

**EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY FOR WOMEN
WORKPLACE POLICIES AND PROGRAMS: CASE STUDY
ANALYSIS**

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May 2005

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THE RESEARCH PROJECT

INTRODUCTION

This report results from a small series of case studies undertaken in 2004. The research sought to identify factors which influence the adoption, implementation and development of policies related to providing equal opportunity for women employees in Australian enterprises.

The research was supported by a grant from the Australian Research Council, and was a joint project by researchers at the University of Newcastle and Griffith University.

The researchers wish to thank the companies, their Human Resource Managers, and the employees who agreed to participate in the research for their interest and cooperation.

BACKGROUND

EEO legislation has been in place in Australia since 1986, when legislation focussed on the need for positive programs to redress women's disadvantaged position in the paid workforce. The Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act (1999) replaced this with guidelines which were less prescriptive and more general in intent. Currently, organisations of more than 100 employees are required to submit reports which address a series of employment issues to the Equal Opportunity for Women Agency (EOWA), but these reports are not audited and there has been no independent assessment of EEO programs.

The researchers have previously examined the relationship between EEO reports and workplace agreements. The current research examines operational aspects of EEO policies within workplaces.

The participating organisations have demonstrated, through workplace agreements, satisfactory reports to the EOWA, being waived from reporting to EOWA after a number of satisfactory reports or (in two cases) being chosen as Employers Of Choice For Women, that they have embraced EEO principles and practices. To this extent they were considered to be 'best practice' organisations for the purposes of the study.

Using interviews with a selection of employees in a variety of non-government organisations, collaborated by information from their EOWA reports or waiving documentation, the research sought to establish, within organisations,

- who is responsible for the development of EEO policies
- what are the main components of EEO programs
- how are employees informed about EEO policies and programs, and how effectively
- who is responsible for their implementation, and how is this done
- to what extent are these programs codified through organisational policy or workplace agreements
- how the programs are evaluated and (where necessary) modified, and by whom
- to what extent women workers are satisfied with existing policies and programs, what changes if any would they like their employer to make, and by what means can they express their views
- whether or not there are fundamental differences between organisations in the way they develop or implement EEO policies and practices.

METHOD

Private sector organisations were selected for the research on the basis that they had submitted reports to EOWA and had a registered workplace agreement. Six organisations were chosen to be included in the study. They ranged across a wide spectrum of industries and locations. Participation was voluntary.

Two of the organisations have been awarded the accolade Employer Of Choice for Women. This accolade rewards those organisations who have satisfied the EOWA that they have achieved a high standard of practice in EEO matters. One other organisation has been waived from reporting for one year, meaning that it has satisfied the EOWA's criteria: they have done all that they can reasonably do to provide equal opportunity for women. At least one other company, which may be eligible to apply for waiving, has chosen to continue providing annual reports, finding that reporting is a useful way of reviewing existing HR policies and programs.

In addition to collecting material available in the public domain (eg EOWA Reports corporate annual reports and workplace agreements), the researchers visited the principle workplaces of each organisation and met with a number of employees. These included the Human Resource Manager and/or the person responsible for EEO matters, other managers, particularly line managers, where appropriate a Union delegate or employee representative, and a wide cross section of employees, both male and female.

The employee profile differed somewhat in each workplace but in every case it was diverse in that it represented a range of roles, seniority and responsibility.

Participants were nominated by the organisations or the HR manager who coordinated the visit. The interviewees were volunteers and were assured of confidentiality. Interviews were semi-structured, meaning that the interviewers were asking questions related to the aims listed above. Participants were asked about their understanding of the organisation's policies and how they were implemented, as well as having the opportunity to talk about their own work roles and the impact of EEO policies and practices on their working lives. Individuals and groups were included. The interviews were then transcribed and analysed using N6 software, and remain confidential.

PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS

Six organisations took part:

- 3 male dominated manufacturing/engineering/technology companies.
- 1 female dominated organisation (private hospital, not for profit).
- 2 companies with roughly equal numbers of male and female employees (tourist facility and clothing design and distribution).
- all had workplace agreements, although not all employees were subject to them.
- all were private sector organisations, and five were owned or part owned by Australian public companies or divisions of multi-nationals. The remaining company was privately owned. None had ASX listing as separate entities.
- Four organisations had 900 or more employees, the other two were smaller, with 250 -350 workers.
- Two were in the suburbs of state capital cities, the others were located in regional areas of Queensland, New South Wales or Victoria. None of these locations was more than half an hour by car from a major capital or regional city.
- At the time of interview, none had a woman at the most senior level of management, but several women occupied positions of responsibility in management roles in some of the companies.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

1. *Formulating EEO Policy.*

- a. **Legislative requirements and the need to furnish reports** are the prime but not the only motivations for EEO policies and practices.

