

NEWS & INSIGHTS

Building better futures with Keystone Trust



Argosy is a Keystone Trust property scholarship sponsor. Argosy recently invited a group of Trust students to walk through its building at 8-14 Willis Street in Wellington. This building earned 6 Star Green Star Built accreditation and recently received the 2024 Property Council New Zealand Supreme Award. The students were guided through the property by a variety of specialists, including architects and engineers, who worked on the building's refurbishment.

Amanda Stanes, General Manager of the Keystone Trust, attended the building visit, and we took the opportunity to ask her about some key takeaways for students.

Q: What was the purpose of visit to 8 Willis Street?

One of the most important aspects of a scholarship with Keystone Trust is access to industry leaders and to projects at all stages of development. The purpose of the visit was to demonstrate to the students the interconnectivity of the industry and for them to understand that although knowledge to build a successful building is important, the right attitude and ability to build and maintain strong relationships are just as important. The scope of the project, which grew from a simple refit to covering three sites, with an integrated façade and an aspiration to achieve a six star Green Star rating made this project of great interest to our students.

Q: What were the expected outcomes for students?

Firstly to hear about the industry in action, to understand the various forces that dictate such a sophisticated build and to appreciate the various parties that come together to create something unique that aligns with the client's aspirations. Secondly, to build their networks and to meet with industry leaders to hear their stories and to introduce themselves.

Q: Is there a large mix of students attending in terms of their study?

The students attending the tour were largely architecture/building science students studying at Victoria University of Wellington. They are at various stages in their academic journey and some have practical experience working in construction.

Q: What's the biggest benefit of trips/visits like this for students?

Students learn in silos. They learn their respective professions and then are thrust out into the market expecting to understand how it all works. By going on site they meet with various project stakeholders and hear their key drivers to making the project a success. They learn that making a company successful isn't about screwing down others but finding ways for everyone to make money and to come away standing tall. I think what impressed the students was how collegial everyone was – even after such a complex project which would have had some thorny and complex issues to resolve. The ability to build professional friendships is a huge skill in this sector because it is not a transactional one.

Being able to learn all the various nodes within the property ecosystem helps them learn more about how they will be able to contribute to the sector when they graduate.

Q: Are students these days sustainability focused and conscious of our sectors' impact on the environment?

There isn't a student on our programme who is not sustainability focused. These young people are vitally concerned about the health of the world and how the construction sector is a huge contributor to its poor health. They understand they have a responsibility to change this and to learn how to make their builds sustainable, healthy and softer on the planet and people. Being able to hear how

collaborative design enabled thousands of tonnes of concrete to be retained in situ without releasing significant amounts of carbon into the environment is a really tangible outcome the students appreciated.

Q: What was the most interesting aspect of the 8 Willis Street for you?

It is all about the team. The project grew and morphed into a far more complex landmark on the Wellington CBD than originally scoped. It demonstrates the art of flexibility, adaptability, of being responsive to a client brief and to having a responsibility to the wider stakeholders of the project. And it showcases that communication and a collaborative attitude are key to the successful completion of a project of this scale.

Thank You

Amanda Stanes shared the following note with us, “What an incredible site visit – so well prepared and so informative. Thank you Argosy for organising it for us. Thank you also to everyone who shared their stories and passion on the day. The scope and scale of the build, the focus on the team, collaboration and joint success inspired our students.

Keystone Trust is incredibly fortunate to have some of the most incredible people and companies to stand alongside our students. Thank you for helping these young people see a future many are only just becoming aware of.”

Who is the Keystone Trust?

Following the death of property developer Graeme Bringans, Keystone Trust was established in 1994 to provide financial and pastoral support to tertiary students with a passion for property and construction. The original trustees lead, by Graeme’s widow, put in the seed money to provide scholarships for two students. Today, the Trust supports some 62 students around the motu, studying a variety of programmes at eight tertiary providers. Funding is provided by 64 industry leaders including Argosy.

Building better futures with Keystone Trust | argosy.co.nz