



eowa employer of choice for women 2005 organisational profile



HOLDEN

Organisational Background

EOWA asked Holden Ltd to explain some of their initiatives and workplace programs instigated to achieve equal opportunity in the organisation, and why they are committed to being an 'EOWA Employer of Choice for Women' (EOCFW).

Organisation Information

INDUSTRY SECTOR	=	Manufacturing
NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES	=	9724 (as at Jan 2005)
% OF FEMALE EMPLOYEES	=	10 % (Hourly 7%; Salaried 17%)
% of FEMALES in MANAGEMENT	=	Executive Management 33%

View the Holden website at www.holden.com.au

Q Why are you committed to becoming an EOCFW?

In order to tap into the potential pool of talent available to us, we have a real business need to attract and retain more women in our workforce. Over the past 5 years we have made a concerted effort to address some of the issues that women face and have had some significant successes. Our female representation has increased to 10% in 2004, but there is still a long way to go. Our EOCFW citation means that we are able to demonstrate to potential employees and our customers that we are serious about supporting women who work at Holden, and we want to attract more of them. In a labour market where there is a growing shortage of skilled workers, attracting more women will be a key factor in our continuing success and sustainability.

Q What did you do?

Our Diversity at Holden policy was launched in 1999 – this was a strong statement that Holden was committed to ensuring all employees were provided with optimal opportunities at work to develop and operate at their full potential. We had always been proud of our cultural diversity but it became very apparent that there were significant challenges in our workforce becoming more gender balanced.

We reviewed our employment policies and processes to ensure that women were being given a "fair go". All Hiring Managers had to undertake in house training in recruitment and selection before they were involved in interviewing candidates for positions. Our promotions, advertising and website featured women working in a broad range of roles within Holden.

We addressed issues that may have been impeding women's progress to ensure they were being given opportunities for training and development, transfer and promotion. Our leadership development program included the business case for diversity and the need to create a more diverse workforce in order to remain creative, innovative and competitive.



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We started to talk about work life flexibility – for women and men - to challenge the male full time “ideal” worker and consider alternative arrangements that would still deliver business results. We continue to encourage our team leaders to focus on results rather than presence.

Q *How did you make it happen?*

We had strong leadership to make it happen. Our former and current Managing Directors were both from General Motors affiliates overseas and knew the benefits for our business by tapping into our female talent. Our first woman was appointed to the Board of Directors in 2001 and other women have followed her to the Board table since – with the current leadership team demonstrating gender and generational balance. Gender Balance was included in our business plan – and linked to the Talent Pathway for Human Resources. Issues important to women got discussed when they were raised at senior levels of the organisation.

In 2002 we became the first automotive manufacturer in Australia to introduce 14 weeks paid maternity leave – and received positive reactions from our employees and from the wider community. As a result of this, and with greater consideration being given to flexible working arrangements on return, the proportion of women returning from maternity leave has increased from 67% to 92%. A policy and process for the provision of lactation breaks has also been established.

We established Diversity Councils where up to 50% of positions were occupied by women.

A work life flexibility strategy was approved. This strategy has 4 main platforms – flexible working arrangements, family support, the ageing workforce, and health and wellbeing.

Formal and informal mentoring arrangements were taken up – for both women and men, involving women as mentors and mentees.

The reporting process for EOWA provides a way to measure our progress across the seven employment matters. Results of our progress were communicated to management teams via the HR network and issues could then be addressed in the areas where they impacted.

Q *What were the challenges you had to overcome? How did you overcome them?*

We are still on the journey so we are still overcoming the challenges. Holden’s culture has moved away from an old style management model of paternalism where women were “looked after” – to one where women feel included, safe, supported and empowered to take responsibility for themselves.

As more than 85% of our employees work in our Manufacturing and Engineering departments, we need to work with schools, governments, unions and employer bodies to make our industry and our company more attractive to girls and women. This will take time. We make opportunities to showcase our employees, especially women in traditional male roles, when we can – and always ensure women are represented in careers fairs, trade shows etc.

Q *What impact has it had on the business and on the women in the organisation?*

Our employee census results show that our female employees feel generally more positive overall about working at Holden and in some categories of response items (e.g. culture of fairness and respect, work life balance) they recorded significantly more favourable responses.

In early 2005 the Holden Women’s Council was established, a group of senior women who will work together to discuss issues of general importance and set objectives. This is the first formal



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opportunity to encourage networking of women within Holden and we expect that this networking will also spread within and between other groups of women.

General Motors globally is shining the spotlight on women in our workplaces and as consumers. This is an area where there is a great deal of interest and enthusiasm and where we have the opportunities to make further significant progress towards increased attraction and retention and greater business success.