Managers at all organisations are aware of the potential for industrial or legal action arising from breaches of anti-discrimination law. To this extent, providing equal opportunities for women can be seen as a part of risk management for organisations.

- b. All the organisations' Human Resource professionals also presented a **business case** for EEO for women.

- **Recruiting and retaining the best person for the job** was a priority among HR professionals and managers.

This was most often associated with an absolute or relative shortage of skilled workers in a particular field. In some cases absolute labour shortages were apparent (nursing, operatives in some remote locations), while other organisations wanted to recruit the best talent and were aware of the increasing number of women with the requisite skills (for instance, actively recruiting female engineers). Two organisations particularly noted that they value diversity in leadership or problem-solving and regard women as making a positive contribution in management roles.

- **The intention to promote or maintain a company culture where individual differences are valued and individuals' particular needs are recognised and respected** was common to all organisations. Not all were equally successful in doing so.

Employees were generally expected to treat each other fairly and with respect. Again, this was regarded as being an asset to the business – in productivity, workplace relations, or interaction with customers. Fair and transparent policies which were widely disseminated and understood in almost all the organisations, and consistency in applying them was regarded by managers and other employees as crucial. So, too, were the accepted ways in which managers or supervisors interacted with other employees, although here there were considerable differences between and within the organisations.

- The private hospital, the only not-for-profit organisation in the study, is alone in emphasising the need for **affirmative action and social equity** as a main driver of EEO. At least one other organisation had targeted a disadvantaged group of women in the past, by training workers in new skills and offering them continuing employment as an alternative to redundancy.

- c. **The details of forming EEO policies is typically in the hands of HR professionals.**

- Awareness of anti-discrimination legislation and labour market conditions and the specific needs of employees (eg for a breast-feeding policy or flexible leave arrangements) provide direction for policy development and day-to-day practices.

- Compiling annual reports to EOWA encourages organisations to reflect on their policies and practices.

- Employment policies, including EEO policies, owe much to the perceived current needs of the workplace and the employees, and may be seen as a response to these rather than to a particular theoretical model or ideology.

- However, the researchers were told more than once that **senior management plays a vital role** in encouraging a positive workplace culture or set of attitudes to women at work.
- Feedback from focus groups, surveys, exit interviews, workplace committees and informal networks can inform this process. Several organisations have formal processes to involve **women employees** in policy review.
- The researchers gained the impression that EEO or Diversity Committees were useful in providing feedback, but needed ongoing commitment from the members and management to remain effective for long.

2. Components of EEO Policy and Practice.

Employees at all levels, including managers, were in broad agreement about what constituted fair employment practices. However, apart from having a general idea of anti-discrimination law, employees did not have a uniform concept of what aspects of their general HR policies constituted EEO for women, but they all supported the notion of fair and equal treatment for everyone. The amusement park, technology company, metals processor, private hospital, and sportswear company had policies which avoided isolating gender from other aspects of equality, equity, or diversity. Instead they stressed that all employees were given the same consideration and the same opportunities, recognising their individual needs. This ‘Managing Diversity’ approach exists within the current legislative framework and has to some extent been grafted on to an older model of affirmative action. Maternity and child care arrangements were nevertheless regarded as particular issues for women.

a. Maternity arrangements

- In each organisation, **maternity leave** arrangements were in accordance with the law: women could take twelve months’ unpaid leave and return to their previous role or one like it. In each case, efforts were made to keep in contact with the employee during her time off, and this varied depending on the size of the company and the industry. It ranged from informal phone calls to mailing of newsletters, continuity of incentives (such as movie tickets in one organisation), invitations to morning tea or staff meetings, to full intranet access from home.
- In all but one organisation, women were encouraged to **return to work** on a part time or other flexible basis if they preferred to do so, when the maternity leave was over.
- Two organisations had some provision for **paid maternity and/or paternity leave**. This was a proposal under discussion at several others. The researchers had the impression that paid maternity leave has not so far become a large issue in enterprise bargaining.

b. Child Care and Family Leave.

