

INFRASTRUCTURE WOMEN IN FOCUS



WIN NZ is open to women of all levels working in infrastructure and has been established to grow the visibility of women in the infrastructure sector. Every month we will be profiling a different woman working in a different part of the sector. If you would like to be involved, please answer the questions and send your picture through to [Natasha](#).

We'd like to introduce Louise as our next Woman of Focus. In addition to her role at ACC, Louise also sits on the WIN Advisory Board.



LOUISE MARSDEN

DIRECT
INVESTMENTS



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

I work for ACC as part of their Direct Investments team. ACC, with assets of ~\$38 billion is the biggest investment manager in NZ. We have a mandate to invest in infrastructure projects, with their high-quality, lower-risk cashflows.

I have a dual role: seeking new projects, and managing a portfolio of existing investments. The largest investments in my portfolio are three PPP projects, each of which I sit on the Board of the Contractor delivering the project.

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

I have worked in the infrastructure sector for nearly 20 years. After training as an accountant I worked for a US power company developing renewable and conventional power projects across Europe. I then moved into financing and managing projects for a bank in the transport, energy, waste and PPP sectors, including a stint looking after 'problem' projects.

On moving to NZ I wasn't necessarily expecting to continue in the same sector, but I arrived around the same time the initial PPP projects landed, so was soon in the thick of a bidding process.

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

One of my projects is the Transmission Gully PPP project. The 27km motorway forms part of the Wellington Roads of National Significance and will provide a safer and more resilient connection between Wellington and the North Island. It's a large and complex project, with difficult and steep terrain, requiring real design and construction innovation. It's incredibly satisfying seeing this project develop through its stages, from inception, through design, planning and construction.

I really enjoy the multi-disciplinary nature of this type of work – you need to have an understanding of different project components: financial, contractual, technical, stakeholder, and H&S. Today I've been analysing various interpretations of a clause in a contract, tomorrow I don my safety boots and high-vis vest for a site visit.

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

The infrastructure industry is subject to a degree of political and economic influence outside your control. The hardest jobs I've done have been a result of these outside influences: renegotiating contracts following the Enron collapse, withdrawing from projects during the GFC, and having projects cancelled due to a change of government.

At a more personal level, my hardest job is to balance doing an effective job with the demands of a busy family life!

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?

In my work life I actively seek to provide diversity of thought, challenging assumptions and providing an alternative view.

I'm not convinced that my ability and willingness to provide a different perspective is driven by my gender 'diversity', rather a questioning mind, and the confidence to express my opinions.

I am however convinced that the most successful projects I've worked on are those where diversity of gender, perspective, skills and experience is brought together, and effectively channelled.

To learn more about opportunities for a career with Accident Compensation Corporation please go to <https://careers.acc.co.nz/>

Or, you can [connect with Louise on LinkedIn](#).

