

## Your Say...

### ORGANISATIONS PIVOTAL IN ADVISING EOWA

The Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency (EOWA) has fulfilled its promise to business, industry and relevant organisations by consulting face-to-face with almost one-quarter of the estimated 2,800 organisations which report to EOWA under the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999.

**M**ore than 686 organisations have participated in the EOWA's employer consultation process to determine business and organisational needs in relation to compliance and reporting under the new legislation. Organisations unable to attend workshops or participate in face-to-face discussion were encouraged to participate through on-line feedback forums.

**Lisa Annese presents a workshop in Sydney**

EOWA implemented the extensive consultation program between October 1999 and June 2000 to ensure that appropriate resources would be created to assist organisations in complying with the new Act.

The consultation process provided valuable feedback which has been incorporated in the reporting and compliance procedures and various tools to assist organisations with implementing the new legislation.

EOWA Director, Fiona Krautil points out that EOWA is dedicated to taking employer needs into account when implementing the new legislation.

Fiona said "The Equal Opportunity for

Women in the Workplace legislation is about assisting business in employing women for mutual benefit - it's about working with business and women to positively impact an organisation's bottom line."

Some of this feedback was obtained via forums and consultations presented in conjunction with industry associations, such as the Victorian Employers' Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VECCI), and Australian Industry Group (AIG).

"We are committed to forming effective working partnerships, responding to feedback from all sectors of business and industry and listening to other interested organisations" Ms Krautil said.

There were an additional 143 organisations who, although not covered under the Act, also participated in the forums as they were interested in the implications of the legislation. This brought the total number of organisations which participated in face-to-face consultation since the roundtables began in late 1999 to 829, with more than half of these meeting with the EOWA in the past five months. An additional 1,240 employers contacted the EOWA Advisory Service to offer feedback on the content and structure of the Voluntary Report Form and Guidelines.

#### EOWA VISION

To inspire Australian employers to bring about a real and fundamental shift in the way they value, utilise, reward and promote women, creating a sustainable social and economic future for all Australians.

#### EOWA MISSION

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

- ▶ Developing a pragmatic and solution-oriented approach
- ▶ Developing strong business/organisational relationships so that they fully capitalise on their female talent and improve their business competitiveness.



**Participants in a workshop; Glenys Perry, Avondale College and John Anderson, Kilpatrick Green**

**It's been a busy time but we value your feedback and we continue to encourage you to talk with us if you have any suggestions or ideas that will assist us to better service your needs!**



# Talking business with Fiona

By now every Australian employer of 100 or more people, who intends to comply with our new Act, should have their 'workplace program' underway. Remember your workplace program, which should be in progress given that the commencement date was April 1st, is expected to be implemented with "intentionality." This means that your organisation can demonstrate that you have intentionally identified the issues for women in your workplace and that action has been taken in relation to them. You need to report on your actions by May 31st 2001.

Accepting that our draft guidelines have been available to assist you in the early stages of developing your workplace programs, I am delighted that we are now at a stage of finalising our Compliance Guidelines (to assist you to develop your workplace program - the central requirement of our new Act). The content of the Voluntary Report Form is also finalised. Both documents are now being further developed visually to improve their user-friendliness. They will be available in this new format on our EOWA website by mid-September.

We have been very pleased with the industry acceptance of our newly developed support materials. I believe that this has been largely due to the very valuable industry feedback we have received from employers, employer associations, our Advisory Board and the efforts of our EOWA staff who integrated the feedback whilst striving to ensure the language remained simple and understandable. However, if you do come across something that you believe requires clarification, please contact us. We are committed to continual improvement of our resources and we welcome your feedback for further consideration.

Employment Matter Guidelines will soon be finalised (which provide you with more detailed information on how to identify issues and take actions on each of the seven employment matters). The Waiving Guidelines are also nearing completion. If your company is interested in being waived from reporting, please read the waiving article in this edition of Action News and access our website for more details. You need to start planning for waiving now!

We have also been delighted with the success of our employer workshops that we have been running in partnership with a number of employer associations. We are currently designing more national workshops that will be conducted in most States in October and November 2000 to further assist employers to develop their workplace program. Please indicate your interest in attending these so we can plan to meet your needs. These workshops will be practical, with the opportunity to hear what other companies are doing and to expand your networks. Our key objectives are to assist your organisation to comply with our act and to add value to your organisational bottom line.

