Russell McVeagh

2021

CSR Report

"We work alongside our communities to help build a better Aotearoa, together"

Message from our CEO

We are pleased to share our 2021 CSR report. It provides an overview of our approach to doing business better and our work towards integrating sustainability into our everyday operations. At Russell McVeagh, a sustainable approach means ensuring we have a positive social and environmental impact, as well as promoting wellbeing for our people and community. This publication celebrates our recent efforts in these areas, focussing specifically on our environmental, community, pro bono, and people initiatives.

As a CEO, I recognise that identifying and focusing on the key strategic priorities is fundamental to every business success. This can be challenging, when there are so many issues to distract our attention. It has never been truer than right now as we all grapple with the global COVID-19 pandemic. That's why I truly believe in the value of having a sound Corporate, Social, Responsibility (CSR) framework.

Our people, clients and communities are at the heart of our CSR framework at Russell McVeagh. Alongside providing exceptional legal service to our clients, for which we have a long-established reputation, we continually seek to effect positive social and environmental impact.

From our establishment in 1863 to the present day, we have had a role to play in building a better Aotearoa through the legal advice we provide to clients and communities. We are proud of this history and recognise that our people and clients expect us to make the right choices. Directly, through our operations, and indirectly, through our advice to clients, we know we can make a real and lasting difference.

This report comes off the back of a significant period of culture transformation at our firm – a journey to which we remain committed. We know that transformation requires meaningful, sustainable change, and is a journey that never truly finishes. Regarding our broader social and environmental ambitions, we know we have a long way to go but are excited to meet the challenges we have set ourselves.

Thank you for taking the time to read our report.

Jo Avenell CEO

"We continually strive to create positive social & environmental impact"

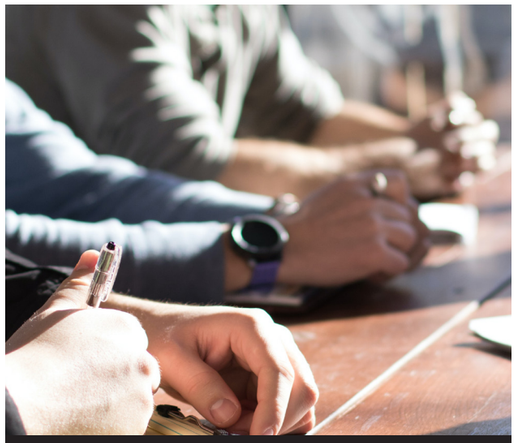
Our commitments

Our commitments define who we are as a firm. We believe it is our obligation to give back – to clients, the legal profession, to our communities and to each other. Our combined efforts to consider and support the environment, our community, pro bono, and people, can lead to substantial and meaningful outcomes.

Environment

Community

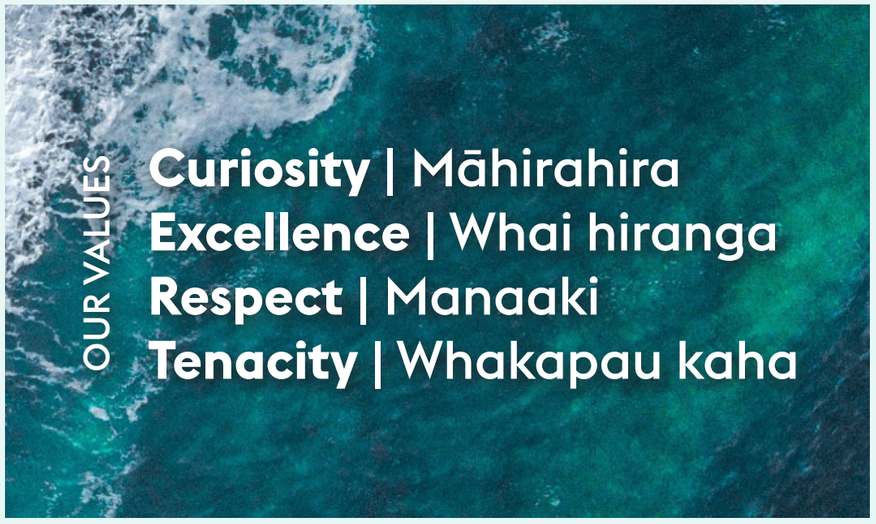
People



Pro Bono

Who we are

Who we are matters – to our clients, to our firm and to the wider communities we support. We are a driven, achievement-oriented law firm putting exceptional service at the heart of all we do. We invest in our people, empowering them to act and think differently.



