

2019 Employer of Choice Awards - Judges' comments

Tasmanian Employers of Choice (13 awards)

Bank of us

Bank of us demonstrates an exemplary approach to growing a strong culture through leadership, transparency and trust. This has enabled the organisation and its people to transform and grow through its recent and significant rebranding project. Values, and continuous improvement, are embedded throughout the business cycle and daily interactions. The executive team share their personal improvement journey with frontline staff, and are honest about their own weaknesses and areas that require development. The employees are excited to be at the forefront of a changing organisation, in which their opinions are encouraged and respected, and they are given the tools to build an excellent workplace and a successful business.

Crusader Homes

Crusader Homes is a family owned business that brings family values and sense of community into the workplace. The business employs and develops young, local people as apprentices, and supports them to be successful in their work, study and personal life. This is a genuine caring workplace where people are comfortable to own their mistakes, suggest ideas and improvements. Leaders show patience in developing new skills and experience, with a focus on developing people for the long term. The business strongly supports a range of initiatives in the local community, which clearly builds pride and commitment amongst employees.

Cyber Hair

The judges were highly impressed with Cyber Hair's incredible retention of staff. Thirteen of the fourteen employees did their apprenticeship with this salon, some of them many years ago. The very high rate of return from maternity leave indicates clearly that staff are treated with care and respect. Systems for performance and feedback are clear and open. Staff love working here because they feel supported to maintain high levels of professional skills as well as enjoying their work. Whether it's learning from international experts in hair and fashion, or having fun with laughter yoga and Zumba classes, Cyber Hair is a passionate and hard-working team who make everyone feel welcome.

Friends Health & Fitness

Friends Health and Fitness was highly commended in these awards last year, and has implemented a number of actions in response to the judges' feedback. The key challenge in this workplace is getting quality feedback and communicating effectively with the large casual workforce. This has been achieved with a strategic combination of surveys, procedure documents and social media. The centre treats all its people as professionals and invests in them – through training and mentoring, mental health and team building programs, plus a significant focus on role clarity and maintaining great equipment. Staff feel connected and valued – even those who work only a few hours per week.

Health Nest

Health Nest provides an open, trusting, supportive environment that enables all staff to contribute to developing the business. The director demonstrates exemplary leadership through mentoring, succession planning and a focus on training that builds capability, confidence and motivation. People genuinely care about each others' wellbeing, and are supported to take action through flexible work arrangements, health programs and gym memberships. A standout for the judges is the opportunity for current employees to make decisions about the recruitment of new staff. This has made a huge impact on fostering a cohesive and team-focussed workplace.

Kolmark Pty Ltd

Kolmark is an extraordinary business with a system of empowerment that creates leaders out of everyone and recognises its people as ambassadors. The judges were struck by the genuine caring relationships among leaders and staff. Staff are paid well and have flexibility in their work. Their loyalty has helped to build a culture of family values and a strong team mentality that supports change and improvement. Staff understand the business and its challenges by being involved in recruitment decisions, project design, and strategic planning. This has brought a collective, innovative approach which is taking the business in new directions that everyone is excited about.

MACq 01 Hotel

MACq 01 excels as a people focused employer where all staff are valued and encouraged to bring their best, through a growth mindset and continual improvement. The leadership team adapts business operations to meet the needs of employees, supporting people to be themselves and contribute to the core purpose of the organisation. There is a strong focus on character - recruiting people with the right attitude, and then upskilling them in the workplace. Staff are proud to be creating a family friendly culture that promotes caring, learning from each other, connecting with people across the business and bringing new ideas into action.

Northern Midlands Council

Northern Midlands Council impressed the judges with the consistency of its working conditions across the organisation. Opportunities for flexibility and professional development are provided to suit the needs of the outdoor workforce as well as office staff. Childcare workers contribute to continuous improvement alongside engineers. A range of ideas and suggestions are acted on, from wellbeing programs to an automated dog lift. People recruited from outside the area are welcomed and valued. Through strategic planning consultations and two way communication systems, positive feedback is shared, teamwork and trust is developed, and everyone feels connected to success.

