

Positive Inclusion Award Entrant: Westpac New Zealand



Video Link <https://vimeo.com/178545459/244f1ccb81>

Some alarming survey results several years ago became the basis of conversations as well as an anchor point for Westpac New Zealand's Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.

In 2014, the bank learned that "a staggering" 50 per cent of employees in New Zealand, whether gay or straight, didn't feel they could be their authentic selves at work. And a third said they were not comfortable working with members of the rainbow community.

The information was shared publically and widely across Westpac's communications channels and workshops were held with other corporates and community partners to share the results and collaborate on how to move forward.

Westpac employs 5,000 people, across 198 branches, serving 1.3 million customers across New Zealand.

Westpac was committed to making a change, demonstrated by the strong support of CEO David McLean who has been instrumental in achieving wide-reaching awareness of the six streams of the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. (Gender, Accessibility, LGBTI, Cultural Diversity and Flexibility).

The drive to support the LGBTI community was a major component of the strategy and led to the establishment of GLOBAL which stands for, Gay, Lesbian, Other (including transgender and intersex) Bisexual and Allys (people who are supportive of the LGBTI community).

GLOBAL's mission is to support Westpac New Zealand's goal of creating a safe and respectful work environment for all LGBTI employees and customers; one that values all diversity, creating a culture of equality and inclusion.

GLOBAL is made up of more than 80 employees/members, from all levels, business units, and geographies across New Zealand who implement key initiatives and events into the business. There are 17 GLOBAL Committee members who are volunteers, and are mentored and sponsored by senior leaders and an Executive.

GLOBAL's work to date included five focuses: 1. Rainbow Tick accreditation 2. Community Events 3. The hero campaign "You being you" and "It Gets Better" video 4. Role Modelling Inclusion 5. Rainbow Roundtables

Rainbow Tick accreditation was achieved in 2014 (Rainbow Ticks are awarded to organisations that complete a Diversity and Inclusion certification process to test whether a workplace understands, values, and welcomes sexual and gender diversity.) Westpac was the first organisation to gain accreditation in the first round.

The second focus is around Community Events in particular Auckland's Pride Parade. Westpac provides on-going support of Auckland Pride Festival month in February which includes David McLean leading the involvement of nearly 200 employees, families and friends at the Pride Parade. Having a visible presence and support in local branches for the Christchurch and Wellington Pride Events and in Queenstown during Gay Ski Week has also been important for regional New Zealand who don't often see a large bank supporting the rainbow community.

Westpac's third big focus, was to create a campaign called "You being you" that sat as the foundational thread for conversations within Westpac and New Zealand. To launch the campaign they produced a video called "It Gets Better", which was supported by a social media campaign. The video featured eight of the bank's own team members from the rainbow community. They each told their own personal story of how they have got to where they are today and revealed their journey on how it really does get better. The video was produced as part of the "It Gets Better" Project, which has a mission to communicate to gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender youth that it gets better, and to create and inspire the changes needed. It Gets Better is a non-profit organisation helping LGBTI youth cope with harassment and discrimination relating to their sexuality. The video was launched at end of September 2015, just before the anniversary of Westpac's Rainbow Tick accreditation. It was used both internally in staff forums and training and externally at events. In sync the bank kicked off the #youbeingyou Social Media Campaign with close to 120,000 people globally already view the video via Westpac New Zealand's Facebook page.

The fourth big project, Role Modelling Inclusion involved taking a "#youbeingyou" message further through proactive conversations, sharing insights and learnings with other Employee Action Groups within Westpac and other organisations who have similar models. By shifting GLOBAL's focus from just helping people with their sexual orientation and gender identity and taking a "youbeingyou" message further Westpac were able to embrace the opportunities that true Diversity and Inclusion can bring to a business, our customers and the wider community.

The fifth focus Rainbow Roundtables, brought together 22 influential members of the rainbow community and other interested stakeholders from the business and academic and press community. The first was held in February to share research with influential members of the community, discuss findings and suggest concrete means for improving the wellbeing of the rainbow community at work.

Westpac will continue to make sure there is accountability for the continuation of its work, in particular partnering with other business organisations and the community. Senior leaders are answerable for delivery of their key measures, which are reported on a quarterly basis at the Diversity and Inclusion Council.