

equal opportunity for women in the workplace agency **annual report**



0809



**Australian Government**

---

**Equal Opportunity for  
Women in the Workplace Agency**



ISSN: 1444-4232

© Commonwealth of Australia 2009


This work is copyright. Apart from any use as permitted under the *Copyright Act 1968*, no part may be reproduced by any process without prior written permission from the Commonwealth available from the Commonwealth Copyright Administration, Copyright Law Branch, Attorney-General's Department.

Requests and enquiries concerning reproduction and rights should be addressed to the Commonwealth Copyright Administration, Copyright Law Branch, Attorney-General's Department, Robert Garran Offices, National Circuit, BARTON, ACT, 2600 or posted at: <http://www.ag.gov.au/cca>.



**Australian Government**  
**Equal Opportunity for  
Women in the Workplace Agency**

Level 7, 111 Pacific Highway  
North Sydney NSW 2060  
ABN 47 641 643 874  
Tel (02) 9448 8500  
Fax (02) 9448 8572  
[www.eowa.gov.au](http://www.eowa.gov.au)



The Hon Tanya Plibersek  
Minister for the Status of Women  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister

I have pleasure in presenting to you the Annual Report of the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency for the year 2008-2009.

The report has been prepared in accordance with Part III, Subsection 12(1) of the *Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999*, which requires EOWA, as soon as practicable, and in any event within 6 months, after each 31 May, to submit to the Minister a report on its operations during the year that ended on that 31 May.

This Annual Report covers the period from 1 July 2008 – 30 June 2009 but also includes EOWA's most current report assessment data from compliance reports submitted for the 1 April 2008 – 31 May 2009 reporting year.

Yours sincerely

Mairi Steele  
Acting Director  
23 October 2009

# Our Vision

To achieve equal opportunity for women in Australian workplaces.

# Our Mission

To lead Australian employers to create workplaces where women's contribution is equally valued, recognised and rewarded by:

- Providing unique education and leading-edge solutions;
- Building sustainable partnerships; and
- Engaging community debate to increase the rate of change.

# Contents

---

01

**6 Review by Director**

---

02

**10 EOWA Overview**

- 11 Role and Functions
  - 12 Organisational Structure
  - 12 Outcome and Output Structure
- 

03

**13 Report on Performance**

- 14 Actual Performance in Overall Achievement of Outcome
  - 15 Actual Performance for Output
    - Reporting
    - Waiving
    - Insights from Reporting
    - Annual Survey
    - Educating HR and Diversity Practitioners
    - Communications
    - Building Partnerships
- 

04

**37 Management and Accountability**

- 38 Corporate Governance
- 40 External Scrutiny
- 40 Management of Human Resources
- 42 Purchasing
- 43 Asset Management
- 43 Consultants, Competitive Tendering and Contracting
- 44 Providing Access to People with Disabilities

# Contact

For any enquiries in relation to information contained in the Annual Report, please contact:

**Amber Fitzpatrick**

A/g Communications Officer

**Email:** [amber.fitzpatrick@eowa.gov.au](mailto:amber.fitzpatrick@eowa.gov.au)

Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency  
Level 7, 111 Pacific Highway  
North Sydney NSW 2060

PO Box 712  
North Sydney NSW 2059

**Telephone:** (02) 9448 8500

**Fax:** (02) 9448 8572

For more information about EOWA and its role and functions, please visit our **website:** [www.eowa.gov.au](http://www.eowa.gov.au)

An electronic copy of the annual report is available at:  
[http://www.eowa.gov.au/Information\\_Centres/Resource\\_Centre/EOWA\\_Publications/Annual\\_Reports/EOWA\\_Annual\\_Report\\_08\\_09.asp](http://www.eowa.gov.au/Information_Centres/Resource_Centre/EOWA_Publications/Annual_Reports/EOWA_Annual_Report_08_09.asp)

# Appendices

46	<b>01</b>	Financial Statements
74	<b>02</b>	Occupational Health and Safety
75	<b>03</b>	Freedom of Information
76	<b>04</b>	Advertising and Market Research
77	<b>05</b>	Ecologically Sustainable Development and Environmental Performance
77	<b>06</b>	Discretionary Grants
78	<b>07</b>	Consultancies Commissioned
79	<b>08</b>	EOWA Staffing
81	<b>09</b>	Non-compliant Organisations
82	<b>10</b>	Waived Organisations
84	<b>11</b>	2008 EOWA Business Achievement Award Winners
85	<b>12</b>	2009 EOWA Employers of Choice for Women List
4		Contact Officer
87		Glossary
88		Index

# 01

Review by Director



## Review by Director



**Mairi Steele**  
Acting Director, EOWA

It has been a privilege to head-up the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency (EOWA) over the past eight months and to carry on the important work undertaken by Anna McPhee. Anna left the Agency in November 2008 after four highly productive and successful years in the role.

2008-2009 has been a period of considerable activity within the Agency and in the equal opportunity arena, particularly around issues for women. During this time the Agency was able to contribute its specialist knowledge to a number of inquiries. These included the Inquiry into the Effectiveness of the Commonwealth *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* in Eliminating Discrimination and Promoting Gender Equality; the Productivity Commission Inquiry into Paid Maternity, Paternity and Parental Leave; and the House of Representatives Inquiry into Pay Equity and Associated Issues Related to Increasing Female Participation in the Workforce. This activity is indicative of the increased focus the Federal Government is placing on issues relating to women in the workforce.

