

VicSuper

VicSuper is a not-for-profit organisation that is the trustee and administrator of one of Australia's largest public offer superannuation funds – VicSuper Fund. Encouraging all staff to apply for promotions, considering job re-design and providing on-going training has helped this organisation increase the number of female recruits and move women into non-traditional roles.

Initiatives

- All external recruitment companies are required to follow VicSuper's equal opportunity policies.
- On-going training in non-discriminatory recruitment is provided to all senior managers and team leaders, as well as one-on-one coaching on EO legislation requirements and behavioural interviewing techniques.
- The organisation offers structured career pathing and specialised mentoring and coaching through individual learning and development and career management plans.
- Female staff in particular have been chosen to represent the organisation at careers fairs, in the hope of attracting more women into non-traditional roles.
- Senior women and women in non-traditional roles at VicSuper are profiled in the media.
- Existing staff are given opportunities to undertake higher duties to gain valuable experience and exposure.
- Staff are able to access both paid adoption leave and paid parental leave of 14 weeks and unpaid leave of up to 38 weeks. Staff may also request additional unpaid parental leave of up to a further 52 weeks where they are the primary caregiver.
- Through the organisation's 'Keep in touch' program, staff on parental leave can request notification of any internal vacancies or promotions that arise.
- The organisation has developed formal succession plans and a career pathing policy for senior and executive managers.
- A mentoring program has been implemented
- Female staff are encouraged to attend 'Women in Super' industry forums.
- A \$300 subsidy is provided to staff for financial planning advice.

Outcomes

- Five female and five male trainees (superannuation advisers and graduates) were working towards attaining principal specialist, traditionally male-dominated roles.
- Two female graduates were internally promoted into principal specialist roles.
- Two out of four externally appointed graduates within the principal specialist areas were women.
- Seven females were externally recruited into principal specialist roles.
- 48% of all external appointments were women.
- Female staff accounted for 66.7% of all internal promotions.
- Female representation at senior management level is 42%.
- Female representation at board level is 50%.

- 75% of participants in management training were women.
- High retention, low absenteeism and a high rate of return from maternity leave have resulted.
- There have been no reports of sex-based harassment since the organisation started.

Case Studies

Case study 1 – flexibility in the workplace/senior women

Jenny Hunter, Executive Manager Sustainability and Education, VicSuper

Combining a family with a career is demanding in any circumstance, but even more so when you hold a position at a senior level of management. Jenny Hunter is one of VicSuper's five executive managers; a group responsible for setting the strategic direction of the company.

"Since starting at VicSuper almost 8 years ago, I've had three children, now aged 2, 4 and 5, and VicSuper has always worked with me to ensure I have enough flexibility and support to manage my position and parenthood" says Jenny.

"With my second and third children, I chose to take the entire year off so I could be with my family full-time. Each time I've returned from maternity leave I've been able to ease back into work by starting two days a week, which makes the transition much smoother.

"Currently I'm working three days each week, which makes for a busy schedule, but one which provides me with a fantastic opportunity to still contribute to my workplace and spend time with my young family. I also think it's gratifying to see that it's not only our female employees who are benefiting from this flexible approach to work and family commitments – we are definitely seeing an increase in males exploring different options.

"My experience at VicSuper is an example of an employer being prepared to make it easier for staff to balance work with family, irrespective of your position and level of responsibility. This type of support definitely helps to set VicSuper apart from many other employers."

Case study 2 – women in non-traditional roles/structured career path

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

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 to Senior Superannuation Adviser 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."

Each VicSuper staff member profiled above is available for interview and further comment. Please contact Tarnia Puchlenko, Manager Communications at VicSuper on 03 9667 9701.

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