A number of EOWA staff, including myself, are also available to meet with management teams or Equal Opportunity (EO) committees in your organisation to assist you in developing a workplace program that does add value to your business bottom-line. Please contact us to discuss how we can be of assistance.

There are also two useful conferences being held in November 2000 for you to consider attending yourself or sending a colleague from your organisation. These are:

**'Productive Diversity Conference - Delivering the Diversity Dividend'**  
in Melbourne on 13th & 14th November and  
**'Corporate Work & Family Awards'**  
to be held in Sydney on 15th November.

Put these dates in your diary now! The 'Clare Burton Memorial Lectures' by Jocelyn Scutt in each capital city may also be of interest. You will find more details on our website or phone us for further information. We look forward to hearing from you by phone, fax or e-mail or meeting with you at one of our employer workshops!

Regards,

**Fiona Krautl**

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

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# Get in on the Act!

## NEW EOWA WORKSHOPS NOT TO BE MISSED...

With the introduction of the new Act this year, EOWA changed its focus to include a greater commitment to assisting employers in understanding the bottom-line benefits of equal opportunity.

To assist employers in complying with the new legislation, the EOWA is taking to the road. We are running educational workshops in most capital cities in October and November this year. EOWA will offer two workshops:

### **Workshop One - YOUR BUSINESS AND THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE ACT 1999.**

This workshop will provide information on the new legislation, compliance and reporting requirements. Through the use of case studies and interactive group sessions you will be able to identify the actions that best suit your organisation and how to determine their effectiveness. The workshop will help you explore and develop your business case for equal opportunity.

### **Workshop Two - ADDING VALUE TO THE BOTTOM-LINE – LEADING DIVERSITY PRACTICES IN ACTION**

This workshop will look at how equal opportunity and diversity can competitively position your business by building your program to meet strategic future needs for your business. Tools to assist you determine the state of play in your organisation and the effectiveness of your program will be provided and discussed. In addition, the Waiving Guidelines will be discussed for those organisations contemplating applying for waiving.

**We would like to note your interest in these proposed workshops. The cover sheet supplied with this issue of Action News contains a fax-back sheet. Nominate which workshop you would like to attend and fax to EOWA or contact Michaela Lyons on (02) 8255 6300 or e-mail michaela.lyons@eowa.gov.au**

**Invitations will be sent by key employer and industry associations, EOWA's partners in providing these workshops. More information on dates, and the associations to contact that are sponsoring the workshops will be available on the Agency's website at [www.eowa.gov.au](http://www.eowa.gov.au)**

## WOMEN IN MANAGEMENT, EOWA TAKES THE FLOOR...

**EOWA has played a significant role in the Macquarie Graduate School of Management's "Women, Management and Employment Relations" two-day conference held in Sydney in July.**

EOWA Director, Fiona Krautil, joined the Sex Discrimination Commissioner Susan Halliday and ICAC Commissioner Irene Moss in giving the opening address on 'EO, Diversity and Discrimination: The Picture In 2000.'

Ms Krautil said it was time that Australian business discarded the old myths which were holding them back. She said that the perception that 'we have fixed all that' does not ring true. Women and men still do not enjoy equal opportunities, and corporate Australia still has much work to do before inappropriate traditions and behaviours are eliminated.

EOWA team members, Lisa Annese and Michelle Hamberger were also in action on the second day of the conference, with an interactive skills-based workshop entitled 'How to Develop a Diversity Program in Today's Workplace'. The workshop provided information about the new Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999 together with case studies on contemporary human resource issues. These were presented within the framework of the Compliance Guidelines, Employment Matters and other tools developed by EOWA to assist employers in applying the new legislation to their workplace.

Vigorous discussion within small breakaway groups, many of whom had different perspectives about the case studies, assisted participants to leave the forum with fresh ideas on how to develop a diversity programme that would be relevant to their organisation.

