

News Release

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ANZ New Zealand proudly celebrates Kiwi women in the banking industry ([+video](#))

ANZ New Zealand has this week paid tribute to the trailblazing Kiwi women whose courage and vision helped create pathways to equality, opportunity and success in the banking industry.

On the 125th anniversary of New Zealand suffrage, ANZ Managing Director Retail and Business Banking Antonia Watson says ANZ is proud to celebrate women and their achievements, today and every day.

"Our predecessor, the Union Bank, opened its first branch on the Petone foreshore in 1840. In 1915 we had 15 women working full-time as 'lady clerks'," Watson says.

"For almost 100 years women were in service roles in the bank, and female customers weren't able to take out mortgages without their husband's consent.

"Thanks to courageous women who fought for the same rights as men, often at great personal cost, this has changed."

To celebrate the 125-year milestone, the company is displaying a range of past ANZ uniforms at the bank's flagship branch at 205 Queen Street in Auckland. The uniforms, some of which had design input from employees of the time, date back to the early 1960s.

A series of photos showing ANZ's earliest uniforms and female bank staff at work will be shown on the branch's big screen. On Wednesday, 19 September the flagship branch will also give cupcakes to customers to celebrate the anniversary.

"While I'm immensely proud of the steps ANZ has taken to advance women's careers we acknowledge there's still a long way to go. We take our role of providing equal opportunities to all our employees seriously," Watson says.

"In recent years the male and female leaders in ANZ have put a real focus on lifting the numbers of women in leadership and managerial roles. Companies need to reflect their customers, and diversity around the decision-making table also improves performance. In 1985, 46 per cent of our workforce was female. Today more than 66 per cent is female, with almost 42 per cent in management roles.

"That's required practical steps like setting ourselves annual goals of increasing women in management, making sure women are on all short-lists for roles and that all selection panels have a senior woman on them.

"We're constantly looking at ways to create pathways to higher-paid roles and greater leadership opportunities for women. We have also eliminated the gender pay gap between men and women in the same roles.

"On the anniversary of universal suffrage in New Zealand, we're taking a moment to celebrate the trailblazers that have gone before us. On their behalf ANZ is committed to making New Zealand a truly equal place to live, work and succeed."

ANZ's past and present uniform display can be viewed in the ANZ branch at 205 Queen Street from Wednesday, 19 September – Friday, 21 September.

New Zealand women in banking

- In 1915, The National Bank (now ANZ) had at least 28 branches across New Zealand, and employed 15 women.
- The bank's 'lady clerks' earned salaries ranging from 50 pounds to 200 pounds per year (\$100 - \$400), much less than their male counterparts. The belief at the time was that women's work was inferior to men's — women were not as capable in the workforce and should therefore not expect to receive equal pay.
- Dorothea Wild was the first woman to be awarded the New Zealand diploma of banking, achieving this in 1925. She joined the staff of The National Bank in Christchurch in 1917 as a clerk.
- During World War I the numbers of female bank employees increased dramatically, and the then general manager of the bank was very positive about employing women, writing to London: "I have accordingly instructed the four centre branches to obtain the services of two or three lady clerks each."
- Barbara Smith was appointed the first female branch manager of The National Bank in Kilbirnie in 1991.

Download the video of past ANZ and The National Bank uniforms [here](#).

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