

Joanna Karatzas, Acting Team Leader, Traralgon Advice Centre, VicSuper

Case study – women in non-traditional roles/structured career path

Since joining VicSuper six years ago as a young graduate, Joanna Karatzas has seen her hard work and commitment open up successive career opportunities.

Starting as a Superannuation Account Consultant assisting employers with superannuation queries, within two years Jo was promoted to a team leader position in VicSuper's Member Centre. Convinced that helping people with their retirement planning was the right career for her, Jo took advantage of VicSuper's career pathing strategy and pursued study to become a superannuation adviser.

After successfully completing the trainee superannuation adviser program, Joanna was promoted into a senior superannuation adviser role and then seconded to Acting Team Leader of VicSuper's Traralgon Advice Centre – all within 18 months of joining VicSuper's advice team. More recently Jo has been appointed as permanent Team Leader at VicSuper's new advice centre opening in Blackburn in early 2007.

"My career at VicSuper has been nothing but positive" says Joanna. "The company is very transparent about what you need to do to move up to the next step, and there are various ways you are supported if you decide you wish to pursue that step.

"Even when I decided to become a Superannuation Adviser – which is traditionally a male-dominated industry – gender was irrelevant. It was a case of, here are the requirements for the role, and here's how VicSuper can help you attain the necessary skills and experience.

"VicSuper makes it clear that candidates will be chosen on merit. That's the way it's always been, and for me it's been great, because I'm made to feel that nothing is beyond my reach.

"I've also been extremely fortunate that right throughout my career so far at VicSuper, I've been coached and mentored by my managers and colleagues. Particularly when transitioning into a superannuation adviser role, I had a specific mentor to assist me and I can't emphasise enough how supported and confident that made me feel. I realise that VicSuper is quite different and that not every employer offers these kinds of opportunities to their staff, but I hope more and more workplaces catch on. It makes a huge difference."

Joanna Karatzas is available for interview and further comment. Please contact Tarnia Puchlenko, Manager Communications at VicSuper on 03 9667 9701.