**Please keep an eye on our website [www.eowa.gov.au](http://www.eowa.gov.au) for AUSTRALIAN CASE STUDIES that may assist you in implementing your Equal Opportunity Programme!**

## THE BUSINESS CASE FOR DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

Diversity in the workplace and the marketplace is a reality. While some companies actively leverage this diversity as an important business resource, many do not. A lack of hard evidence about how diversity can assist the bottom-line seems to be the main sticking point.

In part to establish the business case for diversity management, the Dept of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA) has established nine partnerships, comprising business educators and corporates. The information and resources developed by these partnerships address the key issues of:

- ▶ How to decide if diversity is a central organisational issue;
- ▶ What consequences (positive and negative) can flow from good and poor diversity strategies;

- ▶ What tools are available to help build a diversity strategy.

**These matters will be discussed at a conference titled '21st Century Business: Delivering the Diversity Dividend' to be held at the Hilton on the Park in Melbourne on 13-14 November 2000. A key theme of the conference will be on refocussing thinking about diversity management from problem-solving deficit approaches to an abundance, or dividends, mentality.**

In recognition of the importance of top management involvement in delivering the diversity dividend, DIMA is also planning a series of events for CEOs. The first of these is a breakfast on 28 September as part of Austrade's Business Club Australia Olympics initiatives. Call (02) 6264 3690 for details.

# Someone you can turn to...

If you require assistance in understanding your reporting requirements, or direction in implementing Equal Opportunity (EO) tasks, or looking for some tips on innovative practices, then Elen Burt is eager to help.



She may joke about one day being the Mayor of Bega - her much-loved childhood town on the New South Wales' south coast, but Elen Burt is very serious about equality.

This law and management graduate is just one of the helpful voices behind EOWA's telephone advisory service.

She, and the other client service advisors, can provide case studies, offer suggestions on how to implement staff surveys, and research industry-specific issues to put your organisation on the right track to profitable diversity.

"This is a great job for me. It combines my business and law qualifications, and I am paid to do what I love doing - helping people to implement intelligent business solutions," Elen said.

Having previously worked to promote equality for students at the University

of Canberra before making the move to Sydney at the start of this year, Elen's been on the other side, looking at the Act's requirements from a client's point of view.

She reflects... "People think that it's funny that I moved from Canberra - the public service hub of Australia, to Sydney to become a public servant".

It is, however, an apt title for Elen, who is more than happy to be spending her days providing a public service. "I'm very business-minded. I was drawn to this job because it allows me to combine that part of me with my legal knowledge and my desire to help people," she said.

Elen admits that her commitment to equality - the great Aussie philosophy of giving everyone a 'fair go', has filtered through to every aspect of her life. "I spend my spare time reading newspapers, brochures and

**"This is a great job for me. It combines my business and law qualifications, and I am paid to do what I love doing - helping people to implement intelligent business solutions."**

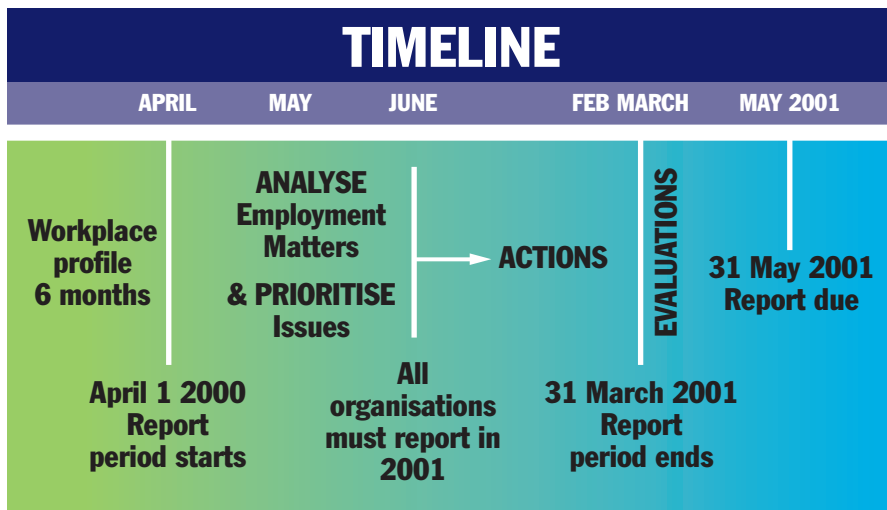
books to keep up with what's new in diversity practices."

