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## **Mentoring gets star rating from female gaming leaders on journey to the top**

The gaming industry is taking action to improve levels of female leadership, a conference has been told ahead of International Women's Day on 8 March.

More than 50 women in the sector descended on The Star Gold Coast today for the Women in Gaming Australasia (WGA) mentoring event, attracting both current and potential future female leaders.

Owner and operator of The Star Gold Coast, The Star Entertainment Group, is a founding partner of WGA along with gaming solutions provider, Aristocrat Leisure.

WGA CEO Helen Galloway said the organisation is the only industry body in Australasia dedicated to empowering women working in, or looking to work in, the fast-paced gaming industry.

"Within Australasia, there is significant work to be done to increase female representation in leadership roles across all industries and this includes gaming, which is traditionally male-dominated," Mrs Galloway said.

"For example, according to the *2017-18 Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) scorecard*, only six per cent of CEOs in gaming are females, and women make up just 21.5% of senior leadership teams.

"This is compared to 17.1 per cent of CEOs across all industries being female, and women making up 30.5 per cent of senior leadership teams.

"We launched WGA in 2017 to support the development and success of women in our industry – through education, mentorship, and networking opportunities – with today's session focused on mentoring as one of the best ways to build sustainable female leadership.

"A 2017 study conducted by Moving Ahead, in collaboration with Deloitte, encompassed more than 6,000 people across 40 major UK organisations and showed that when mentoring was done well, it created 11 key benefits.

"These included empowering and developing confidence, creating empathetic leadership, developing core transferable skills, and accelerating culture change."

Rohan Dyster, The Star Entertainment Group General Manager Organisational Development & Learning, oversees diversity and inclusion initiatives for the company. These include its female diversity working group, Women @ The Star, which coordinates efforts to support women across its workforce.

"When we established our working group in FY2014, we had about 30 per cent women in leadership roles across the company," Mr Dyster said.

"Around four years later, that figure has risen to around 35 per cent female leaders – which is 13.5 per cent higher than

WGEA's gaming industry average; and 4.5 per cent higher than WGEA's average across all industries.

"While these figures indicate we are doing better in comparison to the rest of our industry, and across all industries, our target is 50 per cent female leaders by 2020 so we know more work needs to be done."

Today, the company engages in a range of activities to drive gender equality such as providing mentoring opportunities, flexible work practices, an annual gender pay gap analysis, and forums for women to connect with each other including its annual *Walk & Talk for Women in Leadership* events to celebrate International Women's Day.

The company's future strategy to 2021 looks at how it can activate its male workforce to support gender equity; efforts to achieve 'Employer of Choice' through the WGEA; reviewing female targets and how it hires, promotes, and retains women; producing bimonthly communications with women across the business; and developing a female leadership support program to upskill and drive female careers further.

Matt Bekier, The Star Entertainment Group Managing Director and CEO, said the company is committed to achieving gender equality at all levels, particularly within its leadership group, to foster talented and diverse teams.

"A diverse team strengthens our organisation by bringing together a range of experiences and backgrounds, as well as providing an environment that encourages team members to be the best that they can be," Mr Bekier said.

"We are proud to be a WGA founding partner and put forward current and future female leaders for today's mentoring session – it's important for women to hear how other women have achieved success and overcome challenges."

Amanda Dobson, The Star Entertainment Group Learning and Development Manager Queensland, is one such female leader who spoke to the audience about the benefits of mentoring and shared her tips on how to get the most out of the experience from both a mentor and mentoree perspective.

"One of the greatest benefits of our mentoring program is that it helps break down silos and broadens our team members' knowledge and understanding of the business and its diversity of people – including women – which leads to more inclusive behaviour across the board," Ms Dobson said.

Ms Dobson's top five tips for people wanting to become a mentor and/or mentoree are below:

For the mentor	For the mentoree
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish clear and mutual guidelines on frequency of meetings and format e.g. in person, by phone, or by email.</li> <li>2. Create a safe, comfortable, and genuine environment for your mentoree.</li> <li>3. Be curious about your mentoree and their goals for the future.</li> <li>4. Lead by example and model the leadership capabilities that you want to pass on.</li> <li>5. Be open to learning something new from your mentoree.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Know what you want and be clear about communicating your goals to your mentor in the first meeting.</li> <li>2. Be your true self and ask genuine questions.</li> <li>3. Be open to building a relationship with your mentor – they can often last well beyond the agreed period.</li> <li>4. Take time to prepare and/or reflect before and after each meeting.</li> <li>5. Be proactive in driving the relationship – it shows that you are keen to learn and could also lead to a future career opportunity.</li> </ol>

**For more information:**

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