



Australian Government

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

EOWA Industry Verticals Manufacturing



About EOWA

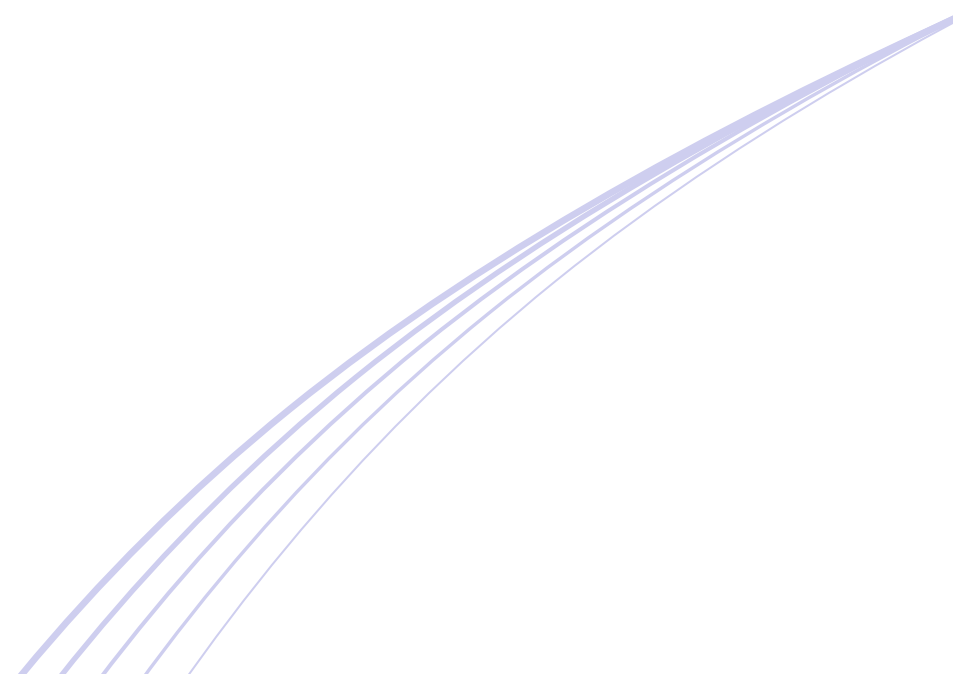
An Australian Government agency, the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency (EOWA) communicates with over 2,700 Australian employers annually regarding their equal opportunity initiatives. EOWA's vision is to create an Australia where women in the workplace can achieve their greatest potential. In addition to annual reporting, EOWA inspires companies to advance women in their workplace through various programs. These include the EOWA Business Achievement Awards, the EOWA Employer of Choice for Women citation, awarded to organisations that demonstrate equal opportunity effectiveness for women, and the EOWA Australian Women in Leadership Census. www.eowa.gov.au

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Australian Government

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

Industry Verticals

Manufacturing

Insights into industry trends and issues in equal opportunity for women in the workplace

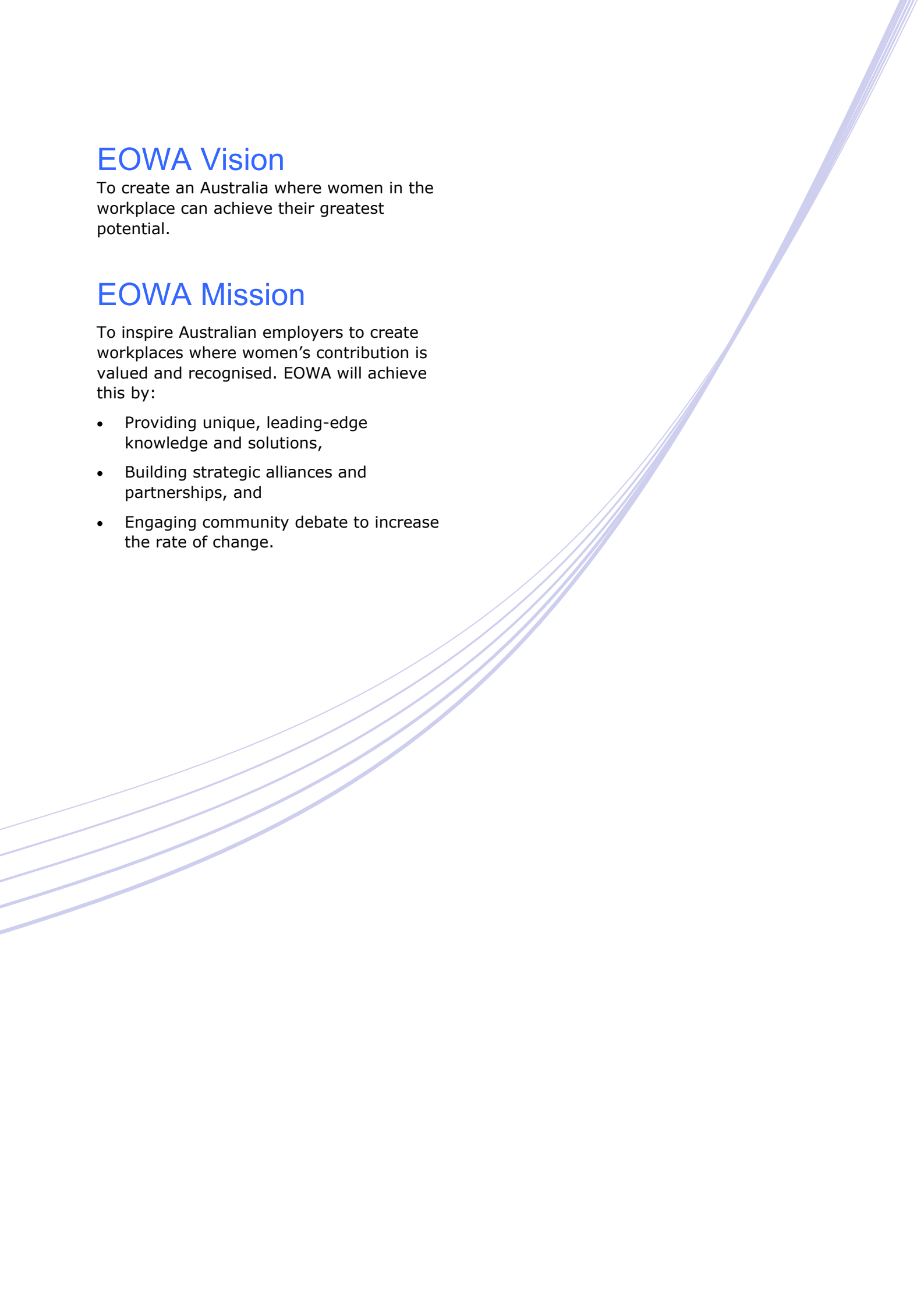
The EOWA Industry Vertical publication series presents an analysis of data derived from equal opportunity reports submitted by employers to EOWA in 2004, the 2001-2003 EOWA surveys of reporting organisations and over 1800 individual consultations with reporting organisations by EOWA client consultants in 2003-04.

EOWA Vision

To create an Australia where women in the workplace can achieve their greatest potential.

EOWA Mission

To inspire Australian employers to create workplaces where women's contribution is valued and recognised. EOWA will achieve this by:

- Providing unique, leading-edge knowledge and solutions,
 - Building strategic alliances and partnerships, and
 - Engaging community debate to increase the rate of change.
- 

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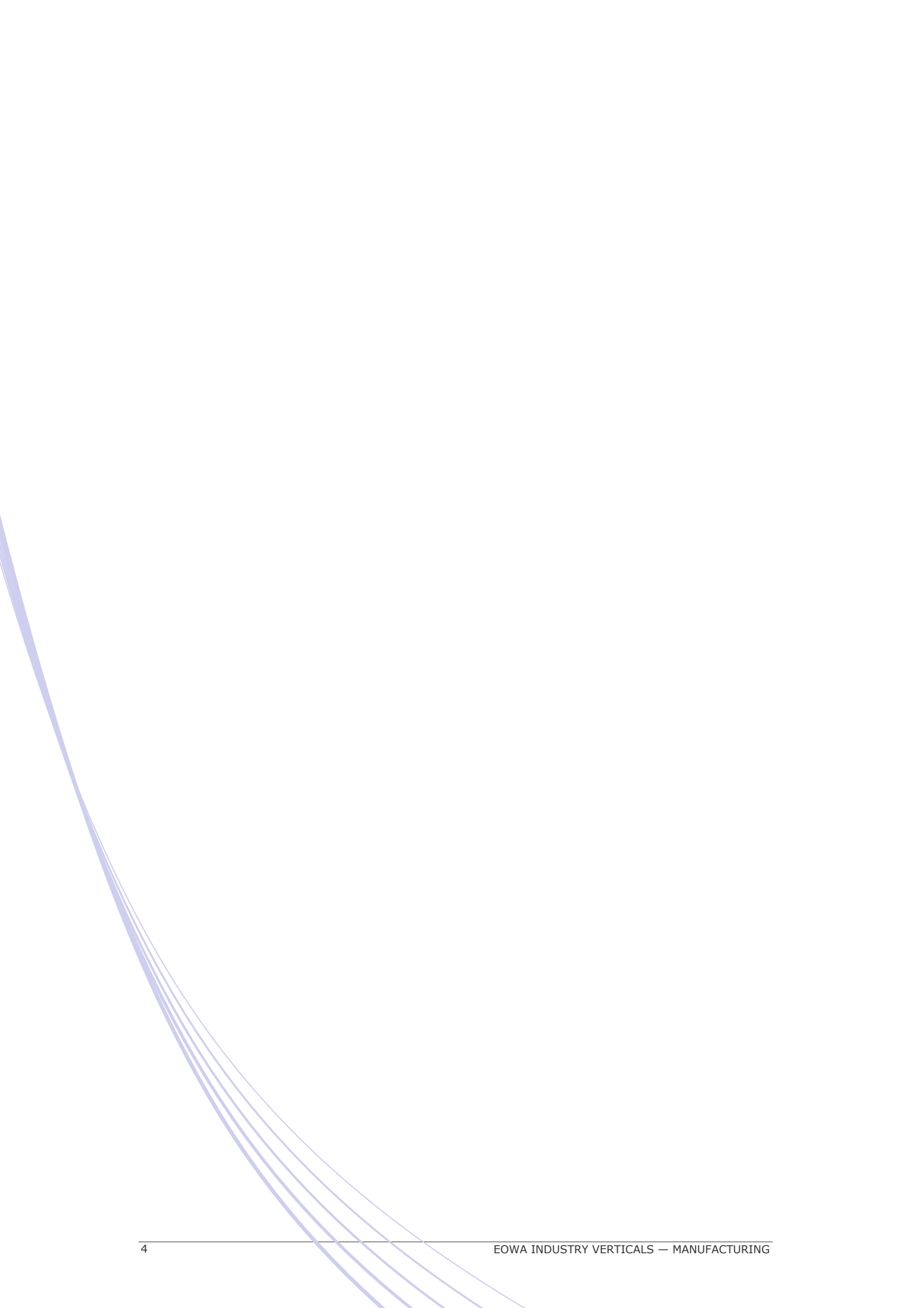
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Forward

The EOWA Industry Vertical publication series presents for the first time a comprehensive collection of EOWA data and qualitative insights into the equal opportunity workplace programs of employers reporting under the federal *Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act*.

Through working collaboratively with these employers to identify the barriers to women's participation and implement effective business solutions, EOWA is in a unique position to track the progress of equal opportunity in Australian workplaces.

Even more crucial to advancing women – and concurrently business success – are the partnerships which EOWA has been able to form with employers who understand the social and business imperatives to create sustainable, effective and equitable workplaces.

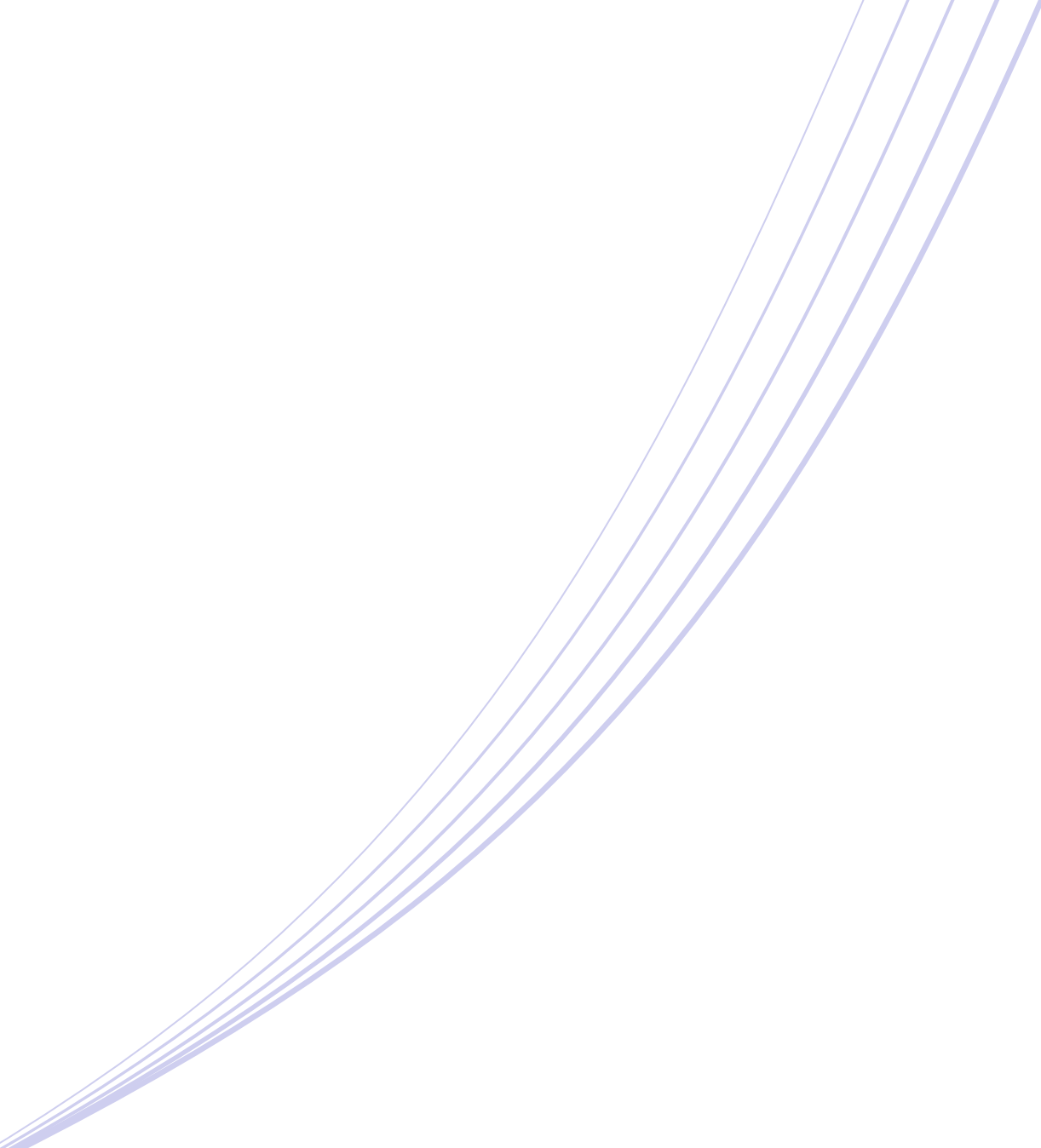
By engaging with the issues and constraints faced by employers and tracking the latest industry developments and workplace initiatives, EOWA is now positioned to deliver back to employers industry insights and analysis that we hope will further strengthen and underpin their equal opportunity initiatives in the future.

Accordingly, I am proud to present this inaugural publication of the EOWA Industry Vertical series, which in this issue focuses on employers in the manufacturing sector.