It is in this same spirit that in June 2009 the Minister for the Status of Women, the Hon. Tanya Plibersek initiated a review of EOWA and its underlying legislation, the *Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999*. The Review comes at a time when many of the indicators of progress in equal opportunities for women appear to have ground to a halt. For example, data from EOWA's reporting organisations shows that the number of female CEOs has remained fixed at 10.1%, and the number of female managers has increased only slightly from 33.3% to 33.5% in 2007-08. Coupled with the poor results from the Australian Census of Women in Leadership released in October 2008, this paints a bleak picture for women in senior positions in Australian businesses.

On a more positive note, the EOWA 2007-08 annual survey results show an increase in the provision of paid maternity leave among EOWA reporting organisations from 48.9% to 50.8%, representing an increase of 27.1% since 2001. In May 2009 the Government announced the introduction of a Paid Parental Leave Scheme (available from 1 January 2011) which can be taken in conjunction with, or in addition to, existing employer provided parental leave. This will benefit many working women who do not have access to employer funded parental leave. In addition, the Government's new workplace relations system, introduced by the *Fair Work Act*, provides stronger protections for women, including a right to request flexible working arrangements and equal remuneration provisions which include the right to equal pay for work of equal or comparable value.

EOWA's annual survey of reporting organisations also points to areas for improvement within organisations, such as sex-based harassment. Almost all reporting organisations have formal procedures for dealing with sex-based harassment in their workplaces. However only 59% provide sex based harassment training to their staff and even fewer provide this training to managers. These findings are significant when considering that one in five women will experience sexual harassment in the workplace in their lifetime, and reinforces the fact that there is still much work to be done to improve conditions for working women.

The good news is that the Agency has seen an enthusiastic response from a growing group of organisations committed to improving outcomes for women within their organisations. Despite tough economic times, EOWA continued to receive a steady number of Business Achievement Award nominations (44 in total) and 2008-09 saw an increase in the number of organisations successful in achieving the Employer of Choice for Women citation from 99 to 111.

Once again the Agency has completed a number of diverse projects to further its role in educating both business and the community on issues surrounding equal opportunity. An Auspoll survey commissioned jointly by the Diversity Council Australia and EOWA in 2008 shows that over 80% of the business and wider community believe that action must be taken to close the gender pay gap, while exposing a lack of understanding about pay inequity and its causes. The Agency initiated Equal Pay Day for the first time in August 2008 which created lively discussion around the gender pay gap and highlighted its costs to women and business. To maintain this momentum the Agency has improved its educational resources on the gender pay gap.

In June 2009, EOWA released the Retail Industry Vertical report which analyses the position of, and conditions for women within the sector's reporting organisations. It revealed that only 14% of organisations in the sector provide paid maternity leave (compared to over 50% of reporting organisations as a whole). On the other hand, the gender pay gap within the sector sits at 10.1%, which is significantly lower than the national average of approximately 17%. This is particularly interesting due to the high concentration of women in the sector (60%).

EOWA released three significant reports in the last twelve months which examined the situation for senior females within Australian organisations; these are the biennial EOWA Australian Census of Women in Leadership; Pay, Power and Position; and Agender in the Boardroom. Disappointingly, the Census figures show a decline in the number of female CEOs, board directors and executive managers in the ASX200 companies to 2%, 8.3% and 10.7% respectively. An enhanced focus on increasing female representation at the decision making levels of business will help Australian organisations to develop role models and mentors for talented and developing women, and foster more gender balanced workplaces.

The Agency and its staff are committed to bettering outcomes for Australian women and business, and we look forward to making further inroads in the year ahead. I would like to personally thank the staff at EOWA for their ongoing dedication to the issues, their hard work over the past twelve months, and for the support they have provided to me in my role.

# 02

## EOWA Overview



# EOWA Overview

## Role and Functions

EOWA's primary role is to:

- Administer the *Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999* (the Act).

The principal objectives of the Act are to:

- Promote the principle that employment for women should be dealt with on the basis of merit;
- Promote the elimination of discrimination, both direct and indirect, and the provision of equal employment opportunity for women in relation to Employment Matters among employers; and
- Foster workplace consultation between employers and employees on issues concerning equal opportunity for women in relation to employment.

The functions of EOWA are:

- To advise and assist relevant employers in the development and implementation of workplace programs;
- To issue guidelines to assist relevant employers to achieve the purposes of the Act;
- To monitor the lodging of reports by relevant employers as required by the Act and to review those reports and deal with them in accordance with the Act;
- To monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of workplace programs in achieving the purposes of the Act;
- To undertake research, educational programs and other programs for the purpose of promoting equal opportunity for women in the workplace;
- To promote understanding and acceptance, and public discussion, of equal opportunity for women in the workplace;
- To review the effectiveness of the Act in achieving its purposes; and
- To report to the Minister on matters in relation to equal opportunity for women in the workplace.

In addition to any other powers conferred on EOWA by the Act, EOWA has the power to do all things necessary or convenient to be done for or in connection with the performance of the functions of EOWA.

### Organisational Structure

EOWA is a statutory authority located within the portfolio of the Australian Commonwealth Department of Family, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA). The Directorship of EOWA is a statutory appointment made by the Governor-General of Australia. The Director reports directly to the Minister for the Status of Women and embodies the powers and functions as described in the Act.

During 2008-09, in accordance with Section 28 of the Act, Mairi Steele was appointed as Acting Director of EOWA by the Minister for the Status of Women, the Hon. Tanya Plibersek MP.

### Outcome and Output Structure

FIGURE 1

Organisational Structure Relating to Outputs and Outcomes

