



THE STAR

Media release

The Star Gold Coast driving gender diversity in tourism and hospitality

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As The Star Gold Coast continues to undergo an unprecedented expansion, meet some of the women playing a lead role across key areas including people transformation, hotel, food and beverage, and gaming.

Together, their passion and unique leadership styles are creating stronger teams within their areas and paving the way for more women to break the glass ceiling.

Amid the challenges of a growing skills shortage, **Jo Dalton** is leading The Star Entertainment Group's future talent attraction and retention strategy, as the company and its consortium partners continue to forge ahead with an exciting \$4.5 billion expansion on the Gold Coast and in Brisbane. As The Star's General Manager of People Transformation, Jo is focused on ensuring the company attracts and retains a skilled workforce at The Star Gold Coast and the Queen's Wharf Brisbane integrated resort – together requiring thousands of team members, and especially women, to join the company in the next three years. With 20 years' experience in a variety of people and talent roles, Jo credits her rapid career progression to her authenticity and positive 'coaching style' of leadership where she aims to unlock her team's strengths.

Starting out as a casual waiter while studying business before switching to a career in gaming across three major cities, to now leading The Star Gold Coast's casual dining portfolio, **Hannah Morelos** stands by her belief that the most exciting careers don't need to follow a linear pathway to move up the corporate ladder. In her current role as The Star Gold Coast's Director of Food & Beverage Performance, Hannah leads a team of around 150 people where she oversees the growing integrated resort's casual dining portfolio including one of its most popular venues, Garden Kitchen & Bar. With more than 20 years' experience in the hospitality and entertainment industry, Hannah moved back to her roots in food and beverage last year after spending 15 years holding various gaming leadership roles.

After uprooting her life from Sydney last year, **Jessica Sykes** was given the ultimate challenge on her first day at The Star Gold Coast after being told she would be responsible for running The Darling while the rest of the integrated resort shut down due to COVID-19 restrictions. Without knowing anyone or her way around the property, Jessica rose to the challenge and months later was promoted to her current role as The Star Gold Coast's Hotel Operations Manager, overseeing both The Star Grand and The Darling hotels. With over 10 years' experience working in tourism and hospitality, Jessica today leads her 400-strong team across a variety of areas including front office, concierge, housekeeping, laundry, facility cleaning, spa, and retail.

As a single mother of three young children, **Naomi Richards** is living proof that women can do it all when they have the right support from their workplace. In her current role as The Star Gold Coast's Director of Gaming, Naomi leads a department of 400 team members where she is focused on working with her team to drive performance, foster engagement, collaborate with internal and external stakeholders, ensure outstanding guest experience, and manage resources.

With more than 21 years' experience in gaming, Naomi started her career as a trainee roulette dealer in Melbourne where she worked her way up the ladder to a senior leadership position. However, like many impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, Naomi was temporarily stood down and sought new employment while learning to juggle home-schooling as a single parent. She eventually made a sea change to the Gold Coast in February and values the tailored, flexible work arrangements offered at The Star Gold Coast enabling her to work full-time while raising her children.

As one of Australia's largest tourism and hospitality employers, The Star Entertainment Group has set gender targets of 45 per cent female leaders, 45 per cent male leaders, and 10 per cent non-binary by 2023.

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

"Across the company, female leaders currently make up 38 per cent of our leadership team so we still have a way to go to reach our 45 per cent target, but we are making great inroads," Mr Bekier said.

"Our company-wide diversity and inclusion (D&I) journey started in 2013 when we set up four key D&I areas including gender – which resulted in forming a gender diversity working group, Women @ The Star, in 2014.

"In 2017, we became a proud founding partner of Women in Gaming and Hospitality Australasia (WGHA), focused on ensuring gender equity and inclusivity across gaming, gaming-related, and hospitality industries. Since then, we have helped WGHA expand across several cities in Australia and New Zealand."

Today, the company drives gender equality through mentoring opportunities, flexible work practices, an annual gender pay gap analysis, and forums for women to connect including its annual Walk & Talk for Women in Leadership events on International Women's Day – now in its fifth year.

In a further boost, Mr Bekier said the company recently delivered a new family-friendly parental leave policy.

"One of the benefits of our new policy is that it will increase company paid parental leave to 16 weeks for principal carers and four weeks for secondary carers," Mr Bekier said.

"Superannuation will also now be paid on all company paid parental leave, with principal carers also receiving an additional two weeks of super into their accounts, totalling 18 weeks of paid superannuation. We hope the increased flexibility will mean less worry for new parents and more focus on their families."

The Star Gold Coast COO Jessica Mellor said the property constantly reviewed its gender targets and strategies for the recruitment, promotion, and retention of women – especially as it continues building two new hotel and apartment towers with its consortium partners.

"As of today, we have many roles available at The Star Gold Coast and hundreds more to come in the future once the new towers open in early 2022 and 2024 respectively, so there will be plenty of opportunities for aspiring leaders and frontline team members, particularly women, to work with us," Ms Mellor said.

For more about the company's career opportunities, visit www.thestarcareers.com.

Media contact: Naomi Jamieson, Media Manager, The Star Entertainment Group, 0419 661 648