



CASE STUDY

# Auckland University of Technology

“Becoming a Hearing Accredited Workplace has given AUT an opportunity to examine our workplace through a new lens and better understand what is working well, and highlight areas of improvements.”

Kate Birch, Auckland University of Technology.

## Inclusion and diversity are of the utmost importance to AUT.

"AUT believes that diversity doesn't stick without inclusion. Inclusion without diversity can make an organisation stagnant and uncreative. Both aspects of diversity and inclusion are important. This is why AUT focuses on efforts to create and build an inclusive workplace culture where every employee feels they belong, that they matter, and that they can bring their whole self to work. The Hearing Accredited Workplace Programme (HAWP) has given AUT an opportunity to examine our workplace through a new lens and better understand what is working well, and highlight areas of improvements."

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**WE WERE EXCITED TO BECOME PART OF THE HEARING ACCREDITED WORKPLACE PROGRAMME**

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(Left) The AUT team attending a Deaf Awareness and New Zealand Sign Language workshop.



(Above) A workshop with AUT's Deaf Studies students.

AUT's Director of Talent and Culture, Kate Birch, was excited to get involved with HAWP from the get go.

"Our Director of Talent and Culture, attended a conference where NFDHH presented and introduced the audience to the workplace hearing accreditation programme. Kate was inspired by this presentation and wanted AUT to become a hearing accredited workplace and find out how we can become more supportive and inclusive of staff and students who are Deaf or hard of hearing."

### Creating a hearing aware culture at AUT.

To start the Hearing Accredited journey, AUT held workshops for employees on Deaf Awareness and New Zealand Sign Language. Information on safe listening habits when using headphones was also distributed to staff to educate them about noise induced hearing loss and how to protect their hearing. These initiatives were successful and well received by staff, with many attendees interested in learning more about the Deaf Community and how to be inclusive to those who are Deaf & hard of hearing.

Relevant human resources and management teams were provided with training to run accessible recruitment processes. This includes ensuring quiet acoustically sound rooms are available for job interviews. If an interview or meeting is conducted online, accessibility options such as closed captions or Ai Media live captioning are available.

AUT have shown that they are committed to making meaningful change by implementing new protocol, guidelines and tools on: Hearing Protection and Audiometric testing, Noise Assessment, Noise Monitoring, and Preliminary Noise Survey.

AUT hold free hearing tests at its staff orientation in the city campus and will regularly provide hearing testings across all three campuses.

### AUT is committed to continuing its hearing accredited journey into the future.

In 2022, AUT will continue to create student and staff communications about noise-induced hearing loss and how to protect your hearing. They will run targeted campaigns for high-risk groups of students and ensure that lift posters are visible in noisy areas. AUT will also share personal stories from staff affected by hearing loss in their TUIA News Stories in 2022.

"We value being a hearing accredited workplace, as this shows that we are actively working towards creating a positive and inclusive environment for our employees and students who are Deaf or hard hearing. We are also committed to preventing noise-induced hearing loss by identifying and managing harmful noises at the university.

We are proud to be the only university in New Zealand to offer a sign language and English interpreter degree. As part our staff benefits, our employees can complete NZSL, New Zealand Sign Language papers for free that are offered by the School of Languages. This provides our staff with valuable skills that can be used to communicate with our Deaf community and provide a more inclusive environment.

We are excited to continue our journey with National Foundation of Deaf and Hard of Hearing and work through our activities planned for 2022."



**Kate Birch**

Director Talent & Culture  
Auckland University of Technology