- None of the organisations in the sample had child care on site, and the lack of access to quality child care was seen as a problem by female staff and HR professionals alike. One organisation had begun to provide assistance for employees in looking for child care, and in others, HR managers and senior managers were in the process of considering options such as buying or sponsoring places in child care centres in their local communities. However the researchers noted that there seemed to be a lack of accurate data relating to the demand for child care, the arrangements

that individuals already have in place, or the availability of child care in the community.

- Generally, **carers' leave** is available, often interchangeable with sick leave or personal leave, although some workplaces require more notice than others and are clearly more flexible in providing leeway for workers who need to attend to family matters during the normal working day. This seems to depend on the company culture, but it is noteworthy that those workplaces that offer the most flexibility, seem also to have more satisfied staff.

- Adequate child care was seen as an issue for families, not just women employees.

c. The Family Friendly Workplace

- **Flexible work arrangements** – part time work, job share, work from home, flexible hours and multiple entry and re-entry points to the workforce are often cited in the literature as being especially for the benefit of women who have child care or other family responsibilities. Women certainly see these arrangements as benefiting them, and employers regard it as a way of keeping trained and productive employees.

- **Flexible leave arrangements**, banking of hours, the ability to take longer holidays at reduced pay, etc, are not specifically part of EEO policy, but, like flexible work arrangements, are of particular interest to women employees.

- **Short-term or incidental** alterations to working arrangement to meet sudden changes or family emergencies are not equally available to all workers in any of the organisations, and were generally more easily accessed by those in administrative and managerial roles, or by casual workers. Employees who had been granted time off in these situations were appreciative of these arrangements.

d. Harassment

- Sex-based harassment, inappropriate behaviour and display of inappropriate material in the workplace, including in emails and at computer terminals, were regarded as areas of concern in each organisation. Some workplaces encountered more problems in resolving them than others, and had needed to address them in different ways. Generally, these matters have been addressed successfully. The sportswear company and technology company reported no instances of harassment, perhaps because of long-standing company culture as well as the nature of the workforce in these industries. One other had carried out extensive programs of education and audits to control inappropriate material, and reported a high level of success.

- **Contact officers** (however designated) to whom employees could report harassment or discrimination, had been appointed in every workplace. Employees need to be made aware of their existence and function, and the contact officers need to be well trained and accepted by their colleagues. This was most often, but not always consistently, the case. In one organisation, the Union representative also had a role in dealing with instances of alleged discrimination and harassment.

3. Communicating and Implementing EEO Policies

- a. Active education programs and worksite inspections** successfully eliminated the display of inappropriate material in one organisation. At two others these issues were regarded as non-existent or solved, a further three discussed how

they had successfully dealt with individual complaints, while the sixth company had been slow to recognise this as a workplace issue.

b. Managers and supervisors are provided with some formal **training in applying EEO principles** and in managing alleged sex-based discrimination or harassment. This varied from one work place to another, and typically involved attending a short course run by the Anti-Discrimination Board, but was sometimes arranged internally, and was conducted irregularly. Assessing the need for, and providing appropriate levels and frequency of training is an ongoing challenge in many organisations.

c. Information about EEO policy was typically included in the **induction of new employees**, and was updated irregularly in most organisations.

d. Several organisations provide detailed outlines of policies on their **intranet**. Two employers used this method effectively. If not all employees have the opportunity to access a computer at work, or do not have the skills to do so, this resource is of less value. This does, however, provide an access point and one which line managers can access readily.

e. **Noticeboards, newsletters and emails** are used in some organisations to advertise the names of contact officers or to announce new policies. While differences reflected the nature of the business and the way information was most effectively disseminated to employees, the importance of **clear communication** of existing and newly introduced policies remains a challenge for most of the organisations in the sample.

f. An alternative is a **staff manual**, and the managers at three organisations used this method. The risk with both these methods is that the information will be outdated, or too difficult to access in a busy day. One organisation had not revised its staff manual for many years, and consequently it was of little use.

g. The role of **contact officers** seems to be better understood and more effective in some organisations than others, to depend on the selection and training of contact officers who are accessible and acceptable, and the extent to which employees are made aware of their role. One company had not appointed contact officers, but the HR manager asserted that she filled this role.

h. As instances of **discrimination or harassment** were reported and dealt with, some employers took the opportunity to increase awareness of these issues among the workforce generally. This included involving the Unions, where applicable, and, in one case, discussion with the work team involved. While confidentiality is the prime consideration, practical demonstration that harassment procedures are effective, is a way of increasing confidence in them.

i. One workplace, where maintaining a high standard of safety receives particular emphasis, encourages employees to see harassment and discrimination in terms of workplace safety, a concept with which they are familiar and comfortable.

