



## EO Initiatives

At Deacons, we have a number of initiatives that have been developed to ensure Deacons is recognised as an Employer of Choice for Women.

Our **training and development** program includes all individuals but we work hard to ensure that people who work part-time (mostly women) and those who take advantage of flexible working arrangements have every opportunity to participate. Our courses are conducted during work hours as well as after hours, with a choice of dates to cater for the needs of people with family or other responsibilities.

At Deacons, we recruit staff based on genuine merit and suitability for the job. This approach to **talent management** allows us to identify future leaders and invest in their development to ensure we have a pool of candidates for leadership roles within the firm, our firm succession plan. The aim of this program is to provide clear and transparent career goals and development opportunities to all our Partners and staff. Potential candidates for the Talent Management program are assessed on gender-neutral, performance-related criteria.

**Mentoring**, both formal and informal, is in place at Deacons. New starters with the firm are introduced to the concepts of mentoring when they join. We encourage people to take control of their own career here at Deacons and the Mentors are simply providing guidelines/anecdotes based on experience and wisdom, being their 'wingman' – giving them the benefit of their experience and keeping an eye out for them. They focus on aspects of career/client management/personal development that Mentees can have specific coaching on (ie public speaking, writing skills, networking skills, confidence building, self esteem etc).

This is the process of mentoring in its simplest but most effective form.

There are many opportunities for women at Deacons to develop their **networking and business development** skills. In addition to client functions which promote networking and knowledge-sharing within our female client base, each office has a Women's Forum. Created by a desire to expand mentoring opportunities available to women, the Women @ Deacons Forum aspires to promote career development for Professional Women in our community. Our common goal is to promote a culture of leadership, innovation and diversity by providing women professionals with an environment conducive to sharing interests and information.

Our **secondment program** has achieved a significant result with fifty-seven per cent of staff selected to undertake an inter-office secondment being women, an increase of 50% on the previous reporting period. Sixty-one per cent of staff selected to undertake a client secondment were women, up from 39% in the last reporting period. We see that women not only seek more opportunity to move within the firm and client secondments, but they are very confident in making the transition, and using well-developed soft skills are able to build relationships quickly.

Deacons has a comprehensive EEO, an Eliminating Workplace Harassment policy and nominated Equal Opportunity **contact officers**.

The policy is very clear and the consequences of any such behaviour are clearly defined. It is available to all partners and staff via the Intranet and all new partners and staff are required to both read and acknowledge in writing that they have understood the policy.

Our workplace relations lawyers in conjunction with our Human Resources staff conduct refresher training courses regularly, and attendance is mandatory.

Our separate **Email and Intranet policy** has a section dedicated to upholding our Equal Opportunity, Anti-discrimination, Eliminating Workplace Harassment (EOADEWH) Policy.

The **Deacons Women's Career Committee** – was formed to open the minds of all Partners in the area of equal opportunity for women, this ensures a mix of men and women being considered for all roles.

Some notable outcomes of our initiatives:

- We have two women on our Board and seven men.
- Three women and five men on our Executive Committee
- 73 women and 215 men in executive and management positions
- Two women and 1 man have been promoted and recruited into senior management positions.