Growing a sustainable business.

Our approach to corporate responsibility.
Growing a sustainable business

Rowan Munchenberg
Managing Director at Bankwest

We were originally established in 1895 as the Agricultural Bank of Western Australia and, although our roots are in WA, we’ve evolved into a smart and flexible national business that serves retail and small business customers across Australia, while meeting the needs of all customers in WA.

As a division of the Commonwealth Bank we’re mindful of our broader obligations as a responsible lender. We strive to balance the interests of our customers, shareholders, regulators and the broader community when making business decisions that affect their financial wellbeing.

My 4,000 or so colleagues live and work in diverse and growing communities across Australia, stretching as far afield as tropical Broome, vibrant Sydney and beautiful Albany on WA’s south coast.

They’re passionate about serving our customers and making a difference in their communities. This is one of the reasons why we partner with organisations that tackle critical issues that impact our communities and the broader economy.

It’s also why we support community initiatives at a grassroots level and provide opportunities for our people to contribute directly to causes they care about.

We’re proud of the role we’ve played in protecting and supporting the financial wellbeing of customers, businesses and communities for more than 122 years.

Every day we make it our priority to listen to and seek to better understand the needs, concerns and preferences of our customers and stakeholders so we continue to help Australia and its diverse communities prosper for generations to come.

Our customers’ changing needs drive everything we do at Bankwest.

For 122 years we’ve supported individuals, businesses & the Australian economy

Employ 4,000 people nationally, including 3,000 people in WA

1.2 million customers across the country, including 610,000 in WA

130 stores & branches 85 in WA & 45 nationally

25% of our profit re-invested in the business to fund initiatives needed to deliver future growth

All our call centres are in Australia and receive 1.5 million calls a year

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Our contribution to the economy in the last 12 months

300 million tax dollars were contributed to the economy

Our suppliers included 1,100 small businesses

Invested $5 million in the community

Helped 5,300 Australians buy their first home

Our corporate responsibility strategy

1. Operating responsibly
2. Promoting equality and inclusion
3. Contributing to our community and the economy
We earn our license to operate when we grow our business in a responsible and sustainable way and work with suppliers and partners whose business practices reflect our own.

Reducing our environmental impact
At Bankwest we’re committed to reducing our environmental impact and playing our role in limiting climate change to two degrees. In July 2016 our Margaret River and Geraldton locations became the first Bankwest stores to be powered by solar energy. These were followed by our Collie store in December 2016 and our Subiaco and Northam stores in July 2017. Between these five stores, 65.5 tonnes of CO2 has already been saved, that’s equivalent to planting 1,691 trees.

Bankwest is a division of the Commonwealth Bank, which now has 36 solar powered sites across the group, bringing the total solar power installs to 544 kW. Our real time portal displays data on how Bankwest and CBA’s network of solar-powered stores and branches across Australia is performing and shows the contribution our solar panels make to powering our stores on a daily basis and to reducing emissions.

Working more sustainably
As individuals we can all play a role in reducing waste and water use and increasing recycling. This was the ambition of a group of volunteers from different areas of Bankwest who collaborated in January 2017 to build awareness and educate their colleagues on how to work more sustainably.

The Sustainable Workplace Group’s initial focus has been on reducing waste and increasing recycling. Activities have included a visit to the company that recycles the head office’s cardboard and the implementation of improved recycling facilities for, among other things, batteries and coffee pods. So far in Bankwest Place 141kg of batteries have been recycled.

In our effort to work more sustainably Bankwest also supports important global events such as Earth Hour and Plastic Free July when individuals across the business are encouraged to take the pledge and refuse to use plastic for a day, week or a month. More recently, the bank partnered with Keep Australia Beautiful to provide staff volunteering opportunities with its community clean up and adopt-a-spot programs.

