



## **EOWA 2006 Business Achievement Awards**

# **Winners' Profiles**

### **AWARD 1: Leading CEO for the Advancement of Women Winner: Maria Mercurio, RSPCA Victoria Incorporated**

Before arriving at RSCPA, Maria was the coordinator of a women's refuge, where she witnessed the negative impacts women can encounter when they have limited opportunities to take control of their own lives. Her commitment to both her female and male staff at RSPCA is a reflection of these experiences.

Managing a large not-for-profit with over 300 staff and 1300 volunteers, Maria Mercurio understands the need to attract and retain talented and committed people. On her arrival at RSPCA Maria introduced a very strong people management framework which uses the values of the organisation as a starting point. As a result all line managers and supervisors are thoroughly trained in the framework and the application of the framework is part of their line manager accountability.

She has ensured there is a strong focus on developing staff and upskilling them which involves mentoring, coaching, scholarships, job rotation, secondments, conference attendances, training and participation on committees. She has worked hard to ensure that working for a not-for-profit has not effected staff training opportunities and she worked with a donor to set up a scholarship program for staff to enable to them to attend high profile conferences and training programs.

She makes sure that staff are not rewarded for long hours but on outcomes for the organisation. She does not work long hours herself so she 'walks the talk' and she encourages her managers to do the same. The implementation of a training program for Frontline Managers has seen animal attendants and other staff complete their first formal management training. Their recruitment strategy has been to review the skills within RSPCA before advertising to identify every opportunity for staff to develop at RSPCA.

In a female dominated organisation the executive management team had no women when Maria arrived and is now 67% female. Since Maria's arrival – retention rates of volunteers have increased by 15% and 60% of volunteers who resigned have gained paid employment within the industry. Maria focuses on encouraging an environment that is fun for staff and believes it is critical to engage people at all levels of the organisation so that they can see the benefits they bring to the organisation. Maria is the first female CEO to win this award.

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**About the organisation:**

Established in 1871, RSPCA Victoria Incorporated is an independent, non-government, community-based animal welfare charity providing services for the prevention of cruelty to animals. RSPCA Victoria's services and responsibilities include enforcing existing laws to protect animals from cruelty, providing shelter and care for stray and surrendered animals, vet care and education for all sectors of the community.

To find out more, visit their website: <http://www.rspcavic.org>

**AWARD 2: Diversity Leader for the Advancement of Women  
Winner: Niki Kesoglou, Westpac Banking Corporation**

Throughout her 11-year employment at Westpac, Niki has been passionate and committed to diversity and has contributed widely to the policy debate on all diversity issues through forums, organisations and conferences, driving change locally and internationally.

Nikki has been instrumental in putting forward the business case for diversity and EO. She was the driving force behind the development of a pilot program which provided coaching for people leaders to overcome biases and leverage the diversity within their teams. She created the first organisation-wide Diversity Census in 2003, and the first organisation-wide Child-Care Survey in 2004.

In 2004, she won approval and a \$100,000 budget to pilot a new Women's Development program and was the major internal advocate for pushing to increase paid parental leave from 6 weeks to 12 weeks.

She delivers a quarterly Women in Management report to senior managers, and presents information in annual Board Reports on pay equity, women in management statistics and a diversity analysis of Westpac's Staff Perspective Survey.

She has identified opportunities for Westpac to undertake and sponsor externally produced research on gender and diversity issues and drove Westpac's *Women Achieving their Potential* program to help talented women in middle management progress in their careers.

With CEO David Morgan saying 'I could not have a better advocate for diversity in Westpac', it is clear that Niki's contribution to equality for women at Westpac has been significant.

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**About the organisation:**

Westpac Banking Corporation provides banking and financial services throughout Australasia. Employing approximately 27,000 people, the business is divided into five main units: Business and Consumer Banking, Westpac Institutional Bank, New Zealand and Pacific Banking, BT Financial Group and Business and Technology Solutions and Services. Westpac serves around 8.3 million customers and has about 266,000 shareholders both in Australia and worldwide.

