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HSBC HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES IS NAMED DIVERSITY LEADER FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

Eva Freedman, head of human resources for HSBC Bank Australia, has been named Diversity Leader for the Advancement of Women in the 2008 Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency (EOWA) Business Achievement Awards.

Freedman was recognised for driving a strategy of ‘inclusiveness’ at HSBC Australia and putting in place a range of initiatives to encourage equal opportunities in the workplace. According to Freedman, it’s been a rewarding experience that has driven the organisation to think beyond its typical banking boundaries.

“HSBC is a global bank serving over 120 million customers from nearly all the countries in the world – almost every nationality and ethnic group. We’re an organisation that actively looks for employees who are culturally sensitive,” said Freedman.

“What we’ve found at HSBC is that the fundamental barrier to diversity is culture. Our inclusiveness strategy seeks to create a fundamental shift in attitude among our people to help them understand that it makes commercial sense to employ people with different points of view and different values.

“You get better value and better results from a diverse team,” Freedman added, “and this translates directly into organisational success.”

Freedman has driven a range of initiatives within HSBC to support this strategy:

- A Diversity Committee was created, chaired by the CEO and made up of employees from around the business, to champion diversity within the business and provide input into new initiatives.
- A review of policies was undertaken that saw maternity leave transformed into primary carer leave of 52 weeks with 12 weeks paid leave and secondary carer leave introduced.
- A flexible work policy was introduced with options of part time (reduced hours per week) or job share, working from home, flexible start and finish times to cater for outside commitments and a compressed working week. A remote working pilot was executed to facilitate more flexible working arrangements for full time employees.
- An internal mentoring program was introduced for female employees.

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- A childcare centre was established, complete with a private tax ruling from the ATO allowing employees to salary sacrifice the fees and pay less for their childcare fees in pre-tax dollars.

Stuart Davis, chief executive officer of HSBC Bank Australia, said "HSBC is an organisation which firmly believes in employing a workforce that reflects the diversity of the communities we serve because it's an essential ingredient for our business success.

"I'm thrilled that Eva, who has been a champion for diversity and a role model in the advancement of women in our organisation, has been recognised by EOWA for her achievements."

The EOWA Business Achievement Awards is the premier awards event recognising organisations for the advancement of women. The finalists were selected by an independent judging panel comprising Mark Goodsell (Australian Industry Group), Dr Barbara Pocock (University of South Australia), Helen Szoke (Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commissions) and Professor Chris Adam (AGSM).

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Notes to editors

HSBC Bank Australia

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