



Large organisation winner Deloitte celebrate their success at this year's EEO Trust Work and Life Awards



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# EEO Trust Work & Life Awards

## Winners – innovative, focussed, values-driven

Speaking at the presentation of the EEO Trust Work & Life Awards on September 2, EEO Trust Chief Executive Dr Philippa Reed, said this year's entries show that the workplaces are continuing to build on previous standards of excellence and innovation.

"After seven years of evaluating the work-life practices of New Zealand workplaces, we have yet to draw a blank on innovation and stretch," Dr Reed says. "The judges commented on the high level of commitment people bring to creating versatile workplaces. This benefits the organisation, its people, and ultimately our communities."

Winner of the Large Organisation category in this year's awards was Deloitte, which was also an entrant last year. In the 12 months between submitting its entries, Deloitte revisited its whole approach to encouraging work-life balance.

"Based on feedback from their people during the preparation of their 2003 entry, Deloitte made healthy relationships an organisational goal with work-life balance policies just one way to achieve that goal. By creating

a bigger picture in which to explore work-life balance, Deloitte revitalised its approach to leadership and people management.

"Our discussions with Deloitte people confirmed that this is not just a management idea, it permeates the organisation. We talked to people throughout the country and at different levels of the organisation who gave us numerous examples of how Deloitte had helped them improve work/life balance in their own lives, whether they be around small or teenage children, sporting or other interests, or further education," says Dr Reed.

Deloitte's human resources management over the last few years has resulted in significant improvements in its retention and promotion of women. For example, the numbers of women returning to work for Deloitte after parental leave have trended steadily upwards from zero in 2000 to 86% in 2003. From 1998 to 2002 the ratio of women to men in positions at manager level and above increased by 18%. From 2002 to 2003 this ratio increased by a further 14%.

The other entrant in the Large Organisation category, Auckland Regional Council (ARC), also demonstrated the effectiveness of thoroughly integrating work-life principles within the organisation and regularly revisiting work-life initiatives to ensure they meet people's needs.

ARC annually assesses staff wellbeing, satisfaction and motivation and develops an organisational development strategy into which its work-life initiatives are integrated.

As ARC says, "Ensuring that we offer a fantastic and supportive working environment and that we are able to attract and retain staff is a critical component of our organisational development strategy."

Work and life is part of ARC's leadership model which defines the qualities of leadership that underpin its culture and the resulting expectations, behaviour and performance. The leadership model emphasises the importance of exemplifying ARC's values and enabling others to achieve results.

# Small, smart and very successful

Winner of the Small to Medium Organisation category was KC Temps, an Auckland company which recruits temporary staff. As an advocate of the use of temporary staff, KC Temps has developed a strong philosophy around the benefits flexibility brings to a workplace. KC Temps founders and directors Alexis Siermans and Kerry Kirwan run a successful business in a very competitive climate while maintaining space and creativity in their personal lives. “They are walking proof that effective and hard working directors can have time in their lives for interests outside work if they really want it.”

KC Temps employs seven staff and an ever-changing number of temporary staff. One of the challenges faced by the business is assisting temporary team members to maintain their health, safety and well-being while they are working on clients' premises. KC Temps has developed a health and safety training video which targets specific issues for temps, including OOS, safety protocols and stress related issues.

Permanent staff are entitled to an annual health and well-being allowance which can be used for a wide range of medical care including medical insurance, natural health therapies, therapeutic massage and fitness options.

KC Temps enables people to work flexible hours so they can manage

their other commitments and interests whether it be building a house, exercising a horse or caring for children.

Another entrant in this category was Strategy Recruitment Consultancy. The company's founders, Barry Brown and Hamish Law emphasise the importance of strong leadership in building an organisation which puts value on people's wellbeing from the base up.

“We had a vision for Strategy which involved creating an environment where although people have their own targets to achieve, they're encouraged to work as a team and share knowledge and information. “We also wanted to ensure the support staff know they were equally part of the business.” “Meeting Barry and some of his team convinced the judges

that Strategy has achieved those goals,” says Dr Reed.

