

Dear Reader

Need inspiration? Information? Innovation? Look no further than our new e-learning website! Interactive educational tools in an easy-to-use style help make developing a workplace program even easier. Also, don't miss what a leading Sydney economist has to say about Australia's ageing population and the opportunities this catalyses for women. Read on!

- > [EOWA launches e-learning website](#)
Client Fast Track! Our practical, solutions-focused tools are tailor-made to assist our varied clients. Take a look now at what's on offer!
- > [Women: the economic case](#)
Increasing the number of women in the workforce ensures strong economic growth, says leading market economist Bruce Luckham.
- > [Flexible workplaces pay off](#)
Work/life balance is high on the list when it comes to keeping and attracting good staff.
- > [Making managers accountable](#)
Predominantly female retailer Bevilles Jewellers encouraged staff development by making managers accountable.
- > [Awards to inspire](#)
Winner of this year's WALTER Construction Prize, Michelle Baran, inspires women.

Be inspired!



"Engineering has become a field where women have the potential to provide invaluable support, advice and leadership at all levels."

Congratulations!

Australian Country Spinners (ACS) got more than they bargained for when Lucie Van Aken participated in a Management Training course. Sixty-three-year old Lucie, who comes from a non-English speaking background, not only successfully completed the course but also gained promotion within ACS to the front-line management role of Night Shift Line Supervisor. She then went on to receive the *Woman of Achievement Award* from the Wangaratta Business & Professional Women's Association.

Congratulations Lucie!

What's New?

- > Paid Maternity Leave - [Valuing Parenthood Interim Paper](#) Have your say and make your submission by **12 July 2002**. Email the [Sex Discrimination Unit](#).
- > [Get Women Off the Sticky Floor](#) – AGSM Scholarships for Women
- > [MGSM 14th Women, Management and Employment Relations Conference](#)
- > [Flexibility at Work: Work/Life Issues Conference](#)
- > [Working Your Way Through Pregnancy](#)
- > [Workplace Bullying Report \(Queensland\)](#)

Visited our website lately? Take a look now: www.eowa.gov.au

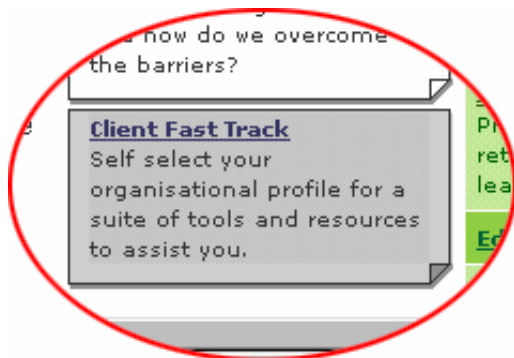
You may notice a change ...



Launched earlier this month, EOWA's new e-learning website was developed in consultation with clients, and uses multi-layered pathways to provide tailored information and tools to meet the needs of our varied client groups.

So what's changed?

"So much information and so little time!" was a common enough cry from clients, so we've streamlined the flow of information to your fingertips. The result: **[Client Fast Track](#)**!



Click **once** and tell Client *Fast Track* if you're a predominantly male, female or mixed gender workplace.

Click **twice** and tell it whether you're a 'first time' or existing reporting organisation.

Click **three** times and tell us whether you're just starting out in your workplace program development, are moving forward, or consider yourself to be leading the way.

Within seconds, Client *Fast Track* enables you to access materials and resources that are tailor-made to your organisation without wading through pages of information that is irrelevant to where your business is at right now. Practical, user-friendly and quick, we're sure you'll love using our new Client *Fast Track*.

Got to www.eowa.gov.au now, click on the bottom left of the main menu and give Client *Fast Track* a workout now!

Find out about specific issues

With education a central part of the EOWA's charter, our e-learning website has a new area: **Key Agendas for Change**. Items such as female workforce participation, work/life balance strategy, and the progression of women in industry will continue the public debate and keep these issues current items on the business agenda.

Visit www.eowa.gov.au and take a closer look at current highly topical issues including *Pay Equity*, *Paid Maternity Leave* and *Women in Decision-making Roles*.