As the following pages reveal, it is through these employers' committed efforts to advance women in their workplaces that the presentation of this information has been made possible.

Through sharing the equal opportunity initiatives and innovations of employers with their industry peers, we hope that others will not only be inspired to undertake similar initiatives, but will be equipped with the practical knowledge and industry insights to realise the full benefits – both for their business and for women.

Anna McPhee
EOWA Director



Industry Profile

Manufacturing Demographics

The manufacturing industry is one of the largest and most diverse industries in Australia, characterised by a male-dominated workforce and an increasingly competitive economic climate.

Representing a quarter of the companies in Australia with over 100 employees and employing a workforce of close to half a million, the manufacturers reporting annually to EOWA are responsible for a significant component of the labour market.

The manufacturing industry provides many jobs of a physical or technical nature that have traditionally been performed by men. Other roles requiring high dexterity or the use of new processing technologies however employ greater numbers of women.

Each year, over 700 manufacturers report to EOWA on their workplace programs to increase opportunities for women. Representing a diversity of sectors in which women are employed in a wide range of occupations, many of these companies have developed successful business solutions to the challenges resulting from a changing labour demographic and an increasingly competitive economic climate.

As new technologies, market trends and industrial developments combine to create new opportunities for women, manufacturers can benefit from the experiences of others who have harnessed these opportunities for greater business success.

EOWA Compliance Data: PROFILE OF REPORTING MANUFACTURING COMPANIES

- 26% OF EOWA REPORTING ORGANISATIONS
- 99.9% PRIVATE COMPANIES
- 20% OF THE WORKFORCE UNDER THE EOWW ACT, COMPRISING 493,000 EMPLOYEES
- 31% FEMALE EMPLOYEES
- 58% OF COMPANIES WITH OVER 250 EMPLOYEES
- 698 EMPLOYEES PER COMPANY ON AVERAGE
- 77% OF COMPANIES IN NSW AND VICTORIA

Women in Manufacturing

An analysis by gender of EOWA data for the manufacturing industry shows that women are under-represented in most employment categories relative to reporting organisations overall.

The manufacturing industry employs fewer women than other industries, with an average of 31% female employees compared with 47% for all EOWA reporting organisations.

The predominantly male workforce is apparent in other indicators of women's workforce participation. Just 4.9% of women managers in manufacturing work part-time, as opposed to 7.3% overall. The manufacturing industry is even more unlikely to employ managers part-time when men and women are combined. Only 1.3% of managers in manufacturing work part-time compared with 2.9% for all reporting organisations.

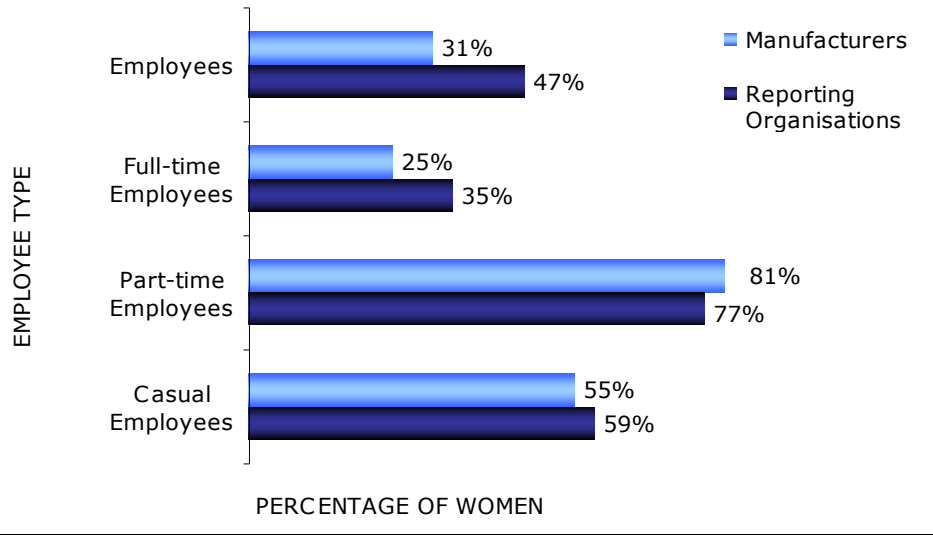
EOWA Compliance Data:

GENDER DEMOGRAPHICS OF REPORTING MANUFACTURERS

- MEN DOMINATE THE MANUFACTURING WORKFORCE AT 68%
- WOMEN MAKE UP 31% OF EMPLOYEES, COMPARED WITH 47% OF REPORTING ORGANISATIONS OVERALL
- 3.4% OF CEOs ARE WOMEN, COMPARED WITH 9.2% OVERALL
- THE MAJORITY OF COMPANIES HAVE LESS THAN 20% FEMALE MANAGERS
- ONLY 22% OF COMPANIES HAVE PART-TIME FEMALE MANAGERS, COMPARED WITH 31% OVERALL

Figure 1 below compares the workforce participation of women in manufacturing with the average for reporting organisations across all industries.

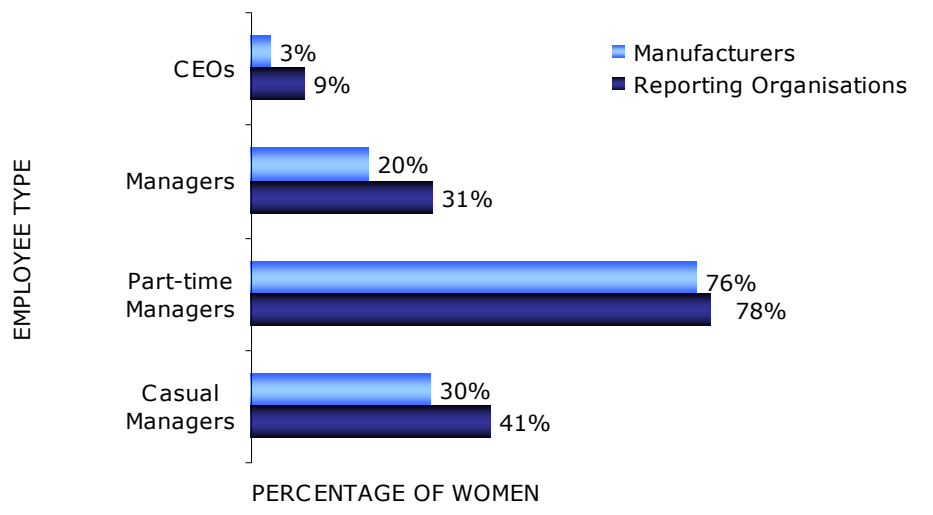
FIGURE 1: WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT PARTICIPATION



- Women in manufacturing hold a smaller percentage of full-time positions (25%) than in reporting organisations overall.
- A slightly higher proportion of part-time employees in manufacturing are female, compared with reporting organisations overall.

Figure 2 below compares the workforce participation of women in manufacturing at management level with the average for reporting organisations overall.

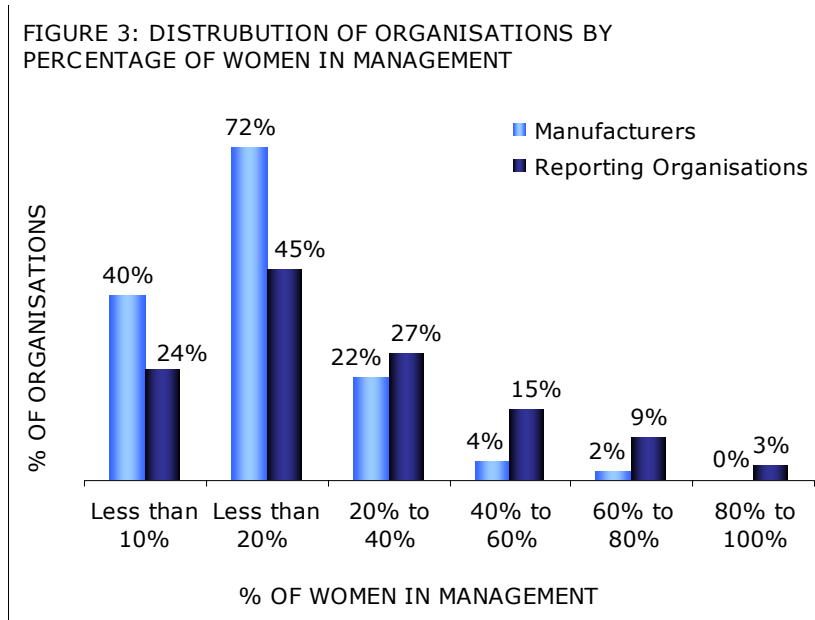
FIGURE 2: WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN MANAGEMENT



- Fewer women are managers or CEOs in manufacturing companies than in reporting organisations overall.
- Women in manufacturing are also slightly less likely to be part-time or casual managers than in reporting organisations overall.

- However, the average ratio of women managers to women employees is similar for both manufacturing and all reporting organisations overall, at 65% and 66% respectively.

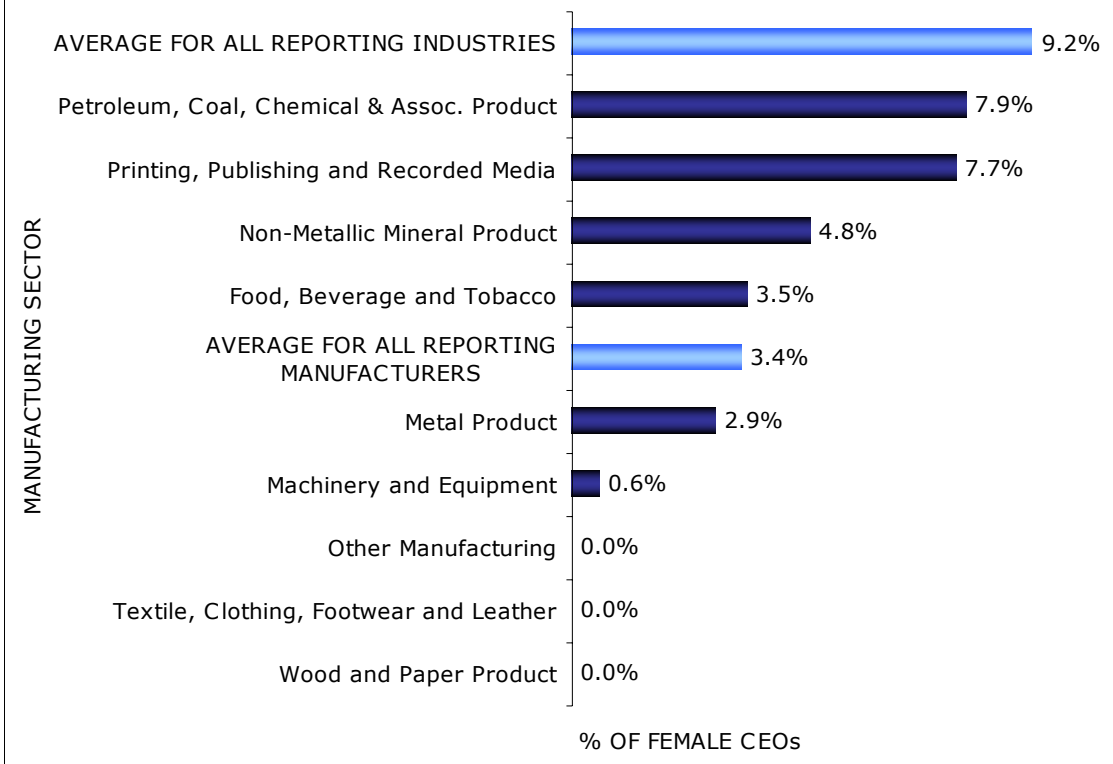
Figure 3 below shows the distribution of manufacturing companies according to their percentage of managers that are women.



- Manufacturing companies have fewer women in management than reporting organisations overall.
- The majority of manufacturers (72%) have fewer than 20% women managers.
- 6% of manufacturers have 40% or more female managers, compared with 27% for reporting organisations overall.
- 40% of manufacturers have fewer than 10% women managers.

Figure 4 below shows the percentage of female CEOs in manufacturing companies by sector, as well as the average for all manufacturers and for reporting organisations overall.

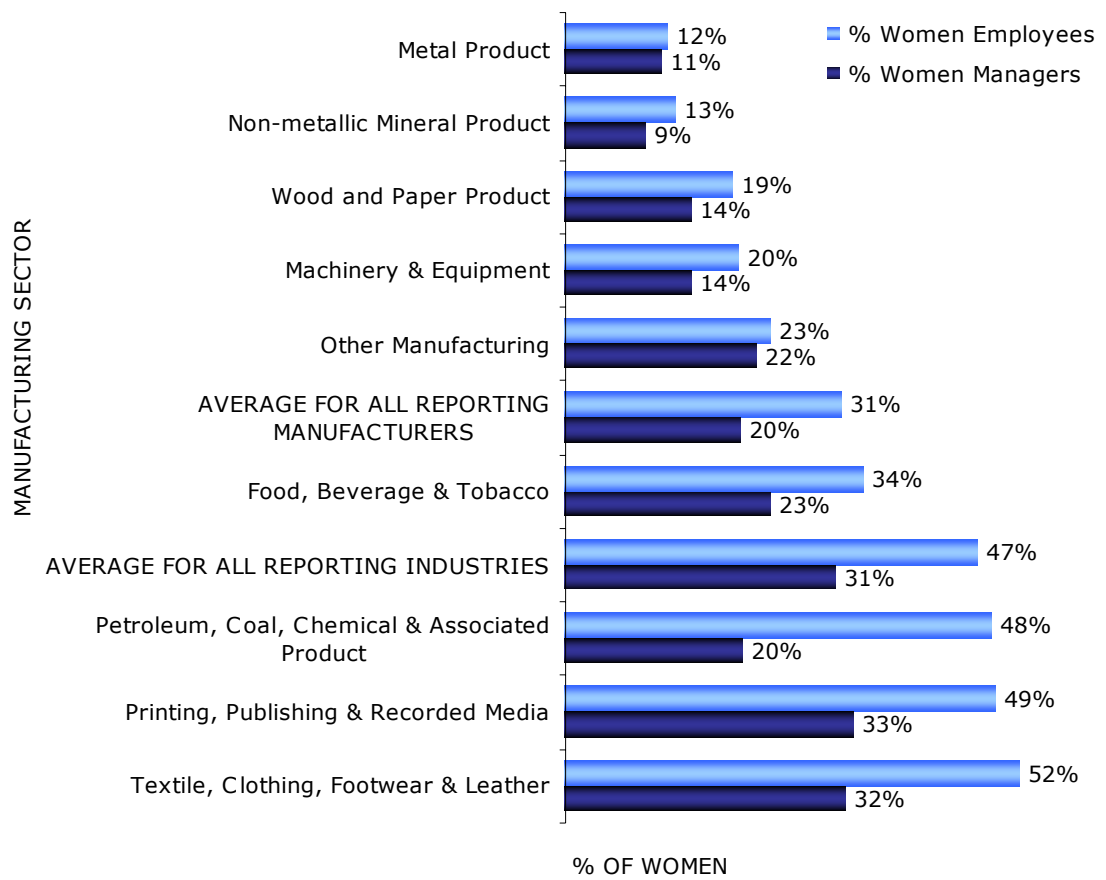
FIGURE 4: WOMEN CEOs IN MANUFACTURING



- Women hold 3.4% of CEO positions in manufacturing, compared with 9.2 of all reporting organisations.
- The sectors with the highest proportion of women CEOs are Petroleum, Coal, Chemical & Associated Product (7.9%) and Printing, Publishing and Recorded Media (7.7%), while reporting organisations in the Other Manufacturing, Textile, Clothing, Footwear & Leather and Wood & Paper Product sectors have no women CEOs.

Figure 5 below shows the average percentage of female employees and managers in each of the manufacturing sub-sectors, as well as the average percentage for all reporting manufacturers and reporting organisations overall.

