

# Human Resources

support



1. NIWA Diver training.
2. Steve Mercer and Liz Day conduct ladder safety inspection, Wellington.
3. Shareen Sharma-Prasad, Payroll Manager.
4. Amy Bennett, HR Manager, with Mary-Anne Dehar, General Manager HR.
5. Safety at sea – water survival training.
6. Safety at sea – fire drill.





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## Creating a culture of leadership

In an increasingly competitive worldwide market for scientific and technical skills, environmental science organisations like NIWA face strong challenges to recruit and retain great staff.

When people join and stay at NIWA, it's not just for money, or the facilities, or even the high calibre of their scientific colleagues. They're also looking for such things as career and personal development opportunities, high quality feedback and coaching, a sense of belonging, shared beliefs and values, and some fun at work.

Many of these factors are related to the quality of leadership in an organisation.

Despite NIWA's past success, the Board and Executive Team believed there were opportunities to achieve even more. With this in mind, in 2007–08, our Human Resources team began the NIWA Leadership Programme.

NIWA contracted André van Heerden as its leadership consultant: "What we're after is a self-sustaining pool of

leadership talent. You'll be continually developing the people coming through. Active delegation and succession planning will see new leaders constantly emerging."

By July 2008, André had conducted eight leadership workshops involving a total of 76 participants. He'd read more than 600 assessments (360-degree feedback), and conducted more than 120 one-on-one follow-up interviews with NIWA staff.

"The Leadership Programme has revealed the breadth of leadership talent available to NIWA. The assessments not only identified opportunities to improve the organisational structure, but also provided insightful and articulate recommendations from right across the company on how to advance NIWA's leadership culture," says André.

Some of this fed into a revamping of titles amongst senior leadership in August 2008, heralding greater clarity of roles and responsibilities.

Dr Mary-Anne Dehar joined NIWA as General Manager Human Resources

in March 2008. There are great opportunities, she says, and the process is underway: "We're seeing ways to strengthen development, coaching, delegation, mentoring, and succession planning throughout the organisation."

André van Heerden is in no doubt about the future direction: "I happen to be an ex-ad man, so maybe I'm over-selling it, but I honestly believe that New Zealand can and should be a model for the rest of the world in sustainability. We're a resource-rich country of just 4.5 million people. But it'll require science leadership. In fact, science and leadership should be synonymous. And I don't think I've ever seen an organisation with greater leadership potential than NIWA."