To find out more, visit their website: <http://www.westpac.com.au>

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## **AWARD 3: Leading Organisation for the Advancement of Women (less than 500 employees)**

### **Winner: VicSuper Pty Ltd**

To address the labour shortage issue, VicSuper has taken substantial measures to establish recruitment processes that tap into a wider, diverse talent pool, attracting and retaining skilled employees across the organisation.

Ongoing training is provided to all senior managers and team leaders on non-discriminatory recruitment methods, interviewing techniques and EO legislation requirements, and external recruitment companies commissioned are asked to adhere to the organisation's policies on equal opportunity. To maximise staff retention and return-to-work, staff on parental leave are notified of any internal vacancies or promotion opportunities as they arise.

VicSuper also provides flexible working conditions which include a work-from-home policy, 14 weeks paid parental and adoption leave and the encouragement of job re-design.

As a result of the initiatives and policies VicSuper has implemented, 48% of new recruitments were women and 7 women were recruited into traditionally male-dominated areas. 66.7% of internal promotions were awarded to female staff members.

VicSuper also has a high retention rate, low absenteeism and a high rate of return from maternity leave, all of which can be attributed to the flexible working conditions the organisation provides.

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#### **About the organisation:**

VicSuper is a not-for-profit organisation that is one of Australia's largest public offer superannuation funds. As at 31 August 2006, the company had over 209,000 members and \$4.4 billion in net assets. VicSuper's central operating principle is to create value for all stakeholders by building a sustainable super fund through the integration of economic, social and environmental considerations into all VicSuper decision support systems.

To find out more, visit their website: <http://www.vicsuper.com.au>

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## **AWARD 4: Leading Organisation for the Advancement of Women (more than 500 employees)**

### **Winner: IBM Australia Limited**

IBM's Diversity Council is chaired by their CEO and is resourced with a significant budget. On a regular basis IBM Executives are presented with diversity statistics in relation to hiring, development, advancement and retention of women. All executives and managers are held accountable and have targets in place for the retention of women and these targets are directly linked to individual performance.

And the success speaks for itself.

Representation of women in executive roles has increased from 13% in 2004 to 17% in 2006 which is a very positive result given the challenges IBM faces in a traditionally male dominated industry. Developing women in technical roles is a key focus and IBM has 33% female representation compared to less than 20% industry representation.

Many career development programs for women have been introduced, including The Springboard Development Program to help women think about what they want from their careers and how they will progress. In 2005 IBM introduced the 'best person for the job' internal recruitment system that requires hiring managers to consider whether each role can be performed part time or job shared.

IBM's return to work rate continues to be at 98% and parenting rooms are now available in all IBM major locations across Australia. Over half of IBM's employees utilize their flexible work options. With 75% of candidates citing IBM's diversity practices as a factor in attracting them to apply for a role at IBM - IBM clearly understands the business case for equal opportunity.

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#### **About the organisation:**

IBM Australia is one of the country's leading suppliers of information technology, software and services. The company aims to be a resource of business insight and industry expertise and to create new and innovative ways to help optimise clients' business performance, assisting them to save money while transforming their business. IBM also strives to be a good corporate citizen, contributing to the communities in which it operates.

To find out more, visit their website: <http://www.ibm.com/au/>

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## **AWARD 5: Outstanding Initiative/Result for the Advancement of Women**

### **Winner: Holding Redlich**

Devised and developed by a group of partners and championed by the National Managing Partner, Holding Redlich implemented a Parenting Partner Program to support, advise and guide the increasing number of its lawyers who were becoming mothers.

As soon as a woman informs the firm that she is pregnant, she is invited to meet with her Parenting Partner in an informal and relaxed environment outside the office. Topics discussed can include advice on quality local child-care services, returning to work, working from home and part-time work or job-sharing opportunities.