400 people trained on Environmental, Social & Governance risks
5 of our retail stores now powered by solar
Overall CO2 emissions reduced by 28% in last 12 months
Our head office has a 5* Green Star Rating
Our operations have an impact on the environment and Bankwest has a target to reduce its carbon emissions to 2.89 tonnes of CO2 per full time employee, per year by 2020.”

Cutting our carbon emissions

Our purpose is to help people achieve what matters, today and for generations to come. We’ve been around for more than 122 years and we’re committed to growing our business sustainably; nothing is more important for the future than protecting the planet on which we live. Our operations have an impact on the environment and Bankwest has a target to reduce its carbon emissions to 2.89 tonnes of CO2 per full time employee, per year by 2020.

At the end of FY17 we had achieved a result of 3.25 tonnes of CO2 reduction per full time employee, per year – an improvement on our 2009 result of 5.54 tonnes of CO2 per full time employee, per year, meaning we’re on track to achieving our 2020 target.

Overall, this reflects a 63% reduction in CO2 (scope 1 and 2 emissions) within our operational control since we began closely monitoring carbon emissions in 2009.
Promoting equality and inclusion

We believe equal access to opportunity is a fundamental right and allows us all to reach our potential. Diverse thinking, insights and perspectives keep us in touch with our customers and communities.

First-ever tech scholarship for people with autism

According to the report published by the Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre (BCEC), there are about 157,000 people of working age living with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in Australia and this number is increasing. Many struggle to transition successfully from school into work or further study because of social or communication issues or due to difficulties managing changes in routine or structure.

In recognition of the powerful contribution people with autism can make to society, especially due to distinctive skills that fit roles which require great concentration and attention to detail (such as software testing), Bankwest partnered with the Curtin University Autism Academy for Software Quality Assurance (AASQA) and the Australian Computer Society to create Australia’s first technology scholarship program for autistic students.

Working with these industry experts, Bankwest has welcomed new recruits as undergraduate software testers, within the boundaries of this structured, highly-supportive program. Michael New, who participated in the program in 2016 and was then offered a permanent role in our graduate program, was among the first to benefit, and offered this testimonial:

“When I first joined Bankwest I was concerned about the stereotypes and stigma associated with autism. My fears were quickly put to rest when I saw just how awesome each and every one of our colleagues are. I love doing what I do as I have an eye for details and don’t feel afraid to challenge decisions and processes.”

“When I first joined Bankwest I was concerned about the stereotypes and stigma associated with autism. My fears were quickly put to rest ... I love doing what I do”.

Growing a sustainable business
Valuing and celebrating difference

Every year Bankwest conducts a People & Culture Survey to better understand the needs of our colleagues and identify opportunities to evolve and improve our culture. The results of 2017’s survey show 4.5% of employees identify as LGBTI, up from 3.7% last year. Unity, our LGBTI network, now in its second year, has helped facilitate an increase in the disclosure and engagement levels of these employees. And this has been recognised with a Gold Tier LGBTI Employer status through Pride in Diversity’s Australian Workers Equality Index (AWEI).

In 2016 we set ourselves an ambitious target to increase LGBTI awareness through formal training for 15% of our workforce by June 2017. We exceeded that target by 7% and having trained over 900 employees, we are on track to achieve 25% of our workforce trained by June 2018, one year ahead of plan.

In addition, we have demonstrated our commitment to LGBTI inclusion by adopting a new salutation option for customers who identify as gender neutral – ‘Mx.’ This change came into effect in April 2017, allowing customers to receive communications from us using this salutation. It’s a small step but one which helps Bankwest further its strategic priority of fostering a culture of inclusion and respect.

Meanwhile our Unity’s Yammer group and regular events provide a forum for ongoing discussion and support for LGBTI people.

Making a positive commitment to reconciliation

One way in which we support diversity and inclusion – a key part of our corporate responsibility strategy – is through our commitment to reconciliation with Indigenous and Torres Straight Islanders peoples. To this end, in 2016 our Executive Team endorsed a 2020 Indigenous Engagement Plan that outlines our practical support for reconciliation.

