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Equal Opportunity For Women In The Workplace Agency
Annual Report 2001-02





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Annual Report 2001-02

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Equal Opportunity for Women
in the Workplace Agency



The Hon. Tony Abbott MP
Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister,

It is with honour that I present to you the Annual Report for the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency for the year 2001-2002.

This report has been prepared in accordance with subsection 63(1) of the *Public Service Act 1999* which requires the EOWA Director to give a report to the Minister for presentation to the parliament.

Subsection 12(1) of the *Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999* 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.

In presenting this report, I wish to acknowledge all EOWA staff for their contribution and dedication to working towards our goals, mission and vision.

Yours sincerely,

Fiona Krautil
Director of the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency
25 September 2002

Through effective reporting and inspiring educational programmes, we are moving forward in achieving our goal of becoming a ***centre of excellence.***

EOWA Overview

Report on Performance

Management and Accountability

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Our Vision

To create an Australia where every woman can achieve her greatest potential in the workplace.

Our Mission

To inspire Australian employers to take action to improve equal opportunity outcomes for women in the workplace by:

- Delivering practical solutions
- Building strategic partnerships; and
- Leading public debate to increase the rate of change

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Fiona Krautil
Director of the
Equal Opportunity for
Women in the
Workplace Agency

It is our experience that leading Australian employers recognise the need to advance women in the workplace. Why? Because these organisations see the value and business benefits that a diverse workforce brings.

EOWA continues to go from strength to strength. Over the past year EOWA has grown in stature and its staff have delivered outstanding outcomes. We are a more effective organisation than ever, and continue to add more value to our key stakeholders: women and business.

While reporting and compliance are still necessary functions for EOWA, EOWA has also strengthened and updated its advisory, educative, research and support functions, which are vital for encouraging business to develop and implement true merit-based equality in the workplace.

It is clear that this mix of regulation and education is working well. The ringing success of last October's EOWA Business Achievement Awards is a prime example of what EOWA has to offer in addition to its compliance role. It was wonderfully inspiring to see the calibre of the 180 business leaders who demonstrated their commitment to the issue by attending, including 29 chief executives. Even better is the fact that six of them were themselves so inspired and impressed that they have sponsored the event for this year.

This was an unprecedented endorsement of EOWA's new approach, and of the Commonwealth Government's support for a greater emphasis on education.

There is, however, still much work to be done.

More Australian women than ever before are working, but they still tend to be concentrated in lower-paid, lower-status jobs. Many employers are still uncertain about how to make their workplaces more effective in including women in all areas, and at all levels. There are also still issues that arise as a result of the career choices schoolgirls make. Even when they are committed to Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) in action, many companies within the "traditionally male" industries, including information technology (IT) and engineering, still have trouble finding women to employ or making their workplaces appealing to the women they do wish to attract.

EOWA staff and the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Advisory Board members visited “best practice” workplaces throughout Australia during the year and a dominant theme that emerged was the beneficial impact on the whole workplace that flows on from a quality equal opportunity programme. Unfortunately workplaces that have such programmes are still the exception rather than the rule. The majority of the employers who report to us still see EEO for women as a risk management or compliance issue, rather than a strategic business issue, which I find frustrating and disappointing.

EOWA is in a strong position to assist employers implement workplace programmes that work for women, work for families and work for the businesses themselves.

The many facets of the issues surrounding working women are hot topics in the community, particularly paid maternity leave. The extraordinary and enduring public debate about this, sparked by the Federal Sex Discrimination Commissioner’s paper is indicative of the level of public concern. EOWA contributed to this debate in April 2002 by launching up to date solid national data on paid maternity (and paid paternity) leave. The statistics, which show that on average 23% of Australian employers of 100 or more staff offer paid maternity leave — 19% of employers of under 1000 staff and 38% of employers with over 1000 staff — were collected as part of EOWA’s 2000-2001 reporting process. They were submitted as part of EOWA’s paid maternity leave submission to the HREOC “Valuing Parenthood” inquiry in July 2002.