The program ensures that there is someone to provide reassurance and to act as an advocate and negotiator within the partnership for flexible work practices across the organisation, as well as a mediator should any disputes arise.

Mothers who have participated have reported the positive effects of the program, saying the support it offered helped to reduce any anxiety they were experiencing about becoming a mother, and later upon returning to the firm as a working mother. It also served as a reminder that they were a valued member of the firm's team.

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#### **About the organisation:**

Holding Redlich acts for organisations of all sizes, including government and public interest groups. The firm is committed to providing relevant, high quality and cost-effective legal services, and has a legal approach defined by their long-standing commitment to social justice. Lawyers at Holding Redlich possess extensive industry knowledge, enabling clients to access someone who understands and can add value to their business.

To find out more, visit their website: <http://www.holdingredlich.com.au/>

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## **AWARD 6: Outstanding EEO Practice for the Advancement of Mature Aged Women**

### **Winner: ECH Inc**

In recognising that its Registered and Enrolled Nurses employed in supervisory positions (who were predominantly over 40 years old) required further training and skills development in management and leadership, ECH introduced a front-line management program to address the issue.

The program involves 45 hours of paid training, which covers key aspects of empowering the workforce and reinforces participants' roles as people leaders and team builders. One of the main areas of focus is the departure from the more hierarchical leadership styles to more supportive and encouraging approaches to leadership.

All staff who successfully complete the program will receive a certificate of attainment, which is a unit of competency towards an actual qualification.

While the program has not yet been fully completed and qualitative measurements to assess its success have not yet taken place, positive outcomes have already been observed. Participants' homework and interactions with their staff have demonstrated changes in their approaches to leadership, theoretically and in practice. In addition, participants have been suggesting new ideas to the executive, including ways to improve services for residents and rearranging staffing structures to improve the level of care ECH provides.

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#### **About the organisation:**

Operating 1,660 independent retirement units in 96 locations and 7 residential care centres across Adelaide and South Australia, ECH is one of the largest integrated, charitable providers of such elder care services in Australia. ECH has over 900 staff members plus many volunteers, all of whom are dedicated to providing quality, affordable accommodation and services to enrich the lives of older people, promoting independence and enhancing their lifestyle choices.

To find out more, visit their website: <http://www.ech.asn.au>

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## **AWARD 7: Outstanding EEO Practice for the Advancement of Women in a Non-Traditional Area/Role**

### **Winner: Cummins Engine Company Pty Ltd**

Cummins Energy Company's Operational Plan for 2006-08 includes a number of EEO targets such as increasing the female representation in non-traditional roles and across the organisation generally. There is also a specific focus on increasing women's inclusion in leadership opportunities and succession planning.

To achieve these targets, Cummins has implemented a range of initiatives, including the creation of the *Women's Leadership Network Group*. This group brings together a cross-section of women from across the organisation to share their experiences or concerns to assist the Diversity Council to understand and address the issues that are impacting on female staff.

Additionally, the Managing Director and HR Director conduct an annual salary review and benchmarking process of all female employees' salaries to ensure both industry and gender pay equity. Paid maternity leave entitlements have been increased to 15 weeks and partners are entitled to 2 weeks paid leave.

Emphasis has been placed on women's participation in skills development opportunities to ensure their representation at senior management levels will increase in the future. For example, efforts are being made to increase women's participation in the company's *Leadership Development Training* system, to assist in the development of their skills and career advancement.

The positive effects of the initiatives Cummins has implemented are evident. Female representation across the organisation has risen from 13% in 2005 to 16% in 2006, and at Executive level, from 11% to 23%. The participation of women in the training system has increased from 3% in 2005 to 14% in 2006 and female high potential staff has increased from 21% to 27%. 50% of promotions in the first quarter of 2006 were awarded to women.

