

MEDIA RELEASE

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Auckland Council's Challen Wilson selected for management exchange

Auckland Council Communications and Engagement Manager (Specialist Operations) Challen Wilson has been selected for the AskYourTeam Overseas Manager Exchange to Victoria, Australia.

Overseas Management Exchange recipients were announced at the 2026 LGFA Taituarā Excellence Awards held at Tākina in Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington on 18 June 2026.

The Taituarā Overseas Manager Exchange Programme provides local government managers with the opportunity to focus on their management development and career progression through an intensive exchange with a local government counterpart overseas. The programme is designed to broaden perspectives, strengthen leadership capability and foster lasting international relationships.

Challen was recognised for her innovative leadership and commitment to strengthening relationships between local government and Māori.

Working within Auckland Council's co-governance function, Challen has developed approaches to communications and engagement that support stronger partnerships and create opportunities for Indigenous economic development. Alongside her professional work, she also contributes extensively to her marae and rūnanga, demonstrating a strong commitment to community leadership.

The judges praised Challen's combination of strategic communications expertise, cultural knowledge and passion for Indigenous development.

“Armed with a strong communications background and a passion for Indigenous economic development, she is uniquely equipped to build enduring cross-cultural connections and bring back invaluable insights to the sector,” the judges said.

The exchange will provide opportunities to explore First Nations partnership models, strengthen cross-cultural relationships and share experiences between local government practitioners in Australia and Aotearoa.



The judges said Challen's leadership and commitment to building connections would make her an outstanding representative for New Zealand local government.

About the Taituarā Overseas Manager Exchange Programme

The Taituarā Overseas Manager Exchange Programme provides local government managers with a unique opportunity to focus on their management development and career progression through short-term exchanges with local government counterparts overseas. The programme broadens perspectives, fosters new ideas and strengthens leadership capability across New Zealand's local government sector.

For more on the 2026 LGFA Taituarā Excellence Awards:

[Download the full media pack](#)

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