And it's not just Elen who is winning from her hobby. The Agency's clients who call her for advice are also gaining an educated insight into the latest and greatest ideas from around the world.

Her next step in remaining a step ahead of the latest philosophies is further education. "I start my Masters of Education next year, and one day I plan to lecture and take on more study in HR and business," she said.

And as for that mayoral position in Bega... "Don't you dare write about that. It's just a little dream for many, many years in the future to give something back to the area where I grew up."

**Elen can be contacted on EOWA's Customer Service Advisory line on (02) 8255 6300.**



EOWA suggests the above timeline to assist you in planning for compliance with the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999

## COULD YOU BE WAIVED?

We recommend that organisations interested in applying for waiving from reporting requirements start planning now! To meet the waiving requirements employers may either arrange for a site visit, to be conducted before 31 May 2001, or submit a written report by 31 May 2001.

EOWA is currently finalising the Waiving Guidelines which will provide assistance and guidance for organisations interested in applying for waiving. These guidelines were presented to the Equal Employment Opportunity Advisory Board in late August 2000. The final version will be available on the Agency's website at [www.eowa.gov.au](http://www.eowa.gov.au) late September. Organisations, unable to access the web who wish to obtain a copy of these guidelines, need to contact EOWA's Advisory Service on (02) 8255 6300 and a copy will be sent.

# Maternity & the Law - Investment versus risk

How can any manager in business today ignore risk management and not maximize the benefits of Equal Opportunity within the workplace?

Organisations that promote diversity see many benefits from their efforts.

These include becoming an employer of choice, higher staff motivation and loyalty, less staff absenteeism, reduced turnover, and an improved image in the marketplace.

These factors improve employee effectiveness and that improves the bottom-line.

However, if organisations are not moved to action by the promise of good fortune, then a new factor may motivate them to action. Over the past few years the case law on equal opportunity employment issues has moved ahead.

In February this year, a Perth dental practice was found guilty of discrimination because they refused to consider the needs of a female charge nurse who had prepared a detailed proposal to return to work part-time after maternity related leave.

It appears the company did not take the time to calculate the potential benefits of making job share available to this longstanding employee whose circumstances had changed.

In another case relating to maternity issues - Swinburne University of Technology (SUT) in Victoria was ordered to pay an Accounts Payable Officer more than \$33,000 after dismissal apparently on the basis of her being pregnant.

It was found that after the worker told her supervisor that she was pregnant, SUT had created an "artificial" assessment process to remove her from the organisation. The accounts area stated there had been "problems" but it was ruled that these were related to a backlog of work, staff shortages and the uncompromising work politics of another employee.

The University gave no reason for her dismissal perhaps implying by default, that the reason had to be related to the employee's pregnancy. The sacked employee was awarded more than \$28,000 for gross salary and nearly \$5,000 in superannuation.

The real cost in such cases runs far higher than the dismissed workers' pay out. Businesses need to also consider the impact on staff morale, disruption to work, associated legal costs and a myriad of other factors.

## WEB IT! QUICK ACCESS TO REPORT FORMS.

The final, approved versions of EOWA's Voluntary Report Form and Compliance Guidelines are now available on the new look EOWA website at [www.eowa.gov.au](http://www.eowa.gov.au).

Members of the EEO Advisory Board who advise The Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency, met in Brisbane recently and officially endorsed the Voluntary Report Form and Compliance Guidelines. The EO Board has played a key role in providing vital stakeholder feedback on the content of this and other relevant documentation.

It is anticipated that following additional input from the most recent Board meeting in late August, the final versions of the Waiving and Employment Matter Guidelines are expected to be available on the EOWA website late September, early October.

The EOWA team has given the website a fresh look, with additional, user-friendly information. In addition to the Report Form and Compliance Guidelines, the site also has information for employers on how to comply with the legislative requirements, a step-by-step guide to building your business case for Equal Opportunity for Women, references to useful publications and resources and links to Australian and international sites associated with equal opportunity.

## COMMUNICATING ELECTRONICALLY – EMAIL US NOW!

A significant finding from industry consultation earlier this year was that the majority of organisations wanted the option of submitting their annual report form electronically. Although this is not currently possible given our existing database configuration, EOWA is currently investigating ways to deliver this preference.