Emerge Supported Employment also works hard to ensure its values are aligned internally and externally. Emerge provides supported employment and transition services for people with disabilities in Wellington. As a not-for-profit, its ability to pay high salaries is limited so it endeavours to reward and retain staff through providing training opportunities and offering generous leave and other work-life provisions.



# First big steps towards a values-based organisation

Winner of the First Steps category Oxygen Business Solutions is a young and very successful business which last year started to develop a set of values to guide and inspire the organisation and its people.

As the Oxygen entry says, “To grow further we needed to develop a culture that was adventurous and courageous. A place where people were empowered and heading in the same direction – basically Oxygen needed to become unstoppable.”

Dr Reed says Oxygen’s story reads like a blueprint for tapping into individuals’ values to create a business that breathes energy, enthusiasm and direction. “Oxygen is working in the incredibly pressured IT industry and needs to enable its people to make quick decisions, respond creatively under stress, and do excellent work, all in a sustainable way,” she says.

Another entrant in the First Steps category was Warehouse Stationery which was developed on principles and values initiated by The Warehouse founder Stephen Tindall. Warehouse Stationery endeavours to create a unique and vibrant culture which prioritises people having fun and extending themselves at work. It has recently introduced a staff survey to measure people’s engagement

“Oxygen has done this by creating a truly values based organisation which encourages people to be well, balanced, happy and healthy and have the energy to do great things for themselves and for Oxygen.”

with the business and is committed to acting on the results of the survey. Last year’s survey showed that 70% of people felt they had fun with other team members in their jobs and were satisfied with the non-monetary benefits they received from the company.

Warehouse Stationery’s turnover rate is currently 24.3% compared with an Australasian average of 33% for the retail sector.

Runner-up in the First Steps category was Buller District Council which endeavours to create a supportive and caring environment for staff. Buller District Council has a strong sense of family at work.

“Many of the council’s work-life initiatives were developed to attract staff to Buller and to help retain existing staff. There is a strong atmosphere of caring and of fun. The council is committed to people’s health and wellbeing and many of its initiatives encourage people to stay well,” says Dr Reed.

Chief Executive Gary Murphy also entered the Walk the Talk category. Staff commented that his emphasis on family permeates the workplace, creating a harmonious and hard working team.

Another First Steps’ entrant, IGT New Zealand, in Lower Hutt, demonstrated the value of small measures which give people more control over their working hours. IGT gives people the opportunity of working a few minutes extra each day and accumulating the time so they can have a day off a month.

General Manager Barry Crossley says absenteeism has dropped 15% since the initiative was introduced.

Barry Crossley has worked for IGT since 1997 and says he had a “revelation” regarding his own priorities in January this year. He now tries to spend more time with his family during the week and says he’s only worked one Saturday this year.

# Child's play for Taupo accountants

Winner of the Manāki Tangata Innovation Award was DPA & Associates, an accounting firm from Taupo which was also the central North Island winner of the HR Initiative of the Year in this year's HRINZ Awards.

The innovative initiative involved hiring a nanny to provide childcare for staff. The firm provides administrative and financial support for the nanny who looks after the children in workers' homes and also comes into the office to do filing and other work and attends some team meetings and other events.

Dr Reed says that on their visit to DPA & Associates judges were impressed by the firm's responsive attitude to its people's needs. "The 'nanny initiative' is just an expression of this willingness to listen to what people want and then think creatively about

how to help. It's a natural expression of DPA's commitment to its people."

The other entrant in this category was Parents Centres New Zealand which is making the most of new technology to create a supportive workplace for its small team of office staff in the Lower Hutt and its much wider network of paid workers and volunteers around the country.

Parents Centres' Chief Executive Officer is Viv Gurrey who was formerly Chief Executive Officer of SAP New

Zealand and has been a major player in the information technology industry for more than 20 years. Her knowledge of IT enabled her to envisage a working environment which provided excellent communication networks, easy access to information, support and flexibility.

Parents Centres' use of IT plays a significant role in its ability to be a progressive employer of choice by encouraging flexible work-life balance arrangements and providing a conduit for information flow through the organisation.