5. Recruitment, Promotion Opportunities and the Segregated

Workforce

Trades, technical and manufacturing work, along with management and some professional roles, remain dominated by men. On the other hand, clerical, retail, hospitality and hospital workers are more likely to be women. Some of the organisations in the case study have been active in trying to avoid this occupational segregation in recruiting but on the whole employment profiles reflect those of the labour market in which they operate.

The male dominated organisations had programs to encourage women to apply for jobs in non-traditional roles. This has included attending school careers events, sponsoring holiday programs for senior school students, liaising with teachers, approaching universities' career fairs and job centres, mentoring of women (one workplace) and producing literature (including their websites) which feature women in non-traditional roles. Two organisations stated that they would give preference to females applying for trades apprenticeships or for traditionally male dominated occupations. The hospital, on the other hand, had a female dominated workforce with relatively few men working in nursing or related health care occupations, again reflecting community norms.

Relatively few women apply for apprenticeships or graduate in traditionally male areas such as engineering and IT. Sportswear has employees who have undertaken training and have subsequently changed roles (eg from machinist to forklift operator). In mature companies with low staff turnover, and those with a stable workforce, recruiting more women in non-traditional roles is necessarily a slow process.

Two organisations had taken advantage of recent restructuring to promote women to management roles or give employees opportunities to change roles. The technology company was undergoing major multi-national reorganisation at the time of the fieldwork. Another is experiencing rapid growth and already has a young workforce with equal numbers of men and women. Finally, one organisation experiencing rapid change resulting from acquisitions and growing markets, and with a high rate of staff turnover, does not seem to have used this as an opportunity to transfer employees to new roles, and some of the women there said their conditions of work had deteriorated after corporate re-structuring.

6 Unions and Agreement Making.

a. Two of the organisations are unionised, and two union delegates/representatives were interviewed. At other sites, the role of unions and enterprise bargaining was discussed with the HR manager. At the unionised workplaces, Union representatives had been involved in formulating some policies, dealing with cases of discrimination and harassment, had taken a role in educating members about EEO practices. At one organisation, the union delegate discussed his his responsibilities in responding appropriately in such cases. He supported adjustments which had been made in the workplace to make it easier for women to handle heavy equipment, since that increased safety for all workers. Elsewhere, the role of labour organisations in such cases was not stressed to the same extent.

b. Issues such as the provision of on-site child care had been included in enterprise bargaining negotiations in at least one organisation, but were not persisted with since child care was not an issue for all members. The HR manager of the female

dominated hospital was surprised that a similar request had not been made during recent negotiations.

c. Elsewhere, it seemed that few issues which could be isolated as particularly relevant to women were priorities for Unions.

7. Women's Perspectives

As expected, these companies take their responsibilities to women employees and to their workforce in general, seriously. In almost all instances, employees, both men and women, reported positive feelings about their work and their workplace. By and large (though not universally), women were satisfied with the opportunities that were available to them in terms of access to further training and promotion, and the possibility of maintaining a work/life balance that was appropriate to their family situation.

For women, the key issues were
working arrangements
access to training and promotion

a. Flexibility

Flexible working hours, part time work, casual work or job share arrangements which enabled them to fulfil family responsibilities were prime concerns for women. The ability to undertake different work roles and working arrangements, including moving between part time or casual work and full time work, at different stages of family life, was valued.