However, considering a shift to electronic reporting raises the issue of cost-effective and timely electronic communication options. Eventually, it is envisaged that via use of e-mail, organisations will be able to receive communications from EOWA as e-mail

attachments, notices, reminders and other correspondence. In line with our vision, in the longer term you may be able to elect to receive e-mail updates on particular issues such as industry briefings and relevant industry news.

However, to make this technological shift, we need your e-mail details so we can update our database.

**Please e-mail us with your details to [paula.cornjeo@eowa.gov.au](mailto:paula.cornjeo@eowa.gov.au).**

Please give us your company's name, phone number, contact person's name and e-mail address.

Before you give these details please

consider the following points:

- ▶ what e-mail address do you use?
- ▶ will this address still be current in 6 months time?
- ▶ will mail from this address be forwarded if the person is unexpectedly on leave?
- ▶ is this person the 'contact person' for EOWA and responsible for the EO program overall?
- ▶ Do you have an official organisation e-mail box?

**We look forward to being inundated with your contact information!  
With thanks for your cooperation.**

# Case Studies

With leading organisations creating individual diversity practices, the plethora of information on innovative Equal Opportunity (EO) practice is growing all the time. With this in mind, EOWA will dip into our case study files each issue to bring you examples from across Australia that we hope will inspire and educate you. We recognise that not every case study will be totally applicable to your organisation, but hope you find some useful reference material.

## FEMALE DOMINATED DOES NOT = EQUALITY

Even though women account for almost 70 percent of the Australian workforce in education, they remain notably under-represented in leadership and management roles.

The Victorian Department of Education is working to change that State's inequality with an innovative program that is having far-reaching implications.

The Department conducted an extensive research and consultation project that identified major inhibitors for women seeking and achieving leadership. Further research is being undertaken this year.

It concluded that women lacked confidence; they bore the brunt of negative perceptions about credibility as future leaders; there was a lack of available mentors; and that women were largely invisible within the organisation.

The research also uncovered that women give a greater focus to their present role, rather than increasing their management skills.

The final inhibitor was women's family responsibilities as carers of children and older family members.

The Department is now combating these discoveries with a multi-faceted "Focus on Women" strategy which includes the Women in Educational Leadership initiative.

With a \$5 million annual budget, the Leadership initiative is delivering a range of programs, including:

- ▶ the Eleanor Davis School Leadership Program, a six-month state-wide mentoring program
- ▶ the "Becoming a Principal" course
- ▶ "At the Interface" - a program for women to improve understanding and use of multi-media technology
- ▶ a dedicated website called "Focus on Women".

A key feature of the program is the involvement of men, as well as women, as sponsors, mentors and planners.

In addition to these women-specific programs, others within the Department have the career development of women linked to their outcomes.

The Post Graduate Scholarships for Women sponsor women for post graduate leadership and management development programs, while the Family Friendly Workplace Program promotes flexible working arrangements where possible.

Work and life balance practices include flexible hours, job sharing and telecommuting/working from home. Models of best practice in family friendly workplaces are being identified to ensure a career path is maintained for women balancing work, family and other life commitments.

The Employees as Carers Information Strategy is a program designed to assist all employees, but women particularly benefit from it as they have primary responsibility for child or elder care.

The Department has also introduced the Managing Diversity Strategy which supports increased understanding and recognition of the vast pool of talent women have to offer.

The tide is turning. Increased numbers of Victoria Education female staff are being promoted and students are benefiting from lower staff turnover figures.

## IT & LEADING EDGE EMPLOYERS

With a woman now at the helm of Hewlett Packard, one of the biggest IT corporations in the world, Aussie IT women will be inspired!

University and professional networking groups are predicting that Carly Fiorina's new position will assist in transforming the image of information technology from a "blokey" profession into a desirable alternative for the modern woman.

Hewlett Packard, both in Australia and overseas, has been playing its part in promoting women's roles in IT long before Ms Fiorina entered the company this year.