New Resources and Tools

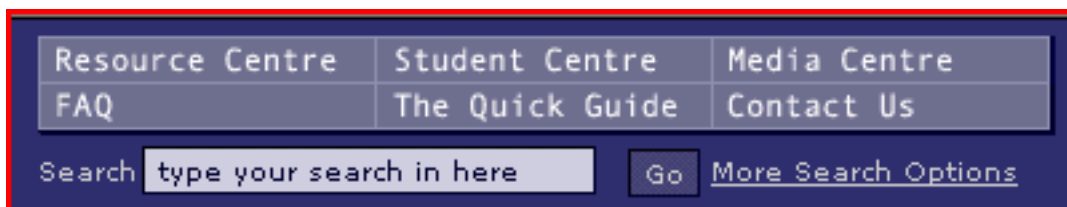
We've consolidated much of the knowledge of our Telephone Advisors and incorporated it into a wide range of practical and easy-to-use EO tools. We'll be showcasing these tools in the coming months, as well as adding to the list, but for starters, visit our website and find out more about these great new solutions-focused resources:

- ◆ Why Equal Opportunity makes Business Sense
- ◆ Developing your Workplace Program – A Step-by-Step Approach
- ◆ Workplace Analysis Toolkit
- ◆ Three new Employee Opinion Surveys
- ◆ Cost of Turnover Calculator – how much is it really costing when you lose staff?

I don't surf the web much. Is the site easy to get around?

Navigation has been improved dramatically. The **main** menu you are familiar with will remain at the left of every screen, allowing users to click easily between such topics as *Why EO Makes Business Sense*, *Developing a Workplace Program* and *Complying with the Act*.

The **secondary** navigation menu (below) now provides a brand new **Search** function ensuring quick access to the information required. This navigation menu remains at the top right of each screen so you'll always be able to find something no matter where you are in the site. Easy!



What are you waiting for?

Click here and visit www.eowa.gov.au now! If you would like some assistance in navigating through the new website, please call (02) 8255 6300 and one of our Client Services Managers will be happy to assist you. ☺

Women: The Economic Case

Our ageing population and the slowdown of young people entering the labour force has profound economic implications. Increasing the female participation rate and retaining those already employed will be an important way of ensuring strong economic growth. With over 15 years financial market experience, Chief Economist and Market Strategist *Bruce Luckham* looks at the economic case for growth in female employment.

Our Ageing Challenge

According to the OECD's Policy Brief *Maintaining Prosperity in an Ageing Society* (June 1998):

"In the past 25 years, the number of people of pensionable age (65 and over) in OECD countries rose by 45 million, but the population of working age rose by 120 million ... This will change dramatically in the next 25 years when the number of persons of pensionable age will rise by a further 70 million, while the working-age population will rise by only five million."

In 2000, 12% of the Australian population was over 65 years with another 9% between 55-64 years. The number of people 55 years and over will increase rapidly in the next 20 years as the 'baby boomer' bulge moves through the population. By 2021, nearly one-third of the population will be over 55 years old.

Add to this the declining proportion of young people in the population (34% under 24 in 2002 and 28% by 2021), and Australia will not be immune from the major economic or social problems of ageing identified by the OECD.

Economic Implications of Ageing on the Available Workforce

Ageing poses a number of economic and social problems for the wider community:

- The burden on public finances increases sharply due to higher health spending and a greater number of people reaching pensionable age. This trend has underpinned the gradual movement away from benefit schemes to contribution schemes, such as changes to superannuation legislation, private health insurance and the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme of recent years.
- The ageing of the population results in slower growth in the labour force. For the last 20 years, the growth in the labour force has exceeded the growth in the population. However, in the next 20 years, this is likely to slow sharply to around the growth in the population, which itself is slowing due to declining rates of fertility. And by the 2020s, the labour force will be growing only one quarter as quickly as in the 1980s. Accompanied by slower labour force growth will be an increase in the average age of the labour force.

"the growth in the population ... is slowing due to declining rates of fertility."