At the one workplace which did not accommodate part time work, job sharing or flexible working hours, women employees expressed dissatisfaction with working arrangements along with many other aspects of the workplace, while male employees generally stated that they could negotiate sufficient flexibility for their needs. The greatest flexibility was found in the private hospital, where elaborate rostering arrangements reflect the shortage of nurses and other professionals. Elsewhere, the need to meet deadlines, safety requirements or have workers on site at different times of day according to production needs or customer demand, presented challenges to flexibility. Managers stated that they still tried to respond to workers' needs and this was confirmed in interviews with other employees and, with one exception, women employees told the researchers that they had enough flexibility to maintain an acceptable work/life balance.

b. Training

Equal access to opportunities to obtain, refresh or update work-related skills is a key component of EEO. Four workplaces were engaged or had recently been engaged in programs designed to enhance women's access to training or to build their skills. In the remaining two, differences were regarded as of no importance.

The provision of in-house or company-sponsored training varied between organisations. Several had found that courses offered by TAFE or similar bodies did not meet their needs, and had responded by employing outside trainers or providing the training in-house (technology, sportswear retailing). Two sponsored or supported (for instance by allowing study leave or paying fees) courses which were not

immediately related to day-to-day work but offered an opportunity for the employee to acquire new knowledge or skills of relevance to their work role. In one workplace, employees were encouraged to take courses for their own interest (lifestyle courses or further education).

c. Child care

The availability of suitable child care was of great importance to mothers and fathers alike. Two organisations recognised child care responsibilities as a component of absenteeism or general dissatisfaction among employees. None provided on-site child care. Support or subsidies for off-site child care places was mentioned frequently, but none had a program in place.

6. Conclusion.

Developing and Implementing EEO Policies

Within this sample, responsibility for developing EEO policies and programs was within the purview of the Human Resource department in each organisation. The resources available to these departments depended on the size and nature of the organisation and varied greatly. Employers were aware of the legislation which forbids discrimination on the grounds of sex, but equal opportunity for women was not accorded equal importance or regarded in a uniform way by the organisations in this small study, indicating that the regulatory mechanism is not the only focus in formulating, evaluating or developing policies. Policies and practices reflected the labour market situation, with employees whose skills were recognised as valuable to the organisation, had qualifications in short supply or had undergone advanced training being especially valued. In some instances they also were consistent with a company culture, overriding ethical position or the perceived need to maintain a certain standing in the community.

The role of trades unions in developing EEO policy or including issues of particular concern to women (such as child care) in negotiations was not significant, although union co-operation in dealing, for example, with instances of harassment or unfair treatment was acknowledged.

Policies and practices were implemented by human relations managers and line managers or supervisors. Formal courses or management meetings, written policies or personnel manuals, instruction during the induction of new employees and informal consultation between managers and human resource managers were among the mechanisms by which policies and practices were put in place.

Communicating EEO Policies.

These same mechanisms were in place to inform employees at all levels of seniority about existing policies and practices. Written documents (on paper or via an intranet or email) staff meetings, training sessions, particularly for line managers and contact officers and informal consultation were some of the methods in use. It was apparent that these mechanisms were not always perfect, for instance when not all workers had easy access to a computer at work, where literacy in English was an issue, or where personnel manuals had not been updated. Some managers in some of the organisations had been slower than others to recognise existing policies or understand when to implement them, and so communicating policy and achieving uniformity of its application remained an ongoing task in most of the sample organisations.

Evaluating and Revising Policies and Practices.

The companies had a wide variety of approaches to the processes of monitoring, evaluating and developing new policies or refining existing practices.

Formal courses or management meetings where managers, contact officers and supervisors were able to upgrade their skills also provided the opportunity for feedback and discussion. These were often but not always conducted by experts from outside the organisation. In other instances, regular communication by a member of the HR team and line managers or managers in remote locations served a similar function.

Most organisations used a staff survey or questionnaire, usually administered annually, to evaluate existing practices and identify current issues for women

employees. Some had, in addition, a workplace committee, focus group or similar mechanism with special responsibility for women employees. These were more active or met more regularly where a particular issue was identified or where managers put a lot of time and effort into sustaining them.

Not surprisingly, larger organisations where a member of the HR team was designated to attend specifically to EEO matters, were better able to identify and address problems and potential problems (for instance for breast feeding mothers, or in regard to the display of inappropriate material) and to formulate revised or new ways to address them. They were also able to negotiate individual arrangements for specific situations.

What do women want?

The interviews and focus group discussions identified two major areas of concern for women employees: broadly: work/family balance and opportunities for career advancement.

