

INFRASTRUCTURE WOMEN IN FOCUS



WIN NZ has been established to increase the visibility of women in the infrastructure sector. Every month we profile a different woman working in a different part of the industry. If you would like to be profiled, or would like to nominate someone to be profiled, please answer the questions below and send your picture through to [Tara](#).

We'd like to introduce Louisa Bloomer as our next Woman of Focus. In addition to her role at Stantec, Louisa is also a member of the WIN Wellington network.



LOUISA BLOOMER
DATA, ANALYTICS AND INSIGHTS
DISCIPLINE LEADER,
AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND



1. What company or organisation do you work for and what is your role there?

I work for Stantec, a top ten global design firm with around 22,000 staff in over 350 locations across six continents. My role as the Data, Analytics and Insights Discipline Leader for Australia and New Zealand focuses on our digital strategy, and I matrix-manage a core team of 25 data analytics, digital innovation, GIS and visualisation staff to support our internal business. I provide direction and leadership for a community of 160 GIS and data analytics staff and ensure we have the right people to support our projects and clients. My role allows me to drive innovation across the Company globally by supporting the incubation of new ideas and ways of working and I provide mentorship and guidance to innovators, ensuring they have the skills and contacts to succeed. I also co-chair our Australia and NZ Digital Governance Board.

2. Tell us about your career background and how you got to this position/role?

I started in a data-heavy, technical role for the first two years of my career which grounded my appreciation for data best practice. I then moved quickly into more client-facing roles that developed my requirement gathering and networking skills—I loved this! When I moved to the UK in 2015 and worked for Transport for London I had my first role leading people. This was a huge period of development while I read and trained myself in managing technical people. From there I moved on to more advisory, project management and people leadership roles to settle where I am now. My current role allows me to have the balance of technical, people leadership, client interaction, and strategy development that I thrive on.

3. Tell us about a project you are currently working on and why it interests you?

Easy! Supporting Tauranga City Council with their Asset Resiliency project has been fantastic. It gives every asset in the city a risk rating based on the type of asset and the impact and likelihood of a natural hazard affecting it, and supports the prioritisation of water and transport asset resilience projects over the next ten years. I find this smart and data-based approach fantastic and a real showstopper for how we prioritise action and investment in the right places at the right time.

4. What's the hardest job you've ever done and why?

Six months ago, I would have said balancing work and kids but since August last year I've been able to work full-time while my husband manages the kids and domestic administration. My hardest job was managing a team through a re-structure a few years ago. Morale was down, and productivity was waning across the team. My attempts to engage them and create a positive culture and encourage new and efficient processes was incredibly draining! I learnt a lot about my leadership style and how to approach situations differently with more introverted personalities.

5. Can you think of one example where your "diversity" has materially affected the outcome of a work situation or project, either positively or negatively?

Yes, one instantly springs to mind. When I was in my mid-20s I wanted to go for a senior role and I happened to be eight months pregnant at the time. I took the hiring manager out for coffee to discuss my interest in applying and to explain how I would be a good fit. I acknowledged my pregnancy and that I planned to take a six-month maternity leave and wanted to discuss how this could work with the role if I was successful. The hiring manager's response was, 'Yes, you'd be great, but we need someone right now'. Writing that a good seven years later makes me cringe as I know it was discriminatory. I know how I would respond now! But back then I said, 'Okay, I understand' and I didn't apply for the role.

I have learned since then that when you're young and new to the professional world you're vulnerable, you don't always know what you can ask for, and it's not always clear who you can go to for advice. The number one piece of advice I'd share from this experience is to get a coach or a mentor. I have learnt so much from and been challenged by three incredible formal and informal female coaches I've had in the last seven years. My first mentor made it clear that I should have stood up for myself and called the hiring manager out for discriminating on my pregnancy. My mentors offered advice around difficult career decisions I faced as well as management advice, and guidance around creating a grounded work-family-life balance.

The outcome of this is that I took a different role when I came back from maternity leave, and I've had awesome roles ever since.

To learn more about careers with Stantec click [here](#), or you can connect with Louisa on [LinkedIn](#).

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