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#### **About the organisation:**

Cummins is the largest designer and manufacturer of diesel engines in the world. The business has over 500 company-owned and independent facilities in 131 countries and territories, employing around 23,700 staff worldwide. In the South Pacific region, Cummins has 38 facilities whose activities include manufacturing, remanufacturing components, warehousing, distribution, engineering, sales and servicing.

To find out more, visit their website: <http://www.cummins.com>

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## **AWARD 8: Outstanding Initiative/Practice in Achieving Workplace Flexibility**

### **Winner: Acumen Alliance (ACT) Pty Ltd**

Chairman Robert Kennedy believes Acumen Alliance's success is due to not expanding at the expense of attracting and retaining talented staff and to rejecting the work/life dichotomy. The key feature of the program is that staff members have the total authority and flexibility to determine their working patterns (hours per day, days per week and weeks per year) and can vary them to suit the changing stages of their lives.

The program is available to everyone in the organisation from receptionist to CEO. Staff on Equilibrium are paid for the number of professional days worked and there is no limit to the number of days leave taken in a year. Staff productivity targets are automatically adjusted to reflect their current work pattern. Acumen was one of the first private companies in Australia to introduce 3 months paid maternity leave, unlimited unpaid maternity leave and paid paternity leave. Sabbatical is available after 5 years in lieu of long service.

Performance measures for all team leaders include not only financial performance but also, retention rates of staff, understanding of and modelling of Acumen cultural values, levels of paid professional development undertaken by team members, participation in induction and recall days where cultural values are reassessed.

In 10 years it has gone from a small organisation to one that employs over 300 professional and support staff with offices in Sydney, Canberra, Melbourne and Brisbane. Revenues have gone from 1.6M to \$60M in 10 years. The program was introduced in 2001 and has been a significant contributor to the increased proportion of women at all levels of the organisation.

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#### **About the organisation:**

Acumen Alliance provides consulting services ranging from IT, corporate governance, financial management, assurance, contracting and recruitment. One of Australia's largest professional services firms, Acumen Alliance prides itself on being 'The Alternative' to traditional consulting firms. The firm aims to ensure that their services are always perceived as representing excellent value for money within the marketplace, and provided by highly skilled and expert staff.

To find out more, visit their website: [www.acumen.com.au](http://www.acumen.com.au)

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## **AWARD 9: Most Promising Person or Organisation for the Advancement of Women**

### **Winner: Stuart Davis, HSBC Bank Australia Limited**

One of HSBC's main goals is to establish a culture of inclusiveness and to embed advancement of women into the workplace. Advancing women is perceived as a distinct business advantage and great opportunity for the organisation.

Under Stuart's leadership, HSBC introduced its Flexibility Policy, which provides a framework for staff to liaise with their managers and arrive at an agreed arrangement that benefits both the staff member and the business. Stuart also chairs the bank's Diversity Committee, whose key objective in 2006 has been to increase the number of women in Senior Management positions.

There are a number of managers in the organisation who are currently working part-time and/or flexibly, who are a great example of successful work/life balance for other staff members. Examples of employees who are accessing work/life balance arrangements are also available to all staff on the HSBC intranet, to stimulate thought about what arrangements might also work for them.

Stuart says that trying to ensure there is a natural progression in having more women in senior roles is significant and he especially highlights the importance of targeting talented women for development and mentoring.

The improvements have been noticeable. The bank recently appointed its first female board member. In 2005, 10 female senior managers were identified as high potential and were promoted and moved around the organisation to expand their experience. The number of staff working part-time has increased from 69 to 101 in the past year. Fifty percent of HSBC's graduates and younger staff are now women.

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#### **About the organisation:**

Part of one of the world's largest banking and financial services organisations, the HSBC Group in Australia offers a wide range of financial services via a network of 35 branches and offices. Services provided include personal and commercial financial services, trade finance, investment advice and securities custody, and these extend internationally across more than 9,500 offices in 76 countries and territories worldwide.

To find out more, visit their website: <http://www.hsbc.com.au>

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