TABLE 1: PROJECTIONS OF LABOUR FORCE GROWTH

Annual growth	1980s	1990s	2000s	2010s	2020s
Labour Force	2.3	1.4	1.3	0.8	0.6
<i>Male</i>	1.6	1.0			
<i>Female</i>	3.6	2.0			
Population	1.3	1.2	1.0	0.7	0.5
Population 15+ yrs	1.7	1.4	1.3	0.8	0.6
Population 65+ yrs	2.6	2.3	2.3	3.0	2.3

Source: ABS, BBY projections

This has quite profound economic implications, as, in simple terms, the potential growth rate of an economy is growth in the labour force plus growth in productivity. Therefore, given an unchanged productivity growth rate, slower labour force growth equals slower potential economic growth.

Changing Face of the Labour Force

One way to alleviate or at least lessen the impact of ageing on the economy is to boost labour force growth. This could be done by:

- encouraging more people into the labour force, or
- keeping those already in the labour force there.

The current composition of the labour force according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics shows that males account for 52% and females, 42%. But females account for the bulk of part time employment (19% female vs 7% male) and are under-represented in full-time employment compared with males (23% female vs 45% male).

Of note, the strongest component of employment growth in the last 20 years has been in female part-time employment (Chart 1). Female full-time employment has grown slightly more quickly than total employment, but part-time employment has increased much more rapidly. Notwithstanding the rapid growth in female employment, particularly part-time, the female participation rate remains well below the comparable male ratio. Chart 2 shows that the female participation rate is around 55% compared with 72% for males.

CHART 1: EMPLOYMENT GROWTH (RELATIVE)

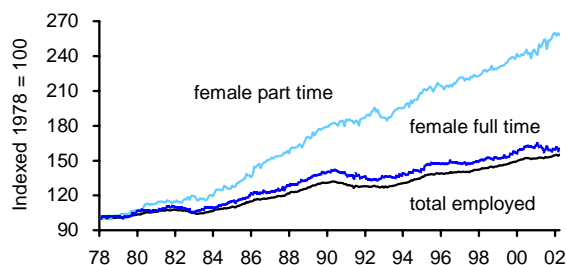
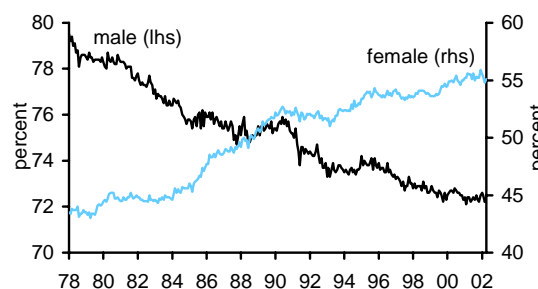


CHART 2: LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATES



Source: ABS

Two interesting trends in participation rates greatly affect the economy: the continuous decline in male participation over the last 25 years due partly to early retirement; and the gradual increase in the female participation rate.

What is to be done?

Based on current population trends and participation rates, the growth in the labour force will slow sharply in coming years and workers will become relatively scarce. However, two ways of alleviating the potentially serious economic implications for the Australian workforce are to:

1. boost the female participation rate closer to the male level, and
2. maintain the relatively strong growth in female employment which has occurred over the last 20 years. ☹

Bruce Luckham has been at Burdett Buckridge Young Ltd, a leading Australian stockbroker, since 1990 in the role of Chef Economist/Market Strategist. Prior to BBY, he worked at Macquarie Equities and Chase Manhattan Bank in the UK.

Flexible Workplaces Pay Off

The recent debate surrounding Paid Maternity Leave highlights the need for flexible working options, particularly after the birth of a child. With ABS statistics revealing that one-third of all employed men and one-third of all employed women have dependent children under 15 years of age, and add to that the ageing population, both child and elder care responsibilities are increasingly likely to have a greater impact on the workplace.

These statistics serve to emphasize a core issue that many employers in Australia are now coming to terms with: the rapidly changing patterns of paid work opportunities and working hours arrangements. In such times, it is often those companies perceived to care about the 'people' aspect of the business – such as work/life issues – that are attracting and retaining the best talent.

And with 71% of surveyed¹ CEOs citing acquisition and retention of the best talent available to be their most pressing issue, can your organisation afford to ignore the retention benefits of a flexible workplace?

