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NAWIC and Bunnings Trade: Growing opportunities for Women in Trades



L-R: Nicole Gorringer Bunnings, Sasha Devia (2025 Bunnings Women in Apprenticeship Winner), Melanie Reid NAWIC

As the National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC) celebrates 30 years of championing women across New Zealand's construction industry, the organisation continues to work alongside industry partners committed to creating greater opportunities for women to succeed and thrive in the sector.

A strong and sustainable construction industry relies on diversity of thought, experience and talent. Increasing participation and supporting women in construction is about more than representation - it is about creating pathways for more people to build rewarding careers while strengthening the future of the industry as a whole.

Over the past three decades, NAWIC has advocated for greater inclusion across the construction sector through professional development, networking, mentoring and recognition programmes. Progress continues to be driven by the collective efforts of individuals, employers and industry partners who recognise the value that diverse perspectives bring to the workforce.

One organisation helping support this vision is Principal Partner, Bunnings Trade, whose commitment to fostering inclusive workplaces and supporting the broader trade community aligns closely with NAWIC's objectives. Across New Zealand, women are playing an increasingly visible role throughout the



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construction ecosystem, from trade suppliers and account managers through to project leaders, business owners and tradespeople working on site.

For Bunnings New Zealand General Manager Melissa Haines, creating environments where people can develop and contribute is critical to the future of the industry.

“Diverse teams bring different perspectives, experiences and ideas that strengthen both our business and the industries we support,” says Haines. “We’re proud to partner with NAWIC and support programmes that help create greater opportunities for women to build successful and rewarding careers in construction.”

NAWIC recognises that meaningful progress requires collaboration across the industry. Partnerships help strengthen programmes that support women with opportunities to expand their skills, build confidence and grow their professional networks.

One example is the Bunnings Women in Apprenticeships Awards. The awards celebrate outstanding female apprentices who are making a positive contribution to their trade while encouraging more women to consider careers in construction. Alongside industry recognition, recipients receive Bunnings gift cards, tools and products designed to support their professional development and help set them up for future success.

Auckland-based electrician Samantha Lee, a recipient of the 2025 Bunnings Women in Apprenticeships Award, says the recognition has reinforced her confidence in pursuing a long-term career in the industry and strengthened her ability to encourage other women considering the trades.

“The recognition and support I’ve received has given me the confidence to keep growing in my trade and to encourage other women to consider a career in construction,” says Lee.

The benefits of industry partnerships are also reflected in the opportunities they create for individuals across the wider construction sector to connect, learn and share experiences.

For Bunnings Trade team member Janet Cui, involvement with NAWIC has provided valuable opportunities for personal and professional development while helping her build meaningful industry connections.

“Through networking events and site visits, I’ve been able to connect with people across the construction sector, broaden my practical knowledge, and build genuine relationships with suppliers, clients and like-minded professionals. It has also given me a real sense of community, and I’d strongly encourage others to get involved to grow their network, stay informed and feel more connected within the industry.”

While significant progress has been made over the past 30 years, NAWIC recognises there is still more work to do. Continuing to build an inclusive and representative construction industry will require ongoing commitment, investment and collaboration from across the sector.

By working together with members, employers and partners such as Bunnings Trade, NAWIC remains focused on creating opportunities for women to build successful careers in construction and helping ensure the industry is well positioned for the future. When women are supported to thrive, the benefits extend well beyond individuals - strengthening businesses, communities and the construction sector as a whole.

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About Bunnings NZ

Bunnings is a leading retailer of home and lifestyle products for consumer and commercial customers in Australia and New Zealand. We are a major supplier to project builders, commercial tradespeople and the housing industry. Our store network in New Zealand is made up of 51 locations, comprising Bunnings Warehouses, smaller format stores and trade centres. This physical network is supported by a growing e-commerce ecosystem and supply chain network. Bunnings employs more than 5,000 team members across the country.

