

## Media Release

Tuesday, 4 March 2008

### Employer of Choice for Women – seventh consecutive year

**St John of God Health Care has been named an Employer of Choice for Women for the seventh consecutive year in recognition of policies and initiatives supporting its predominantly female work force.**

The Employer of Choice for Women citation is awarded annually by the Australian Government's Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency (EOWA).

St John of God Health Care, an international health care group with hospitals, outreach and diagnostic services in NSW, WA, and Victoria, and in Christchurch, New Zealand, and the Asia-Pacific region, employs nearly 8,000 caregivers (as it describes its staff). Of its workforce, 85% are female; 62% work part time; and 70% of managers are female, many of whom work part time.

Group Director Human Resources, Ian Oakley, said it was imperative to provide policies and initiatives to support a predominantly female workforce, particularly in the context of national and global shortages of nurses, midwives and other health care professionals. "The EOWA citation provides us with significant positioning in a competitive marketplace and assists us to attract the best possible employees and importantly, retain them," Ian said.

This year, EOWA set several new criteria, including that organisations achieve a pay equity gap of less than 17%, which is the ABS recorded Australia-wide gap. This means that currently female full time adult ordinary earnings average 83% of their male counterparts.

St John of God Health Care's pay equity gap is 10% over all caregivers or 6% if hospital management and doctors/medical officers are excluded.

Ian said a recent initiative helping women was a group wide policy, approved in late 2007, to provide all caregivers with flexible working options, including job sharing, part time work, purchased leave, deferred salary, compressed time, remote access and phased retirement. "This recognises the benefit to both us and our caregivers of strategies enabling people to manage and balance their professional and personal responsibilities." Ian said.

In October 2007, St John of God Health Care engaged Ernst and Young to conduct a Work Life Balance Survey of caregivers aged 45 +, the group's largest demographic. The findings are informing workplace planning and policies to ensure a sustainable workforce into the future.

"We aim to provide working environments and flexible working options to meet the work life balance needs of our caregivers, including their personal carer responsibilities and the transition through their later stages of working life in preparation for retirement," Ian said. The survey showed that 81% of all caregivers aged 45 plus were satisfied or had no issues about their current work life balance; and 59% of caregivers aged 45 plus planned to work with St John of God Health Care until they retired.

Ian says the group would not rest on its laurels and would continue to research and implement policies and initiatives in response to societal changes and the changing needs of its workforce.

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