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ACCENTURE AUSTRALIA TOPS LIST OF LGBTI-FRIENDLY AUSSIE EMPLOYERS

Accenture Australia has been named Australia's Employer of the Year for 2013 at a special event recognising workplace support for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people.

The Australian arm of the global professional services organisation topped a list of 10 organisations which were recognised today at a special luncheon in Sydney organised by Pride in Diversity, Australia's first and only national employer support program for the inclusion of LGBTI people in the workplace.

The awards were determined using Pride In Diversity's Australian Workplace Equality Index (AWEI), a free service provided annually by Pride In Diversity that evaluates and benchmarks LGBTI inclusiveness in Australian workplaces.

The 2013 Top Ten Australian employers for LGBTI people are (in ranked order) Accenture Australia, PwC, Goldman Sachs, KPMG, IBM Australia, Chevron Australia, Curtin University, Westpac Group, The University of Western Australia and Lend Lease.

Other awards at the luncheon included: Employer of the Year (Accenture); LGBTI Employee Network of the Year (BFS assort – Macquarie Banking & Financial Services Group); Highest Ranking University (Curtin University); Highest Ranking Public Sector Organisation (Australian Federal Police); and Achievement Award for Most Improved (National Australia Bank).

New awards introduced for the first time this year included: Regional/Rural Award for LGBTI Workplace Inclusion (Northern Rivers Social Development Council); Small Employer Award for LGBTI Workplace Inclusion (Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia); Not-for-Profit/Charity Award for LGBTI Workplace Inclusion (UnitingCare Ageing NSW/ACT); and individual LGBTI Workplace Inclusion Champion Awards which went to Dade Bailey from Commonwealth Bank and Dean Field from Westpac Group.

Pride In Diversity Program Director Dawn Hough says more and more organisations are engaging with the annual awards. "Submissions this year were up by 65% and over 3000 employees took part in the process," Ms Hough says. "This has made gaining entry to the Top Ten a much more difficult process which shows that organisations throughout Australia are taking very seriously their work in this area and that LGBTI inclusion within Australian workplaces is on the rise and is fast becoming a differentiator in the workplace diversity agenda."

Speakers at the sold-out event at the Ivy Ballroom in Sydney included Pride In Diversity patron the Hon. Michael Kirby, AFL anti-homophobia campaigner Jason Ball and Master of Ceremonies Bob Downe.

Ms Hough says the luncheon and awards, which take place every year on the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia on May 17, provide a valuable platform for organisations to highlight the quality of their LGBTI workplace diversity practices as well as provide a national benchmark on what organisations are doing in this space.

"Pride In Diversity congratulates all the organisations recognised today on their significant achievement and for showing great leadership in the area of diversity and inclusion," Ms Hough says.

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