

# New bank boss breaks ground

JOHN DAGGE

BENDIGO and Adelaide Bank is set to become the first major lender to have both a female chief executive and chair.

Jacqueline Hey, the former chief of telecommunications equipment maker Ericsson in both the UK and Australia, will take over as chair of the nation's fifth largest retail bank at its general meeting.

She will replace Robert Johanson who has been in the role for 13 years, overseeing the

merger between Bendigo Bank and Adelaide Bank and guiding the regional lender through the global financial crisis and banking royal commission.

Ms Hey has sat on the Bendigo board since 2011.

She is also a non-executive director at Qantas Airways, AGL Energy and Cricket Australia where she organised the independent review into the sport's governance and culture following the ball-tampering scandal in South Africa.

Marnie Baker took over as Bendigo chief in July last year, replacing Mike Hirst.

The 160-year-old lender is set to become only the second company – and first bank – in the ASX 200 to have both a female chief and chair when Ms Hey takes up the role on October 29.

The ASX 200 is the stock market's benchmark index, broadly tracking the nation's 200 largest listed companies.

"Given that just over 50 per cent of the population is

female it should not be an abnormal event but it absolutely is," Ms Hey told *Business Daily*.

Coca-Cola Amatil is the only company within the index to have women in its two most senior roles with Alison Watkins serving as chief and Ilana Atlas as chair.

Four of Bendigo's nine current board members are female, as are 40 per cent of its senior executives.

"Diversity is really important in all its forms – it gives diversity of thought, it makes

people think from different angles and you come up with better outcomes," Ms Hey said.

"I'm grateful I work for an organisation that takes that very seriously and focuses on it. From the top down to the bottom up, diversity in all its forms is something very important to us and useful to us in achieving outcomes."

Ms Hey said Bendigo was well placed to prosper in a post-banking royal commission environment given trust was an increasingly valuable

commodity. The lender exited the commission largely unscathed and is the only bank to feature in the nation's top-10 most trusted brands, according to research house Roy Morgan.

"We have to double down on things we have done well for a long time," Ms Hey said.

"That is around trust, it's around doing the right thing, it's around respecting regulators and it's around making sure we are connected to communities and customers."

 clevertar.



## Avatars giving customer service a personal touch

VALERINA CHANGARATHIL

ADELAIDE digital avatars business Clevertar is expanding its focus from healthcare to other sectors, launching a new self sign-up "virtual human" chatbot for businesses.

Conversagent is being launched globally this week with businesses invited to trial the bot, which can be deployed "without the need for coding and in a matter of minutes".

It's a new direction for the business, which recently overcame two months of uncertainty about its future.

On May 15, Clevertar resumed normal trading after being placed in external administration by its directors on March 28.

Co-founder and chief executive Tanya Newhouse said the administration was triggered by international giant Konica Minolta's decision not to take up its 2016-issued, \$600,000 convertible note offering due to a change in the Japanese company's strategic direction.

Clevertar is a Flinders Uni-

versity-backed, award-winning business that has received multiple taxpayer grants and international recognition since it was co-founded by Ms Newhouse and Martin Luerssen in 2012.

Ms Newhouse said Conversagent was already deployed in the telecommunications and health counselling space and was ideally suited for businesses that used "scripted conversations".

"For businesses, the best customer support staff are empathetic, helpful and know their company's products inside and out.

"Unfortunately, customer support teams are expensive to operationalise 24/7, but with Clevertar's technology companies can deploy a virtual human employee and take all of the best elements of their most effective support agents to train the virtual human and create conversational flows that deliver a satisfying customer experience every time."

Details about Conversagent can be found on the Clevertar website.

AVATAR: Clevertar's virtual Conversagent, which is being launched globally this week.

## Outgrown your old stuff?

Turn unwanted stuff into cash.  
Advertise it online for free!

List it now at [buysearchsell.com.au](http://buysearchsell.com.au)

\*Free ads are only available for private party advertisers in participating For Sale classifications. Conditions Apply. Visit [www.buysearchsell.com.au/free-ads](http://www.buysearchsell.com.au/free-ads) for full details.



**buy search sell**  
.com.au