



We have interviewed our Partner – Architecture + Women • NZ (A+W•NZ)!
(Response by Lynda Simmons, Co-founder of A+W•NZ)

1. Can you give a brief introduction to your association?

Architecture+Women•NZ (A+W•NZ) brings together women trained in the field of architecture and seeks to raise their profile in the public realm through networking, events, publishing and the formation of policy. It's free to join and while the organisation has serious intentions, participation is intended to be enjoyable as well as purposeful. In the few years since it was set up, A+W•NZ has created a structure that provides guidance, discussion, visibility and positive role modelling for women and men alike through facilitating events and publications around a healthy reassessment of industry 'norms'.



The two core aims behind A+W•NZ are to promote *visibility* in the field of architectural practice, and to aim for an *inclusive* architectural practice culture. The A+W•NZ website hosts a growing database, currently at over 600 women, as well as research articles, news and events, and links to our social media platforms.

2. How people can support Architecture+Women•NZ and how Architecture+Women•NZ can support the architecture sector and construction industry?

Anyone can support A+W•NZ simply by being involved – by joining the online database, staying connected, participating in the many events we hold, getting involved in research, and speaking up on issues of policy. If you do not meet the three criteria to join the online A+W•NZ database, anyone can register for the free monthly online newsletter from the home page of the website. Financial support is via donations, becoming a 'Friend of A+W•NZ, or by direct sponsorship. For more details, see <http://www.architecturewomen.org.nz/sponsors-donations>.

A+W•NZ supports the profession and the construction industry by ensuring the architectural community is engaged, active and informed. We hold lectures, exhibitions, engage in ongoing research and provide information on our online platforms. A+W•NZ reaches beyond those currently working in construction to those who may not be currently practicing, but like to stay connected. (For example those who are in suspension or who have left the profession for other design-related fields.)

A+W•NZ have also supported the profession by raising money on behalf of other Charitable Trusts and groups such as the NZIA Venice Biennale team.

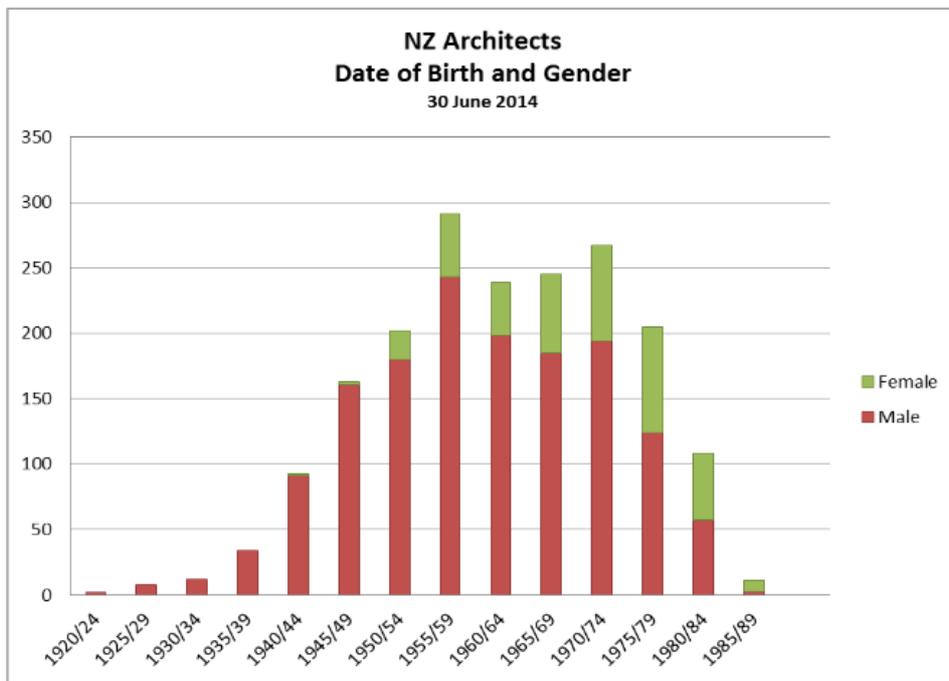


3. Can you provide us the percentage of women architect in New Zealand currently? What is your expectation of the trend in next 5 years? Why?

Currently in NZ there is a 50:50 gender ratio across the three architecture schools, with an equal level of female and male graduates entering the profession for the last decade. (At Auckland University, there has been a steady increase of female students since 23% in 1983 to 55% in 2015.)

The next stage where measurement is taken is at registration, which is currently 24% female, 76% male. While there are many women working in architectural practices, they tend not to get registered at the same rate as their male counterparts, and A+W•NZ believe that the architectural community must look at workplace structures and workplace culture to avoid losing so much valuable talent from the industry.

Fig 1



4. Are there any challenges for women architects to enter the sector? Why would these happen?

Any barriers that previously existed in the universities have been removed via changes in employment policy over a 20year period, starting in the 1980s. The current diverse student population is slowly transferring into the workplace, where changes to policy are also beginning to be implemented. There is still very low representation of women at higher levels in architectural practices (1% nationally), however client demand for wider diversity, and research showing greater profits to companies with a broader representation of people at the director level, means that smart practices will look at removing any barriers they may have in place for the career development of some staff.



5. If so, what can the women professionals do to overcome the challenges?

Be involved. Be visible. Be supportive of colleagues and speak up when fairness is not being practiced. A+W•NZ recognise that gender equity in New Zealand is very strong, and that our position of strength can be used to break down barriers for other diverse groups in architecture. It is hoped that discussions around gender, workplace culture and policy can have a wider effect on the visibility of many other diverse groups. The intention is for visibility and inclusiveness to apply to all who make their lives in architecture.

6. Coming to Auckland Build 2016 Expo, what are your expectations?

Maintaining connections with the design and industry communities is important for all architects, and A+W•NZ are very happy to be involved at the Auckland Build 2016 Expo. As mentioned, one of our core aims is for women to be 'visible' in the industry, and we look forward to helping the many women involved in the industry in New Zealand to be seen.