Retaining Good Staff

The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Australia's HR Manager Jessica Horrocks believes that their organisation can't afford to ignore the work/life balance issue, especially when employee satisfaction is an important factor motivating their business. "The demands for flexible hours with part-time, job sharing, and home-based work as well as flexible leave practices have come from the staff," she says.

90% of ICAA's staff on maternity leave returned to work, with 60% on a part-time basis.

With women accounting for three-quarters of their employees, this not-for-profit organisation made it their business to find out what their employees wanted in order to retain them.

And keep them they did. Almost 90 per cent of those on maternity leave returned to work at ICAA and, of those, 60 per cent have come back on a part-time basis. Says Horrocks: "We acknowledge that employees' lives have changed and their priorities altered, so we try and integrate that into the culture. Our aim is to retain the employees' skills, training and career."

Putting the Policies in Place

Sylvia Hewlett, author of the much-publicised book *Executive Women and the Myth of Having It All*, agrees. Her research reveals that women want work/life policies that provide reduced-hour jobs and careers that can be interrupted without long-term damage to them.

But having the policies in place is simply not enough, as the recent decision in the case of *Schou v The State of Victoria* demonstrated. "Employers who have a flexible work practices policy must ensure that access to such a workplace benefit is not unreasonably withheld," explains Juliet Bourke, Director of WORK+LIFE Strategies.² In the decision, a discrimination tribunal confirmed that an employer cannot deny an employee's request by raising remote "possibilities" as to why implementing a flexible work arrangement would be "inconvenient".

¹ *Best Employers to Work for in Australia 2001*, Hewitt Associates survey, in Work/Life News, Issue 39

² Bourke, Juliet, *Work+Life Strategies* newsletter May 2002

Recognising Women's Value

Increasing part-time work opportunities also goes a long way towards recognising, accepting and profiting from the valuable contribution of women employees, and helps reduce an organisation's talent drain. This was highlighted in a recent report by the Victorian Women Lawyers on part-time work practices in law firms, which found that only 4 out of 10 firms had partners working part-time.

Commenting on the findings, Attorney General Rob Hulls said:

"Our legal profession has failed to deal with inflexibility in the workplace. In many ways, its very presence guarantees a path to partnership for men as long as they can do the long hours and give up weekends, then the riches of partnership will be theirs ... It's this culture of absolute and often unblinkered commitment which needs to change."

Greater profits for better people management

But it's not only employees who benefit from changing to flexible workplace practices. The link between better people management and greater financial performance is growing stronger. According to US consulting group Hewitt Associates, Australian data shows that with those companies judged the 'best employers' are more than 40 per cent ahead in average profit growth.³

The reasons? "They receive more job applications per position advertised, have lower turnover, and more satisfied customers," says the chair of the study's judging panel, AGSM professor Roger Collins.

Companies judged the 'best employers' are more than 40% ahead in average profit growth.

And with statistics showing women's employment participation rate continually increasing⁴ and women making 90% of all household purchasing decisions, women both as employees and customers continue to be a powerful reckoning force. ☺

What are innovative organisations doing?

- **Country Road** introduced Career Breaks, and Childcare Leave plus Emergency and Annual Leave at half pay. They also increased job flexibility by introducing part-time and job-share roles. As a result, they had an 8% drop in staff turnover. The full case study is available [here](#).
- **Jetset Tours Pty Ltd** tried home office set up for employees on maternity leave. They looked at modifying hours and days worked to enable a more productive working arrangement. After the trial period, the company had a better understanding of how to help employees achieve a work/life balance. The full case study is available [here](#).
- **Commonwealth Bank of Australia** implemented a computerised Job Share Request System which provides a register for those staff interested in finding a job sharing partner. They currently have several job-sharing arrangements at managerial level, with 21.5% job-sharing at assistant managerial level. Around 70% of staff stated they would have resigned had they not had the opportunity to job share, and of those, 50 per cent had over 10 years' experience. The full case study is available [here](#).

³ *Best Employers to Work for in Australia 2001*, Hewitt Associates survey, cited in Work/Life News, Issue 39

⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics

Making Managers Accountable

By building accountability into performance management systems, line managers as well as senior managers can be made accountable for ensuring EO is always on the agenda. More and more organisations are taking this approach in different areas of their businesses. Bevilles Jewellers is one of these forward-thinking organisations.

