

## New Zealand first all-female built home creating more than just history

Thursday 24 August 2023

On a Fletcher Living section in Auckland's suburb of Whenuapai, New Zealand history is about to be made – with the build of a four-bedroom, two and a half-bathroom home, entirely planned, designed, engineered, and built by women.

BUILDhers is more than just a build of new home, it is a build set to challenge stereotypes by providing female tradespeople with a platform to show what is possible and encourage women interested in a career in building and construction to give it a go.

“Everything from the architectural drawings, laying the foundations, through to the eventual sale of the ground-breaking BUILDhers home will be carried out by a team of more than 40 women,” explains Aurelie Le Gall, Fletcher Living Branch Manager Auckland North, and the woman behind making BUILDhers a reality.

“The idea behind this female led BUILDhers project is to use it as a tangible example of what women can do by highlighting the diverse skills of women already successfully holding their own working in building and construction. At the same time though, we're passionate about normalising the presence of women on a construction site through inspiring women of any age to consider pursuing a career in the male-dominated sector,” says Aurelie.

According to Statistics New Zealand only 15% of people employed in construction are women and Aurelie admits for the team at Fletcher Living, Fletcher Building's Residential business, finding enough women to fill each role needed for BUILDhers has been a hard task.

“We've put a lot of time and effort into working with our networks to get the word out there to find women for each job. We are emphatic that there will be no compromise on quality or duration on the build, and honestly, it's been hard sourcing a female crew, with the necessary experience.

“But we also see this as an opportunity to give female apprentices a boost. They will be asked to take on more responsibility than they would usually get while being mentored by more experienced builders,” says Aurelie.

Championing women and working towards greater gender balance is a particular focus for Fletcher Building as a whole. In the past 12 months the number of females in operational roles increased by 296, and 36 more women started leading operational teams. One such female operational leader is Site Manager Jasmin Lawrence who has been helping assemble the BUILDhers team. She says build partners have jumped in steel cap boots and all when it came to helping on this legacy project.

“Project managing an ALL-FEMALE led build has a great ring to it! We’ve already had such a positive impact, with some contractors hiring women especially so they could contribute to building this unique home.

“We’re well underway. The foundations started back in June with the slab poured last month, ready for frames the start of September. However, we are still in need of more women to be part of the build so please get in touch!” says Jasmin.

Qualified Roof Installer Liz Watson who owns her own roofing business in Waikato, got in contact as soon as she heard about BUILDhers and is now the roofing subcontractor.

“Part of the attraction of taking part in this legacy build was to be able to show that women can do one of the most difficult of all trades ‘roofing’, and that women can do anything - If they can see it, they can do it! What I’m most looking forward to is working alongside all the other female tradies and then at the end looking back with pride at the new precedent we will have set. That will be epic,” says Liz from Stone Roofing subcontractor for Aspect Roofing.

BUILDhers is also being applauded by Construction Industry bodies ‘Women in Trades’ and ‘National Association of Women in Construction’ NZ (NAWIC).

"Seeing the launch of BUILDhers is incredibly exciting. The team behind BUILDhers should be enormously proud of what they are achieving by empowering women to come together to achieve one goal. Without a doubt it will help encourage women to pursue and establish successful careers in the construction industry,” says Lenie Buis from NAWIC Auckland Chapter.

While completing the Whenuapai build is the current focus, Aurelie believes it won’t be the only job for the BUILDhers team.

“I don’t intend for this to be a one-off build. Many women already love being a part of the industry, BUILDhers is giving them the platform to share that belief with others and I’m looking forward to supporting them however I can,” says Aurelie.

The BUILDhers project will have its own webpage [www.buildhers.co.nz](http://www.buildhers.co.nz) where people can follow the build progress, learn more about the women involved, and see all the different women making it happen. Once completed the BUILDhers home will be sold on the open market.

Women wanting to find out more about career opportunities as part of the BUILDhers crew can contact [buildhers@frl.co.nz](mailto:buildhers@frl.co.nz)

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### Notes to Editor

The BUILDhers home will be a four-bedroom, 2-bathroom standalone house constructed to the same standards as every Fletcher Living home.

For further information please contact:

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