>$1 million
in pro bono support
to 50+ organisations in 2020

Longstanding
community support
and involvement

>1000 m²
reduction
in our occupancy footprint since 2016

300+
PEOPLE

Women account for:

66%
of our senior management team

54%
of our Special Counsel

50%
of our Senior Associates

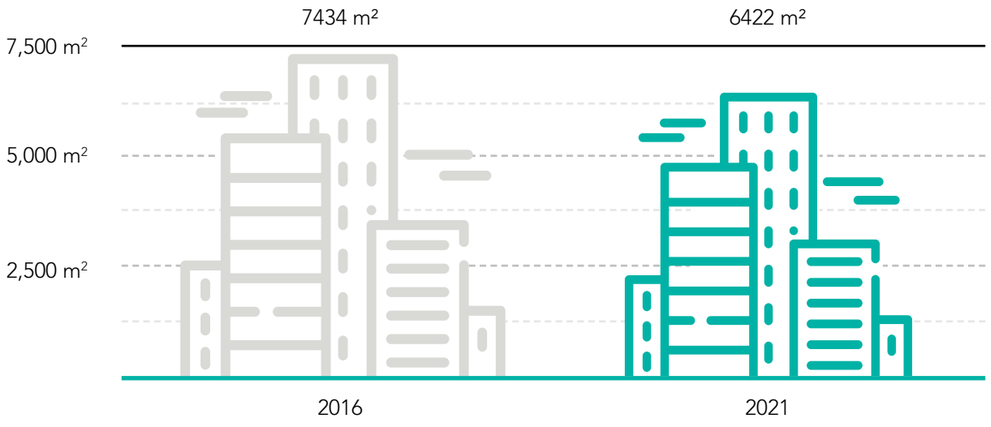
TWO
AKL---------- WGN
OFFICES

Founded in:
1863

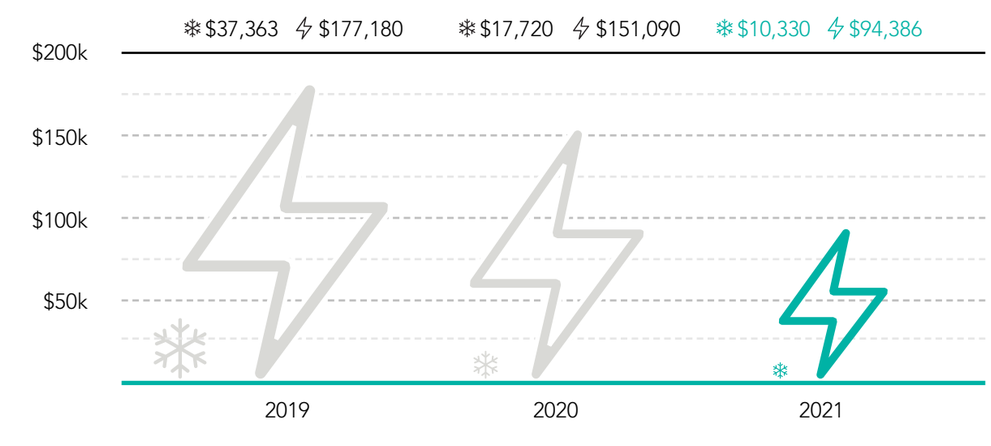
Managing our environmental impact

We understand the urgency of the climate crisis and the importance of managing our environmental impact. Our Sustainability Committee looks for opportunities to improve our environmental performance, challenging the firm to adopt new sustainability practices and educating staff on what we, as a firm and as individuals, can do to make a difference.

Occupancy footprint (across our Auckland and Wellington offices)



Reducing air conditioning, power & gas usage



Increasing recycling

- Our recycling programme has grown over the last few years. We now have dedicated recycling bins in multiple locations in both offices separating out organic waste, paper, recyclable plastics and cardboard.
- We have also purchased a number of office "keepcups" so that staff who forget their own are still able to get their morning coffee in a sustainable cup.
- While we had managed to eliminate disposable cutlery, glasses, cups and crockery from our offices, COVID-19 has meant we had to bring some back for health and safety reasons, but we have chosen compostable or recyclable options to ensure the impact is as minimal as possible while still keeping our people safe and complying with best practice.

