

Submission on developing the Aotearoa New Zealand Aerospace Strategy

Your name and organisation

Name	Women in Space Aotearoa New Zealand
Organisation (if applicable)	Women in Space Aotearoa New Zealand

Overview of the Aerospace Strategy

Do the four areas above provide the right basis for the Aerospace Strategy?
What are the critical factors that you see for aerospace sector development?
How would an Aerospace Strategy help you?

Please type your submission below. If applicable, please indicate the question(s) to which you are responding.

Women in Space Aotearoa New Zealand (WISANZ) are enthusiastic about supporting an ambitious aerospace strategy for Aotearoa New Zealand – the proposed areas can provide a good basis to advance the sector. WISANZ are eager to support Aotearoa New Zealand’s aerospace sector to reach for the stars.

WISANZ is a not-for-profit professional network established to support and enable women and gender minorities working in the New Zealand space sector, and those who want to join the sector. We are highly motivated to work with the Government and the wider sector to help advance aerospace in New Zealand in a manner that will provide equity and opportunity for women and gender minorities. Aotearoa has an opportunity to set out a bold ambition within the aerospace strategy to lead the world in action to radically improve the equity for and the representation of women in the aerospace sector, and to co-develop plans for that action with women to bring about real, lasting change. In this way, the aerospace strategy can act as a catalyst to open up the advantages that a thriving aerospace sector brings to women in New Zealand – providing increased benefit to women both from the capabilities and services that aerospace can bring our communities, and to the high skilled and well paid careers, as well as leadership roles, the aerospace sector provides.

The critical factor for Aotearoa New Zealand’s aerospace sector development is radically improving diversity in the sector, particularly gender diversity.

A deep, highly skilled domestic talent pool across all career levels is vital to provide the workforce that is needed to ensure a world-leading aerospace sector in Aotearoa New Zealand – and that cannot be achieved while the sector continues to not draw on the talent of 50% of the population. There is no data on the gender diversity of New Zealand’s aerospace sector, however WISANZ member’s collective experience indicates international data on diversity in the space sector reflects the reality of New Zealand. The UN Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) reports that women make up less than 20% of the global space industry, and when considering only technical roles that representation is substantially smaller. In science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM)

research, the proportion of women researchers is less than 28%. The UNOOSA state representation of women in the global space sector has not improved in the last 30 years.

Each of the goals proposed for Aotearoa New Zealand's Aerospace Strategy will require substantial innovation from the Government and the aerospace sector to be achieved. There are numerous studies that prove that increasing diversity of an organisation leads to increased innovation.

The consultation document proposes pillars of Unlocking Aerospace Potential and creating an Aerospace Nation that will underpin the Aerospace Strategy. WISANZ strongly believes that a game-changing action plan specifically focussed on improving gender diversity of the aerospace sector is fundamental to achieve the ambitions of the Aerospace Strategy. Long lasting change can only be achieved if the action plan to improve gender diversity in the sector is co-developed between women, aerospace companies, the Government and education and training institutes. It must plan for gender engagement and enabling action across all stages of education in Aotearoa New Zealand, as well as action to support and enable women at all careers levels once they are working in the sector.

Aotearoa New Zealand has the potential to be internationally renowned as a world-leading aerospace innovation nation. WISANZ proposes that Aotearoa New Zealand, with our history of leading the world on giving women equality in the right to vote, now has an opportunity to lead the world in diversity of our aerospace sector, through ambitious commitment by the Government and the aerospace sector to work with women to take action that will radically increase the representation of, and opportunity for, women in Aotearoa New Zealand's aerospace sector.

Area One - A strategy for building our aerospace sector

Is the 2030 Future State set out in a way that enables New Zealand to build on its existing advantages to develop a leading place in the global aerospace economy?

Will the 2030 Future State support your ambitions for growth and participation in the sector?

What barriers are there to optimising sector growth?

How could the government and the sector work together to achieve the 2030 Future State?

How can the Government enable Māori ambitions for the sector?

Please type your submission below. If applicable, please indicate the question(s) to which you are responding.

