

EMERGING TALENT MEMBERS IN FOCUS



The Emerging Talent Network has been established by Infrastructure New Zealand to develop the next generation of infrastructure leaders. Each month we will be profiling an ET member 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 would like to introduce Paul Curry from Higgins Contractors Ltd in Christchurch as this month's Emerging Talent Member in Focus.



PAUL CURRY
SENIOR ESTIMATOR
HIGGINS CONTRACTORS LTD

HIGGINS.

1. What organisation are you with, and what do you do day-to-day?

I am with Higgins Contractors Ltd that forms part of the Fletcher Construction Company. Higgins builds and maintains roads and civil infrastructure throughout New Zealand and within Fiji. With a 'customer number one' focus, Higgins is a dynamic civil construction business with a team of 1700 people. I'm a Senior Estimator that leads the estimating team for the construction division in the South Island. I form part of the senior leadership team for the Christchurch branch and I am a member of Higgins' national commercial excellence group. My day-to-day works involves implementation of tender strategies to procure tenders, estimating, planning, bid and pre-contract management.

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

My educational background has been routed in the fundamentals of civil engineering, with three years study of such and then a change of focus to quantity surveying for my final two years, where I received my Honours Degree in Ireland. After receiving my degree, I decided I would like to gain some international experience which led me to my current position in New Zealand, where a few months stay grew into a few years and then some more. With my educational base it has led me to my love of estimating and the task to try and foresee all possible eventualities for the project at tender stage, both understanding the engineering fundamentals of the task and the cost and commercial implications of the actions. As the years progressed and my technical skills became more mastered, I became engaged by the coordination of people and what process worked and what didn't. This has now led into my senior position and into my early days of bid, pre-contract management and learning the many varying factors that make a good leader.

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

For me, it would be a project I have previously worked on as I have only recently joined the Green Team here at Higgins. The project would be the America's Cup 36 (AC36) Infrastructure Works in Auckland. Being part of such a great alliance (the Wynyard Edge Alliance) was a highlight. Working with some of the top talents in New Zealand between owners, constructors and designers really interested me and shows the strength of such a model. Being part of preparation for such a significant event for New Zealand was a real honour as the works that will last well beyond that sporting event and creating an attractive, welcoming waterfront destination that Aucklanders and visitors will love for years to come.

4. What are the biggest successes/challenges with the new ways of working? (i.e., video conferencing, lack of events and in-person meetings, etc.)

Working from home was always seen as an exception and I believe the perspective has slightly shifted. I have always been an advocate for flexible working conditions and now I believe it is in the employer's best interest also to attract and retain the most effective workforce. So, I would see more successes than challenges with the new ways of working as it has forced many companies to have the correct infrastructure in place to facilitate such. I have been fortunate to join Higgins as they have the infrastructure in place, a culture that supports these new ways of working and an understanding of the world of networked individuals.

5. What are your key learnings from lockdown?

It's fair to say we learned a lot about ourselves during lockdown. I think from a general level it's shown we are much more resourceful than we think, and we always have an innate ability to bind together to overcome difficult situations, which is a real positive. From a professional perspective I think the same is applicable.

6. Do you have any tips on how to thrive professionally in an ever changing COVID environment?

Being comfortable with change is key. Often some of the greatest opportunities present themselves in difficult situations, and you need to keep your head up and not be overwhelmed by the external noise. Focus on what you can control. I have always been more of a process-oriented thinker so what works for me is to always keep the bigger picture in mind, then take it back to what I can control now, breaking it down step by step and focusing on producing the highest quality at each stage, being content but not satisfied and knowing that result will follow.

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

Yes, in a positive context. It is knowing that age diversity in the workplace can improve organisational performance with numerous generations representing today's workforce. I found it drives innovation as different ages brings about different experiences, expectations, styles and perspectives. As an example, my age diversity with Higgins has led me to adopting my own styles to tender strategies and inputs that has now led me to be part of a national working group to provide information and feedback in the field of estimating and new business. This will have an outcome for the business as the collective feedback from various members will form part of the new management systems that will be rolled out throughout the business.

To learn more about opportunities for a career with Higgins Contractors Ltd click [here](#) or you can connect with Paul on [LinkedIn](#).



