

## Diversity

# Getting off the treadmill and on the program

## Westpac women achieving their potential

"Tightly wedged on to a treadmill crammed with work, childrearing and intellectual dreams; frazzled from keeping all the bits together, but never doing so to my satisfaction, challenged to really think how I could get more satisfaction in my life and stop feeling guilty. Finally I got the courage to stop the treadmill. Result? Work offered me the perfect role and I embraced it," said Susan Clark, Senior Manager Sustainable Supply Chain Management (see photo bottom right).

Susan is one of Westpac's female employees who have benefited from a new program that helps participants recognise and overcome the specific internal and external impediments, which prevent them from reaching their potential.

The program, Westpac Women Achieving Their Potential, was custom-made after Westpac identified a growing bottleneck of women in middle management. It aims to help them break →

**"Diversity is not only about compliance and social responsibility. Yes, it's the right thing to do, but embracing everyone's unique perspectives and differences is the strategic thing to do for Westpac."**

**David Morgan, Chief Executive Officer**





through into the senior ranks. Indeed, the proportion of women in management at Westpac has risen from 14% to 45% between 1994 and December 2006.

Participants learn to develop a strategic career plan; increase their personal skills and capacity to achieve their career goals; and build a supportive network of women peers across the organisation. Held over nine weeks the program is not for the faint hearted. But challenge brings change, with participants reporting that, at work and home, they live life with a new confidence and sense of purpose. Internal research shows that of those who participated in the program:

- 23% had been promoted by February 2006
- 19% have moved to new roles at the same level to increase their skills and broaden their management experience
- Their employee satisfaction scores averaged 92 out of 100, well above the organisational average
- The resignation rate for program participants is at 4.8% which is well below the corresponding rate for women (13.2%) and the overall Westpac Group (13.8%).

“Tightly wedged on to a treadmill crammed with work, childrearing and intellectual dreams; frazzled from keeping all the bits together, but never doing so to my satisfaction...”



**Susan Clarke, Senior Manager Sustainable Supply Chain Management, Westpac.**

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## Diversity. Why is it important?

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**Diversity is about embracing differences in views, experiences and backgrounds. It's about having environments and practices that are inclusive and support people regardless of race, religion, ability or gender. It's important because our customers are diverse; the communities in which we all live and work are diverse; and we have a diverse employee base that reflects this. It's important because it's the best way to meet the needs of our diverse stakeholders.**

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## Making a difference

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**For the third year, Westpac has been rated No.1 in the financial sector and among the top 25 organisations in Australia in the 2006 Annual Benchmarking Survey Work/Life Initiatives – The Way Ahead 2006.**

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## Westpac Involvement:

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- 261 talking ATMs installed and operational as of 31 March 2007
  - Accessibility Action Plan
  - The only bank in Australia with a Women's Markets division, since 2002
  - Migrant and Multicultural Banking uses the languages and cultural backgrounds of our employees to service customers
  - Over 1,300 mature age workers (over the age of 45) were recruited between October 2002 and May 2006.
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**“I feel valued, not to meet some quota, but because I have a set of skills that the company values. Westpac doesn't give a rats if you've got three heads, as long as you can do the job.”**

**Neville Brown, Senior Systems Analyst,  
BT Financial Group**



## Access All Areas



**By Graeme Innes, Disability Discrimination Commissioner at the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission.**

As a global leader in responsible business practices, Westpac is committed to seeking an environment in which customers with disability have appropriate access to products and services, and employees are chosen on the basis of the best person for the job whether that person has a disability or not.

A particularly encouraging aspect of Westpac's plan (2006 Accessibility Action Plan) is the move away from a focus on 'disability' compliance, towards a culture where access becomes just one of the issues routinely considered in all business areas.

Moving any organisation from a culture of thinking about access as a special afterthought to one where accessibility is 'the way we do things around here' involves strong advocacy and I offer my congratulations to Westpac for championing that change.

## In Brief: Workplace flexibility

**Westpac offers a comprehensive range of flexible work practices to assist employees balance family and personal commitments with their career.**

- **12 weeks paid parental leave**
- **Breastfeeding in the workplace**
- **Flexible working options: part-time roles, job-sharing and telecommuting**
- **High quality and affordable childcare**
- **Flexible use of sick leave**
- **Paid leave day for community volunteering**
- **Carer's leave**
- **Purchased leave**
- **Other leave options: 'Career break' and time out for up to 12 months**