"DPA assists staff in many ways including supporting people in their study regardless of whether it's work-related, enabling people to work flexible hours and creating a harmonious and family-friendly work environment."

# Stretching the IT square

Winner of the Walk the Talk category was Nisha Nati who is a senior manager with EDS New Zealand and manages nearly 300 people in the applications maintenance, support and development field. Nisha has four children.

Dr Reed says, Nisha brings a no-nonsense approach to the challenging job of managing people and maintaining balance for herself in the male dominated world of IT.

"She is a great example of a woman who's been very successful in the IT industry without compromising her commitment to herself or her family." She's also a strong advocate of balance in the workplace, filling her office with her children's pictures and insisting

people go home if she feels they're spending too much time at work.

"Her 'can-do' approach means she's open to creative solutions to people's work-life dilemmas. For example, the day we visited Nisha some of her staff had asked her if they could shift to one of the other EDS offices to minimise travelling time. Her answer was an unequivocal 'no, we need to keep the team together' but she encouraged them to think about ways they could adjust their schedules to help them avoid peak travelling times," says Dr Reed.

For more information on the EEO Trust Work & Life Awards 2004 go to <http://www.eeotrust.org.nz>.



Nisha Nati, winner of the Walk the Talk category



Leon Sullivan receives his Special Diversity Award from Prime Minister Helen Clark

# Special diversity award for Wellington manager

“Leon has gone out of his way to recruit people from diverse backgrounds, recognising that their unique combination of experience and skills will create a very special and productive work environment.”

EEO Trust Work & Life Awards judges created a special diversity award for another Walk the Talk entrant, Leon Sullivan of Land Information New Zealand.

While Leon’s entry demonstrated his commitment to work-life balance, the judges were particularly impressed

by his ability to ensure that everyone in his very diverse team contributed effectively to their organisational goals.

Leon is currently learning sign language to enable him to communicate better with a deaf team member – and has recently embarked on learning Braille to support another team member.

For more information on Leon and other employers and managers who make good use of a diverse workforce go to <http://www.eeotrust.org.nz/peoplepower> or order a book of case studies and background information by emailing your postal address to [info@dol.govt.nz](mailto:info@dol.govt.nz) with “PeoplePower” in the subject line.

# World Wide

## Balancing family responsibilities and workplace rosters in Australia

The latest WORK+LIFE Strategies' Diversity & Flexibility email newsletter reports on a case where the Australian Industrial Relations Commission (AIRC) determined that employers must take into account the needs of an employee with family responsibilities, as well the needs of the business when setting workplace rosters.

The case involved a call centre operator who is a single mother with three children. When she was first employed she was given set working hours which enabled her to combine her work and family responsibilities. The newspaper advertisement for the role said that "... positions could be tailored to suit working parents as well" and the

recruitment agency assured the applicant that the employer would accommodate her particular circumstances.

In early 2004 her team was restructured and 19 of the existing staff applied for the 16 new positions working irregular hours. The woman was not successful in obtaining one of the positions.

The woman said she had been guaranteed set hours when she started working for the call centre and argued that the employer's unilateral change of her hours from set hours, which enabled her to combine work and family responsibilities, to irregular hours, breached the terms on which she had accepted the position. She also argued that the employer had (unlawfully)

failed to take into account her family responsibilities when changing the roster.

The AIRC held that the employer had not considered the needs of the employees in the selection process for the 16 positions and ordered the employer to re-conduct the selection process for the 16 positions.

For more information on the case and its implications contact Julie Bourke at [juliet.bourke@workpluslifestrategies.com](mailto:juliet.bourke@workpluslifestrategies.com)

The decision can be found at [http://www.airc.gov.au/documents/other/other\\_decisions.html](http://www.airc.gov.au/documents/other/other_decisions.html)

## UK dads reluctant to take paternity leave

Only one-in-five working fathers in the UK have taken up the right to paid paternity leave which was one of the Labour Government's key family-friendly policies when, in April 2003, new fathers in the UK won the right to two weeks of paid leave for the first time.

The Department of Trade and Industry had estimated earlier that 80% of the 400,000 workers who became fathers every year would take paternity leave

– a total of more than 300,000 men. But figures for the first year suggest that only about 79,000 have done so.