The highlights of Hewlett Packard's diversity practices for Australian employees include:

- ▶ A half-day education program specifically dealing with diversity and harassment issues. 'Owned' and delivered by line managers, the program has given credibility to diversity.
- ▶ The Diversity and Harassment Advisory Program, with members drawn from every area of the organisation, advises staff in a professional and confidential manner. (Hewlett Packard estimates the program has led to a 99 percent success rate in resolving workplace issues informally.)
- ▶ Re-design of recruitment and selection practices.
- ▶ Broadened critical competencies required for graduate positions to include non-technical skills. (The organisation has achieved a 50 percent representation of females in its graduate recruitment.)
- ▶ A compulsory "Diversity Learning Forum" to educate staff on differences in gender communication and inappropriate workplace behaviours.

# Board Business

## REPORT FORM & COMPLIANCE GUIDELINES FINALISED!

Members at the fourth Advisory Board meeting, held in Brisbane recently, officially endorsed the Voluntary Report Form and Compliance Guidelines.

The nine-member Board also provided advice, at the request of the Minister to whom the EOWA reports, the Hon. Peter Reith, on how long organisations should be waived from reporting.

EOWA Director, Fiona Krautil, had provided feedback from an extensive

consultation process (see page 1) to Mr Reith indicating that business believed that a one-year waiving period was insufficient incentive to encourage organisations to develop effective workplace programs and apply to be waived. The Board advised that a two-year waiving period was appropriate.

The Board also considered the content and structure of the draft Waiving Guidelines and Employment Matter Guidelines. Board endorsement of the final versions of the Waiving and Employment Matter Guidelines was sought at the Board's meeting held in Sydney on 24 August.

In keeping with the Board's ongoing focus to build strategic links with business, it also

looked at future educational services the EOWA could implement to respond to employer requests for assistance in developing effective workplace programs.

Options under consideration for the education services include: web-based education, workshops or events with stakeholders; voluntary workplace visits; a consultant and trainers register; research projects with stakeholders and industry-based partnerships.

The Board was established to provide the Minister of Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business with advice on matters relating to the operation of the Act and the function of the EOWA. It meets quarterly in different locations throughout the country to establish industry links with local organisations and draw upon their experience.

Brisbane's Conrad International Hotel played host to the Board on this occasion, thanks to the efforts of Lorraine Martin AO, the Queensland Board member.



Front row sitting (left to right): Fiona Krautil, Deanne Bevan. Standing (left to right): Rohan Squirchuk, Jane Goodluck, Reg Hamilton, Lorraine Martin, Therese Bryant, Julie Flynn, Brendan McCarthy.

## EOWA NETWORKS IN QLD

The Advisory Board hosted a stakeholder event in Brisbane in late June where more than 80 employers gained insight into the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999 and EOWA's activities.

Director of the Australian Industry Group (Queensland), David Whiting addressed the gathering, speaking on his confidence in the new Equal Opportunity (EO) legislation to provide more flexible reporting arrangements for employers. Commissioner of the Queensland Anti-Discrimination Commission, Karen Walters, explained the state of play for working women and the need for responsive legislation.

Chair of the Advisory Board, Deanne Bevan, and EOWA Director, Fiona Krautil, also spoke.

The two-hour reception, held immediately after the Advisory Board's all-day meeting, also provided a vital networking opportunity for the more than 80 Queensland employers who attended.

## INSIGHTFUL VISITS BY BOARD!

The Advisory Board participated in two site visits in Brisbane in late June which provided insight into the opportunities and challenges facing women in different industry sectors.

Six Board members and EOWA Director, Fiona Krautil, were treated to a half-day tour of Conrad International Treasury Hotel in the city centre and the Bovis Lend Lease construction site at the Royal Women's Hospital in inner-city Herston.

Human resource staff and four senior management women from the Conrad International Hotel gave the Board members a sneak preview of the future of hospitality, with women securing more senior positions.

The tour was followed by a discussion with women in senior management. Board members agreed that it was heartening to see innovative and creative women being recognised and promoted in the hospitality arena.

The construction site visit provided a valuable insight into the equal opportunity advances made within the male-dominated construction industry.

Board members listened to informal presentations by three women - one working in the administrative area and two facing the challenges of construction work.