FIGURE 5: WOMEN EMPLOYEES & MANAGERS IN MANUFACTURING



- Most sectors employ predominantly men, with Metal Product and Non-metallic Mineral Product having the smallest female workforce at 12% and 13% respectively.
- Three sectors have an approximately even gender distribution: Textile, Clothing, Footwear & Leather (52%); Printing, Publishing & Recorded Media (49%); and Petroleum, Coal, Chemical & Associated Product (48%).
- Management is made up predominantly of men in all sectors; however, the proportion of women managers relative to women employees varies considerably, from Metal Product and Other Manufacturing with almost the same proportion of women managers as women in the workforce, compared with the Petroleum, Coal, Chemical & Associated Product sector with half the workforce comprising women but with only 20% women managers.

Emerging Trends and Issues

In 2004, EOWA spoke to the equal opportunity contacts in over 700 manufacturing companies about the emerging issues and opportunities facing their company and industry in relation to advancing women and their business.

The emerging trends reflect the increasing number of employers undertaking initiatives to overcome the current and pending skill shortages, and to maintain commercial viability in the face of stiff international competition and an equally competitive labour market for talented employees.

Manufacturers reported that these developments are creating new business challenges but also new opportunities for advancing women.

Changes in the External Operating Environment

- Improved **business prospects** and market upturn are taking place in some industries, but market competitiveness is increasing in others, influenced by the higher Australian dollar and global trading conditions.
- There is increasing movement of manufacturing operations **off-shore**. The resulting increase in the ratio of managerial roles to manual handling jobs in Australia is potentially creating new opportunities for women to advance within these companies.
- The introduction of **new technologies** is both creating and diminishing opportunities for women. New roles are opening up for women due to manual strength replacement technologies and the associated new training opportunities. However, the replacement of manual tasks previously performed by women by new technologies is also resulting in downsizing.

Tightening of the Labour Market

- Increasing initiatives and incentives are being aimed at improving **employee retention** in the face of an ageing workforce and competitive labour market. This is posing particular threats to companies in which extensive expertise and experience resides in a senior management that is nearing retirement.
- **Skill shortages**, particularly in the trades, are leading to a greater emphasis on competency-based training and education at the lower and entry levels within organisations, aided in some instances by specifically-designed graduated certificates offered through Regional Training Organisations and TAFEs.

- Manufacturers are increasingly **recruiting recent immigrants** to Australia, many of whom may be of non-English speaking or minority ethnic backgrounds. While this is increasing the cultural and language communication issues for these companies, other attributes of an ethnically-diverse workforce are proving beneficial, including low turnover and strong social bonds within same-ethnicity or same-language groups of the workforce.
- **Succession planning and high potential programs** are being more widely implemented, in particular for supervisor levels and above. Greater attention is being focused on how career paths are structured and on the training and development needed to advance.

Job Redesign

- **OH&S-driven redesign** of the physical demands of jobs, often involving the introduction of new technologies which reduce minimum strength and size specifications or the redesign of work organisation to reduce the strength requirements (for example, through smaller packaging), is enabling greater numbers of both women and men to apply for these roles.
- **Technology-driven job redesign**, involving the replacement of manual processes with greater automation and computerised processes, is occurring across a range of sectors. Often substantially transforming roles, it is creating training and development opportunities for women to move into non-traditional roles.
- The **redesign of non-traditional roles** to introduce flexible work options is resulting in increased numbers of women applicants.

‘Training and the implementation of new equipment and work practices has not only improved our safety results, but also our productivity.’

MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT MANUFACTURER, NSW

Increasing Participation of Women

- The **male-domination** of many manufacturing sectors is gradually decreasing as companies continue to actively recruit women, improve flexible working arrangements and implement EO workplace reforms.
- Within companies, there is an incremental **movement of women from traditional areas** of the business into previously male-dominated roles. However, this varies between sectors and companies, and is influenced by the availability of qualified female applicants for non-traditional roles – increasing in some fields, diminishing in others.
- Ownership by **foreign parent companies** is increasing the push for greater workforce equity and the advancement of women, in particular where the overseas parent or HQ requires gender targets to be incorporated into management performance measures.

Work/Life Accommodation

- The implementation and promotion of **family-friendly policies** and activities is significantly increasing some companies' retention rates.
- Exploring **partnerships with childcare providers** is enabling companies to provide staff with access to quality and affordable childcare.

Attitudinal Change

- **Greater recognition of the value of diversity** is evident from many companies' EO workplace programs, including initiatives to address language and cultural differences and in some companies actively create more 'people-oriented' workplaces.
- Some companies are experiencing poorer **workplace morale** as a result of industry-wide downturns and the associated organisational instability that accompanies downsizing, site closures and mergers.
- Incidents of reported **sex-based harassment** have decreased as preventative policies and procedures have become embedded.

Strategic Case for EO

The manufacturing industry faces significant constraints in increasing women's workforce participation, not least a widespread industry downturn and nationwide skills shortage.

The benefits to be leveraged from equal opportunity programs however are proving more than equal to their costs, and provide a convincing case for the incorporation of EO into a company's business plan. The business case for advancing women in manufacturing is outlined below.

A Business Imperative

Women make up 47% of the Australian workforce, and yet manufacturers employ on average just 27% women nationwide and 31% in the medium-large organisations reporting to EOWA.ⁱ

Leading-practice employers have realised that maximising the use of their female workforce, and ensuring that no barriers exist to women's increased participation, is a vital strategy to offset the constraints faced by the manufacturing industry and improve their business outcomes.

Workplace equal opportunity initiatives aimed at improving the recruitment, training, promotion and retention of women have the potential to address the key workforce imperatives faced by manufacturers today:

- A tightening labour market
- A national skills shortage
- An ageing workforce

The following are some of the business benefits that advancing women can have for companies in the manufacturing industry.

- **EO helps to attract and retain the best talent**

Staff turnover is expensive. Organisations with effective and transparent HR policies that encourage flexibility and positive work/life balance retain staff and reduce absenteeism. Research has shown that for every \$1 a company spends on flexible work or family benefits, there is a return of between \$2 and \$6 from reduced absenteeism, increased motivation and higher rates of retention.ⁱⁱ

- **EO helps a company's productivity and innovation**

Diversity in organisational teams leads to a more thorough examination of assumptions and the implications of decisions and to the provision of counter-arguments that can reduce a company's decision-making risks. It can also lead to the identification of new business opportunities and a better understanding of target audiences.

‘If our engineers were the only people working on problems, I found the solutions would lie within a narrow focus and were usually capital-intensive. By engaging all our people, we could find faster, cheaper outcomes and build better jobs.’

WAYNE OSBOURNE,
MANAGING DIRECTOR ALCOA WORLD ALUMINA

- **EO reduces a company's risk**

Apart from reducing an organisation's risk through better decision-making processes and better understanding of different audiences and customers, EO reduces a company's legal risk. For companies who have refused employees' parenting rights as part of their employment conditions, there are many precedents where Australian law courts have ruled in favour of employees, for example in Hickey vs. Hunt. Similarly, the penalties for employers held responsible or vicariously liable for workplace sex-based harassment are severe.

- **EO helps a business attract more female customers**

Women are a significant consumer base whose disposable income and buying power is growing. In Australia, women buy or influence the purchase of 80% of all consumer goods, and that includes motor vehicles, household goods and financial services. Holden found that 70% of their customers in the four cylinder automobile market are women and that even in traditionally male-dominated markets the customer base is changing in favour of women.

- **EO helps improve organisational morale**

EO also ensures that merit-based recruitment and promotion is embedded in the organisational culture. Any reduction in the subjectivity of recruitment processes and decisions and in the measurement of performance leads to staff being treated in a fairer way and to increased confidence by staff in the organisation.

Strategic Interventions

Pressure to downsize, global competition and skill shortages are just a few of the constraints faced by manufacturers today, and yet many report a wide number of effective and innovative initiatives that have increased the retention and participation of female employees and improved organisational productivity and culture.

As the analysis of compliance data in the final section shows, manufacturers are reporting a higher number of equal opportunity initiatives than reporting organisations overall,

averaging 4.9 initiatives per organisation compared with 4.6 for non-manufacturers. (For details, see the section on EOWA compliance data on page 45.)

The following are some of a range of strategic interventions being undertaken by manufacturers to realise the long-term benefits of providing an inclusive work environment for all employees.

- **Strengthening Organisational Capacity**

Includes the use of HR metrics to link EO with increased business value, the integration of EO objectives into the Business Strategy, the development of new management practices and the pro-active implementation of EO recruitment, training and promotion policies and strategies.

- **Removing Barriers to Women's Participation**

Includes the redesign of physical job requirements to overcome OH&S barriers, restructuring the organisation of work, introducing greater flexibility and installing facilities for female staff.

Manufacturers are reporting a higher number of equal opportunity initiatives than reporting organisations overall.

- **Development of Women's Skills**

Includes training and development linked to promotion, the sponsoring of female employees and apprentices in non-traditional roles and the offer of language and literacy training to all employees.

- **Increasing the Utilisation of Women's Talents**

Includes the appointment of women to senior or non-traditional roles, increasing the pool of female candidates for new positions and implementing succession planning.

- **Enhancement of Women's Employment Conditions**

Includes the provision of paid parental leave, conducting pay equity and job-size reviews, transitioning casual employees to permanent status and improving facilities and work environments.

- **Overcoming Cultural Barriers**

Includes the promotion of positive attitudes to and a greater awareness of women in non-traditional areas, the implementation of culture-change initiatives and developing networks for female employees.

Information on the specific issues for women in the manufacturing industry, and the initiatives undertaken by manufacturers' to overcome these, are covered in detail in the following sections of the report.

Equal Opportunity Issues

EOWA speaks to over 700 medium to large manufacturers annually about their equal opportunity programs and the issues that face women in their workplace.

Insights gathered from these conversations were collated and analysed to identify the current equal opportunity issues for manufacturing employers, and are presented below.

Barriers at Recruitment

- The small **female talent pool for senior and non-traditional roles** has been identified by many manufacturers as a major barrier to appointing more women to these roles. Many companies reported making concerted efforts to recruit female applicants for senior and non-traditional positions, which often require trade qualifications, but cited the lack of suitably-qualified applicants for these roles. Not all companies were aware of the full range of initiatives available to find, recruit, train and develop female candidates for senior and non-traditional roles.
- **Low turnover** in stable workplaces is limiting the ability of some companies to increase their percentage of female employees through filling new vacancies with women.

‘Our challenge... is to eliminate the traditional barriers that hinder females from entering, progressing and developing their careers within the manufacturing industry.’ CHEMICAL PRODUCT MANUFACTURER, VICTORIA.

- Advancement in some companies is dependent on **internal promotion** based on the experience gained within the company, limiting women's recruitment to entry-level roles. Appointing women to senior and non-traditional roles is often determined therefore by the quality and accessibility of internal training, mentoring and development opportunities.

Barriers to Advancement

- The unpleasant or repetitive nature of some manual-handling roles performed by women in manufacturing companies can create **high turnover**, reducing opportunities to further develop these women into other, non-traditional areas.

- Smaller manufacturing companies report that there are **limited internal advancement opportunities** for women, particularly in senior non-traditional roles, due to the low turnover rates, prevalent recruitment freezes, isolated rural locations, the need for on-the-job experience and the paucity of qualified female applicants for non-traditional roles. The creation of internal advancement opportunities, including job content and work organisation redesign and technical and non-traditional training, is often the only viable option to address these constraints.

Gender Differentiation

- The **tradition of employing predominantly men** continues to be an industry-wide impediment to improving women’s employment outcomes. The male-dominated workforce has led to workplace cultures, work organisation practices and job designs that are better suited to the needs and circumstances of male employees and which act as a barrier to the recruitment and retention of women. A lack of basic facilities for women is also an issue in some workplaces.
- Some companies reported **pay inequity** issues within their workforce, not only between male and female employees performing the same job but also as a result of an uneven distribution of men and women across roles, with women frequently clustered in lower-level and lower-paid areas of the business. In some organisations, restrictions on the types of roles open to women—whether due to OH&S requirements, the physical demands or to traditional role segregation—mean that women earn less on average than the men.

‘People still worry about not being seen
and being deprived of opportunities.’

PETROLEUM AND COAL PRODUCT MANUFACTURER, WA

- Some women have **unequal access to overtime**. Performing overtime can be crucial to employees’ access and visibility to managers, which in turn impacts on their advancement and earning opportunities. Male employees may be protective of their priority access to overtime shifts where this has become a regular component of their total pay. Exclusion from access to overtime can also impact on women’s status within an organisation, creating barriers to promotion. A male-dominated management culture may reduce women’s status and visibility within a company and thereby reduce their access to overtime and promotions, reinforcing vertical gender segregation of the workforce and creating pay inequity issues.
- **Female-dominated workforces**, such as in some textile companies, have their own unique issues in relation to equal opportunity, including the historical undervaluation of women’s work and skills, which can create pay equity issues, and a lack of advancement opportunities if the management tier has traditionally been filled by men. Alternatively, even where the management is female-dominated, these managers may not necessarily have the expertise in EO to address these issues.

Job Design

- The **physically-demanding nature** of many jobs in manufacturing creates impediments to these roles being filled by women, and often by some men as well. There is underutilised potential for many jobs to be restructured or redesigned,

including through the introduction of new technologies, to reduce or redistribute the strength required to perform the job and improve the physical working conditions.

- **Shift work** is common throughout the manufacturing industry yet often difficult to combine with family responsibilities due to the long hours and inflexible schedules. While shift work is highly amenable to job-sharing, however, this arrangement remains rare in practice.
- The **organisation of work** in many jobs in the manufacturing sector is characterised by long hours, fixed rosters, overtime, early starts and 24/7 operations, and some companies report a strong perception that this is linked to the economic performance of the company. Redesigning the organisation of work in these companies to incorporate more flexible work practices has been assisted by a re-assessment of working time requirements and a well-developed business case for change.
- **Union resistance to flexible and part-time working hours** creates challenges for some manufacturers who would like to introduce part-time and flexible working arrangements as a means of removing barriers to women's participation. These arrangements may be resisted by unions if they have the potential to threaten employees' permanent full-time status and overtime access, or if alternatively they could create a risk of work intensification.

External Factors

- Companies experiencing **financial constraints** have found it difficult to prioritise and allocate resources to improving the employment outcomes of women, particularly where EO initiatives have not been integrated into the business plan and as a result have been regarded as non-core or superfluous.
- A number of companies reported that their **equal opportunity programs were disrupted** or on hold due to restructuring, site closures, mergers and/or the absence of key personnel, primarily as a result of the current industry downturn.

‘No managers have expressed interest in part-time work. Perhaps there is a reluctance to be a trail blazer or there might be a perception that it would be frowned upon.’

SHEET METAL PRODUCT MANUFACTURER, SA

Cultural Barriers

- **Discriminatory attitudes** towards women and about what women can do in the workplace continue to limit women's opportunities in some male-dominated workplaces, particularly in manual or technical areas of the business and in rural locations.
- **Low receptiveness to change** is an issue in some organisations where low turnover can allow workplace attitudes to gender roles to become entrenched, creating barriers to job redesign and the employment of women in non-traditional roles. In some areas, women working in the same company as their husband may encounter cultural or social expectations that they not exceed their husbands in either pay or seniority.

Initiatives to Advance Women

Manufacturers currently undertake a wide variety of initiatives to increase women's participation in the workplace and improve the management of their valued human resources.

In 2004, the initiatives most widely reported to EOWA included removing barriers to women's participation, improving the use of women's talents and increasing organisational capacity to bring about more inclusive workplaces that support equal opportunity. These and other initiatives are described below.