Malcolm Bruce, the Liberal Democrats' trade and industry spokesperson – whose parliamentary question unearthed the figures – warned that the right to paid paternity leave could "remain an empty victory for fathers".

TUC general secretary Brendan Barber commented: "The UK's long hours culture

and the pressure to put in the hours at work no doubt prevent many men from taking the leave they would like to take when their children are born." Both Mr Barber and Mr Bruce suggested that the low rate of paternity pay – a maximum of £102 a week – was hampering take-up.

More information at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/3926165.stm>

## Encouraging small businesses to adopt flexible working

UK organisation Working Families has created a website to encourage SMEs to offer flexible working options. The website demonstrates how helping staff balance their work and home lives reaps all sorts of benefits for small businesses. It includes guidance on flexible working, maternity, paternity, family and emergency leave and other work-life balance issues.

Go to [http://www.workingfamilies.org.uk/asp/employer\\_zone/e\\_welcome.asp](http://www.workingfamilies.org.uk/asp/employer_zone/e_welcome.asp)

## Families at work – Expanding the Bounds

This collection of reprinted and original articles from the US endeavours, according to the editors, “to make sense of the new relationship between work and family occasioned by, above all else, the rise in women’s employment”.

The book is arranged in four sections which examine gender and how it is being reconstructed as a result of new working patterns, childcare, the place of families and work in communities, and the broader context of politics and policies.

Several of the articles explore work-family issues for men, including one called “Halving it all: The Mother and Mr Mom” on couples who work alternate shifts so one parent is always available to care for the children. Another explores the notion of fatherhood in Silicon Valley which the author describes as a “male-dominated, turbo-capitalism environment”.

Editors: Naomi Gerstel,  
Dan Clawson, Robert Zussman  
2002 Vanderbilt University Press  
ISBN 0-826-1398-0

## Work/Life Initiatives - The way ahead report on the year 2004 survey

This report from Managing Work/Life Balance International reports on its annual research on work-life balance in Australia. More than 300 Australian organisations provided information quantifying their achievements and identifying future priorities in what the authors believe is the only longitudinal study of its kind in the Asia Pacific region.

The data shows that work-life strategies contributed to the bottom line through:

- Reduced turnover by an average of 4.5%
- Reduced absenteeism by an average of 3.5%
- Increased return rate from parental leave by an average of 24%
- Increased employee satisfaction by an average of 11%.

Plans for the future include improving internal communication about work-life issues, introducing and managing flexible work options and on-going efforts to include work-life issues within the organisations’ appraisal processes.

For more information on this comprehensive report which comes in CD ROM format email [mail@worklifebalance.com.au](mailto:mail@worklifebalance.com.au)

## Work/Life Balance Strategies: Progress and problems in Australian Organisations

This recent addition to the EEO Trust library reports on the findings of three surveys of Australian workplaces conducted from 1997 to 2000. It explores the range and use of work-life balance strategies and identifies barriers to their success. The authors argue that workplaces’ need to attract and retain valued employees in a highly competitive

labour market is a strong motivating factor for increased implementation of work-life balance initiatives.

Authors: Helen De Cieri, Barbara Holmes, Jacqui Abbott & Trisha Petit  
Working Paper 58/02  
Department of Management,  
Monash University ISSN 1327-5216

## Upcoming events Senior Women Executives and the Culture of Management Conference

This Sydney conference provides the opportunity to hear women working in senior executive positions and experts on gender debate the impact of having women in senior positions and on boards.

It will draw on findings of a major research project investigating the impact of women in senior management in 19 Australian organisations.

Other topics covered include:

- The experience of women managers
- Characteristics of cultures that sustain and support women
- How cultures change when women are in senior positions
- Challenges still to be faced.

The conference is being held on 29-30 November. More information at [http://www.uts.edu.au/oth/wexdev/pdfs/snr\\_wmn\\_conf\\_brochure.pdf](http://www.uts.edu.au/oth/wexdev/pdfs/snr_wmn_conf_brochure.pdf)