[Bevilles Jewellers](#) employees 261 staff, of which 208 are female. As part of their training and development strategy, they found they needed to provide regular feedback on performance as well as identifying and meeting staff developmental needs.

What did they analyse?

- Equal Opportunity Committee discussions
- Workplace profile
- Equal Opportunity Employee Opinion Survey

What did their analysis show?

- The need to develop a recruitment and selection process.
- Provide regular, constructive feedback on performance; identify development needs and implement strategies for improvement and/or change.
- Educate and update employees on EO policies and procedures.

Actions taken:

- Trained management on providing feedback and coaching of staff.
- Made it part of management accountability and attached bonus payments to remuneration if all staff were reviewed every month.
- Implemented two hours per month in-store training program.

Outcomes:

- All staff had feedback and training needs assessed at least twice a year.
- Staff found the in-store training program was excellent.
- Improved performance of new recruits so greatly that 78% of Christmas casuals were offered continuing employment through the following year.

The full case study is available [here](#).

Get Women Off the Sticky Floor

In 2002 women are still under-represented in managerial and administrative positions. Recent statistics from the Australian Bureau of Statistics show that women occupy a meagre 24.9 percent of management and administrative positions, an increase of less than one percent since 1998!

The Australian Graduate School of Management (AGSM) has been attempting to positively influence this trend by offering scholarships to women who show management potential and possess the required aptitude.

“A lot of people are making the right noises,” said Dr Anne Lytle, Program Director, AGSM, referring to the prospect of paid maternity leave and the NSW Labor Party’s acknowledgment of the importance of a gender-balanced environment. “However the fact remains there has been no significant change in these statistics for almost half a decade.”

Running for six years, the scholarships for women gives high-potential women executives the opportunity to undertake the AGSM’s coveted Accelerated Development Program (ADP).

Avril Henry, Director of Human Resources for national law firm Clayton Utz agrees with Dr Lytle. “This issue is incredibly important to all Australians and cannot be understated. Quite simply, we need more women in management and administrative positions.”

Accelerated Development Program


Designed specifically for executives approaching top-level management positions, the Accelerated Development Program gives managers the broad skill set necessary to drive their company to new levels of success and profitability. Run in two modules later this year, the program typically attracts senior executives from a diverse range of industries and disciplines.

By giving women in business the opportunity to attend the ADP, the scholarships for women initiative aims to encourage the development of women executives in all aspects of Australian business life. The ADP is split into two modules with the time between used to complete a work-related management project.

Each scholarship covers half the program fee, which includes tuition, accommodation, meals and program materials. Typically, the scholarship winner’s employer is responsible for the balance of the scholarship fee. Scholarships are open to both the government and private sectors.

The Accelerated Development Program is a three-week course presented in two modules from Sunday the 21st July to Friday the 2nd August, 2002 and from Sunday the 3rd to Friday the 8th of November, 2002. The ADP is conducted at the Australian Graduate School of Management located in the University of New South Wales.

Closing date for applications is 30 June 2002. The scholarship fee is \$9,625.00 + GST.

For further information the scholarship or an application form contact AGSM on (02) 9931 9333 or visit www.agsm.edu.au. 

Be Inspired!

Sponsoring an award or scholarship at your local TAFE or University is a great way to raise your organisation's profile with future talented employees. We've showcased a few Awards below and are happy to hear of others. Send your contributions to actionnews@eowa.gov.au

>>> **WALTER Construction Group Prize** Winner: Michelle Baran

At 22, Michelle Baran is already one step ahead of her fellow graduates having completed her Bachelor of Engineering (Civil) and is due to finish her second degree in Business Management at the end of the year. Her experience already includes assisting in the construction of Brisbane's Goodwill Bridge, which Baran says she enjoyed immensely.



Her interest in civil engineering, she explains, is due to a number of factors. "I always loved science and maths at school and engineering has sort of been a combination of the best of both worlds. Plus, it runs in the family. My dad is a civil engineer for the Department of Main Roads."

