



MEDIA RELEASE

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AVRIL HENRY, GAME CHANGER & PROVOCATEUR, RECEIVES AUSTRALIA DAY HONOUR OF AM (MEMBER OF THE ORDER OF AUSTRALIA) FOR SERVICES TO BUSINESS, PROJECT MANAGEMENT & ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN IN AUSTRALIA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SYDNEY, 26TH JANUARY 2024: Avril Henry is an acclaimed keynote speaker, consultant, coach, mentor, media commentator and author, who is passionate about diversity and inclusion, developing collaborative leaders and positive workplaces. She was today awarded the honour of an AM (Member of the Order of Australia) in the Australia Day honours. Avril's career has spanned senior roles in finance, technology, project management, change management and human resources. Her multi award winning consulting business for over 20 years has worked with organisations in Australia and globally, to change their culture and build their leadership capability.

Avril emigrated to Australia in 1980 with 2 suitcases, \$500 and a dream to live freely in a democratic society and make a difference. She grew up in South Africa during the 1960s and 1970s during the Apartheid era. As an anti-apartheid activist at university, she had a deep understanding of the impact of exclusion and lack of justice. She knew that she was on the Security Polices' watch list and decided it would be best to leave South Africa.

In 2015 Avril was one of the AFR/Westpac 100 Women of Influence in Australia, and one of the 10 most influential women in the diversity space. She has been recognised by the Human Rights Commission and received business awards in Australia and the USA, for her diversity programs. She has received the prestigious Lifetime Achievement in HR Award at the Australian Human Resources Awards, and a global award for Excellence in Leadership Coaching.

“I am honoured and humbled being awarded an AM on Australia day, but above all I am thrilled that the work I have done over the past 4 decades has truly made a difference. I was extremely grateful to be given a skills-based visa to emigrate to Australia, and I promised myself the day I set foot on the tarmac at Sydney airport in 1980, that I would work hard to make a difference and be worthy of Australian citizenship. I am a very proud Australian – and always support Australian sports team – even when they are playing against South Africa!”, Avril stated.

With such a significant recognition of her career, when asked what her proudest achievements have been, Avril responded with “My proudest achievements include being part of the history-making Westpac team in 1995 who introduced 6 weeks paid maternity and one weeks paid paternity leave. We were the first private sector company to do so, which set in motion a domino-effect for other financial institutions to do the same. This has been part of the foundation of today's federally funded parental leave.”



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“I am also proud of the work done in the development of training programs on addressing sexual harassment, bullying and discrimination which has made a positive impact on workplace culture across multiple industries and organisations, from banking to the defence forces. We still have some way to go, but we have come a long way from the 1980s and 1990s.”, Avril added.

Avril has played a key role for nearly two decades working with Australian Defence Forces in increasing the participation rates of women in senior leadership roles across all three services. She has been a senior advisor on cultural transformation, gender and diversity to the Chiefs of Army, Navy and Air Force, Commissioners of Emergency Services, and large private and public sector organisations. Avril is a sought-after coach, and has coached 2-star military officers, ambassadors, CEOs, and senior executives across multiple industries. Her clients include banks, mining companies, construction companies, the health sector, universities, pharmaceutical companies, and elite athletes.

When asked how she feels about progress for women in the workplace going forward after receiving her AM honour, Avril said, “We have seen many advancements in the workplace for women, but we have a long way to go before we have equity. In the 1990s it was going to take 167 years before we would have equity, that has now decreased to 100 years, which is still unacceptable; and after five decades and four pay equity cases we still do not have pay equity! I now have a granddaughter, which is an additional motivation to continue to work for equity for women and girls, not only in Australia, but globally. This is a journey which we as women need to take in conjunction with men to create a better future for women and men.”

ABOUT AVRIL HENRY

Avril Henry is the Founder & Executive Director of Avril Henry & Associates. Avril is an award-winning keynote speaker, consultant, coach, facilitator, and author. She looks at leadership, culture, and inclusion through a financial and economic lens, believing authentic leadership and diversity deliver positive financial and social results. She is an internationally acclaimed keynote speaker who is passionate about transforming leadership models, building diversity capabilities, and reforming outdated workplace practices. Coming from a 25-year background in finance, IT, Human Resources and change management, in South Africa, Australia, the UK and USA, Avril founded her consultancy practise in 2003, Avril Henry and Associates. Avril is the author and co-author of several books on leadership and the different generations at work, and her book, Leadership Revelations II How Australians lead in Crises was voted a “Must Buy, Must Read” and “Best Brain Food book of 2012”, by the Australian Financial Review BOSS magazine. In addition, Avril has been a media commentator and leadership and workplace relations expert for media for the past 20 years with regular appearance on TV and radio news, current affairs, and talkback radio as well as appearing in numerous print/online media including editorials.

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