructure project involving a partnership with the NZ and Australian governments to deliver the Southern Positioning Augmentation Network for world-leading satellite positioning services – to make satellite services up to 50 times more accurate and providing potential uses for major sectors.

## Climate Change



We are focused on helping our clients navigate the wide range of continually evolving issues in this fast-moving area. From future proofing their businesses from climate risk through to managing the transition to a low-carbon world. Our Alliance with Te Whakahaere, a climate change advisory consultancy, allows us to broaden our service offering in the climate change space.

**Te Whakahaere**

### Renewable energy

Across the renewable energy life cycle, we help clients with planning and consenting, design and construction, generation, distribution, and user consumption, including advising:

- Vector Powersmart on installation of the first floating solar arrangement in NZ and other solar energy projects in the Pacific Islands.
- WEL Networks' acquisition of and investment in renewable energy services company Infratec, and development of a 35MW battery energy storage system.
- Genesis Energy on its establishment of a joint venture with the solar farm developer FRV Australia, to develop up to 500 megawatts of large-scale solar energy projects over the next five years.
- Meridian Energy on the initial stages of Southern Green Hydrogen, a joint project by Meridian Energy and Contact Energy to evaluate the opportunity to produce green hydrogen in Southland.

### Sustainable financing

We supported more than NZ\$3.2 billion of sustainability-linked loan (SLL) borrowings and NZ\$750 million of green loans and bonds, including:

- ANZ Bank and National Australia Bank as joint Sustainability Coordinators for Kathmandu Holdings Limited's A\$300 million debt facility refinancing and, establishment of a syndicated A\$100 million sustainability linked loan facility – the largest syndicated SLL in the NZ market.
- Summerset Group on completing its loan facility refinance for approximately NZ\$1.2 billion, incorporating a NZ\$700 million SLL, the first in the retirement care sector.
- KiwiRail on the first shipping loan in the world to be certified under the Climate Bonds Initiative framework.

**We led over**  
**NZ\$3.2 billion**  
of the \$4 billion of Aotearoa New Zealand's green and sustainability linked loan financing in 2021

# Who we are Ko tātou

We employ over 320 people across our Auckland | Tāmaki Makaurau and Wellington | Te Whanganui-a-Tara offices and offer our clients a collaborative, one-firm approach. Our practice groups work seamlessly to support a wide range of clients, drawing on our expertise across the full spectrum of Banking and Finance, Competition, Corporate Advisory, Litigation, Public law, Real Estate and Construction, Tax and Environmental & Planning law matters.

## Board of Management



Allison Arthur-Young (Chair), Tom Hunt, Ian Beaumont, Marika Eastwick-Field, David Butler, Jo Avenell (CEO)

## Chair of the Partnership



**Polly Pope**  
Partner  
Litigation/  
Restructuring  
& Insolvency

## Our Values

Our values are at the heart of our culture. They reflect who we are, what we stand for and how we work together.

Respect | Manaaki

Tenacity | Whakapau kaha

Excellence | Whai hiranga

Curiosity | Māhirahira

## Our Management Team



**Ben McLaren**  
Chief Operating Officer



**Karen O'Leary**  
General Manager, Human Resources



**Joanna Comerford**  
General Manager, Business  
Development, Marketing  
& Communications



**Clifton Walsh**  
Head of Information Technology



We welcome your feedback and suggestions to help us make further progress. Please reach out to any one of our Russell McVeagh team members, Allison, or Jo for further information. We look forward to sharing further updates with you.

Ngā mihi nui.

## Our Russell McVeagh partners:

Allison Arthur-Young  
 Craig Shrive  
 David Weavers  
 Greg Neill  
 John Powell  
 Matthew Kersey  
 Sarah Blackmore  
 William Irving

Anna Crosbie  
 Daniel Jones  
 Deemle Budhia  
 Guy Lethbridge  
 Kirsten Massey  
 Mei Fern Johnson  
 Simon Pilkinton

Ben Paterson  
 Daniel Minhinnick  
 Ed Crook  
 Ian Beaumont  
 Kylie Dunn  
 Michael Taylor  
 Tim Clarke

Bradley Aburn  
 David Butler  
 Emma Peterson  
 Jesse Fairley  
 Liz Blythe  
 Nathaniel Walker  
 Tom Gillespie

Cath Shirley-Brown  
 David Hoare  
 Emmeline Rushbrook  
 Joe Edwards  
 Malcolm Crotty  
 Petra Carey  
 Tom Hunt

Christopher Curran  
 David Raudkivi  
 Frederick Ward  
 Joe Windmeyer  
 Marika Eastwick-Field  
 Polly Pope  
 Troy Pilkington

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