Ms Baran concedes that her entry into the engineering industry won't be as daunting as for women in previous generations. "Engineering has become a field where woman have the potential to provide invaluable support, advice and leadership at all levels" Baran said.

Presenter of the Award, WALTER Construction Group Construction Manager, Greg Packer, said two of the last three recipients have been women. "It's fantastic. The industry has evolved markedly since the world's engineering sector had women contributing to it."

The WALTER Construction Group Prize recipient is chosen for excellence in engineering studies as well as involvement in extracurricular activities.

Further information: Greg Packer, WALTER Construction Group, (07) 3369 8111.

>>> **Outstanding Women in Non-Traditional Areas of Work and Study 2002** Nominations close on Monday 1 July 2002.

Siiri Mesa was exploring traditional village music in South Africa when she heard the news: she'd been short-listed as a finalist in the annual awards for Outstanding Women in Non-traditional Areas.

A lover of world music, Siiri's passion has led her across the globe to work with *Yalla!* (traditional Arabic music), the *Pheasant Pluckers* (American bluegrass music), *Klezmeritis* (Jewish Klezmer music), *Jigzag* (Sydney-based Celtic folk music) and *Valanga Khoza* (South African music).

"It is important to record music with exceptional clarity and spirit," says Siiri. "But my real goal is to give that music a deeper dimension by understanding where it comes from both physically and culturally."

While she watched vervet monkeys cavort last year, she filled in her nomination form and later, as she scaled the heights of Mount Victoria, a Melbourne-based judging panel interviewed her.

But you don't need an exotic locale to be nominated for the 2002 awards!

Previous finalists and winners have studied and worked in farming, multimedia, management, engineering, scientific research, finance, technical trades, butchery, the automotive industry and many more.

They have worked in universities and city offices; on ships and planes and trucks and trains; on Antarctic bases, down mines and in deserts.

They have been apprentices, trainees, undergraduates, postgraduates, employed for six months, employed for twenty years and they have been self-employed.

Like Siiri, all have been outstanding because of their passion, drive and achievements.

Nominations

Hosting the eighth successive annual awards for Outstanding Women in Non-traditional Areas, the National Centre for Gender and Cultural Diversity in partnership with IBM, the National Australia Bank and Swinburne University of Technology, invites you to acknowledge the achievements of outstanding women who work and study in non-traditional areas.

Winners will attend a gala Presentation Dinner at the Plaza Ballroom in Melbourne on 1 August (airfares and accommodation paid for), and will receive \$1000 each.

For details of all nine categories (covering both work and study) and to download a nomination form, visit our web site at www.swin.edu.au/corporate/nccgcd and follow the prompts to Awards. Otherwise, contact Shirley Dickinson at sdickinson@swin.edu.au or on (03) 9214 5570.

>>> ACCI National Work and Family Awards 2002

Is your organisation a family-friendly workplace? Become part of the Work and Family Hall of Fame!

The 10th anniversary of the Awards, 2002 provides a great opportunity for organisations to be recognised for their family-friendly practices. The Awards are open to any workplace – large or small, public or private, with a number of Award categories.

The Awards are facilitated by the federal Department of Employment and Workplaces Relations and the Council for Equal Opportunity in Employment Ltd and sponsored by AMP Ltd.

For more information, visit [ACCI National Work and Family Awards 2002](#).

Tell a friend

Know someone who would be interested in receiving our newsletter? Email us at actionnews@eowa.gov.au and provide their organisational details and email address and we'll be happy to send *e-Action News* to them.

Feedback

We welcome your feedback! We aim to provide practical help to develop a workplace program as well as providing lively discussions on related topics. If there is anything you would like to see in a future issue, please contact us by emailing actionnews@eowa.gov.au.

Privacy statement

The agency collects such information as is needed to assist in administering the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999. Information is only used for the purpose it was collected and will not be shared with anyone else unless required by law.

Individuals and organisations may review any information that the Agency holds on them and request that this information be changed or updated as appropriate.

The agency takes reasonable steps to ensure that the personal information we collect and use is accurate, complete, and up-to-date. We take reasonable steps to protect the personal information we hold from misuse and loss and from unauthorised access, modification or disclosure.