

Positive Inclusion Award Winners: ASB Bank Limited



Video Link <https://vimeo.com/178545410/27af82263f>

A highly engaged workforce is one of ASB Bank's greatest assets but they're always looking for opportunities to create an even more inclusive culture.

ASB was aware that while gender was a well-established diversity focus area within the bank, there was no specific focus on LGBTIQ (Lesbian, Gay Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Questioning/Queer) issues.

So in 2014 "Unity" was shaped by a group of passionate LGBTIQ staff, their allies, and specialists from human resources. The vision was: "To promote an inclusive culture that empowers ASB people to bring their whole selves to work. To extend our reach to support LGBTIQ customers and community, including the allies and families of people connected with ASB."

ASB employs almost 5,000 people throughout New Zealand, from Invercargill to Kaitia, providing banking and financial services to more than 1.4 million customers.

The group has evolved and expanded its reach over the past two years to include many more allies representing all business units at ASB.

The first goal the working group worked towards was becoming the first New Zealand bank to receive the Rainbow Tick accreditation. This required ASB to show evidence of their plans

to meet 30 assessment criteria that demonstrate the bank is a welcoming and inclusive workplace for anyone in the LGBTIQ community. ASB achieved Rainbow Tick accreditation in September, 2014.

The work Unity has done to achieve the Rainbow Tick has led to a number of benefits for the workplace. All of the organisation's policies have been verified or updated to specifically address diversity and inclusion. To show support for days of significance such as IDAHOT (International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia) and Wear It Purple day, (which celebrates rainbow young people). The bank has also run competitions for best dressed and best team events, breaking down issues of geography and distance.

As part of the Rainbow Tick reaccreditation audit for 2015/16, a number of focus groups were run and feedback from staff members show the positive impact that Unity has already had on the organisation:

"I wouldn't have talked about my partner as "he" when I applied to work here but I think I would now, I can see it's ok."

"Now I feel quite comfortable talking about myself and calling my partner my girlfriend and that sort of thing whereas before I would have used neutral pronouns, just in case."

Backing up the personal comments, the results of the most recent People & Culture survey indicate that the work ASB has done to create an inclusive workplace is having an impact, shown by the consistency between the engagement scores of LGBTIQ and non-LGBTIQ staff.

Unity has also worked with ASB's partners RainbowYOUTH and Rainbow Tick to provide education and training to ASB's customer facing and support staff by building a training module to be sensitive and inclusive to the unique needs of the LGBTIQ community.

The organisation's confidential email inbox is showing signs of awareness and value, evidenced through recent enquiries from frontline staff seeking guidance how to best serve customers that have or are in the process of transitioning gender. In the past three months the bank has also welcomed seven new members to the working group, making a total of 26 members.

ASB's support of RainbowYOUTH has so far included donating True Rewards charitable donations, supporting their presence at Auckland Pride festival and parade, assisting with their office relocation, donating to their 25th anniversary celebration and funding two \$2,500 youth scholarships.

Unity has also led the bank's presence at Auckland's Big Gay Out in 2015 and 2016, production of 'limited edition' ASB rainbow EFTPOS cards, and sponsoring the New Zealand Falcons rugby team.