



**media release**

**10 November 2010**

## **2010 EOWA BUSINESS ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS**

### **Awards continue to set new benchmarks**

In her address EOWA Acting Director, Mairi Steele, said "The organisations profiled today at the 10<sup>th</sup> EOWA Business Achievement Awards represent the way forward for EO in Australian businesses. Ultimately, they are the organisations that are going to be able to secure the best and brightest staff."

The winners and finalists were honoured at a ceremony in Melbourne attended by the Minister for the Status of Women, the Hon. Kate Ellis, MP and keynote speaker, Glen Boreham, Managing Director, IBM Australia New Zealand.

The winners of the EOWA Business Achievement Awards are:

#### **1. Leading CEO for the Advancement of Women**

- ***Paul Hitchcock, Corporate Express Australia Limited***

When Paul Hitchcock became CEO of Corporate Express he recognised that something needed to be done to turn around the blokey culture and "it needed to start with me". With 50% of the workforce being female, no women in senior leadership and few women in management roles, he has turned what was perceived as a "women's issue" into a business issue by calling for targets and keeping a monthly scorecard on gender diversity. He also decided to "own" gender diversity because he didn't want to run the risk of it becoming 'no more than a policy' and rallied the male leaders within Corporate Express to support it. In 2009 he changed the structure of the leadership group to ensure it included all leaders, not just those with a profit and loss role and increased the number of women in leadership from 9% to 35%.

#### **2. Diversity Leader for the Advancement of Women**

- ***Kate McCormack, Mercy Health***

Kate McCormack has been the architect of a number of programs and initiatives that have addressed equal opportunity and delivered competitive advantage for health care provider Mercy Health. She increased the number of women on the board from 20% to 46% and became an influential member of forums that improve and advance women's participation. She has worked to ensure that equal opportunity is a standing agenda item as well as personally championing initiatives such as the *Parent's Network Program*, the *School Holiday Program*, a *Childcare Referral Program* and *Mercy Bank*, a program to assist employees on leave take up casual work and a talent identification program. These programs have resulted in decreased staff turnover, a return from parental leave rate of 97% and a reduction in sick leave during school holiday periods.

#### **3. Leading Organisation for the Advancement of Women (<800 Employees)**

- ***St Aidan's Anglican Girls' School***

St Aidan's, a Prep to Year 12 Anglican girls school located in Brisbane, is committed to achieving the best for female staff and providing positive role models for the students. Between 20-25% of staff work part time or flexible hours which is uncommon in a school environment. Free childcare is provided when staff attend a weekend Open Day and they can access After School Care and Vacation Care at reduced costs. The CEO established a leadership and development program and in response to concerns about the decline in the number of female leaders in schools, instigated the Aspiring Women Leadership Conference which has been run successfully since 2006. 50% of attendees have been promoted to higher positions within their schools and three female staff members have been promoted to the position of Principal in other schools in the last six years.

#### **4. Leading Organisation for the Advancement of Women (>800 Employees)**

- ***Griffith University***

Griffith University has been an EOWA Employer of Choice for Women since the inception of the citation, only one of fourteen organisations nationwide to achieve this. Since 2004, the university has funded an annual Woman in Leadership program and establishes KPIs to increase the percentage of women in senior roles which is already at 45%, well above the sector average. It has set a goal to become the national leader in this area and achieve 33.3% of women in senior academic roles by 2013. To assist people caring for dependants, it provides reversible part-time appointments for up to five years with the guaranteed option of returning to full time. Recruitment procedures also require shortlists for senior roles to include at least one woman, resulting in more attention on attracting suitable candidates, especially into roles where it has been difficult to attract women applicants. In 2009, three out of four vacancies at the Senior Executive level were filled by women and women were appointed to 31% of Associate Professor and Professor vacancies.

#### **5. Outstanding EEO Practice for the Advancement of Women in a Non-Traditional Area/Role**

##### **▪ *Synnex Australia Pty Ltd***

Synnex, an IT distribution company, tackled the gender pay gap by increasing the number of women at each level of the organisation in its male dominated workforce. They reviewed and altered job descriptions and diversified roles to attract female candidates as well as offering flexible working arrangements and work from home options. A new internal grading system was introduced to overcome the issue that female staff didn't have specific industry experience and found it hard to be promoted as quickly as other employees. All senior managers were requested to nominate high achieving female staff members to take on the role of 2IC or team leaders and the women identified were offered external training and a mentor. Over two years the company has increased the number of female staff from 95 to 116 and achieved a greater representation of female staff in management.

#### **6. The Minister's Award for Outstanding EEO Initiative/Result for the Advancement of Women**

##### **▪ *Shine Lawyers***

Brisbane based Shine Lawyers, unveiled a new Parental Support Scheme that has set a benchmark. The scheme provides up to an additional 20% of an employee's base salary in childcare costs (until their children reach school age); 18 weeks of paid maternity leave and links to childcare centres throughout the country to ease the burden of finding a place for employees' children. In the first seven months the Parental Support Scheme has been operational, 100% of women eligible for maternity leave returned to the firm and utilised its flexible working arrangements.

##### **▪ *MIGATE – Highly Commended***

Mount Isa Group Apprenticeship, Traineeship and Employment Inc (MIGATE) is a not-for-profit community-based Group Training Organisation located in Mount Isa, North West Queensland. The MIGATE Yallambee Project aims to employ and train indigenous community women at the Yallambee Aboriginal Reserve in a nationally recognised Certificate III in Childcare to enable them to self-manage, educate, and train other community members in all aspects of childcare, health, and hygiene. The project is helping to break the cycle of dependence on non-community members and assist with closing the gap in education, employment, and mortality rates between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous people. In the past year specifically, 28 women have benefitted from MIGATE.

The finalists were selected by an independent judging panel comprising Australian Industry Group's Mark Goodsell, Sydney University's Professor Marian Baird and the Australian Office for Women's Sally Moyle.

EOWA's 2010 Business Achievement Awards were sponsored by Australian Industry Group, Commonwealth Bank of Australia, ExxonMobil Australia, Freehills, IBM Australia Limited, and McDonalds Australia.

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Full details of the winner's and finalist's initiatives can be accessed at:

[http://www.eowa.gov.au/Business\\_Achievement\\_Awards/2010\\_Awards/2010\\_Awards.asp](http://www.eowa.gov.au/Business_Achievement_Awards/2010_Awards/2010_Awards.asp)

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