“ The many facets of the issues surrounding working women are hot topics in the community ”

In June 2002 we said goodbye with great sadness to the EEO Advisory Board. Over the past three years the EEO Advisory Board, under the excellent direction of Deanne Bevan, has been a key advisor on EOWA’s new direction, and a key to our success in improving our communication with industry. Over the next year we will explore alternative ways to maintain this vital communication.

Reporting – Transition from Policing to Advising and Educating

In December 2001 and January 2002 EOWA conducted a pilot coverage project to identify relevant employers for the purposes of the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999 (the Act) in the retail and business services sectors who had not reported. We identified 82 new employers with 62,290 staff, and they are now all part of the reporting process. EOWA will continue to work industry by industry to ensure that all employers covered by the Act are aware of their obligations.

In March 2002 I was delighted to be able to post 226 public compliance reports on our website as a searchable database which enables employers to find relevant reports which will help them develop their own workplace programmes. By early 2003 all 2002 compliance reports will also be available in this form. During the year EOWA continued to build on the positive relationships developed

The number of employers waived was updated and finalised on 30 September to 112

with employers during last year's first reporting cycle under the amended Act. To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of reporting, EOWA introduced a case management approach, where each assessor managed their own group of clients, where practicable specialising in specific industry sectors. This process will be evaluated in October 2002 with a view to further streamlining the reporting process.

Over the past year the EOWAR database underwent further development, with a focus on improving the reporting process and making it faster. In 2002 78% of employers submitted their reports electronically — this innovation is clearly one they appreciate.

In the 2002 reporting year 116 employers met the requirements of waiving under the Act. These organisations were able to demonstrate that they are taking all practical measures to address issues for women in their workplaces.

More than 2600 educative consultations have taken place in person and over the phone between EOWA advisors and employers in the 2002 reporting cycle as a way to add value to the reporting process. No specific complaints have been received to date on the reporting process.

To assist EOWA to identify educational priorities, we conducted a short survey asking employers to identify their top priorities for change to achieve real equal opportunity for women in the workplace and the barriers to achieving that change. The results will be released by February 2003.

EOWA Business Achievement Awards

As part of our strategy to engage business leaders and inspire action, EOWA held its extremely successful inaugural Business Achievement Awards in Sydney in October 2001. There was strong competition in each category and it was with pleasure we were able to recognise the following significant achievers:

- Leading CEO for the Advancement of Women — Mr Brian Schwartz, Chief Executive Officer, Ernst & Young;
- Leading Change Agent — Ms Serenella Prelaz, Corporate Diversity Manager, Ford Motor Company of Australia;
- Leading Company over 500 employees — Mars Incorporated;
- Leading Company under 500 employees — Santa Sabina College; and
- Outstanding EEO Practice for the Advancement of Women — Downs Group Training.

EOWA also successfully launched our “Employer of Choice for Women” citation. This valuable recognition was given to 56 employers who demonstrated that they were committed to advancing women and business. The citation can be used on recruitment advertising and it is proving to be highly sought after by employers who understand the value to the bottom line of attracting and retaining talent.

New Educative Website

A major achievement for the year was the development of EOWA's new educative website www.eowa.gov.au, which was launched in June 2002 with a focus on providing practical assistance to help our reporting contacts identify the issues for women in the workplace and to address the issues.

The website has been redesigned and remodelled to engage, educate and enrich our key stakeholders and other interested internet browsers who visit it.

Its new features include:

- New analysis tools, including a Costing Turnover Calculator;
- Employment Matter process tools to show the importance of the human factor (or how things can go wrong despite having textbook management processes in place);
- Women's career development tools, including tools on mentoring, women's networks, maintaining the momentum for change, engaging men in the change process, and flexible work by design.

We were also delighted to be able to add 30 new case studies of companies across a range of industries that have successfully identified the issues for women at work and taken action to address them.

Speeches

The Director, Deputy Director and Manager of EOWA Employer of Choice for Women and Waiving each delivered a number of leading edge public presentations to a wide range of audience groups, including Chambers of Commerce and Industry, human resources managers and staff, chief executives, business leaders, women's networks, academics and the general community, with the goal of educating and inspiring participants to advance women and business. One of the speeches that has received the most enthusiastic comment was "Engaging Men and Boys to Achieve Employment Equity", delivered at the Office of the Status of Women's conference in August 2001.

eActionNews

We were also extremely pleased to launch our inaugural *eActionNews*, following feedback from employers letting us know that they were keen to receive up to date electronic educational material that they could easily circulate within their organisations. Three bi-monthly issues of *eActionNews* have been sent out via email. In addition, EOWA produced one hard copy issue *Action News*, highlighting our EOWA Business Achievement Award winners.