Utilising Women's Talents

- The implementation of effective, merit-based recruitment and selection procedures has assisted many companies to **appoint women to senior or non-traditional roles**, including to roles never before held by a woman. Such appointments are significantly breaking down stereotypes about women's capabilities and are an effective means of paving the way for future high-level or non-traditional female appointments. Some companies have also instigated targeted recruitment searches for senior roles when traditional forms of recruitment have failed to attract women.
- Strategies to improve women's participation include both **increasing the available talent pool**, for example through graduate programs and work experience initiatives, and increasing the number of women applying for jobs, such as through targeted advertising, recruiting overseas and instructing recruitment agencies to include women on all short-lists.

‘We want to continue to attract employees with abnormally high abilities...None [of which] differentiates between job level, gender, ethnicity... or the 101 other ways that we pigeon-hole people.’

FORMER ALCOA CEO, MIKE BALTZELL

- Initiatives aimed specifically at encouraging **younger women and girls into non-traditional areas** include company attendance at school fairs, university visits, sending female role-models to schools to act as industry 'ambassadors' and instigating student competitions such as in bridge building.

- **Succession planning**, including high-potential employee programs and mentoring of female replacements for upcoming retirements at senior management level, is another means by which manufacturing companies are increasing their utilisation of women’s talent. Some companies are also working to develop and improve career paths within their organisation to enable high-potential employees in lower-level positions to advance.
- A number of companies have adopted a **preferential recruitment policy** as a means of achieving specific gender targets. Under this policy, female candidates are actively appointed in preference to male candidates when all relevant job criteria such as skills and experience are equal. Other companies ensure that the top-ranked female candidate is always interviewed, even if she does not make the initial short-list.
- The impending **retirement of senior employees** has been identified by some companies as an opportunity to appoint a woman to the role, often for the first time.

Removing Barriers to Participation

- The **redesign of physical job requirements**, in particular to overcome OH&S restrictions by replacing manual processes with greater automation and by using other means and technologies to reduce the strength required to perform the job, has been highly successful in opening new roles to women across a wide range of sectors. Other initiatives include redesigning or reorganising job task components, improving physical workplace conditions and redefining role and grading systems to enable talented employees to advance irrespective of physical strength.
- The **redesign of working hours** has enabled a number of companies to increase their staff retention and the numbers of female applicants for new roles, and at a senior level, to create new advancement opportunities for women who are otherwise unable to work full-time. Types of arrangements implemented have included part-time and job-sharing positions, graduated return from maternity leave, phased retirement and the introduction of split shifts (of 4 hours each), which in one organisation were negotiated through an Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA).

‘Job-sharing is great for people who are retiring... it eases the transition out of the workplace and assists the company to retain corporate knowledge.’

SHEET METAL PRODUCT MANUFACTURER, QUEENSLAND

- **Flexible work practices**, including compressed hours, time off in lieu, working from home, flexible start and finish times, flexible rostering and school-hours employment, are all being introduced by an increasing number of manufacturers, who report improvements in employee retention, commitment and morale as a result.

Improving Conditions

- **Paid parental leave** is being introduced as a retention strategy and health-related leave provision, often based on a business case comparing the price of the policy with

the potential savings in reduced turnover. Thirty per cent of manufacturers surveyed by EOWA in 2003 said they provide paid maternity leave, and in 2004 a number of employers reported increasing the duration of their paid parental leave offered, in some cases up to 14 weeks.

- Manufacturers in a range of sectors are recognising the profitability of **transitioning casual employees to permanent part-time** status, which is improving employees' access to training, leave and other benefits and conditions.
- The **instalment of female facilities** for the first time, usually on sites that have previously employed only men, has been a basic yet necessary step for a number of companies to open up non-traditional roles in male-dominated workplaces to women.

Developing Women's Skills

- **Training and development** initiatives for female employees, such as skill assessments to determine the requirements to advance, are being used by numerous companies to improve female participation rates as well as address skill shortages. There is also a new emphasis on competency-based training for shop-floor staff to assist in the development of career paths, and encouragement of women to take up development opportunities such as external studies, cross-skilling and role rotation, for example of administrative staff onto the factory floor.
- Some companies are actively seeking to **engage female apprentices** and are also sponsoring internal female employees to take up apprenticeships and traineeships to assist them to move into non-traditional roles.
- With increasing workforce diversity and a tightening labour market, a number of employers are providing **language and literacy training** for employees. For women on the shop floor, this can be an important stepping stone to further advancement within the company.

‘The women are inspired and delighted with their recent certificates and graduation. It was the first official qualification for over 65% of the machine operators... it was a brilliant outcome for everyone.’

MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT MANUFACTURER, NSW

Strengthening Organisational Capacity

- The **analysis of workplace data** on recruitment, training, promotion and retention is being used by most leading employers to accurately measure the costs and value of their human resources, and the impact on these of current and potential new employment arrangements and policies.
- The **integration of EO objectives into the Business Strategy** has often been an important prerequisite in the implementation of effective programs to advance women, ensuring alignment with core business objectives and thus securing management commitment and support. Examples include planning for an expected business upturn by

implementing new training and development programs, and linking quality assurance targets with employee skill assessments that recognise the potential of currently underutilised employees.

- The **development of a business case** for improving specific employment opportunities or conditions for women within an organisation has been another important step for many companies before they have been able to justify resourcing new workplace initiatives. This often identifies, among other benefits, the additional skills and experience likely to be brought to the workforce through greater gender diversity.
- The appointment of dedicated **EO, diversity and harassment officers** has been effective in many companies in increasing workplace morale and productivity, as well as reducing the risk of litigation.

‘We have reviewed the shift rosters across the organisation and wherever possible considered shift patterns that would attract females, particularly those with family responsibilities.’

WEAVING MILL, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

- Improved **management practices**, including the adoption of new styles of management and conducting management training in non-discriminatory recruitment and interview techniques, have helped to create more inclusive workplaces.
- The development of **better employment policies and procedures**, including specific equal employment opportunity strategies, has provided the policy framework on which a number of companies have subsequently been able to base new initiatives to improve women's workplace outcomes.
- The committed and proactive **implementation of existing EO policies** on recruitment, training and development has also been a common element of many companies' efforts to advance women.

Overcoming Cultural Barriers

- **Culture-change initiatives** including staff training programs, focus groups and other initiatives are being used to bring issues out into the open and encourage honest communication.
- Some companies are actively **promoting positive attitudes** to and greater awareness of women in non-traditional areas, for example through having a presence at career fairs, profiling female role-models, visiting schools, encouraging student work experience in non-traditional areas, holding student competitions and publicising the appointments of women to non-traditional roles and apprenticeships.
- **Women's networks** are being developed to provide support and mentoring to female managers and professionals, particularly where professional isolation may be a factor in non-traditional and male-dominated fields.

Sector Profiles

The manufacturing industry comprises a number of sub-sectors, each with distinct demographic and gender profiles and unique industry constraints and issues for advancing women.ⁱⁱⁱ

This section highlights some of the issues experienced by the different sectors through a closer analysis of the EOWA compliance data, and outlines a selection of the initiatives being undertaken by employers to advance women’s workforce participation.

Food, Beverage & Tobacco

	FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO	ALL REPORTING MANUFACTURERS
NO. OF EOWA REPORTING ORGANISATIONS	141	707
% OF EOWA REPORTING MANUFACTURERS.....	20%	100%
AVERAGE NO. OF EMPLOYEES	887	698
% WOMEN EMPLOYEES	34%	31%
% WOMEN MANAGERS	23%	20%
% ORGS WITH PART-TIME MANAGERS	36%	25%
AVERAGE NO. OF EMs ACTIONED PER ORG	4.4	4.9
% OF ORGS ACTIONING 4 OR MORE EMs.....	63%	75%
% ORGS WAIVED FROM REPORTING IN 2004	6.4%	3.5%

The Food, Beverage & Tobacco (FBT) sector represents the second-largest manufacturing sector reporting to EOWA and comprises some of the largest employers, with 42% employing over 500 staff and 23% employing over 1000.

Women comprise 34% of the overall workforce and almost one quarter of management (23%), which is slightly higher than the average of 20% female managers for reporting manufacturers overall. The FBT sector is also more likely than average to have managers working part-time, with 36% of companies reporting this compared with 25% of manufacturers overall.

Equal Opportunity Issues

- **Industry downturn.** Tightening economic and trading conditions, the sugar industry crisis and the drought have had a negative impact on the ability of many companies to improve workplace outcomes for women and for staff generally.

- **Few women in management.** Women are generally represented in managerial and supervisory positions at lower levels than their workforce participation rates. In some sectors this has been due to the historically low numbers of women applying for positions due to the non-traditional, physical or unattractive nature of the work and the long hours and early starts. In other sectors where women have high workforce participation rates, however, a lack of equal development and promotional opportunities and flexible working arrangements are also likely to be contributing factors.
- **Physical or unattractive nature of the work.** A number of companies in this sector reported that the nature of the work in their industry makes it unattractive or even unsafe for women. In some cases this was backed up by OH&S or workcover strength requirements or restrictions on pregnant women performing the work. Where technologies exist that would reduce the strength requirements of certain jobs, some companies have been prevented from introducing these by financial constraints.
- **Barriers to flexible working arrangements.** Companies across a wide range of sectors have found that issues of work organisation, including long hours, rotating shifts, overtime and early starts, have made it difficult to recruit women. Where companies have decided to offer part-time and job-sharing roles, the long travelling distances in rural areas have sometimes made these uneconomic, and in a small number of cases, these initiatives have been blocked by protective industrial action.
- **Seasonal work.** The seasonal nature of work in some sectors, for example in the sugar industry, impacts on companies' ability to implement long-term programs to retain and develop staff.

Initiatives to Advance Women

- **Job redesign to open non-traditional roles to women.** Companies are recognising the potential of job redesign to open up non-traditional roles to women. One company is introducing new equipment and layouts for both abattoir and smallgoods factories which will reduce the weight and effort involved and open up more opportunities for women. Combined with training initiatives to re-skill the entire workforce, this is helping to eliminating some of the hidden barriers to promotional opportunities for women, and is allowing them to learn some job functions which were previously beyond them physically and which form part of the traditional career path.

‘The level of engagement of part-time staff was the highest group result in our survey.’

DAIRY PRODUCT MANUFACTURER, VICTORIA

- **Job redesign to increase flexibility.** Many companies are introducing flexible working hours and other work/life balance policies as a means of opening up new roles to women unable to work full-time, and where these policies already exist, have been active in enhancing their provisions by reviewing new options or making existing provisions available to a wider cross-section of staff.
- **Enhancing organisational capacity.** Building organisational systems and structures to address EO issues has been a major focus of a number of companies over the last

year, including in one flour mill the establishment of a Women's Action Group to look specifically at women's issues, and in another food manufacturer the establishment of Family Groups to discuss work/life balance issues. Other companies have concentrated on improving their overall people management practices, including creating a dedicated HR function and reviewing discrimination and harassment policies.

- **Development of women's talent.** Programs which develop the potential of talented female employees are becoming increasingly popular as the flow-on benefits for the company are recognised. Types of initiatives include stretch projects, secondments, cross-functional movement and non-traditional roles, combined with targeted development plans. In one major food manufacturing company, a 'female development funnel' has been created to enhance the career development and career planning of senior-level female executives to ensure the company attains its diversity objectives.
- **Improved recruitment processes.** The development of more accurate job descriptions and merit-based selection processes, including a clear identification of accountabilities and key performance indicators, is assisting women to move into previously male-dominated roles. Companies are also taking steps to promote positive images of the industry and ensure that advertising and selection criteria address the requirements of the position. One company reported that it is now deliberately targeting women for non-traditional roles involved in the production of quality meat products, as females have been assessed in workplace trials as having higher-level skills in these tasks than men.
- **Promotion of positive attitudes to the industry.** To upgrade the perception of the industry and attract more women to apply for non-traditional roles, one company has made a video advertising career paths for women in the industry which is now being shown on local television.

Textile, Clothing, Footwear & Leather Manufacturing

	TEXTILE, CLOTHING, FOOTWEAR & LEATHER	ALL REPORTING MANUFACTURERS
NO. OF EOWA REPORTING ORGANISATIONS.....	41	707
% OF EOWA REPORTING MANUFACTURERS	6%	100%
AVERAGE NO. OF EMPLOYEES.....	440	698
% WOMEN EMPLOYEES.....	52%	31%
% WOMEN MANAGERS	32%	20%
% ORGS WITH PART-TIME MANAGERS.....	19%	25%
AVERAGE NO. OF EMs ACTIONED PER ORG.....	3.8	4.9
% OF ORGS ACTIONING 4 OR MORE EMs	56%	75%
% ORGS WAIVED FROM REPORTING IN 2004	4.9%	3.5%

The Textile, Clothing, Footwear & Leather (TCFL) sector comprises a relatively small proportion (6%) of reporting manufacturers, but employs the largest percentage of female employees (52%). Women are however under-represented in management at 32%, and hold no CEO positions within the 41 companies registered with EOWA.

Companies in this sector are smaller on average than other manufacturers, with only a quarter of the national TCFL workforce covered by the 100 employee-plus organisations registered with EOWA. The sector is located predominantly in Victoria (56% of reporting companies), with a further 22% in New South Wales.

Equal Opportunity Issues

- **Difficulty in recruiting women to senior and non-traditional roles.** A number of companies experienced difficulties in attracting female applicants for jobs involving a manual handling component, while barriers to increasing the number of women in management included the limited supply of suitable women, an inhospitable workplace culture and a lack of adequate finances for EO programs.
- **Inflexible working conditions.** The work arrangements in some companies require 12-hour shifts, fixed starting times and long hours, making it difficult for employees to advance in the workplace while balancing family responsibilities. Some companies regard this as necessary to remain financially viable in the face of global competition.
- **Low engagement with EO issues.** A significant number of companies participating in the 2002 EOWA survey cited workplace culture as their principal challenge to achieving equal opportunity objectives, while others did not believe any action needed to be taken to advance women. This may reflect the less visible nature of EO issues in female-dominated workplaces where improving the conditions of a mostly-female workforce may not be regarded as an EO initiative.
- **Low provision of paid maternity leave.** Paid maternity leave is provided by 13% of TCLF companies compared with 30% reporting manufactures overall, despite having a majority-female workforce. This indicates that TCLF companies may not be retaining their female workforce to the fullest extent possible, and may indicate lower-level benefits for employees in other areas, a common feature of female-dominated industries which may also reflect the undervaluing of work traditionally performed by women.

Initiatives to Advance Women

- **Technology-driven up-skilling of the female workforce.** Many companies are finding that as technology advances and in particular becomes more computerised, there has been a need to train and up-skill existing employees, some of whom may not even have post-school qualifications let alone computer experience. In a major clothing manufacturing company, one such woman was sent to Germany for advanced training on the new, computerised technology to be introduced. Another company has established a training committee to periodically review the training needs of the organisation and to identify and assist in the coordination of training for employees in the shop floor environment.
- **Retention initiatives to address retirement-linked skill shortages.** Companies with ageing workforces have found that they need to increase their efforts to retain older employees or else face skill shortages. In one such company where 98% of the workforce are women and 50% are over 45 years of age, the CEO has introduced a phased retirement option to help retain the female workforce as they move towards retirement.

- **Creating harassment-free workplaces.** Several companies are undertaking extensive reviews of their EO and sexual harassment policies to ensure they address the current legislation, provide a consistent and equitable policy framework and ensure a harassment and discrimination-free work environment. A training initiative in one company involved re-educating employees on workplace behaviour issues, including in all areas of harassment and discrimination, to maintain and reinforce the company’s ‘no tolerance’ stance toward inappropriate behaviour.
- **Increasing women in management.** A number of companies are targeting the low representation of women in their management teams. In one clothing manufacturing company where this was made the specific focus of the HR department, the company has been successful in increasing women’s representation on the management team from 13% last year to 34% this reporting year, while in another company, a leadership development program has been established to provide identified high-potential employees with the appropriate opportunities for development.

