



Communication, Community and Reputation  
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## FINANCIAL PLANNERS MORE SKILLED FOR RAPID CHANGES AFFECTING CUSTOMERS

**13 December 2004:** A panel discussion comprising the financial planning heads from the big four banks has revealed that their focus on improving financial planners' excellence is producing positive results, while more people are turning to their financial planners to guide them through the increasingly complex retirement planning landscape.

At the Financial Planning Association's Annual Convention in December, panellist, Tim Gunning, the Commonwealth Bank's General Manager, Network Financial Planning, outlined how the training, skills and customer focus of the Bank's planners had improved significantly, reflecting the rapid changes in the industry and planners' critical role in customer wealth creation and management.

"Faced with an abundance of financial information and new options, especially in the area of superannuation, our customers are depending increasingly on financial planners to help them build and create their wealth," he said.

"This year we at Commonwealth Financial Planning have increased our teams of technical experts, launched a training academy, put the planners through rigorous training and testing and equipped them with the most up-to-date technology and tools", Mr Gunning said

"Our financial planners are taking more pride in the quality of the advice and plans they provide and in making their advice more accessible and affordable."

Mr Gunning said that while perceptions are definitely changing, many older Australians remain reticent about financial planners, as shown in a recent Newspoll survey finding that 59% of pre-retirees have not made a financial plan or seen a financial planner.

"My biggest challenge is to get the message out to customers that while the skills, training and expertise of financial planners do vary across the industry, financial planners from the major banks represent a trusted authority," he said.

"My advice to anyone who is still nervous about seeing a financial planner, is to see someone who has the backing of a solid, trusted financial institution behind them."

**Ends**

### Note to Editors

The FPA Annual Convention & Expo 2004 took place in Sydney 1-3 December. The panelist discussion was facilitated by Peter Dawson and panelists included: Mike Goodall, GM, ANZ Financial Planning, Melbourne; Adrian Hondros, GM, National Australia Financial Planning, Sydney; Tim Gunning, GM, Network Financial Planning, Commonwealth Bank, Sydney; and Justin Greiner, Head of Financial Planning, BT Financial Group, Sydney.

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