Women universally appreciate a flexible work place, especially in regard to the availability of part-time work, control over starting and finishing times and hours worked, and the ability to take career breaks and subsequently re-enter the workforce. Their chief reason for this is the need to accommodate family responsibilities, especially the care of young children. The difficulty in arranging good-quality, affordable child care was a regular source of concern for mothers and for managers in organisations with significant numbers of women employees. Access to further training, transfer between work roles and the opportunity for promotion within the organisation is valued.

Differences between organisations.

The organisations in the study differed substantially in their approach to equal opportunity for women in the workplace and in their achievements. These differences arose from organisational culture or adherence to a value base as well as to a pragmatic understanding of labour market forces. Where women's contribution to teamwork, leadership or problem solving was regarded as valuable because of its difference, women were more likely to be found among the ranks of middle and even senior management. This was particularly evident in three organisations:

The *Amusement Park* relied on promotion from within to swell the numbers of women in management and in non-traditional roles. Women eager to pursue a career in the industry were able to avail themselves of opportunities provided in the workplace to acquire the management and technical skills necessary. Here also, casual employees were able to attend some training courses provided by the company, in their own time, and so may acquire skills necessary to move to other roles within the organisation. While senior management is male-dominated and most technical jobs are taken by men, there are women in the middle ranks of management: most of these have been promoted from within.

At the *Metals Manufacturer*, employees are similarly able to move between departments and roles, and this is seen as a way of extending and enhancing their ability to take on more responsibility. Some have undertaken special projects as part time workers while their children were young, and subsequently returned to full time work. Several women interviewed at this organisation had undertaken a number of different roles and had moved between part time and full time work over many years of service.

The *Technology* company values diversity in forming task-oriented teams and, while it remains a predominantly male workplace, a number of women hold positions of responsibility. The organisation has actively sought to employ women engineers and other skilled workers, and has a moderate turnover of staff in keeping with that industry.

Organisations which have been successful in recruiting and promoting women and have welcomed women's contribution to management or in specialist roles consider that this has enhanced their business, productivity or staff retention. Where women have been encouraged to undertake further training or to apply for more senior roles, they have done so. While men still occupy the highest levels of management in most fields, several of these organisations have women in at management level and anticipate having women in senior management roles in the next five years.

This study indicates that women who can work part time, work flexible hours, job share, work from home or take career breaks in order to accommodate family responsibilities, and have access to transfer and promotion, are more likely to return from maternity leave and to be enthusiastic about their work. The difficulty in arranging appropriate child care is recognised by employers and HR professionals, but no employer in this sample had so far addressed it in a thorough-going way. Unsurprisingly, consistent, transparent and demonstrably fair policies and practices (or the lack of them) are noticed by all employees, at all levels of seniority. Where diversity is recognised and valued, women are more likely to feel encouraged to undertake additional training, apply for promotion or seek out new roles.

Appendix A.

Case Study: SPORTSWEAR

The Organisation

'*Sportswear*' is a wholly owned division of a USA based company which designs, wholesales and distributes sportswear and equipment for surfing and other active sports. Situated in a coastal town some distance from a major regional centre, it is, with one other sportswear company and summer tourism, the main employer in the district. Manufacturing is done off-shore, while all aspects of design, marketing, distribution, financial management and administration for the Pacific region take place at this location, as does the management of the company's retail division. This company has expanded rapidly in recent years. Pay and conditions are negotiated individually: there is no union on site, and while some employees are subject to Awards or Agreement, there is no enterprise agreement covering most or all employees.

'*Sportswear*' employs approximately 350 people, with equal numbers of male and female employees, including at most management levels. Approximately half the workforce is full time (marginally more men), less than 10% part time (predominantly female) and more than a third are casuals. Casual work is mostly confined to the retail stores, which are highly seasonal, and the warehouse, which also has significant peaks and troughs in demand. More females work as casuals in the retail stores, males in the warehouse.

Fieldwork

Two researchers visited the workplace on one day in July 2004, and conducted a series of semi-structured interviews with a number of staff. These included the HR manager, managers from four other sections of the enterprise (finance, retail, supply line, merchandising) and a diverse group of women employees. All these people were asked about their understanding of the organisation's policies and how they were implemented, as well as having the opportunity to talk about their own work roles and the impact of EEO policies and practices on them. Participation was voluntary, but participants were nominated by the HR manager who coordinated the visit. These interviews were taped and later transcribed.