‘We now employ female staff in the loomstate area of production for the first time in the history of the mill.’

WEAVING MILL, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

- **Job redesign.** The redesign of jobs to introduce greater flexibility in working hours, or to incorporate new technologies and safer working practices into roles with a high manual-handling and/or heavy lifting component, has enabled a number of companies to recruit women to roles previously held only by men. In a Western Australian textile manufacturing company, a woman has been employed in the loomstate area of production for the first time in the history of the mill. The company reports that not only has the appointment been successful, but it is making a positive impact on the employee’s male counterparts.

Wood & Paper Product Manufacturing

	WOOD & PAPER PRODUCT	ALL REPORTING MANUFACTURERS
NO. OF EOWA REPORTING ORGANISATIONS.....	33	707
% OF EOWA REPORTING MANUFACTURERS	5%	100%
AVERAGE NO. OF EMPLOYEES.....	732	698
% WOMEN EMPLOYEES.....	19%	31%
% WOMEN MANAGERS	14%	20%
% ORGS WITH PART-TIME MANAGERS.....	16%	25%
AVERAGE NO. OF EMs ACTIONED PER ORG.....	5.2	4.9
% OF ORGS ACTIONING 4 OR MORE EMs	85%	75%
% ORGS WAIVED FROM REPORTING IN 2004	0.0%	3.5%

The Wood & Paper Product sector comprises just 5% of reporting manufacturers, with companies typically employing under 250 staff but with a small number of companies employing over 1000 staff.

Despite women comprising just 19% of the total sector workforce, women make up 14% of overall management. Wood & Paper Product companies report a high number of workplace initiatives in their annual EOWA Compliance reports, averaging 5.2 separate Employment Matters actioned per organisation compared with an average of 4.9 for manufacturers overall.

Equal Opportunity Issues

- **Few flexible working options.** The availability of part-time and flexible working arrangements in the Wood & Paper Product sector is rare, reflecting the tradition of male employment, heavy physical work and often remote rural locations. At managerial level, only 6 of the 2,107 managers reported in the 2003-04 EOWA Compliance reports worked part-time.
- **Industry constraints on expanding opportunities for women.** Economic pressure to downsize, resulting in recruitment freezes, closures, company and site mergers and lower production demand, are impacting negatively on the resources available within companies to implement active EO workplace programs.
- **Male-dominated workforce.** The male-dominated, physically-difficult and often dirty work, combined with remote rural locations, has made it difficult for some companies to attract women. One company found that because of the traditional male focus within the industry, women were sometimes subject to resentment when promoted over males, and as a result they have needed to maintain regular monitoring of equality in recruitment, promotion and training for women.

‘Flexibility allows the retention of good people.’

PAPER MANUFACTURER, NSW

Initiatives to Advance Women

- **Introduction of flexible working arrangements.** Increasing emphasis on developing family-friendly, flexible work practices, including implementing structural changes to introduce split shifts, four-day weeks, flexible starting times and time off in lieu, is enabling a number of companies to improve their female recruitment and retention rates. In some companies, the new arrangements have specifically targeted management, including introducing options such as job-sharing and working from home to make senior roles more viable for employees with children and other external commitments.
- **Appointment of women to non-traditional roles.** The introduction of new technologies which reduce the manual-handling component of jobs has opened new roles to women. In some companies, the proactive recruitment and up-skilling of female employees has enabled pioneer appointments of women to non-traditional roles, such

as the appointment of a female envelope die-cutter in the envelope department of one company, a first for the industry.

- **Employee development and training.** Programs to develop the skills of existing employees are being used to advance women as well as address skill shortages. Initiatives have included the development of competency training and progression systems to improve retention rates and create career paths, including providing AQF certificate-level training programs for all employees and cross-skilling to enable female employees to move sideways into non-traditional areas of the business.
- **Advancement of women.** Several companies reported focusing their efforts on the promotion of women into leadership and executive management roles, with some companies succeeding in raising women’s representation in senior management to significant levels, in the case of a Victorian Pulp, Paper & Paperboard manufacturer to as high as 68%.
- **Development of women's networks.** Women’s networks have been effectively used by some companies to build understanding and support for women’s issues at both the shop-floor and managerial levels. In one Paper Bag & Sack manufacturing company, a women’s networking website has been established on the company intranet which outlines the network’s purpose, profiles senior women in the company and provides links to external websites on women’s career development.

Printing, Publishing & Recorded Media

	PRINTING, PUBLISHING & RECORDED MEDIA	ALL REPORTING MANUFACTURERS
NO. OF EOWA REPORTING ORGANISATIONS	65	707
% OF EOWA REPORTING MANUFACTURERS.....	9%	100%
AVERAGE NO. OF EMPLOYEES	711	698
% WOMEN EMPLOYEES	49%	31%
% WOMEN MANAGERS.....	33%	20%
% ORGS WITH PART-TIME MANAGERS	42%	25%
AVERAGE NO. OF EMs ACTIONED PER ORG	4.9	4.9
% OF ORGS ACTIONING 4 OR MORE EMs.....	80%	75%
% ORGS WAIVED FROM REPORTING IN 2004	0.0%	3.5%

The Printing, Publishing & Recorded Media (PPRM) sector is characterised by some of the best developed workplace programs for women among manufacturers.

With a workforce of nearly 50% women, and a smaller proportion of jobs in non-traditional, technical or manual labour roles than other sectors, the PPRM sector has the highest proportion of female managers of any sector in manufacturing and rates significantly above the industry average. At 33%, however, women are still considerably under-represented in management relative to their workforce participation rate of 49%.

Conditions of employment are also above average, with paid maternity leave offered by more than 50% of surveyed PPRM companies.

Equal Opportunity Issues

- **HR management practices.** There is increasing recognition in workplaces with sophisticated HR practices of the need to develop policies and processes, including in relation to merit-based recruitment, equitable training and development and staff consultation, that maximise the company's staff retention and improve its competitiveness in a tightening labour market.
- **Few women in technical roles.** Technical and other non-traditional roles continue to have low representations of women, especially in the production departments of printing and publishing companies. Companies attribute this to the widespread—but no longer accurate—view of the printing sector as a dirty and unattractive occupation for women.
- **Financial constraints.** The shrinking of the domestic market and loss of market share is restricting some companies' abilities to implement active EO programs and initiatives.
- **Low turnover levels.** A number of companies reported low turnover levels, particularly in senior positions and non-traditional areas of the business, which is restricting their ability to increase their recruitment of female staff. A 155-year old family printing business with a tradition of employment for life, for example, has found it difficult to address a historical legacy of gendered role segregation.
- **Male-oriented work organisation.** A number of companies provide minimal flexibility in how work is organised, which may be restricting opportunities for women to advance within the workplace. One newspaper printer is seeking to introduce permanent part-time roles for the first time as part of their industrial relations negotiations, while another in music publishing reported that allowing a female manager who was pregnant to attend doctors' appointments was an exceptional instance of flexibility.

Initiatives to Advance Women

- **Development of improved EO practices.** Companies are taking numerous initiatives to bring their human resource management practices in line with leading business practice and introduce greater equity and impartiality into recruitment, training and promotion policies and processes. Initiatives include the review of collated training and development data from annual performance appraisals, the recruitment of HR managers at more senior levels and the review of position descriptions to identify required skills and expertise during recruitment and ensure merit-based selection of the best candidate.
- **Technology-driven up-skilling of the female workforce.** The introduction of new technologies is creating opportunities to provide training for the female workforce in non-traditional roles, enabling women to move into the core areas of the business from which promotions are made. One printing company has encouraged women to undertake training in machine operation skills, an essential skill for advancement, and as a result women operators now manage production in the bindery and digital print areas. Another printing company has implemented a new competency-based system in conjunction with RMIT and union delegates which has led to increased identification and awareness of both skill levels and training needs, with the result that over 27 traineeships have been provided to new and existing staff.
- **Promotion of non-traditional roles.** Printing companies are undertaking initiatives to change the perception of the industry from dirty and inky to clean and high-tech, in one

instance even drawing parallels between working with print control consoles to using a sound mixer to attract higher numbers of job applicants.

- **Creating advancement opportunities for women.** The introduction of managerial training, succession planning, high potential programs and other development initiatives have increased the number of women in management in a number of companies. A periodical publisher, for example, has identified the career pathways in the core parts of the business and devised matching development plans for each path which outline the necessary learning opportunities and which are available to all staff within each stream. Other companies with flat structures at senior levels and a resulting high turnover of staff below this level are introducing additional levels of management to create new advancement opportunities for highly-valued employees.
- **Paid maternity leave.** The PPRM sector is a strong exception to the manufacturing industry in the provision of paid maternity leave, with 62% of companies saying they provide paid maternity leave compared with 30% of the manufacturing industry overall.
- **Employee Assistance Programs.** Several companies have established Employee Assistance Programs to improve the safety and morale of their workforces, with one publishing distributor introducing a 'Fair Call' 1800 hotline for staff to report any unethical behaviour. The line is manned by a major professional services firm and reports are recorded anonymously and fed back to the HR department.

Petroleum, Coal, Chemical & Associated Product Manufacturing

	PETROLEUM, COAL CHEMICAL & ASSOCIATED	ALL REPORTING MANUFACTURERS
NO. OF EOWA REPORTING ORGANISATIONS.....	127	707
% OF EOWA REPORTING MANUFACTURERS	18%	100%
AVERAGE NO. OF EMPLOYEES.....	680	698
% WOMEN EMPLOYEES.....	48%	31%
% WOMEN MANAGERS	20%	20%
% ORGS WITH PART-TIME MANAGERS.....	29%	25%
AVERAGE NO. OF EMs ACTIONED PER ORG.....	4.9	4.9
% OF ORGS ACTIONING 4 OR MORE EMs	75%	75%
% ORGS WAIVED FROM REPORTING IN 2004	7.1%	3.5%

With a workforce of 48% women, the Petroleum, Coal, Chemical & Associated Product (PCCA) manufacturers that report to EOWA have a much higher proportion of female employees than the total sector nationwide, estimated by the Australian Bureau of Statistics to employ 32% women overall.

The high proportion of women in PCCA reporting organisations may reflect the diverse nature of its sub-industries, with large numbers of women working in Cosmetic & Toiletry Preparation and Medicinal & Pharmaceutical Product manufacturing, but far fewer women in Rubber Product and Plastic Product manufacturing.

The range of sub-industries, organisational sizes and workforce demographics may also account for the diversity of companies' engagement with EO issues, with reporting organisations in this sector more likely to have been assessed as 'Starting out' in the implementation of their EO programs (16% compared with 13% of reporting manufacturers overall), but also more likely to have achieved Waived status in 2003-04 (7.1% of companies compared with 3.5% of all manufacturers).

Equal Opportunity Issues

- **Limited advancement opportunities.** Low staff turnover at the top, combined with the high level of plant industry expertise required for many senior management and operational positions, which can often only be gained while on the job or from working in a similar environment, means that there are few opportunities for women to be promoted in some companies.
- **Few women with non-traditional expertise.** Companies are finding it difficult to recruit women with engineering qualifications and technical skills, with the number of women in engineering and trade roles either stalled or even decreasing in some companies.
- **Organisational constraints on increasing women's participation.** Opportunities to increase women's participation are perceived to be limited as a result of the increased market competition from overseas, which is forcing companies to drive down production costs to compete and is resulting in downsizing, redundancies and high levels of organisational instability.
- **Male-oriented employment conditions.** A tradition of historically employing predominantly men has in some companies led to few facilities for women, inflexible work arrangements such as rigid shift rosters and limited work/life balance provisions. Some female-dominated companies also provide limited flexible work arrangements, with one major cosmetics manufacturer reporting that they have been unable to accommodate all of their female employees' requests for a change in status or altered duties to take into account changed family circumstances.

Initiatives to Advance Women

- **Recruiting women to non-traditional roles.** Employers trying to attract women to non-traditional roles are undertaking a range of initiatives, including tailored job advertisements, alliances with TAFEs and universities and consultation within their industry groups. One major petroleum manufacturer reviewed their selection criteria and removed the stipulation for trade experience to encourage more female candidates to apply.
- **Fast-tracking high-potential female employees.** Development programs for high-potential employees have succeeded in raising women's participation in some companies. An analysis of the promotion data in one petroleum refinery company revealed that, as a result of the female workforce being moved through the grades in a shorter time frame, women were averaging 1.7 years to be promoted compared with 2.3 years for men.
- **Introduction of flexible work practices.** A growing number of companies are introducing flexible work arrangements, including rostering, job-share and part-time

roles. The HR manager at one major pharmaceutical company succeeded in changing the culture of her organisation and was able to obtain approval for and implement a flexible work solutions policy within the organisation, enabling managers to adopt flexible work solutions within their department.

- **Support for working parents.** Paid parental leave and phased return from maternity leave are among the options being introduced by companies to improve maternity leave retention rates. In one paint manufacturing company, a return-to-work plan was negotiated between a pregnant employee, her manager and the HR department that incorporated working from home, flexible working hours and an eventual return to full-time hours. In a pharmaceutical product manufacturing company, the executive team approved \$100,000 to support working parents, with focus groups to be established to review industry data and determine the best use of the money in relation to introducing flexible work practices, child-care subsidies and paid maternity leave.

Non-Metallic Mineral Product Manufacturing

	NON-METALLIC MINERAL PRODUCT	ALL REPORTING MANUFACTURERS
NO. OF EOWA REPORTING ORGANISATIONS.....	21	707
% OF EOWA REPORTING MANUFACTURERS	3%	100%
AVERAGE NO. OF EMPLOYEES.....	1369	698
% WOMEN EMPLOYEES.....	13%	31%
% WOMEN MANAGERS	9%	20%
% ORGS WITH PART-TIME MANAGERS.....	53%	25%
AVERAGE NO. OF EMs ACTIONED PER ORG.....	5.6	4.9
% OF ORGS ACTIONING 4 OR MORE EMs	90%	75%
% ORGS WAIVED FROM REPORTING IN 2004	4.8%	3.5%

Comprising a relatively small number of reporting manufacturers, companies in the Non-Metallic Mineral Product (NMMP) manufacturing sector are nonetheless likely to benefit from their generally large organisational size, and the increased HR capacity that normally accompanies this, in implementing initiatives to advance women.

As a result, and despite employing a workforce of only 13% women overall, the NMMP sector has almost the same percentage of women in management (9%), and a relatively high proportion of women CEOs (5%).

Equal Opportunity Issues

- **Few female applicants.** Some companies are experiencing reducing numbers of female applicants for new jobs, due in part to recruitment efforts being increasingly in non-traditional roles for which traditional advertising and recruitment methods are not drawing a wide female applicant pool.

- **High turnover of women.** The high turnover of female employees in some sub-industries is impacting negatively on company efforts to develop and advance existing female employees into non-traditional roles.
- **Inadequate workforce information.** The analysis of workplace data in some companies is hampered by outdated and inadequate systems and processes, including payroll systems that are unable to identify managers and part-time and casual employees separately.
- **EO initiatives marginalised.** The organisational instability and restructuring experienced by many companies in this sector, for example resulting from downsizing, acquisitions and de-mergers, has led to major changes in companies' senior management which in some has reduced the coordination of and commitment to initiatives to advance women.

Initiatives to Advance Women

- **Proactive recruitment of women.** Initiatives aimed at attracting greater numbers of female applicants for engineering and professional roles, for example targeted recruitment advertising, have been effective for some companies in increasing the number of women applicants for non-traditional roles. Techniques include the use of striking visual representations of women employees in advertisements and profiles of successful women on the company website.
- **Pioneer appointments of women.** Women are being appointed for the first time to non-traditional and managerial roles, including for example in one company the first ever appointment of a women to the operations management team, and in a cement manufacturing company, the appointment of a woman as a mine manager and another as a materials manager.
- **Improved remuneration and reward systems.** Initiatives designed to provide better recognition of women's contribution include the development of incentive structures to link pay equity with performance management, and in one case the offer of 'Excellence Awards' and a letter of formal recognition from the CEO.