As we set out earlier, a deep, highly skilled domestic talent pool across all career levels is vital to provide the workforce to achieve the goals of the Aerospace Strategy– and that cannot be achieved while the sector continues not to draw on the talent of 50% of the population.

The outlined 2030 Future State is an opportunity to signal Aotearoa’s commitment to leading the world on improving diversity of our Aerospace Sector.

However, the reality is that there is no easy or quick fix to grow a diverse workforce and, as 2030 is only 7 years away, it is not realistic that the aerospace workforce of 2030 will reflect Aotearoa New Zealand’s diverse society even with targeted action starting right now.

WISANZ supports an ambitious but realistic action plan to be developed to improve diversity of the aerospace sector, so that the workforce in 2030 is on track towards reflecting our society. That action plan must be co-developed with women and other underrepresented groups including Māori and Pasifika, and have progress measurable and tracked against ambitious targets at all stages of education, training and career levels in the sector, and across all career fields.

It is important to establish the status quo of diversity of the sector as it stands. WISANZ strongly recommends the first stage of improving diversity is the commissioning of a study to understand the diversity of the sector now. The only way to understand how to develop targeted plans to improve diversity, and to be able to measure progress towards a truly diverse aerospace sector in Aotearoa, is to understand the scope of the problem. We would recommend the Strategy includes plans to survey the current workforce of the aerospace sector now and in 2030, with potential intermediate survey in 5 years’ time to see if there has been any measurable difference as a result of the activities outlined in the Strategy or if further action should be instigated. This survey would be valuable for diversity efforts but also for understanding the sector’s workforce in general.

Area Two - Building strong foundations (Three Pillars)

What do you think of the Three Pillars and do you think they will support the 2030 Future State?

What else would you like to see in the Three Pillars?

What actions and initiatives could the sector focus on to support the Three Pillars?

Please type your submission below. If applicable, please indicate the question(s) to which you are responding.

See our earlier responses.

With regards to Pillar 3 (Aerospace Nation), reference is made to growing participation in aerospace education and training, and as per our earlier responses WISANZ would support targeted programmes to address gender and other diversity imbalances as part of efforts towards this Pillar. Women in Space Aotearoa New Zealand are in the process of holding a series of Pathways to Space events to encourage school-aged and tertiary students to consider a career in the Space sector, targeted at young women but open to all genders. The recent Auckland event was fully subscribed and has received very positive feedback from students and whānau, showing that there is considerable interest in space careers within Aotearoa's rangatahi that has the potential to greatly benefit the future sector workforce if we act collectively help foster it.

Area Three - Goals for 2030

What do you think of the Goals for 2030?

Are the goals framed in a way that will enable New Zealand to build on its strengths and comparative advantages to achieve the 2030 Future State?

What activities and milestones can help us achieve these Goals?

Where do you see yourself in realising these Goals?

Please type your submission below. If applicable, please indicate the question(s) to which you are responding.

WISANZ are eager to support Aotearoa New Zealand's aerospace sector to reach for the stars. The Goals proposed for the Strategy can provide great opportunity for women to benefit from the development of the sector to achieve these ambitions, particularly for Goals 3, 4 and 5 which will expand Aotearoa New Zealand's capability and reputation as an innovative space nation.

WISANZ are ready to work with the Government, aerospace companies and training and education institutions to get action plans underway to open up the opportunities these Goals have the potential to create for more women in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Area Four - Pathway to the 2030 Future State

What policies, ideas, actions, and/or initiatives would you like to see in the Action Plan to help achieve the ambitious 2030 Future State?

What would be the benefits of these actions and how would they help grow the New Zealand aerospace sector?

How would you like to be involved in the delivery of the Aerospace Strategy?

Please type your submission below. If applicable, please indicate the question(s) to which you are responding.

See our earlier responses on how important it is for action plans to improve diversity of the sector to be co-developed with women and other underrepresented groups, including Māori and Pasifika.

WISANZ is ready to work with Government and the entire sector to achieve the ambitions of the Aerospace Strategy for Aotearoa New Zealand, through action to radically improve the representation of women in the aerospace sector across all career levels and career fields.