|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **MEDIA RELEASE** | **24 MAY 2019** | **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** |

**AUSTRALIA’S TOP ORGANISATIONS FOR LGBTI INCLUSION ANNOUNCED**

RMIT University has been named the 2019 Employer of the Year for LGBTI inclusion at the Australian LGBTI Inclusion Awards, hosted by ACON’s Pride in Diversity – the national not-for-profit employer support program for LGBTI workplace inclusion in Australia.

More than 730 business leaders, diversity champions and HR professionals representing all sectors and employer sizes came together at the Hyatt Regency in Sydney to celebrate the results of the Australian Workplace Equality Index (AWEI) – a rigorous, evidence-based benchmarking tool that annually assesses workplaces in the progress and impact of their LGBTI inclusion initiatives.

This year reflects the greatest diversity of top employers achieving Platinum and Gold Employer Status in the history of the AWEI. It is also the first time that a non-private commercial organisation has been awarded Employer of the Year status.

This year top employers spanned public, private, higher education and not-for-profit sectors:

* Four employers have been awarded Platinum Status for longevity in high performance (Accenture, LendLease, ANZ, UWA).
* Two employers have qualified for Platinum Status next year (EY, Macquarie Group).
* 14 employers have been awarded Gold Status for highest results within the current year.
* The Small Employer component of the index also saw an increase in participation and scores with Initiative Media taking out the Small Employer of the Year.

**Note: The complete list of awardees are featured on the next page.**

The year’s awards were attended by a record number of CEOs and business leaders with Qantas CEO and Patron, Alan Joyce, providing this year’s keynote address.

Dawn Hough, Director of ACON’s Pride Inclusion Programs, said there has been continued growth in participation in the index since its launch in 2010.

“This is the ninth year of the AWEI and, once again, we have record numbers of employers across all sectors and states participating in the index. The accompanying employee survey elicited a staggering 27,349 responses, which underscores the importance of LGBTI inclusion in the workplace,” Hough said.

“Practice is continuing to shift significantly in this space with employers across Australia not only maintaining their commitment to LGBTI inclusion but in fact strengthening their inclusion initiatives and activities. Scores required to obtain the various tiers of recognition have continued to increase. We are delighted with the continual growth and focus exercised within this area of diversity and inclusion,” Hough said.

Pride in Diversity is part of Pride Inclusion Programs, a suite of social inclusion programs delivered by ACON, Australia’s largest LGBTQ health organisation. Pride Inclusion Programs also includes Pride In Sport and Pride in Health+Wellbeing.

This year awards also celebrated the results of the Health + Wellbeing Equality Index (HWEI) focusing on LGBT inclusive service provision. The award for Inclusive Service Provider of the Year went to Uniting, which is also a Gold Employer in the AWEI.

“LGBTI inclusion has well and truly made its way onto the Australian workplace diversity and inclusion agenda, and is starting to make a mark in the sporting and service provider sectors as well,” Hough said.

“Congratulations to all award winners recognised today on their significant achievements and for showing great leadership in LGBTI inclusion.”

Pride Inclusion Programs will next celebrate LGBTI inclusion within Australian sport at the second Australian Pride in Sport Awards in Melbourne on 12 June. Held at Cargo Hall, the event will be hosted by NITV’s Matty Webb and attended by Pride in Sport co-patrons Alex Blackwell and Daniel Kowalski, along with several other leading sporting and community figures.

**For more information on ACON’s Pride Inclusion Programs, go to** [**www.prideinclusionprograms.com.au**](http://www.prideinclusionprograms.com.au)

**2019 Australian LGBTI Inclusion Awards**

**2019 Australian Workplace Equality Index Award Recipients**

**Employer of the Year**

RMIT University

**LGBTI Employee Network of the Year**

LGBTI ERG, LendLease

**Platinum Employers (Long-term Gold Employers)**

Accenture

ANZ

LendLease

University of Western Australia

**Platinum Qualifiers for 2020**

EY

Macquarie Group

**Gold Employers**

Australian Taxation Office

Brisbane City Council

Clayton Utz

Deakin University

Department of Prime Minister & Cabinet

EY

Macquarie Bank Limited

MinterEllison

NAB

PwC

QBE Insurance Australia

RMIT University

Uniting

Woolworths Group

**Small Employer Gold**

Initiative Media

Oliver Wyman

BlackRock Investment Management Australia

**Small Employer of the Year**

Initiative Media

**Most Improved Employer**

Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet

**Trans and Gender Diverse Inclusion**

RMIT University

**External Media Campaign**

‘The Road to Broken Hill’ AAMI, Suncorp

**Executive Leadership**

Andrea Kenafake, Brisbane City Council

**Network Leader of the Year**

Cameron Tirendi, BHP

**Out Role Model**

Nicholas Steepe, Charles Sturt University

**Sapphire Inspire**

Caitlin Monnery-Korving, ANZ

**The Sally Webster Ally Award**

Joint winners: Ian Bennett (PwC) & Superintendent Richard Roberts (AFP – posthumously awarded)

**2019 Health + Wellbeing Equality Index Award Recipients**

**LGBTI Inclusive Service Provider of the Year**

Uniting

**Gold Service Providers**

Reliant Healthcare

Flourish Australia

Uniting

**MEDIA ENQUIRIES:**

**David Alexander**

ACON Media and Communications Officer

0428 477 042

dalexander@acon.org.au