

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 else to be profiled, please answer the questions below and send your picture through to [Natasha](#).

We'd like to introduce Eloise as our next Woman of Focus. In addition to her role at Kinetic Environmental Consulting Ltd, Eloise is also Chair of the WIN Waikato Chapter Committee.



ELOISE LONNBERG-SHAW

SENIOR PLANNER



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

Since August this year, I have been working for Kinetic Environmental Consulting Ltd, which is a brand new consultancy managed by Christian (McDean) and myself. My role with Kinetic is as a Senior Planner with a clear pathway to directorship. My main work is to prepare resource consent applications for our varied clientele, which includes private persons, local councils, public departments (such as the NZ Transport Agency) and a range of corporate clients. An average working day for me would consist of meeting with or talking to clients and/or technical specialists (such as engineers, landscape architects, archaeologists or ecologists), liaising/negotiating with stakeholders and/or Councils, reviewing technical specialist reports and progressing consent applications towards lodgement.

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

I was a lawyer for about 10 years (both in New Zealand and in Europe) with most of that time focusing on litigation and resource management. I gained my LL.M (master's degree) in Sweden (which is where I am from) and Australia and started working as a lawyer in Sweden shortly after graduating in 2007. Following that position, I worked for a range of law firms, from sole barristers to mid-size commercial firms to one of the largest firms in the world (in London). I always really enjoyed being a lawyer (particularly going to Court!) and loved the challenging and diverse workload, but after returning to work after having my son I decided that I wanted to pursue a career outside of the legal sector. While the work itself was very satisfying, I felt a pull to be involved in a project from its very inception, rather than just from when things started going 'wrong' (one of the inherent aspects of being a litigator). After seeing an advert, I applied for a role with (then) Opus International Consultants as a Planner, which I thought would be a relatively smooth transition based on my resource management legal background. After getting that role, I have never looked back! I moved from Planner to Team Leader about a year after starting with Opus, which gave me great opportunities to manage and progress a team in a large organisation. That role also exposed me to a range of challenging yet interesting planning work, an aspect which I have brought with me to my current role. The decision to move into a small business after having worked for such a large organisation was a relatively easy one, as I felt that working for 'myself' was a better

option for me at this point in my life. I also really love a challenge and what better way to challenge oneself than to do something slightly out of your comfort zone... It has certainly been a very exciting few months since joining Kinetic and it is thrilling to be part of something from the very beginning, experiencing first-hand how we move from strength to strength. In the short months since starting the company, we have hired another planner and have just signed a lease for our first office, which is an awesome step in this great journey. Overall, we are very thankful to our very loyal and friendly clients without whose support we wouldn't be able to do any of this.

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

One of my major current projects is the SH3 Awakino Tunnel Bypass, which is aimed at increasing the safety of the state highway by bypassing a single-lane, almost 100-year old tunnel (located just before the Awakino Gorge). This project has been incredibly interesting and has involved a great deal of stakeholder engagement (one of my favourite aspects of this job) and negotiations with a range of parties to ensure that we achieve the best possible environmental outcomes. We are currently at the cusp of obtaining consents from Waikato Regional Council, as well as finalising the designation alternation with Waitomo District Council. It feels like a long time coming as the job has involved many hours of work by a large number of committed people, but we have also had a lot of fun along the way.

Another really interesting project I'm working on is a municipal water take consent for one of our local Councils. The availability and quality of fresh water is a matter of great relevance to our country and with increasing pressures on that resource, it is very important to ensure that any consent allowing for the taking of large amounts of water has suitable conditions to ensure that our water is used sustainably. To add a level of complexity to the process, we of course have a number of iwi co-management partners in the Waikato, which has meant that I have had the opportunity to learn about and understand the cultural implications of taking and using fresh water. What has impressed me the most throughout this whole project is the level of commitment from Council and iwi alike in terms of finding a mutually agreeable and sustainable solution. A lot of time and dedication has gone into ensuring that everyone has had their say and that appropriate measures are put in place to address any concerns.

In addition to these, we have a number of current projects which are challenging and fun, such as arranging consents for a quarry or talking to stakeholders and Council about an aquaculture farm. The best part about my job is the fact that I get exposed to so many different industries and learn about each as we move through the consenting process.

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

I can think of a number of jobs which have been incredibly challenging, and which have pushed either just myself or the wider team harder than anticipated. In saying that, I personally get more satisfaction (both mentally and work-wise) from jobs that challenge me in some way, as each and every one of those 'hard' jobs has left me with a greater understanding about the issue encountered. Usually, a job that seems particularly difficult will also be much easier to tackle once you share the 'burden' of finding the solution with someone else, which is why it is so important to surround yourself with people whose opinion you trust. Throughout my career, I've had the privilege of working with some truly amazing people who have been willing to share their thoughts, wisdom and lessons with me, which has given me the luxury of being able to grow as a person/planner/lawyer on the back of their excellence and humility.

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?

Diversity is such a wide phrase that encapsulates so many different aspects of a person, which of course is why it is so important to ensure we have it! For me personally, having emigrated to New Zealand and grown up in a different environment (particularly true in respect of gender equality, being an area where Sweden is quite advanced) coupled with my legal background, means that I sometimes bring a thought to the table that perhaps would not have been there otherwise. In saying that, I like to think that any person who has an open mind, a willingness to learn and who is humble and confident in equal measures, is a person who will provide a positive contribution to any situation, whatever their gender, ethnicity, age or profession.

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