Sustainable Timber Tasmania

Sustainable Timber Tasmania has transformed its business model and undergone a significant culture change with a focus on leadership development and genuine support for employees. The senior leadership team shares its journey of development with staff, and provides support through coaching, succession planning and training to the next generation of leaders. The Board and senior managers walk the floor with frontline forest workers. The excellent staff survey and performance planning processes have enabled people to give feedback and share in designing actions that have improved their workplace. People have embraced change because they have been given a key role in making it happen.

TasCOSS – the Tasmanian Council of Social Service

TasCOSS has been on a four year journey of change that has values at its core. Both management and staff collaborate on distributing leadership and knowledge, empowering each other to take on challenges and share what they learn. There is a strong commitment to diversity, inclusion, flexibility and development. TasCOSS has fully embraced a coaching culture which recognises individual difference and provides an environment where employees feel valued for who they are and the skills they bring to the organisation. The supportive environment allows everyone to feel safe, to speak up, to challenge ideas, and to work together to achieve the best outcomes for their clients.

The Shoreline Hotel

The Shoreline Hotel's recent extensive refurbishment meant that parts of the hotel closed for long periods, however nobody lost their job. Instead, a strategy was put in place to provide leadership training, workplace culture development, and systems improvement. Senior leaders bring core values to life by implementing a flexible rostering system, converting casuals to part-time on request, and committing to financial transparency. The business invests in its people so they can step up and be accountable. Staff appreciate being given responsibility with support, freedom and trust. Learning motivates them. Expectations are clear. Leaders listen and act. And everyone is respected.

William Smith and Sons

William Smith and Sons is a positive, supportive and open workplace. It thrives because of the mutual feedback between staff and management. People share knowledge and understand the roles of their colleagues across the business. A strategic approach to planning, culture and systems is blended with leaders walking around, being involved, helping out, discussing challenges. Staff are committed because they are encouraged to grow and contribute through teamwork, new ideas and shared success. Everyone pitches in at festivals and special events like the bushfire support. Staff suggest new products and are involved in building the business case. There is a clear sense of pride and enthusiasm.

X Squared Architects

X Squared Architects demonstrates a deep understanding of the business benefits of building a great place to work. A strong commitment to employee health and wellbeing has seen financial growth, as well as increases in productivity, retention and client satisfaction. Staff feel respected in a supportive culture where they can challenge, learn, innovate and build a career whilst maintaining a healthy work life balance. The judges were impressed with a number of innovative approaches based on a Trust Plan – core hours with flexibility, delegated responsibility for designs and decisions, profit sharing, and a collaborative approach to building strategy, values, relationships and trust.

Highly Commended (4 awards)

Care Forward

Care Forward is making a great effort to meet the challenges of change through understanding its people and adapting a business model to suit their needs. The management team is clearly committed to working with staff on continuously improving communication and collaboration across teams state-wide. The judges were particularly impressed with the THRIVE health and wellbeing program, which is led by frontline staff. This is an excellent example of building a positive culture of trust, support, participation and fun.

Cumulus Studio Pty Ltd

Cumulus Studio is developing a culture of inclusion and empowerment. The focus on open communication has enabled staff to better understand the business model, share their creative ideas and support each other to deliver results. Staff build their knowledge with formal training as well as exposure to a variety of projects. People are able to work flexibly to suit their personal needs, and the company's pro bono support for community gardens and harvest markets brings a great sense of pride.

Energy Solutions

Energy Solutions is a growing business, making a great effort to build a collaborative and supportive culture. The judges noted strong, caring relationships among leaders and staff, and in particular the extensive support for apprentices, female employees, and staff with multicultural backgrounds. Leaders are approachable, they encourage ideas, and trust people to make decisions. Staff feel valued because they can express their opinions, and are appreciated for their work in this highly positive working environment.

illuminate Education

illuminate Education is a small, innovative and collaborative team that delivers its programs with passion. The judges were impressed with the high levels of empowerment and trust that have been built through values-based recruitment. Staff contribute to the business strategy and feel supported to bring new ideas, give honest feedback and learn from their experiences. Everyone is inspired to make decisions that improve the quality of their work, and build productive relationships that provide successful outcomes for their learners.