

Media Release

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BT and Striver launch second wave of internal talent program as adviser shortage bites

10 DECEMBER 2025: BT, in partnership with careers technology platform Striver, has expanded its internal Career Pathways Program, welcoming a second intake of employees – nearly doubling participation since the pilot launched last year.

As Australia's financial advice sector faces a critical talent shortage, BT is investing in its people to help close the gap, offering structured pathways to industry-recognised qualifications, access to professional development and new career opportunities, all while continuing in their current roles.

The program launched in September 2024 with a pilot intake of six BT employees, all of whom have now completed the program. Building on this success, the latest intake of 11 employees draws participants from across the business, reflecting strong and growing demand.

With adviser numbers having halved over the past five years, millions of Australians are missing out on access to quality financial advice. BT's partnership with Striver aims to help close the gap by equipping motivated employees with the confidence, capability, and connections to progress towards a career in advice - supported by formal study, CPD-accredited webinars via the BT Academy, exposure to industry events, and mentoring from experienced professionals.

Linda Cummins, BT's Client Account Specialist and a mum of three, is among the program's latest participants. "The pitch was simple: keep your job, study at your own pace, gain an industry-recognised qualification, and open the door to a career in financial advice. It was a dream come true," Ms. Cummins said.

Edgar Palmeira, a Perth-based case manager who also successfully applied for the program said, "This was a no-brainer for me because it's such a good opportunity. You have your full-time job, mentors and a course to improve your knowledge and broaden your vision. It helps you gain more confidence in where your career could go."

"In the first instance, the Program helping me in my current role - I work closely with many financial advisers, and thanks to this program, I now understand their world so much more - I can speak their language. But also, in the future, this course will enable me to become a financial adviser myself," Mr Palmeira added.

Michael Lowndes, executive sponsor and BT's Head of Strategy and Governance, sees the program as both a business imperative and an act of stewardship. "Partnering with Striver is about supporting the creation of new talent across the industry. There is an enormous unmet advice need in Australia, and while this program is just one contribution among many needed to address the challenge, we're proud to play our part. One of the most consistent challenges we hear from advisers using our BT Panorama platform is their struggle to find talent."

Mr Lowndes said the program aligns with BT's strategy to enable quality financial advice to thrive. "We're very fortunate to have a lot of talented people at BT. Giving them pathways into new roles and industries builds their careers, while also strengthening the advice ecosystem which BT relies on. Whether participants continue to grow their careers at BT or take their skills to the broader industry, the benefits are shared – supporting both BT and the future of financial advice in Australia," said Mr Lowndes.

With Government plans to broaden education standards and create a 'new class of adviser', the Striver program has been designed to stay ahead of these changes. Its curriculum covers ethics, regulatory obligations, consumer behaviour and the advice process - all aligned to anticipated incoming shifts in the regulation and qualification requirements.

Mr Lowndes said the program is well-timed and adds that it is deliberately designed to be adaptable to a range of career goals. "The Career Pathways Program is flexible. Whether it's paraplanning, client account management, or ultimately financial advice, the program dovetails with the educational pathways the industry needs."

Striver founder and CEO Alisdair Barr called the collaboration with BT a bold step – a culmination of a 14-year mission to bring new entrants into financial advice. "I've been focused on bringing new entrants into the profession because I believe advice delivers real outcomes for Australians. As our population ages and the need for quality financial advice continues to grow, there's a significant opportunity to strengthen and support the growth of the profession. This collaboration helps talented people go where demand meets supply," Mr Barr said.

Mr Barr said BT's involvement was never a hard sell. "We started small, with BT backing some of our marketing and events to attract next-gen talent. It quickly became: 'what more can we do?' Having BT as a partner gives us another pathway to grow talent - via institutional training, development and exposure - so we can support the profession sustainability."

He also challenged the idea that developing staff with courses like this increases flight risk. "Yes, some may leave, but the reverse is more likely: higher engagement, longer tenure, and a more diverse cross-section of talent. Ultimately, this is good for BT, good for advice firms nationwide, and good for the profession," Mr Barr said.

Striver has set an ambitious goal: 5,000 new advisers over the next decade, enabling up to a million more Australians to access quality financial advice. "Everyone points at the talent shortage, but few are laying foundations to solve it. With BT, it's actually happening. BT has drawn a line in the sand and committed to this - but this can't be exclusive. The industry needs a collective, bold move and better collaboration to address the challenge," Mr Barr added.

For Linda Cummins, the program has been transformative both professionally and personally. "Beforehand, I was capable in my role but unsure about my future in the industry. Now I feel like I can actually study, qualify, and open up more career possibilities. It's given me real confidence," she says.

Balancing work with study and family as the mum of three daughters has been demanding but manageable for Ms Cummins: "You can fit it around your lifestyle. It's not just about getting a certificate. You're supported by BT, by Striver, and you feel there's a real pathway into the future."

Her long-term ambition is clear: "Ultimately, I'd love to move into a financial advice role. It's probably a couple of years away, but I can see it now. This program has shown me I can do it and that there's a place for me in this industry."

For more on BT's collaboration with Striver, visit the BT website: <https://www.bt.com.au/striver.html>

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