We are also members of the Ākina Foundation's fwd: programme, which is New Zealand's first social procurement marketplace, to ensure our purchasing decisions have positive social, cultural and environmental effects.

Reducing resource wastage

We are committed to:

- reducing printing
- replacing all lighting with LED
- running regular recycling education campaigns
- promoting active commuting such as cycling and walking
- promoting digital solutions that cut down on paper, such as editable pdf software for document reviews and online storage of precedent documents.

RMcV Sustainability Committee

Regular staff education

In addition to our ongoing education efforts, we organise an annual Sustainability Week, promote sustainability-based team Charity Days (such as planting community gardens, clearing invasive plants or tree planting), and encourage participation in initiatives like the Aotearoa Bike Challenge.

Focus on our clients

As a professional services organisation, our own footprint isn't where we have the greatest influence. We know our greatest impact is through our clients. As their long-term trusted advisers, we have a critical role to play in helping them future proof their business from climate risk and manage the transition to a low-carbon world. Our multi-disciplinary Climate Change sector group is focused on helping our clients navigate the wide range of continually evolving issues in this fast-moving area of law. We support clients directly through our regulatory, transactional and disputes advice, which focuses on climate change, sustainable finance and corporate governance.

Community engagement

Supporting our local communities is ingrained in the culture of Russell McVeagh. Our people want to give back, and we encourage them to do so. From our work with social enterprises, to our pro bono programmes, sponsorships, and charitable partnerships, we work alongside our communities to help build a better Aotearoa, together.

Our solicitors volunteer at our local Community Law Centres, each of our teams spend a day each year working together on a community project and we are proud to be members of the Ākina Foundation social procurement programme.

For us, a sustainable approach means ensuring we have a positive social and environmental impact, as well as promoting wellbeing for our people and community

FOCUS ON

HeadFit Foundation Awards

We are proud to be supporting a new mental health initiative, the HeadFit Foundation Awards, established to celebrate individuals, teams and workplaces who are leading in the area of workplace mental health. This year, for their inaugural awards ceremony, we are sponsoring the Leader of the Year Award, which recognises a senior leader at work who has demonstrated initiative improving mental health within their workplace.

FOCUS ON

Tāmaki College

Our Māori and Pasifika communities have long been an area of focus for our community efforts, evidenced by our long-standing relationship with Tāmaki College. Tāmaki College, located in Glen Innes, provides education to a large number of Māori and Pasifika students and since 2008 Russell McVeagh have run a programme of six to eight workshops each year with Year 13 students. These workshops are focused on preparing our Māori and Pasifika students for life after high school and include (among other topics) how to apply to university, polytechnic and trade school, preparing a CV and being interviewed, and general financial literacy. The workshops alternate between Tāmaki College and our Russell McVeagh offices, with dinner provided before each workshop. Outside of the workshop program many of our solicitors have been involved with helping students to apply for scholarships, student allowance and work opportunities.

Pro bono – giving back

The law is our bread and butter, and we know that using our skills and knowledge to provide free legal support is one of the most valuable contributions we can make.

Pro bono forms a core component of our business and culture, and we have a long history of directing our skills and resources towards making a difference. Our relationships with Community Law Centres in Māngere, Wellington and the Hutt Valley date back to the 1980s.

In 2020 we provided more than $1million in pro bono support to more than 50 organisations, which include SheEO, The Aunties, Wellington & Hutt Valley and Mangere Community Law Centres, the Ākina Foundation, RainbowYOUTH and World Vision. We are also working on projects to support victims of domestic and financial abuse, and to fund devices for low decile learners.

More recently, we've been able to use our expertise to play our part in the COVID-19 response, assisting non-profit group, Home Guard NZ, with the launch of its platform that matches medical and allied health professions willing to offer up help with the organisations in need of them.

We're proud of our commitment to pro bono and the strong relationships we build with our communities. Fundamentally, the support our firm provides comes from a desire to genuinely make a difference and help in the best way we know how.

FOCUS ON

Russell McVeagh advises pro bono client RainbowYOUTH on its merger with OuterSpaces Charitable Trust.

COVID-19 has created a challenging environment for small community organisations, highlighting the vulnerabilities of charities (and the communities they serve) to major changes in the social and political environment. Within this context, Russell McVeagh advised RainbowYOUTH on how it could work collaboratively to strengthen the support options available to Wellington's rainbow rangatahi.

