

Creating opportunities at ANZ

19 July 2017

There's no magic bullet to closing the gender pay gap – you need multiple strategies, says Felicity Evans General Manager, Human Resources New Zealand and the Pacific at ANZ.

On the face of it, ANZ does not have a gender pay gap for women. In fact, a recent review revealed that overall female staff working for the bank were paid five percent more than the male staff.

“That is not a true indicator though – that's simply because there are more women in the organisation. We dug deeper and looked at different occupations – particularly leadership roles – and found that there were pockets where there were significantly fewer women. Though there is still more to do, we now have 41 percent women in management,” says Felicity.

Achieving this has required a multi-faceted approach aimed at pulling down barriers and creating opportunities. It is something that Felicity has been dedicated to seeing through.

“My father is an amputee, and I have to say that from a very young age I saw a degree of discrimination against that. It wasn't until I worked in other areas that I saw gender bias. It was an epiphany for me when I moved into senior roles, that I could actually make change happen.”

Raising the profile of other women in the organisation has been one of her aims.

“We want our senior women to be more visible so women within the organisation hear more women's voices. As part of our advocacy and leadership programmes, we encourage them to write editorial, contribute to online publications, speak at events and publicly own their expertise.”

Allowing work to mesh more smoothly with family life has been another focus. Around 87 percent of the firm's 9,000 staff routinely work flexible hours. This ranges from being able to leave early to go to school sports to working part-time or from home.

“We've found that if you are working flexibly you find zones when you work better, smarter and harder. It is output rather than prescribed hours or being physically in the office that is important,” she says.

“I have teams around the globe that I barely see, and it does take a different skill to manage that. Slick technology means that we have multiple ways of communicating so it seems quite old-fashioned to me that an employer will require staff to always be in the office.”

The bank offers a family-friendly 18-weeks paid parental leave plus two-weeks family leave, and continues to pay employer contributions to KiwiSaver during parental leave, regardless of gender.

“We are concerned that the pay equity gap will turn into a retirement equity gap for women. Women earn less and take more career breaks, which impacts upon savings for retirement. It could be a huge problem.”

Felicity finds the benefits of these policies include being an employer of choice in a competitive market. She says staff are more engaged, and greater diversity within the company translates into more innovation.

“We will continue to look for new opportunities. Our diversity and inclusion policy is really part of a broad HR strategy for the bank to be people-centered in the way that we look at things. We are a big organisation with a huge community reach so we have a responsibility to be thought leaders in this area.”

This article was published on 19 July 2017. Felicity has since moved on from ANZ.

