

Statement on VCAT ruling in relation to Finch vs Heat Group

HEAT GROUP WELCOMES VCAT FINDING ON “UNTRUE AND UNFOUNDED” DISCRIMINATION CLAIM

2 July 2010

The Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal this week dismissed all claims of discrimination and harassment by former Heat Group employee, Joanne Finch.

Finding for the Heat Group, Justice Harbison criticised Ms Finch’s “obvious carelessness with the truth in giving her evidence” whilst noting the “credibility of the Respondents witnesses in giving their evidence”.

In her 142-page ruling Justice Harbison concluded: “I am positively satisfied that many of the Complainant’s claims of discrimination, harassment and victimisation are not just unproven but clearly false. I am satisfied that many of the allegations were made without concern about whether or not they were true.”

Heat Group CEO Gillian Franklin welcomed the finding, adding that Justice Harbison’s comments vindicated the company’s decision to defend its innocence throughout the four-year legal battle.

“The Heat Group consistently denied any wrongdoing in relation to Ms Finch and has vigorously contested her claims throughout the trial.

“We chose to fight these claims because we had a responsibility to prove our innocence and protect the reputation and integrity of our staff.

“These unfounded and untrue claims struck at the heart of our values and corporate reputation. The Heat Group is a recognised leader in workplace relations and a strong advocate of the rights of women.

“We are proud of our achievements over many years in creating opportunities for women and helping all employees balance their work and family lives.

“Our reputation is very important and I am delighted that the truth has prevailed and we can get on with our responsibility to grow our business for the benefits of all our stakeholders,” Ms Franklin said.

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