Russell McVeagh advised RainbowYOUTH in its agreement with OuterSpaces to merge into one legal entity. Throughout this process, OuterSpaces and RainbowYOUTH were committed to carrying out a genuine community engagement process, acknowledging that the communities they serve should be at the heart of any major decisions made.

We were delighted to be involved with this transaction, which will assist the development of Aotearoa's rainbow infrastructure and help facilitate the outcomes for RainbowYOUTH, OuterSpaces and the rainbow community.

>$1 million
in pro bono support
to 50+ organisations in 2020

Our pro bono clients include:

World Vision

RY

māngere community law centre te korowai ture o māngere

ākina

SHEEO

> **Pro bono forms a core component of our business and culture, and we have a long history of directing our skills and resources towards making a difference**

People

We are committed to creating an open and collaborative culture where every person feels valued. A culture that values difference and promotes inclusion.

We have made significant progress on our cultural transformation in the last three years and we are proud of what we have achieved. Last year at the NZ Law Awards, we were pleased to be awarded Large Law Firm of the Year, and Employer of Choice. More importantly, our people tell us they are proud to work for Russell McVeagh.

We continue to evolve as a firm, and we are listening to and bringing our people with us on that journey. While there is still work to do, we are confident that we are building an open, inclusive and people-focused culture.