EEO Policies and Practices

'*Sportswear*' has a tradition of allowing employees to take time off if for recreation, a policy which pre-dates legislation, and this has extended over time to include time off to attend to family responsibilities. An informal and fun-loving company culture is encouraged. Issues addressed in recent years have been around opportunities for promotion, training, flexible work hours, part time work and job sharing, the conduct of staff reviews and the opportunities for female staff to participate in activities together. Paid maternity leave options are being considered but at the time of the case study there is no paid maternity leave. However the needs of the mother are promoted as the prime consideration in maternity leave arrangements and efforts are made to keep communicating with the employee when on maternity leave and in planning her return to work. Some women have worked from home or have made individual arrangements to balance family and work.

Managers made it clear that time off for personal or family reasons could be 'made up' in a variety of ways (for instance working extra hours on another day), or would in some cases be considered part of annual leave. Flexible working hours are regarded as important in maintaining a work-life balance, and are negotiated on an individual basis. Work from home has been utilised in some cases. Individual employees are expected to be able to manage their own workload, and do so. These are all within the constraints of deadlines and workplace arrangements, which are nevertheless demanding on all employees and flexibility is in fact contained within the needs of the business. Nevertheless one informant said "they always put family first here and that's without a lie."

The general impression was that this was a relaxed company with relatively few strict protocols or procedures, and that issues were dealt with in a humane but *ad hoc* way. The HR manager acknowledged that as the company grew some of these informal processes would need to be formalised. A detailed handbook of policies and procedures is given to all employees, however this was rarely mentioned in the interviews. The HR manager emphasized the open communication within the organization at all levels.

She regards the legislation as an important driver to EEO policy and practice, and the need to provide annual reports as a good discipline in requiring a regular review of practice. She is aiming for the EOFC award in the near future. She considers most staff as unaware of issues as gender-specific, rather as good policies carried out for everyone.

Movement between casual, part time and full time roles is frequent and accepted. Promotion is on merit, regardless of gender, and where possible is from within the organisation. Training is provided, as required, equally for men and women, either within the workplace or at nearby colleges, and managers regard this as an integral part of employees' workload. Issues of discrimination, harassment and so on are rare, but the HR manager has an open door policy and encourages staff to report problems directly to her.

Formulating and Evaluating Policy

With the legislation as a guide, 'Sportswear' has formulated a policy designed to respect diversity. This is also in accordance with company culture which is oriented toward the promotion of leisure and leisure activities.

Managers consult with the HR manager about any issues which arise in their departments, including EEO issues.

Regular staff reviews, an 'open-door' HR policy and submitting reports to EOWA, are used to monitor policy, which may be modified as a result.

However the overall impression is of informal arrangements which are seen to be fair for each employee. One example is some employees in the retail division who (contrary to usual company policy) take time off in school holidays to care for their children.

Communicating Policies

This has been a small organisation where one-to-one communication on a relatively informal basis has been the norm. Most employees seemed satisfied with existing arrangements, and worked in relatively small units where personal communication was still possible. A personnel manual includes EEO policies.

Problems and difficulties

- A challenge facing the organisation will be the imminent move of a major part of the workforce to a new location some distance from the current one. Already one staff member interviewed felt that some retail staff were ‘out of the loop’ when it came to promotions and transfers because their workplace was somewhat remote from the main offices and warehouse. Maintaining good communication between different business units may require new strategies in the future.
- Although flexibility of hours and work arrangements was acknowledged, line managers stressed the importance of meeting deadlines or performing certain tasks, so there are clearly limits to the degree of flexibility offered, at least in some work roles. Individual needs were acknowledged and where possible, accommodated. Managers also stressed that not all jobs could be easily structured into part time or job-share positions, that deadlines (which are frequent) had to be met, etc. Some work could be carried out at home or outside normal office hours, but in some areas, such as fitting of garments, the warehouse and aspects of the design and merchandising process, the whole team needed to be present. Hence there is a good deal of variation between different parts of the organization in terms of flexibility and working arrangements. The researcher had the impression that everyone worked hard and at times under considerable pressure. However allowances are made for workers who have family or other responsibilities, in the expectation that they will make up the lost time by their own initiative.