Initiatives under the plan include supporting Reconciliation WA programs and initiatives and the installation of acknowledgments to the Wadjuk People of the Nyoongar nation in our head office foyers and main boardroom. Our plans also include commissioning economic and social research through our partnership with the Bankwest Curtin Economic Centre and piloting a volunteering initiative in partnership with the WA State Government Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions in Yanchep National Park, focusing on the preservation and cultural significance of Nyoongar flora and fauna.

Another exciting initiative is our partnership with the Girls’ Academy, through which we have provided funding to support the work the academy does within the school system, primarily in WA, to address issues related to drug and alcohol abuse, pregnancy and violence that can prevent Aboriginal girls from completing their education. Sport and extra-curricular activities, intensive mentoring and counselling and a focus on building practical life skills (including financial literacy) are critical elements of the engagement program.

Clock

71% of our people say they work flexibly

51% of our people come from a background other than Australian

Women make up 57% of total workforce and 37% of leadership

Rainbow

4.5% of our people identify as LGBTI
Contributing to our community and the economy

We believe equal access to opportunity is a fundamental right and allows us all to reach our potential. Diverse thinking, insights and perspectives keep us in touch with our customers and communities.

Improving gender equality

Bankwest believes differences must be valued so that ideas are heard, creativity is unlocked, connections are made and people are able to be the very best they can be. Equally, the diversity of our workforce and our leadership teams needs to reflect that of the communities in which we work. Only in this way can we keep in touch with what matters to our communities.

The Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre partners with the Workplace Gender Equality Agency to pursue a common goal of improving gender equality throughout Australia’s workplaces through its Gender Equity Insights series. This year the centre released Gender Equity Insights 2017: Inside Australia’s Gender Pay Gap, the second report in the series, which extends and strengthens the evidence base around gender pay gaps and how these have changed over time across Australian workplaces.

The report found that top tier female managers in Australian organisations earn on average $93,000, or 26.5% less per year compared to their male counterparts. It explored how gender pay gaps vary across industries and occupations and also included special investigations on gender pay gaps for graduate program participants, workforce gender segregation and the balance of women in top-tier management positions and how this impacts on the gender pay gap over time.
Building expertise in the not-for-profit sector

The Bankwest Foundation was established in 2013 with a mission to improve the wellbeing of Australians by implementing meaningful community initiatives in Western Australia and nationally.

Of the $1 million that has been pledged to the Foundation every year for five years, $100,000 is being invested in providing social media grants to allow ten not-for-profits in WA to build expertise in using social media channels to attract and retain volunteers.

Participating organisations are able to take part in a 12-month social media mentoring program delivered by Hancock Creative, a creative agency which designed the program in collaboration with the Bankwest Foundation and the Australian Scholarship Fund.

Boosting digital literacy

In the many and varied volunteer programs in which our people participate, they donate something even more valuable than money – their skills and time. One such program is the ‘Cododojo’ run by Bankwest volunteers from Enterprise Services (ES), which is a free coding club to help young people aged between seven and 17 years learn coding and digital literacy skills.

The club is not the only activity ES volunteers are involved in. Every October, female mentors from ES run a day-long girls-only ‘dojo’ during the school holidays. Girls from across Perth are invited to learn coding in a supportive environment at Bankwest Place. As the state’s biggest IT employer, Bankwest aims to demonstrate that ‘coding is cool’ and that IT can be a great career choice for women.

In addition, in the January and April school holidays in 2017 Coderdojo@ Bankwest ran school holiday coding sessions for children at Ronald McDonald House in Perth. The kids staying at the house were from rural and regional areas and either they or their siblings were undergoing medical treatment, often for months at a time, at Princess Margaret Hospital. It gave them an opportunity to program Lego ‘Mindstorm’ robots (model robots with sensors) or build computer games, giving them insights into coding and providing a distraction from hospital treatment.

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