Leading Practice Case Study:

Advancing Women in a Ceramic Product Manufacturing Company

A ceramic tile manufacturer with a traditionally male-dominated workforce which typically performs heavy, dirty work reviewed all of its jobs and concluded that women were capable of doing every job in the company.

As a result, the company increased the proportion of women in its workforce from 20% to 40% during the period, achieving a 20% increase in women in management, including in leadership roles in production; recruited four women to sales for the first time; and employed a woman forklift operator/packer in the warehouse.

All women in the organisation (and some men) are now undertaking a relevant AQF Certificate III program after first undergoing literacy training and confidence building activities.

- **Redesign of working hours.** Structural changes to the organisation of work, including the introduction of split shifts, flexible starting times and shorter weeks, are being used by many companies to provide greater flexibility to employees.
- **Greater work/life balance for managers.** The introduction of flexible work arrangements targeted specifically at managers, such as job-sharing and the option to work from home, is making senior roles more viable for employees with children and other caring commitments.

Metal Product Manufacturing

	METAL PRODUCT MANUFACTURING	ALL REPORTING MANUFACTURERS
NO. OF EOWA REPORTING ORGANISATIONS.....	70	707
% OF EOWA REPORTING MANUFACTURERS	10%	100%
AVERAGE NO. OF EMPLOYEES.....	691	698
% WOMEN EMPLOYEES.....	12%	31%
% WOMEN MANAGERS	11%	20%
% ORGS WITH PART-TIME MANAGERS.....	25%	25%
AVERAGE NO. OF EMs ACTIONED PER ORG.....	4.9	4.9
% OF ORGS ACTIONING 4 OR MORE EMs	79%	75%
% ORGS WAIVED FROM REPORTING IN 2004	0.0%	3.5%

The Metal Product sector has the most male-dominated workforce of all manufacturing sectors, employing just 12% women. Comprising sub-industries such as aluminium smelting, iron casting and forging, many jobs are physically demanding and are often performed in difficult working environments.

In the face of these challenges, however, many companies are nonetheless actively engaged in initiatives to advance women, with 31% of Metal Product manufacturers reporting actions under all seven of the legislated Employment Matters in their annual Compliance report to EOWA.

Equal Opportunity Issues

- **Few qualified women.** Employment in the metal processing industries often requires trade qualifications in areas such as welding, boiler-making and galvanising, in which few women undertake apprenticeships.
- **Small female recruitment pool.** Difficulties in attracting female applicants for non-traditional roles has made it hard for many companies to improve the participation of women in their workforce. In some companies, this has been exacerbated by declining numbers of employees in unskilled or operative areas combined with increasing numbers in technical areas and the line manager and supervisor categories, with the result that new roles and promotional opportunities often require applicants to be trade-qualified in the areas of production, few of whom are women.
- **Limited recruitment opportunities.** Low turnover, sector-wide downsizing and recruitment freezes have restricted companies' opportunities to recruit more women.

Difficult economic conditions have also led many companies to streamline their corporate administration, reducing opportunities for women in more traditional areas.

- **Attitudes to the industry.** The perception of the industry as male-dominated and comprising work that is physically demanding and performed in dirty or unpleasant environments has created a low demand by women to train and apply for jobs in the sector.
- **Sexual harassment.** Companies with male-dominated workforces report that sexual harassment continues to be a workplace issue, with the removal of inappropriate and offensive material an ongoing challenge.

‘Women are not attracted to the work because of the physical demands and the work environment – usually hot, dirty and dusty.’

METAL PRODUCT MANUFACTURER, VIC

Initiatives to Advance Women

- **Head-hunting women for senior positions.** Proactive recruitment processes have enabled some companies to appoint women to roles held previously only by men. In the case of a steel product manufacturer, when only one man was put forward for a senior management position the CEO instructed the recruitment agency to broaden the pool of applicants to include a suitably-qualified woman, who turned out to be a clear stand-out candidate and was appointed to the role.
- **Career development assistance.** Increasing numbers of women employees are accessing company-sponsored development opportunities, including external study programs, graduate development programs and work experience initiatives, as a means of increasing their promotional opportunities and gaining a better understanding of the organisation and its work environment. This has also led to an increased number of female appointments in support management and at graduate entry level.
- **Competency-based training.** The development of foundry ready training courses in one company has enabled four additional women to be employed in the non-traditional areas of sheet metal manufacturing. In another company, 19 women were enrolled in Certificate III courses in engineering and production technology.

‘People like to see that the company is able to be flexible.’

METAL PRODUCT MANUFACTURER, NSW

- **Work and family initiatives.** Companies introducing more flexible work and family and working from home policies have increased the participation of women employees with dependent care commitments. One company related how one woman returned to work two weeks after the baby was born and had it with her all day until it was five months’ old—in meetings and at her desk—until eventually she was able to obtain home help.
- **Paid parental leave.** A number of companies are introducing paid parental leave.

Machinery & Equipment Manufacturing

	MACHINERY & EQUIPMENT	ALL REPORTING MANUFACTURERS
NO. OF EOWA REPORTING ORGANISATIONS.....	179	707
% OF EOWA REPORTING MANUFACTURERS	25%	100%
AVERAGE NO. OF EMPLOYEES.....	561	698
% WOMEN EMPLOYEES.....	20%	31%
% WOMEN MANAGERS	14%	20%
% ORGS WITH PART-TIME MANAGERS.....	9%	25%
AVERAGE NO. OF EMs ACTIONED PER ORG.....	5.4	4.9
% OF ORGS ACTIONING 4 OR MORE EMs	82%	75%
% ORGS WAIVED FROM REPORTING IN 2004	2.2%	3.5%

The Machinery & Equipment (ME) manufacturing sector is the largest sector among reporting manufacturers, comprising 25% of all registered companies in 2004. Women’s participation is amongst the lowest, however, at 20% of the total sector workforce, with a similarly low management participation rate of 14%.

The main sub-industries are motor vehicles and parts manufacturing, electrical and electronic equipment manufacturing and industrial machinery and equipment manufacturing. Women tend to be concentrated in large numbers in a relatively small number of companies, though with increasing initiatives to increase women in management.

The sector is characterised by the effects of a recent economic downturn, severely curtailing opportunities to increase women’s participation, combined with a moderately high level of engagement with equal opportunity issues and widespread recognition of the role that women can play in combating a tightening labour market and pending skills shortages.

Equal Opportunity Issues

- **Limited supply of qualified women.** The lack of female engineering graduates continues to make it difficult for many companies to recruit women into engineering roles, which in turn is limiting the number of women professionals from which to recruit for senior management roles.
- **Few new entrants to trade roles.** Some companies are experiencing serious difficulties as a result of being unable to recruit apprentices and trainees of either gender. The unattractive and often heavy and dirty nature of the work in many roles is also making it difficult to attract women job applicants in equal numbers to men, and in the automotive industry in particular, older experienced tradespersons are deserting the trade for the less demanding and cleaner environment of spare parts.
- **Financial constraints on EO.** The economic necessity for many companies to either downsize or move manufacturing plants offshore has limited the opportunities to progress women’s employment outcomes in terms of promotion and new employment. The resulting low workforce morale has also forced some companies to focus on risk

management and minimising individual hardship. In some companies, the lower and middle levels of management have also been shifted offshore, making promotions dependent on transfer overseas and limiting the advancement opportunities to these employees who can relocate, which excludes women with family commitments.

- **Technology-driven retrenchments.** The introduction of new technologies aimed at improving productivity is decreasing traditional female roles, particularly on the shop floor.

Initiatives to Advance Women

- **Pioneer appointments of women.** Groundbreaking appointments of women to positions previously held only by men have been successful for some companies in increasing women's participation in managerial and non-traditional roles. In one defence manufacturing company, a woman appointed to the Business Development department was the first-ever person from a civilian background to be appointed to this previously military and male-dominated division.
- **Enhancing employees' competencies.** Companies are increasingly providing training and development for shop-floor employees, both to maximise their workforce contribution and to create opportunities for career progression that will help to offset current and future skill shortages. A range of initiatives are being offered to lower-level staff, including competency-based training, apprenticeships, traineeships and lateral transfers.

Leading Practice Case Study:

Introducing Flexibility in a Machinery & Equipment Manufacturing Company

The company philosophy of a NSW machinery and equipment manufacturer was that one working arrangement for all did not necessarily make for a happy and productive workforce. Flexible working arrangements, however, were known sometimes to create problems if they reduced employees' total working hours.

The company resolved this through the introduction of flexible shifts, but with the additional arrangement that any Award staff not assigned shifts could continue to work a 40-hour week in any way they choose. In consultation with management, staff can now choose to finish late or start early, or even work on weekends to make up their hours. This means that many of the company's mothers and fathers are able to drop their children at school without having the cost of before care, or leave early to pick up children. Other parents are employed on a permanent part-time or job-sharing basis, with the result that the redistribution of duties has become common for employees with families.

The flexible work arrangements have been successful in improving employee retention and enhancing workplace morale. Data collected since the introduction of the new arrangements show that 95% of women taking maternity leave have been able to return to work.

- **Promotion of women into management.** A number of companies are reporting significant progress in increasing the number of women in senior management. One Electronic Equipment Manufacturing company reported that women comprised 17% of managerial promotions last year compared with 8% in the previous year, while another company in Computer & Business Machine Manufacturing is investing significantly in leadership development, with two women funded to undertake Masters of Business Administration, another two women supported in traineeships, and women comprising 15% overall of employees undertaking external management academy training.
- **Talent management programs.** High-potential employee programs and succession planning are being used to maximise the retention of talented employees and ensure that the women amongst them receive the same development and advancement opportunities as the men. In one large car manufacturing company, 22% of the high potential candidates identified in 2003-04 were women, with candidates provided with a range of development opportunities including residential development programs run by an external executive management training institute.

‘As a consumer company, Ford understands that the more our workforce mirrors our customer base, the better insights we’ll have and the better decisions we’ll make.’

FORD PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT VP, JOHN SHELTON

- **Revaluing female-dominated roles.** In a rare initiative to increase the value placed on support roles which traditionally have been held by women and were felt to be undervalued, an electronic equipment manufacturer implemented a ‘Functional Appreciation’ initiative in which women in support roles were invited to give a presentation to staff on how their work interacted with and provides an essential underpinning function to the work of other divisions.
- **Broadened recruitment searches.** Increasing recognition of the importance of widening the recruitment pool has led companies to develop partnerships with TAFEs and other educational bodies to increase new entrants to the sector and improve industry linkages. Other initiatives include presentations at school career nights outlining the benefits of having a trade, and becoming more involved in local networks to encourage students to think about apprenticeships. Similar initiatives are also having success at tertiary level, with one company reporting that enrolments of female engineering students at RMIT have increased from 5% to 16% since 2000. Other companies are recruiting overseas to attract more female engineering applicants for senior and non-traditional roles, and to identify a more diverse group of applicants with a greater range of experience.
- **Harnessing workforce diversity.** Companies are demonstrating increasing recognition of the value of workforce diversity, with one machinery manufacturer providing English lessons for close to 100 female employees from a non-English-speaking background.
- **Paid parental leave.** A growing number of companies are providing paid maternity leave for up to 14 weeks, with 33% of companies surveyed by EOWA in 2003 now offering this provision compared with 30% of surveyed reporting manufacturers overall.

Other Manufacturing

	OTHER MANUFACTURING	ALL REPORTING MANUFACTURERS
NO. OF EOWA REPORTING ORGANISATIONS.....	30	707
% OF EOWA REPORTING MANUFACTURERS	4%	100%
AVERAGE NO. OF EMPLOYEES.....	531	698
% WOMEN EMPLOYEES.....	23%	31%
% WOMEN MANAGERS	22%	20%
% ORGS WITH PART-TIME MANAGERS.....	18%	25%
AVERAGE NO. OF EMs ACTIONED PER ORG.....	5.5	4.9
% OF ORGS ACTIONING 4 OR MORE EMs	90%	75%
% ORGS WAIVED FROM REPORTING IN 2004	0.0%	3.5%

The Other Manufacturing sector comprises the Prefabricated Building, Furniture and Other Manufacturing sub-industries, and represented 4% of reporting manufacturers in 2004.

Women comprise 23% of the total workforce, and an almost equivalent 22% of management.

Smaller on average than other manufacturers, the EOWA Compliance data shows that companies in this sector are nonetheless making concerted efforts to advance women in the workplace, with 90% of companies reporting initiatives under four or more of the seven EOWA Employment Matters.

‘Our female workforce are confident and proactive, even though they are still the minority. It is certainly recognised that females have a lot to offer and a perspective which lends itself to better objectivity and logic.’

SIGN MANUFACTURER, VICTORIA

Equal Opportunity Issues

- **Low representation of women in management.** Low turnover at senior management level, combined with the long time it normally takes to develop the required level of industry knowledge, are regarded by a number of companies as the major factors slowing women’s progression into management.
- **Few female candidates for non-traditional roles.** Due to the nature of work in the sector, companies have found it difficult to attract women into non-traditional roles such as carpenter, builder’s labourer and construction worker. Some have used external recruitment agencies to recruit more widely, but have not always been able to attract women for the roles in which they have vacancies.

- **Shortage of skilled female applicants.** Some companies have also experienced a decrease in the number of skilled female workers applying for shop-floor jobs, leading to a decrease in the number of women employed on the shop floor as a result.
- **Financial constraints on EO initiatives.** The recent industry downturn and tight economic export climate has resulted in widespread restructuring and retrenchments which have reduced staff recruitment and training and have decreased opportunities for the promotion, transfer and recruitment of women.

Initiatives to Advance Women

- **Introduction of flexible working options.** The successful introduction of flexible working arrangements is breaking down the perception that some roles are inappropriate to fill on a part-time or job-share basis.
- **Multi-skilling.** Multi-skilling and other lateral training initiatives such as cross-training are being used to up-skill female employees and promote them into non-traditional roles, in one company resulting in six new promotions of women and in another enabling two women to move into higher-paid positions in the Coating Area.
- **Training and development.** More conventional forms of training and development also continue to play a role in enabling women to move into new areas. In one company, the main warehouse jobs required a forklift driver's licence, so a female temporary worker and a full-time female employee were assisted in obtaining their forklift licences, with the result that both now have full-time permanent jobs in the warehouse.

The implementation and promotion of family-friendly policies and activities has increased our retention rate significantly, [reducing] attrition... dramatically from 19% to its current rate of 2.7%.

OTHER MANUFACTURER, NSW

- **Dedicated EO personnel.** The appointment of EO, diversity and harassment officers has been effective in increasing workplace morale and productivity. One company trained four new people as EEO and harassment contact officers—and two days after training one of these people successfully mediated a dispute, with the result that employees now have faith there is equity in the system.
- **Improved workplace culture.** Some companies are reporting a gradual improvement in workplace culture as it becomes less 'blokey' and more accepting of flexible working arrangements and women in non-traditional roles, though one company reported that this process had taken almost seven years.

EOWA Compliance Data

EO Compliance Reports

Each year, employers submit Equal Opportunity Compliance reports to EOWA on the progress of their workplace programs for women. Detailing employers' actions under each of the seven legislated Employment Matters, the reports are a valuable source of information on manufacturers' initiatives to advance women.

Each report is assessed by an experienced EOWA Client Consultant and the salient details under the legislation recorded. The collated report assessment data enables EOWA to benchmark industry progress and identify new trends in workplace programs.

In addition to reporting, employers are also surveyed by EOWA annually on their specific workplace initiatives for women.

The EO report assessment and survey data for the manufacturing industry is presented below, with the equivalent results for reporting organisations from all industries included for comparison.

