

MEDIA RELEASE

Driving change: Bunnings Trade & NAWIC celebrate four women shaping the future of trade



(L-R Shaina Ali Bunnings, Lilly Toa Bunnings, Lola Williams WIAA winner, Jacob Vorster Bunnings, Fiona McGovan Bunnings, Sharmaine Lamb Bunnings)

Four Kiwi women making their mark in the trade industry have been celebrated as the recipients of the *Bunnings Trade Women in Apprenticeships Awards*, in partnership with the National Association for Women in Construction (NAWIC).

The awards aim to empower women at the start of their trade careers with recognition and support from the industry. Winners receive professional resources and a Bunnings Trade prize pack valued at over \$10,000.

The winners of the 2025 award are Samantha Lee (electrician, Auckland), Mikyla Wardlaw-Ruru (carpenter, Whakatane), Sasha Devia (fabrication welder, Hamilton) and Lola Williams (carpenter, Napier)

Nominations were judged on the individual's contribution to their trade and how they innovate, inspire and make a positive impact on the industry and those working in it.

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Samantha Lee, Electrician – Auckland

When Samantha felt unfulfilled by her corporate job, she changed her career path and started her apprenticeship as an electrician. Now, her passion for working in the trades goes beyond the worksite and into her online profile where she promotes the industry to others who are interested in joining the trades. She shares her personal journey, advice and work experience on residential, commercial and civil sites, to encourage others to give it a go.

Mikyla Wardlaw-Ruru, Carpenter – Whakatane

Whakatane mother of two, Mikyla, is a dedicated carpenter and community volunteer. She has persevered in her trade to overcome barriers, such as her position in a male-dominated workplace. Mikyla is committed to developing her skills and taking up the opportunities the industry offers. When she's not on the job site, she is often helping as a committee member for the Waimana Sports & Cultural Club and supporting with various marae projects in her local community.

Sasha Devia, Fabrication Welder – Hamilton

Sasha is undertaking an apprenticeship as a Heavy Fabrication Welder and once completed, she will be the first female welder in the company where she's currently employed. She is passionate about her future as a tradie and works hard to improve her skills. She's also committed to motivating other women to consider the trades as a viable career.

Lola Williams, Carpenter – Napier

Lola is dedicated to joining the construction industry and is in the process of completing her apprenticeship to become a carpenter. Following in her family's footsteps, she is driven to succeed and has worked hard to purchase her own tools and a vehicle so that she can pursue her chosen career in the trades.

Head of Bunnings Trade New Zealand, Matt Heinrich said, "Congratulations to all the tradeswomen making a mark in the industry and inspiring others to follow in their footsteps. The future of the industry looks bright with Samantha, Mikyla, Sasha and Lola leading the way, and we look forward to seeing their influence and abilities grow."

Bunnings 2024 WIA Winner and Auckland carpenter, Courtney Willan, said, "It has been hugely rewarding to be acknowledged with this award. The prize pack has helped me with my day-to-day work on site, while the recognition from my peers has encouraged me to continue to grow and support women in trades. Congratulations to this year's group of winners – you are an inspiration to us all."

NAWIC NZ President, Colleen Upton, said, "At NAWIC, we know that mentorship is a powerful tool for creating lasting change in our industry. We're proud to partner with Bunnings Trade to celebrate outstanding tradeswomen, and ensure they're supported as they grow in their careers. Together, we're building a stronger, more inclusive future for women in construction."

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In New Zealand, only 4.85 per cent of apprentices in training for trade occupations are women (13,225 out of 77,490). The highest number of female apprenticeships are working in the construction industry (3.8 per cent), followed by Retail Trade and Manufacturing. More than half of female trade apprentices are still engaged in an industry related to their training after ten years.

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Each winner has received

- Bunnings Gift Card valued at \$5,000
- Hard Yakka Voucher valued at \$1,000
- NAWIC National Mentorship and Membership valued at \$162 (varies per region)
- AEG, Kango and Empire product Pack valued over \$1,450 RRP
- Irwin Product Pack valued over \$770 RRP
- Kincrome Pack valued over at \$1,130 RRP
- Full Boar Pack valued over \$1,045 RRP

About NAWIC

The National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC) is a not-for-profit organisation that encourages women to pursue, establish and sustain successful careers in the construction industry. Its vision is to be the leading voice for women in this sector.

<https://www.nawic.org.nz/>

About Bunnings Trade

Bunnings Trade is a major supplier to project builders, commercial tradespeople and the housing industry. It serves the industry through a network of 51 trading locations made up of 42 stores and 9 trade centres.

<https://trade.bunnings.co.nz/>