



## Media Release

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### Federal Government Agency announces winners of equal opportunity awards

The Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency (EOWA) has recognised a number of employers and individuals that are leading by example in creating workplaces that support working women.

Eight awards were handed out at today's luncheon honouring innovation and commitment to equity including to **Professor Ross Milbourne**, Vice Chancellor of **UTS**, for driving the University's Gender Equity Grants and Women in Engineering Programs to improve representation and career progression for women in non-traditional fields of study and employment.

The seven other winners and initiatives include:

- **Carnival Australia** for its 'Project PJs' pilot, a call-centre team, set up to work from home which resulted in greater flexibility and reduced travel time for employees, cost savings, increased employee performance, engagement and satisfaction and reduced absenteeism.
- **Cement Australia** for investigating and addressing pay equity by reviewing the classification and grading of roles, identifying "similar" roles filled by males and females to identify and address any inequities.
- **Mercy Heath** which includes gender diversity in the organisation's KPIs ensuring equity is embedded in the organisation's policies and practices. As a result 46% of Board positions are held by women, 51% of its employees access flexible work arrangements, and the establishment of the Mercy Bank Program has enabled staff on maternity and extended leave to access casual shifts when desired.
- **SP AusNet** for the establishment of a Diversity Initiative Group to ensure the organisation is attractive to a diverse range of employees. The group recently established a parent's and carer's room in the workplace.
- **Savings and Loans Credit Union (SA)** for its parental leave program designed to keep parents connected to the organisation and give staff on parental leave the opportunity to undertake short term and casual work opportunities.
- **Kim Schmidt** of **Woolworths** who has been instrumental in leading initiatives such as the Women in Management Working Group, developing and mentoring executive women and ensuring the availability and support of flexible work policies and paid parental leave benefits. As a result 34% of internal executive promotions and 45% of external appointments at Woolworths were women.
- **St Aidan's Anglican Girls' School** for the establishment of a formalised mentoring and shadowing program and its Aspiring Women Leaders' Conference designed to develop women's career paths and create a pool of female candidates who are well equipped to move into leadership roles.

The finalists and winners were honoured at a ceremony in Sydney today attended by the Minister for the Status of Women, the Hon. Tanya Plibersek, MP. The audience included CEOs from Australian businesses with Giam Swiegers, Deloitte CEO delivering the keynote address.

EOWA's 2009 Business Achievement Awards were sponsored by Australian Industry Group, Commonwealth Bank of Australia, Exxon Mobil Australia, Freehills, IBM Australia Ltd, the Australian Government Office for Women, and are supported by Suited for Work.

EOWA is a Federal Government statutory authority which administers the *Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act (1999)*. Employers of 100 people or more are required to report to the Agency on the initiatives they take within their organisations to advance women in the workplace. EOWA works with employers to improve equal opportunity outcomes for women in Australian workplaces.

ENDS

Full details of the winner's and finalist's initiatives can be accessed at the following secure media site:

[http://www.eowa.gov.au/Business\\_Achievement\\_Awards/2009\\_Awards/2009\\_BAA\\_Media\\_Kit.asp](http://www.eowa.gov.au/Business_Achievement_Awards/2009_Awards/2009_BAA_Media_Kit.asp)

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