

01

Review by Director



Review by Director



Anna McPhee
Director, EOWA

The past year has been extremely productive and interesting for the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency, with numerous new projects completed to further enhance our role in educating and assisting Australian employers to implement programs that enable women to participate and advance equally in the workplace.

Women's participation in the Australian workforce has increased slightly from 47.2 per cent in 2006-07 to 47.8 per cent, although this figure remains lower than in 2005-06, when women comprised 48.5 per cent of Australian employees. The percentage of female CEOs in EOWA reporting organisations has continued to increase, up from 9.8 per cent in 2006-07 to 10.6 per cent.

The 2006-07 EOWA annual survey results showed that the provision of paid maternity leave among EOWA reporting organisations increased from 23.7 per cent in 2001 to 48.9 per cent in 2007. The percentage of organisations providing twelve weeks or more in line with both the recommendations of the International Labour Organisations and the World Health Organisation has increased to 40 per cent, compared to just 27 per cent two years ago.

In 2006, five years after the inaugural Employer of Choice for Women (EOCFW) criteria were determined, EOWA decided to review the citation to ensure it reflected the positive progress employers have made and ensure its status as a benchmark for which organisations can continue to strive. In 2008 organisations were required to meet six new standards.

Ninety-nine reporting organisations rose to the challenge and successfully applied for EOCFW status under the new prerequisites, demonstrating that they provide paid maternity leave of a minimum 6 weeks, have female managers working part-time and have a gender pay gap that is less than their industry average, among other leading edge achievements. EOWA will continue to work with reporting organisations, encouraging them to keep raising the bar and aim to achieve EOCFW status by implementing new policies to meet the revised criteria.

While there has certainly been positive change and progress made toward achieving equal opportunity for women in the workplace, research conducted by EOWA over the past twelve months has shown us that there is still a long way to go.

The Top Earners Report, released by EOWA in January 2008, revealed the disappointing reality that there is a significant gender pay gap at top earner level (where a top earner is one of the five most highly paid executives in a company). The report, which analysed pay data collected as part of the 2006 EOWA Census of Women in Leadership, found that women hold just seven per cent of top earner positions in the ASX200 and that at top earner level, the overall median pay for women is just 58 per cent of that for men. Female Chief Financial Officers and Chief Operating Officers earn half the wage of their male equivalents, while in Chief Executive Officer positions, a female earns just two-thirds the salary of her male counterpart.

When considered alongside Graduate Careers Australia's *GradStats* figures, which revealed in 2007 that male graduates earn a median starting salary \$3,000 higher than female graduates, and that male graduate salaries increase at a greater rate than for women, the Top Earners Report indicates that the gender pay gap affects a woman's salary from the very beginning; an inequity that will affect her salary throughout her career, across all levels of the workplace.

Released in April 2008, EOWA's *Generation F: Attract, Engage, Retain* research publication revealed further barriers for women in the workplace. The report, which surveyed women and men in the Australian workplace aged 16-65 on their perceptions and attitudes toward their careers and workplaces, revealed that despite the skills shortage, there is a clear discrepancy between what women want and expect from a role and workplace, and what they experience in reality.

It was found that a quarter of women do not feel their employers provide them with a career path, while nearly a fifth of women left their previous job because of a difficulty in progressing. While 83 per cent of women consider organisational support of work/life balance to be important, 42 per cent believe they do not have access to flexible working conditions. In addition, a quarter of women and over a fifth of men agreed that women and men are not treated equally in the workplace, and 43 per cent of women and nearly half of men believe there is a boys' club within their organisation.

While these research pieces have not brought good news, EOWA is determined to harness the findings and strengthen our commitment to further build on our strong relationships with Australian employers. Over the coming year, we will continue to educate and work with employers to improve their workplace equal opportunity programs to achieve positive outcomes for women, men and the business.

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*
- Provide information, advice, education and communication to reporting organisations and members of the broader community to achieve equal opportunity for women in the workplace

The functions of EOWA are to:

- advise and assist relevant employers in the development and implementation of workplace programs;
- issue guidelines to assist relevant employers to achieve the purposes of the Act;
- 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;
- monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of workplace programs in achieving the purposes of the Act;
- undertake research, educational programs and other programs for the purpose of promoting equal opportunity for women in the workplace;
- promote understanding and acceptance, and public discussion, of equal opportunity for women in the workplace;
- review the effectiveness of the Act in achieving its purposes;
- 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.

Outcome and Output Structure

FIGURE 1

Organisational Structure Relating to Outputs and Outcomes