EOWA Compliance Data: SUMMARY REPORT DATA ON REPORTING MANUFACTURERS

	MANUFACTURING	ALL
NO. OF EOWA REPORTING ORGANISATIONS	707	2712
% OF EOWA REPORTING ORGANISATIONS	26%	100%
% OF COMPLIANT ORGANISATIONS	99.7%	99.4%
NO. OF NON-COMPLIANT ORGANISATIONS	2	17
% OF ORGANISATIONS AWARDED WAIVED STATUS	5.3%	5.7%
% OF ORGANISATIONS WAIVED FROM REPORTING IN 2004	3.5%	6.5%
AVERAGE NO. OF EMs ACTIONED PER ORG	4.9	4.7
% OF ORGS ACTIONING 3 OR LESS EMs	24%	26%
% OF ORGS ACTIONING 5 OR MORE EMs	61%	55%
% OF ORGS ACTIONING ALL 7 EMs	27%	21%

EOWA assesses companies' EO Compliance reports for actions taken under the seven Employment Matters listed in the EOWW Act. These are:

- EM 1 – Recruitment and selection criteria
- EM 2 – Promotion, transfer and termination
- EM 3 – Training and development
- EM 4 – Work organisation
- EM 5 – Conditions of service of employment
- EM 6 – Arrangements for dealing with sex-based harassment in the workplace
- EM 7 – Arrangements for dealing with pregnant, potentially pregnant employees and employees who are breastfeeding

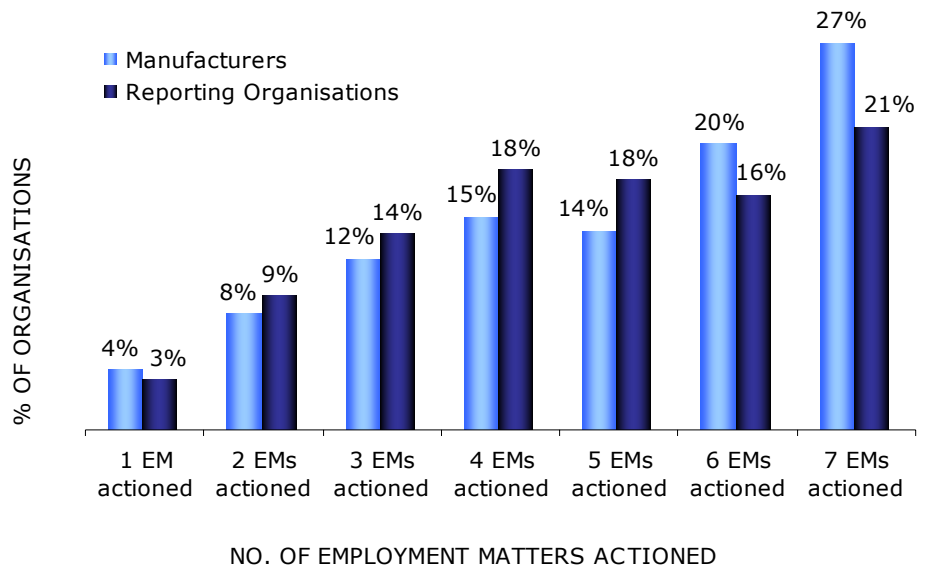
Figure 6 below shows the proportion of organisations that reported taking action under each Employment Matter (EM) in 2003-04.



- Manufacturers share a similar distribution of actions against the seven Employment Matters to reporting organisations overall.
- Manufacturers were most likely to undertake EO-related initiatives in relation to *Employment Matter 3: Training & Development*, and least likely to take action in relation to *Employment Matter 5: Conditions of Service*.
- Significantly more manufacturers reported taking actions under *Employment Matter 1: Recruitment & Selection* and under the *Employment Matter 7: Pregnancy, Potential Pregnancy & Breastfeeding* than reporting organisations overall.

Figure 7 below shows the distribution of organisations according to the number of separate Employment Matters they reported taking action under in their 2003-04 report to EOWA.

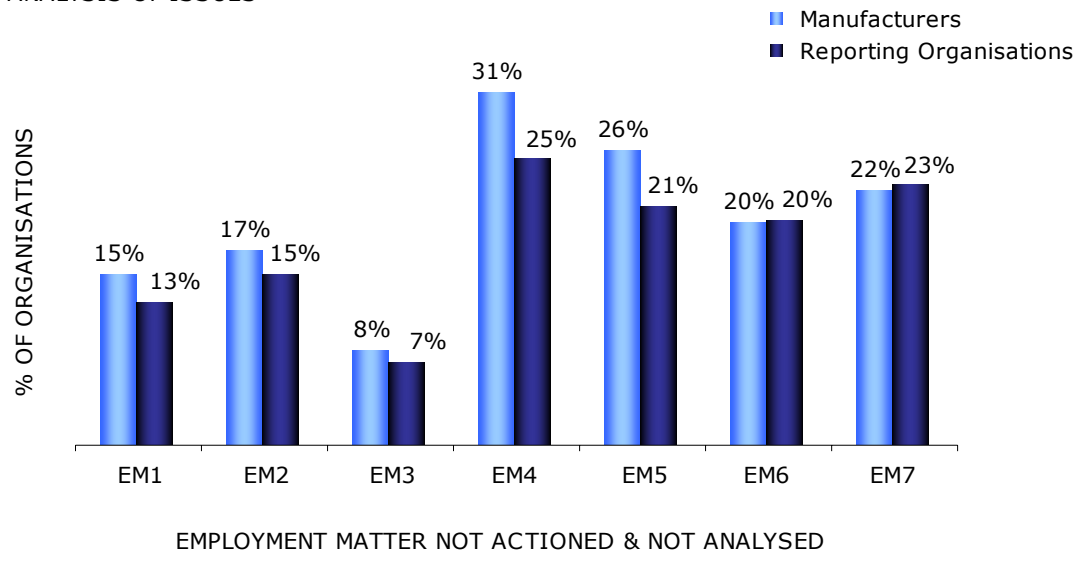
FIGURE 7: NUMBER OF EMPLOYMENT MATTERS (EMs) ACTIONED BY REPORTING ORGANISATIONS



- Manufacturing companies are more likely than reporting organisations overall to have taken action under six or more separate Employment Matters.
- More than one quarter of manufacturers (27%) reported taking an EO-related action against all seven employment matters.
- Manufacturers were slightly more likely than reporting organisations overall to report having actioned only one Employment Matter in 2003-04 (4% versus 3% overall).

Figure 8 shows the proportion of organisations against each of the seven Employment Matters that took no action and reported minimal or no analysis of the issues for women.

FIGURE 8: ORGANISATIONS REPORTING NO INITIATIVES OR ACTIONS UNDER THE SEVEN EMPLOYMENT MATTERS AND NO OR MINIMAL ANALYSIS OF ISSUES



- A significant proportion of manufacturers (20% or more) took no action or reported no or minimal analysis of the issues for women against Employment Matters 4, 5, 6 and 7.
- Against all but Employment Matters 6 and 7, manufacturers were more likely than reporting organisations overall to have undertaken no EO-related initiative or to have reported no or minimal analysis of the issues for women.

From the EOWA Compliance data above, it is evident that while manufacturers are more likely to report taking EO-related actions than other organisations overall, a significant proportion of manufacturers did not report undertaking any action or analysis in 2003-04 to advance equal opportunity for women in several major areas of employment.

For more information on EOWA Compliance data, see the Technical Notes in the Appendices.

Equal Opportunity Survey Insights

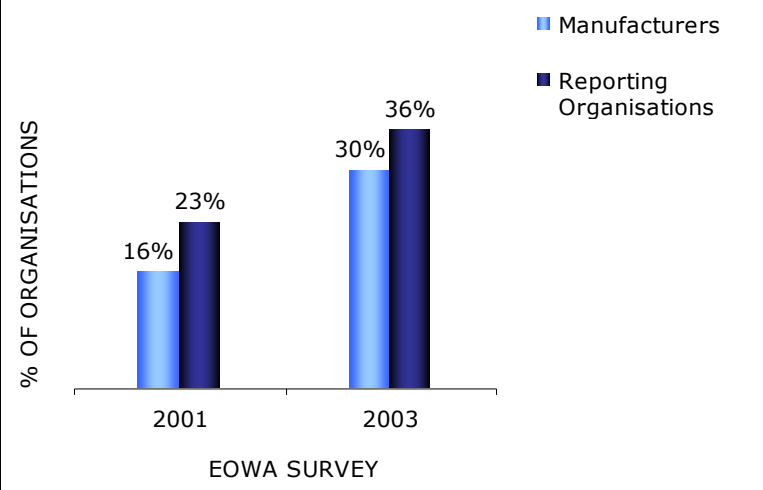
A large and traditionally male-dominated sector, the manufacturing industry faces unique challenges in promoting equal employment outcomes for the women in its workforce.

Each year, EOWA conducts a survey of reporting organisations to assist in identifying some of the major issues for employers in implementing equal opportunity for women in the workplace.

Paid Maternity Leave

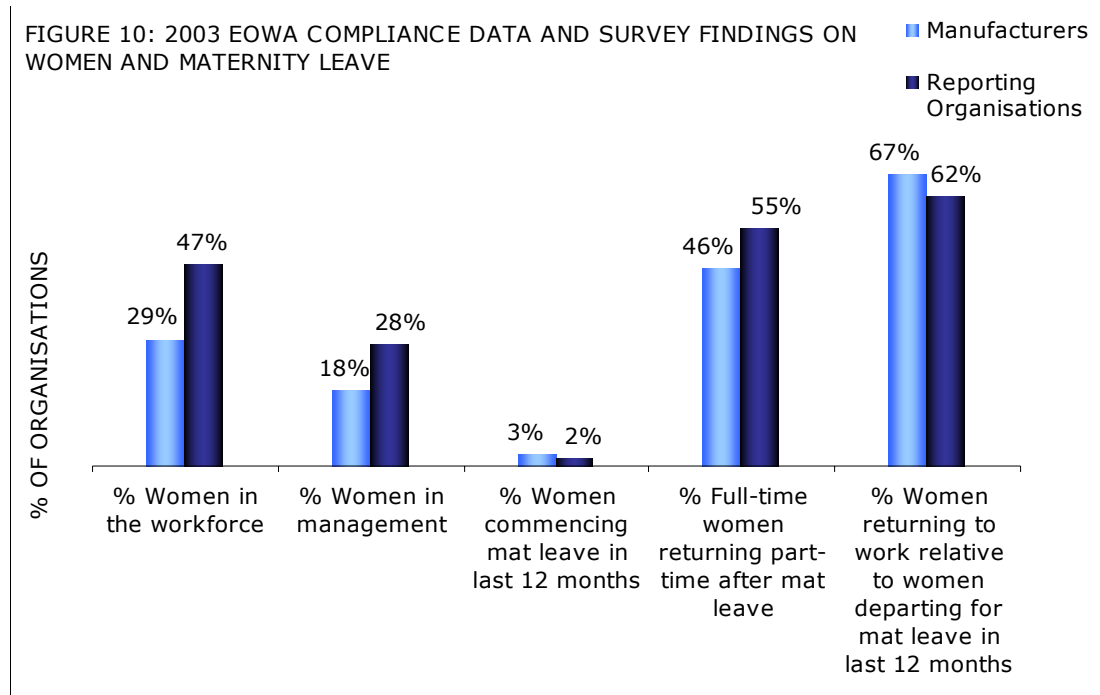
Figure 9 below shows the results of the 2001 and 2003 EOWA surveys on paid maternity leave for the manufacturing sector and for all reporting organisations overall.

FIGURE 9: ORGANISATIONS PROVIDING PAID MATERNITY LEAVE IN 2003



- 30% of surveyed reporting manufacturers in 2003 said that they provided paid maternity leave, compared with 36% for all reporting organisations overall.
- Since 2001, the percentage of manufacturers that provide paid maternity leave has almost doubled, from 16% in 2001 to 30% in 2003.
- The proportion of reporting manufacturers providing paid maternity leave has increased at a faster rate than for reporting organisations overall.

Figure 10 below shows the 2003 EOWA survey findings on the average proportion of the female workforce that left for maternity leave within a 12-month period, the full/part-time capacity in which full-time women returned from maternity leave during this period, and the average point-in-time retention rate of women who had left to take maternity leave, based on the numbers of women leaving and returning within a 12-month period.



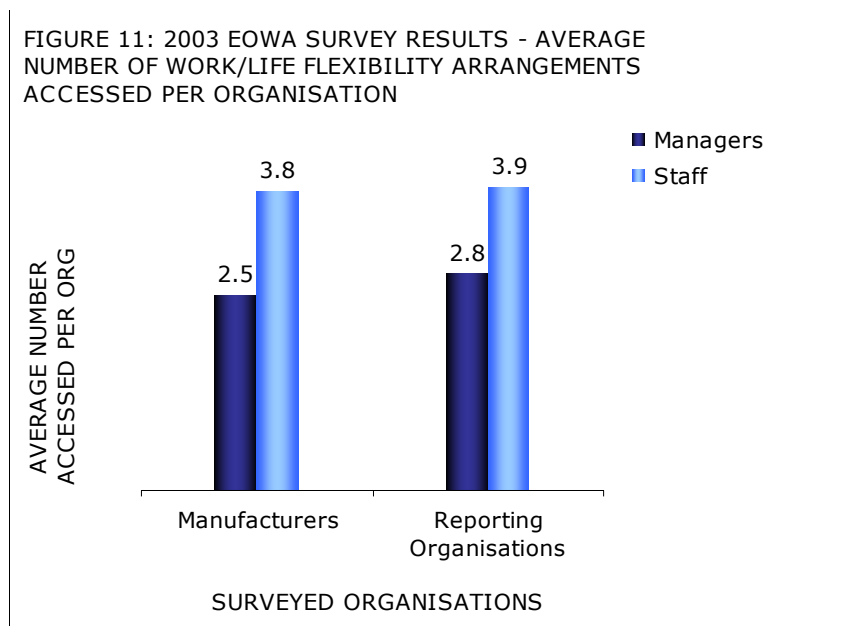
- Despite having fewer women on average than other industries, the manufacturing industry had a higher average proportion of its female workforce take maternity leave, as well as a higher retention rate of women returning from maternity leave, than reporting organisations overall. This may reflect differences in workforce characteristics between women working in manufacturing and the female workforce in general, such as socio-economic differences.
- The survey findings on the capacity in which full-time women returned to work after maternity leave showed that fewer women work part-time on their return from maternity leave in manufacturing than in reporting organisations overall (46% compared with 55% overall). This may indicate that it is harder for such women to return in a part-time capacity in manufacturing than it is in other industries, or alternatively that such women have greater need or want of a full-time wage.

Access to Work/Life Flexibility Arrangements

2003 EOWA Survey Results

In 2003, EOWA surveyed reporting organisations on the work/life balance and flexible work arrangements which employees currently access in their workplace.