Partnerships

Educational workshops

Over the past year EOWA has updated and improved the educative workshops it offers clients and has conducted them in partnership with a range of employer associations across Australia. EOWA also offered one-to-one industry consultations after each workshop and these proved particularly useful to companies interested in applying for waived status under the Act.

“How Does Diversity Change Really Happen?” ARC Linkage Project

EOWA is participating in a successful research partnership with the National Diversity Think Tank, the NSW Department for Women and the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology to study the context of diversity change in organisations that achieve successful change.

“Balancing the Till in 2001” Retail Research Project

The final report of the “Balancing the Till in 2001” research project conducted by EOWA in partnership with the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations’ (DEWR) Work & Family Unit and the Australian Retailers’ Association (ARA) was launched by Peter Boxall, Secretary of DEWR, at the executive dinner of the ARA in Melbourne in February 2002. EOWA has conducted two workshops with retailers to assist them look at ways to improve the retention of good staff. Two of the major challenges to emerge were the need to provide family friendly work practices across the industry and the need to redesign work so women could escape the “sticky floor” of what is often a 24 hour a day, 7 day a week business.

Catalyst “Women in Leadership” Census

An exciting new strategy of EOWA's for engaging CEOs and business leaders is our Catalyst “Women in Leadership” census. I am very pleased indeed that in November 2002 EOWA, in partnership with the US non-profit organisation Catalyst, the Australian Institute of Company Directors, ANZ Bank, Macquarie University, the Office of the Status of Women, and Expertise Australia will launch the first ever study into women’s business leadership in Australia. This ABS-approved study comprises a census of Women Board Directors and a census of Women Corporate Officers and Top Earners.

The census is designed to establish accurate data on the number of women on boards and in senior management positions in leading Australian companies. It uses the standard practice of benchmarking to promote women’s advancement and applies the business principle of “what gets measured gets done” to focus attention on the issue. It serves as a marker of accomplishment — and of the work still to be done.

The study replicates an identical census by the Catalyst organisation in the US and Canada of Top 1000 and Top 500 Companies, respectively. In North America the release of these reports are a major corporate event. We aim to achieve the same result here.

The results and the analysis of them will provide international comparison as well as domestic research. The findings will be utilised by the public via the EOWA website. It will serve as an educative tool for business, students and the general public. The 2002 Catalyst Australian Census will form the benchmark for subsequent years. Companies taking part will be recognised in this role and will enjoy prime positioning for subsequent censuses and performance-based awards.

Outlook for the Future

EOWA's future looks exciting and full of challenges. Our team of quality, dynamic staff will continue to pursue our goal of becoming an Australian centre of excellence on women in the workplace issues and solutions. EOWA will continue to build on our credibility with employers, and deliver pragmatic, solutions oriented and customer-focused service to improve equal opportunity outcomes for Australian working women.

“ Our team of quality, dynamic staff will continue to pursue our goal of becoming an Australian centre of excellence ”

We will continue to identify strategic educational interventions, building on our success to date, in tailoring ideas and solutions to suit employers at their particular stage of their workplace programme, so that individual organisations can move on to becoming an equal opportunity employer for women.

We will continue to expand our information and educational tools on our website. Through the positive relationships we have established with employers through the previous reporting process, our EOWA Business Achievement Awards and our EOWA Employer of Choice for Women (EOCFW) list, we will continue to leverage our core business in order to identify other opportunities by exploring opportunities to engage in new research and educational partnerships through tripartite arrangements with government and non-government organisations (both local and international), academia and industry.

I am confident that EOWA will continue to build on its successes to date: engaging key stakeholders on our journey as we assist an increasing number of Australian employers by showing them the way to enable their staff to fully contribute to the best of their ability.