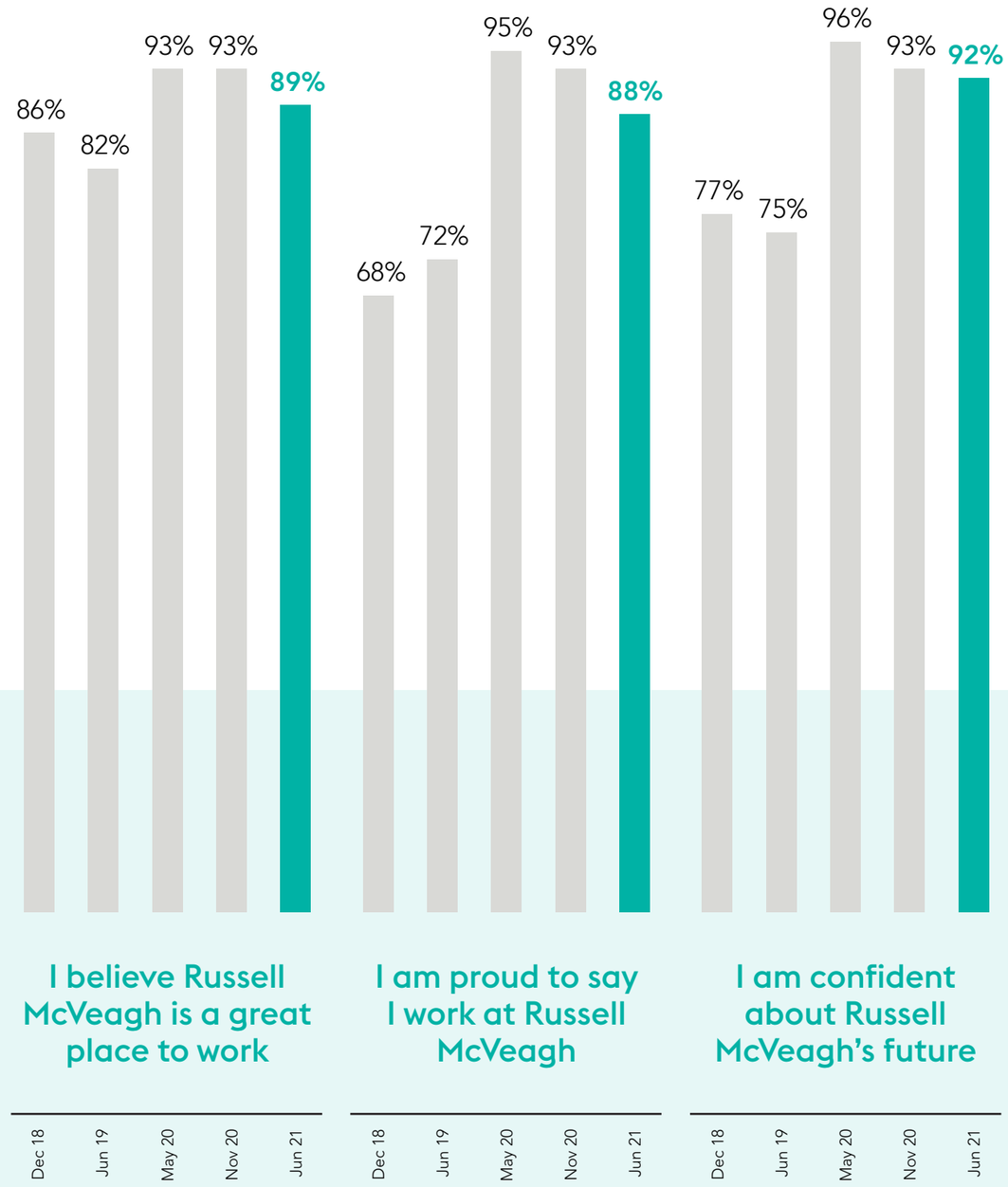
Diversity and inclusion

Our people-led Diversity and Inclusion subcommittees work collaboratively to identify and address key areas. Alongside our leadership, the subcommittees' hardwork has been for improvment across Accessibility, Ethnicity & Culture, Gender, LGBTTQI+ and Socio-economic areas and have been instrumental in Russell McVeagh achieving the Rainbow Tick, and becoming a signatory to the Women's Empowerment Principles and the Gender Equality Charter.

We celebrate the diversity of our people and enjoy participating in cultural events for Te Wiki o Te Reo Māori, Chinese New Year, Eid al-Fitr and Matariki among other celebrations throughout the year.

Staff engagement

Every year we run a 'Pulse' survey, to check in on staff engagement. Feedback is provided anonymously. Results from our surveys regularly demonstrate that our people regard Russell McVeagh as a great place to work and that they are proud to work here.



Focus on equality

Our CEO, Chair of the Board, and Partnership Chair are all women.

Six of our 13 most recently appointed Partners are women.

We maintain pay parity across all Partners at equivalent career stage.

Women make up 40% of our Board, 66% of our senior management team, 54% of our Special Counsel and 50% of our Senior Associates.

Our pay gap at Senior Associate and Special Counsel level is approximately 5%, which can be accounted for based on years of experience.

All other levels have no gap or a gap in favour of women. We regularly check the gap and look to close it during the annual remuneration round.

Our ethnic make-up approximates that of the legal profession, which we recognise needs to improve, and it is a strategic imperative to attract, grow, and retain talent from diverse backgrounds.

Our culture transformation

At Russell McVeagh, we are committed to having a culture where all our people can thrive in a working environment of trust and respect. Highlights of our culture transformation include:

- Staff-led diversity and inclusion teams working collaboratively to identify and address key areas for improvement across Accessibility, Ethnicity & Culture, Gender, LGBTTQI+ and Socio-economic areas
- Hosting events and activities for various diversity and inclusion initiatives including regular events to support our rainbow community at the firm; Breakfast Club, a networking, discussion and support group for junior women in the firm and a forum through which junior women can raise ideas for development opportunities; and 'Closing the Gap' events, which aim to close the gender investment gap
- Firm-wide 'Respect' and 'Unconscious Bias' workshops to embed our culture of respect
- Partnering with Global Women and Champions for Change, and being part of the TupuToa programme, which aims to encourage greater numbers of Māori and Pacific students into the legal profession
- Embedding culture change in our business strategy
- Actively managing hours of work to further support the wellbeing of our people and provide consistent recognition
- Considering leadership capability in all promotion decisions - we have developed our own leadership assessment methods

Our values

Our culture is underpinned by our values, and we reflect these across all facets of our work, ensuring a focus on transparency, communication and collaboration in our relationships.

Respect | Manaaki

We value difference.
We have challenging conversations.
We build each other up.
We engage with kindness.

Excellence | Whai hiranga

We embrace unwavering commitment to excellence.
We're always raising the bar.
We create 'wow' for our people and clients.
We ensure our people thrive.
We support our people, clients and communities.

Tenacity | Whakapau kaha

We take on the tough stuff together.
We show courage through honesty, vulnerability and integrity.
We make the hard calls.
We get it done.

Curiosity | Māhirahira

We bring energy and passion.
We are dynamic.
We connect to learn and grow.
We are creative thinkers looking for smarter solutions.
We empower and challenge each other.

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