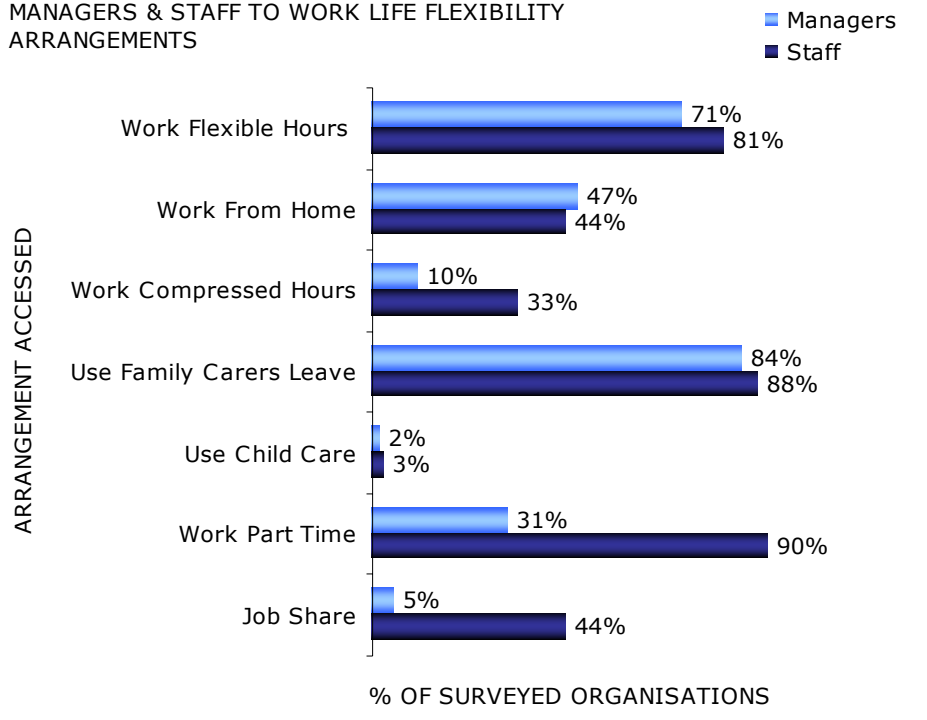
Figure 11 below shows the average number of different work/life flexibility arrangements accessed by staff and managers in manufacturing companies and in reporting organisations overall.^{iv}



- The difference between staff and managerial access to work/life and flexible work arrangements is pronounced in both manufacturing companies and reporting organisations overall.
- Employees in manufacturing companies have slightly lower access on average to work/life flexibility arrangements than employees in reporting organisations overall. The difference in access between managers and staff is also more pronounced in manufacturing companies.

Figure 12 below shows employee access against different types of work/life flexibility arrangements for the manufacturing sector.

FIGURE 12: 2003 EOWA SURVEY RESULTS - ACCESS BY MANAGERS & STAFF TO WORK LIFE FLEXIBILITY ARRANGEMENTS



- The types of work/life flexibility arrangements most commonly accessed by employees are part-time work, family carers' leave and flexible hours.
- However, managers are much less likely than staff to be able to access part-time and job-share arrangements and to work compressed hours.
- Managers are more likely to be able to work from home than staff.

Benefits and Barriers to Part-time Managers

2003 EOWA Survey Results

The 2003 EOWA survey also asked employers what benefits their organisation had experienced from having managers work part-time and/or job-share. If the organisation had no such managers, the respondent was asked to nominate the reasons for this.

Figure 13 below shows the proportion of surveyed organisations citing particular benefits experienced as a results of having managers work part-time and/or job-share.

FIGURE 13: BENEFITS EXPERIENCED BY ORGANISATIONS FROM PART-TIME &/OR JOB-SHARE MANAGERS



- Of the surveyed organisations with part-time and/or job-sharing managers, 100% of manufacturing companies and 99.9% of reporting organisations overall said that they had experienced benefits as a result of managers working in these arrangements.
- The most common benefits cited were retention of staff (93% of respondent organisations with part-time and/or job-share managers), good staff relations and higher morale (87%) and job satisfaction (87%).
- The average number of benefits cited by an organisation was 4.8 for manufacturers and 4.9 for reporting organisations overall.

‘I suspect that managers are concerned that an interest in part-time work would be interpreted as a lack of interest in furthering their career.’

SOAP AND OTHER DETERGENT MANUFACTURER, NSW

Figure 14 below shows the reasons cited by surveyed organisations for not having any managers who work part-time or job-share.^v

FIGURE 14: ORGANISATIONS' REASONS FOR HAVING NO MANAGERS THAT WORK PART-TIME &/OR JOB-SHARE



- The principal reason cited by organisations for having no managers who work part-time or job-share was that no managers had expressed interest (90% of respondents), followed by that the type of work does not allow it (64%) and that the workload is too much (49%).
- The survey results indicate that, of the surveyed organisations without part-time and/or job-sharing managers, manufacturers are slightly less likely to cite obstacles to managers working in these arrangements than reporting organisations overall, and are slightly more likely to attribute not having any part-time or job-sharing managers to a lack of demand.

Challenges and Priorities for Advancing Women

2002 EOWA Survey Results

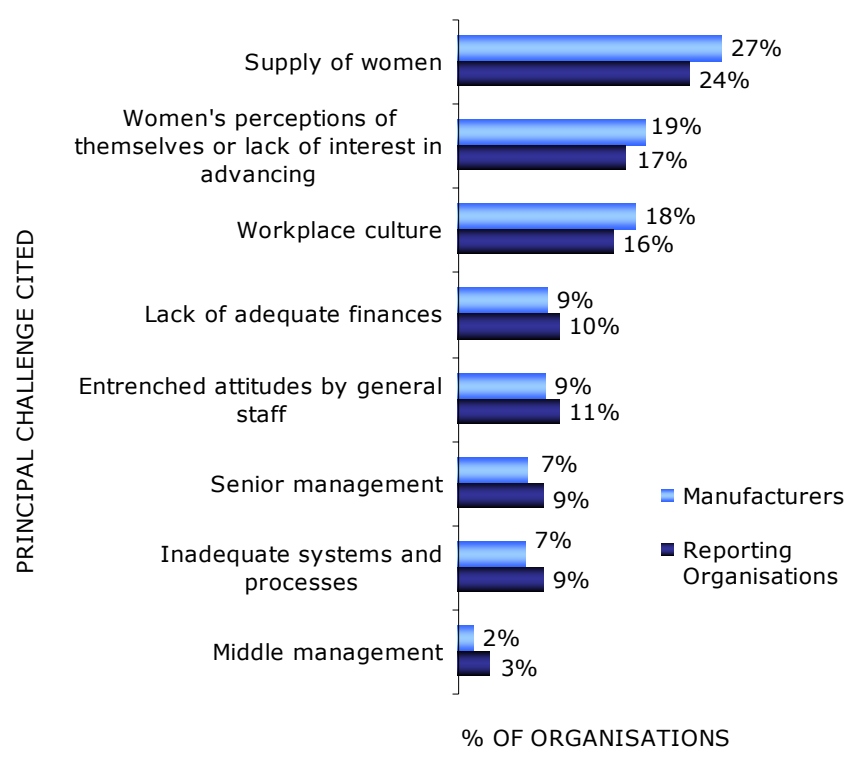
The 2002 EOWA survey asked reporting organisations, 'If you had the resources and support, which three things (ranked in order of importance) would you most want to do to advance women in your workplace?', and 'What are your biggest challenges in achieving these outcomes?'

Figures 15 and 16 below show the first-ranked priorities of reporting manufacturing companies, compared with the responses of all reporting organisations combined.



- Manufacturers' highest priority action to advance women was getting more women into leadership positions (31% of first-priority responses) followed by getting more women into non-traditional work (27%).
- Manufacturers were more likely to prioritise these actions than reporting organisations overall.
- Putting in place flexible working practices was also a fairly high priority for manufacturers (16.1%), and accorded similar importance by reporting organisations overall (15.5%).

FIGURE 16: EOWA SURVEY 2002 - REPORTING ORGANISATIONS' PRINCIPAL CHALLENGE IN ADVANCING WOMEN



- The principal challenges to advancing women cited by manufacturers were the supply of women, women’s perceptions of themselves or lack of interest in advancing, and the workplace culture.
- Manufacturers were slightly more likely to cite these challenges than reporting organisations overall, though these were also the three main challenges cited by other organisations.
- 18% of manufacturers said that their single biggest challenge to advancing women was either senior management, middle management, or entrenched attitudes by general staff. While this is less than the equivalent figure for reporting organisations overall (23%), it indicates that companies’ internal culture and attitudes are also regarded as a significant barrier to women’s advancement.

For more information on the survey findings, see the Technical Notes in the Appendices.

Appendices

References

ⁱ ABS Australian Labour Market Statistics, catalogue no. 6105.0, October 2003.

ⁱⁱ Work/Life Directions, Massachusetts, USA, 1994.

ⁱⁱⁱ The sectors analysed are those designated as secondary subdivisions under the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industry Classification (ANZSIC) coding system.

^{iv} Based on the number of arrangements currently accessed by employees out of a total of eight options: work flexible hours; work from home; work compressed hours; use family carers leave; use child care; work part-time; job-share; and other.

^v The results were obtained from 874 responding reporting organisations (55% of all surveyed organisations, being those organisations that stated that no managers currently worked part-time and/or job-shared), 321 of which were manufacturers (68% of all surveyed).

Technical Notes

The *Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999* requires private-sector organisations with 100 or more employees to provide an annual report on the equal opportunity programs within their workplace. The Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency (EOWA), a Commonwealth statutory authority, is responsible for receiving and assessing these reports.

Equal Opportunity Compliance Data

In accordance with the Act, EOWA assesses organisations based on whether they are Compliant with the Act, eligible to be Waived from reporting requirements for a specified period or Non-Compliant with the Act. Employers report to EOWA on:

- The composition of their workforce
- Issues for women in their organisation across the seven Employment Matters
- Actions taken
- Evaluation of the actions taken
- Planned future actions

This provides EOWA with the opportunity to observe and collect data on the actions and initiatives being undertaken by reporting organisations to promote equal opportunity for women in the workplace.

The total number of organisations registered with EOWA in 2003-04 was 2712. Of these, 89.6% (2430) were due to report to the Agency in 2003-04. The remaining 10.4% (282) were exempt from reporting this year as they had been Waived in previous years.

In 2003-04, employee data was available for 2702 of the 2712 organisations registered with EOWA. These 2702 organisations employed 2,487,849 people. Employee gender data was available for 2167 reporting organisations.

Survey Methodology

The Act allows for EOWA to collect information from reporting organisations in addition to that supplied in their annual Equal Opportunity Compliance reports.

Survey data is collected as part of the annual report assessment process for each reporting year, 1 April – 31 March. The data is collected through a telephone survey of organisations' report contacts and is conducted by EOWA report assessors between the months of May and September each year.

2003 Survey

The 2003 survey examined issues of work/life flexibility, and was conducted during the course of report feedback calls to organisations from June to September. A total of 1595 organisations were surveyed on their paid maternity leave provisions, maternity leave retention rates, flexible-working arrangements and attitudes to managers working part-time. This response rate represents 63% of all organisations due to report to EOWA in 2002-03. The published results of the 2003 survey can be viewed in full on EOWA's website at: http://www.eowa.gov.au/Information_Centres/Media_Centre/Media_Releases.asp.

The 2003 survey was approved by the Commonwealth Government Statistical Clearing House. The approval number is 01186-02. You may phone the Statistical Clearing House on (02) 6252 5285 to verify the approval number.

2002 Survey

The 2002 survey examined what Australian organisations believed were the critical EO issues facing women in the workplace. 783 of EOWA's reporting contacts, the majority of whom are HR practitioners, were posed the following two questions and asked to answer from a list of response options:

- 1 If you had the resources and support, which three things would you most want to do to advance women in your workplace?
- 2 What are your biggest challenges in achieving these outcomes?

The full questions and published results of the 2002 survey can be viewed on EOWA's website at: http://www.eowa.gov.au/Information_Centres/Media_Centre/Media_Releases/Business_Blind_To_Womens_Talent.asp.

2001 Survey

In 2001, 1935 reporting organisations were surveyed on their paid maternity leave and paid paternity leave provisions. The full questions and published results of the 2001 survey can be viewed on EOWA's website at: http://www.eowa.gov.au/Information_Centres/Media_Centre/Media_Releases/Maternity_Leave_Survey.asp.

Glossary

Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency

The Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency (EOWA) has been established to administer the Australian *Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999* (the EOWW Act).

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

Equal Opportunity Compliance Reporting

Employers covered by the Act are required to report annually on their equal opportunity workplace program to EOWA. EOWA Client Consultants review these reports and work with employers to ensure compliance with the legislation.

Using this information, EOWA identifies:

- Organisations that comply with the legislation
- Organisations that do not comply with the legislation
- Organisations eligible to be Waived from reporting for a limited number of years

Employers Covered by the Act

Employers covered by the Act include private-sector companies, community organisations, non-government schools, unions and group training companies with 100 or more employees. Higher education institutions, as defined by the Act, are also covered.

Employment Matters (EMs)

The seven Employment Matters listed in the Act are:

- The recruitment procedure, and selection criteria, for appointment or engagement of persons as employees
- The promotion, transfer and termination of employment of employees
- Training and development for employees
- Work organisation

- Conditions of service of employment
- Arrangements for dealing with sex-based harassment of women in the workplace
- Arrangements for dealing with pregnant, potentially pregnant employees and employees who are breastfeeding

Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace

Equal opportunity is generally implemented through a workplace program of policies and initiatives. Equal opportunity has been achieved when women have fair and equal access to employment opportunities and benefits, and are not inhibited or prevented from taking up those opportunities and benefits by any gender-related barriers. It means that all employees have an equal chance to compete for employment opportunities on merit.

Waiving

Section 13C of the Act provides reporting organisations with the opportunity to apply for Waived status. This means that the employer is not required to submit a report to EOWA for a period of up to three years. Under the Act, Waived organisations are required to continue to develop their workplace program during the Waived period.

Workplace Program

A workplace program means a specific program designed to ensure that:

- Appropriate action is taken to eliminate all forms of discrimination by the employer against women in relation to the seven Employment Matters
- Measures are taken by the employer to contribute to the achievement of equal opportunity for women in relation to the seven Employment Matters

Under the amended Act, employers are required to develop a workplace program by:

- Preparing a workplace profile
- Analysing the issues for women in the workplace, considering each of the seven Employment Matters to identify the priority issues
- Taking action to address the priority issues
- Evaluating the effectiveness of the actions

Further Information

EOWA was established by the Australian Government to assist employers to improve equal opportunity outcomes in the workplace.

Each year, the Agency identifies the best human resource practices of over 2700 organisations by assessing their workplace programs and building relationships with them. EOWA therefore has a clear understanding of the challenges and constraints for businesses across all industries in a global economy.

Our Services

Consultancy Services

EOWA expert consultants can tailor a program that is appropriate to your business needs and help you achieve an effective, ongoing EO program. The range of consultancy services available include:

- Advice and assistance on how to become a leading organisation
- Analysis of your current workplace program including a review of, and recommendations for future actions on, the seven employment matters
- Motivational presentations
- Advice and assistance with industrial agreements
- Industry-specific reports, including industry-specific data and case studies
- Internal training workshops

Workshops

EOWA runs a series of tailor-made workshops throughout the year. Workshop topics include:

- How to develop an effective EO program for women in the workplace
- How to position your organisation for Waiving from EOWA's Act
- How to implement a strategic diversity program
- How to promote women into management
- How to get more women into non-traditional areas
- How to create a harassment-free workplace

Research

EOWA carries out research each year into the issues facing women and business and on how to fully utilise talented staff to improve business outcomes. A key EOWA initiative has been the EOWA Australian Census of Women in Leadership which measures the exact numbers of women in senior management and on the boards of Australia's top 200 ASX organisations.

EOWA Publications

EOWA's book *Chief Executives Unplugged* was listed amongst the *Australian Financial Review's* Top 100 Management books. It reveals the tools and techniques that Australia's most prominent CEOs have employed to advance women in the workplace and enjoy parallel business success.

Regular newsletters with the latest news on equal opportunity and leading EO practices are available on EOWA's website.

EOWA Website

EOWA's website offers an extensive range of online tools and an online library of rich resources including leading organisations' policies, practices and case studies, designed to enhance the development of successful EO workplace programs.

Contact Us

For more details on EOWA's services, please visit the EOWA website: www.eowa.gov.au or contact EOWA on (02) 9448 8500.

For more information on this publication, please contact the EOWA Research Officer on (02) 9448 8500 or email eowa@eowa.gov.au.

women + men = business success

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