The women talked frankly about the exhilaration and obstacles facing women who wanted to work within the construction industry. They concluded by praising Lend Lease for the support they had given in rewarding the women for their achievements.



(Left to right): Tanya Kier, Project Manager, Bovis Lend Lease, Fiona Krautil, Director, EOWA, Jane O'Leary, Client Services Manager, EOWA, Therese Daddow, Project Manager, Bovis Lend Lease and Phyl Dawson, Administrator, Bovis Lend Lease

## Outstanding Work Recognised

Instrumental in bringing Australia's leading private sector organisations a greater understanding of the strengths of equal opportunity strategies, Ms Catherine Harris, former director of the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency, was awarded a Public Service Medal on 10 May 2000. The medal was awarded at a dinner hosted by the Public Service Commissioner, Ms Helen Williams, AO.

"I am pleased to see Catherine Harris' work receive formal recognition. The recent changes to our legislation will build further on the valuable work of the Agency that was conducted during the time of Catherine's leadership," said Fiona Krautil, Director, EOWA.

Ms Harris was formally recognised for her role in gaining the acceptance of Australia's business community. The Public Service Medal is awarded twice a year by the Governor-General. It recognises people who have consistently performed demanding jobs to the highest standard and have made a major contribution to the Australian community.

The Public Service Medal is part of the official Australian system of honours and awards and was established to recognise employees of the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments.

**Further information is available from the Awards & National Symbols Branch of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.**

**Contact Mr Tim Crowe, (02) 6271 5625 or visit the Australian Honours website [www.itsanhonour.gov.au](http://www.itsanhonour.gov.au)**



### EOWA CONTACT DETAILS

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**Web: [www.eowa.gov.au](http://www.eowa.gov.au)**



Women workers of the Australian Comforts Fund watching from the back of a truck as the 7th Division march in Brisbane, Queensland, 8 August 1944.

This image is reproduced with the consent of the Commonwealth Office of the Status of Women and 1901-2001 Centenary of Federation

## THE CHANGING FACE OF AUSTRALIA

Society has come a long way since the late 1860s. In the same decade as the first Melbourne Cup was run and the kelpie dog was bred, more significantly, the first Australian woman fought for the right to enter university.

A medical practitioner contended at the time "of women who do go to university, their nervous systems are wrecked by a process of stimulation for examinations, exhibitions and prizes". In fact, we've moved mountains since the 1960s. In 1965 women in the Australian Public Service were still forced to resign when they got married. That same year, Dame Roma Mitchell became the first female Supreme Court Judge.

### Here's a few more interesting tidbits from the pages of our colonial history:

- 1883** Victorian women were the first to be allowed to own property in their own name
- 1895** Women in South Australia were the first to be allowed to vote in Australia
- 1912** The minimum wage was set for women's work, usually calculated at 54 percent of the male wage\*
- 1921** Ada Emily Evans was the first New South Wales woman granted the right to practice law (a degree she had held for 19 years). In the same year, Edith Cowan became the first female elected to the Australian Parliament
- 1933** Birth control hit the headlines with the first clinic opening in Sydney
- 1943** The first female Australian Municipal Mayor was elected in Heidelberg, Melbourne
- 1959** The Matrimonial Causes Act was enacted, removing the male bias in seeking divorce based on adultery
- 1966** Annabelle Rankin, a Senator, was the first woman to hold a Federal portfolio (Housing)
- 1967** Caroline Chisholm is the first Australian woman to be honoured on Australian currency

\*These early successes laid the foundation for the waves of change that occurred in the late 1960s. The momentum necessary for women to push through the glass ceiling is still increasing. Even in the few months since the turn of the new millennium Australia has witnessed a number of firsts:

- ▶ the appointment of the first Australian female scientists to work at the South Pole
- ▶ a woman was announced as the first Chief Federal Magistrate of the new Federal Magistrates Service
- ▶ the youngest person to be appointed to the Australia Council is a woman who took office in March
- ▶ The first baby has been born to a female Federal Government Minister - the Hon. Jackie Kelly, while the minister is in office
- ▶ Jill Ker Conway has been appointed as the Chairman of Lend Lease, a \$10 billion corporation. The recent appointment of Margaret Jackson as chair of the Qantas Board has doubled the number of women chairing boards.