Innovations

- During a period of change and rapid expansion, ‘*Sportswear*’ has achieved approximately equal numbers of female employees at most levels of the organisation.
- The employees interviewed were universally enthusiastic about their work and the company.
- Work from home and/or individually tailored return from maternity leave has been used successfully.
- Most praised the availability of flexible arrangements and were pleased that they were made in response to individual needs. This is a feature of the workplace that contributes to their enjoyment of, and commitment to, their work.
- Training and further education are available to all employees, and both in-house and external resources are used.
- In a predominantly male sport with a male culture that goes with it, there is a danger that female employees may feel ‘left out.’ The company has used its range of women’s wear and promotion of an all-female professional tournament as a tool to correct this.

Appendix B.

Case study: PRIVATE HOSPITAL

The Organisation

In an inner suburb of a capital city, *Private Hospital* operates under the auspices of a major Christian denomination. It is the only not-for-profit organization in the study, but is nevertheless expected to return a surplus to fund its own development and to support other work of the church. It has 430 beds, 13 operating theatres and numerous outpatient and specialist clinics; there are 1800 employees. The hospital group of which *Private Hospital* is the largest, has 2140 staff at July 2003. Some 83% are women, making *Private Hospital* also the only female-dominated organisation in the study. According to its own website, flexible rostering, security (eg parking for night staff), availability of gym, counselling, physiotherapy, consultation with a dietician, either free or at a discount, and accessible training and education are advantages of working at *Private Hospital*. The group to which it belongs was identified as Employer of Choice for Women in 2003 and 2004, achieved by having more women in senior management roles, in non-traditional roles, and in implementing better leave provisions for employees.

Fieldwork

Two researchers visited the hospital on one day in November 2004, and conducted a series of semi-structured interviews with a number of staff. These included the Human Resource Manager responsible for EEO matters, three nurse managers one of whom was also the Nurses' Union representative, a physiotherapist working on a casual basis, a food services manager, and a group of employees including nurses, a patient attendant, a ward attendant, a personal assistant, a radiographer and a laundry worker. All these people were asked about their understanding of the hospital's policies and how they were implemented, as well as having the opportunity to talk about their own work roles and the impact of EEO policies and practices on them. Participation was voluntary, but participants were nominated by the HR manager who coordinated the visit. These interviews were taped and later transcribed.

EEO Policy and Practices.

Private Hospital uses the terms 'Diversity' and 'Equity' to describe its EEO program in order to avoid over-stressing gender-based discrimination but also because they more easily include other disadvantaged groups, such as indigenous Australians. 'Diversity' encompasses treating staff with dignity and respect and providing 'work environments that promote equity and diversity'. It has well developed and well documented policies, which are reviewed regularly.

In addition, features of the policy which led to the award of EOCFW include equity training of managers, the appointment and training of Discrimination and Sexual Harassment Contact Officers (DASHCOs), generous and flexible work arrangements (eg paid maternity leave, long service leave arrangements, a variety of rosters) and the development of specific policies for recruitment, training, transfer and promotion and leave entitlements.

Maintaining a competitive edge in recruiting and retaining qualified and quality staff is a prime motivation for the EEO policies in this organisation. *Private Hospital*

shares with other employers in the health sector an ongoing shortage of skilled workers, a factor which undoubtedly influences the way human resource policies are developed and implemented. Also important is the organisation's commitment to social justice as part of its Christian mission. Maintaining or enhancing its reputation within the community is valued because it supports the other two aims.

.A Diversity Coordinating Team comprising senior and middle managers is responsible for developing, reviewing, evaluating and implementing the policy. Diversity reference groups and DASHCOs monitor these regularly and identify staff issues annually. There is a detailed personnel manual which is available to managers. Other disadvantaged groups are also targeted using the same mechanisms (e.g. indigenous Australians, non-English speakers).

Managers reported that they are at pains to provide fair and equitable rosters which also take account of the individual's needs, for example, work/family balance or individual health issues, and several admitted they they sometimes had to 'fill in' for absent workers. In most areas of the hospital, flexible rosters are in place, and starting and finishing times, days and hours worked are negotiable within defined limits. In practice they may have to be varied to meet unexpected demand. In some sections of the hospital workers are able to 'swap' shifts with a co-worker or come to some other informal arrangement from time to time. Some accommodation is made so that an employee who works after the scheduled finishing time can make arrangements, eg for child care.

Formulating and Evaluating Policy

- Policies have arisen in response to legislation, labour market forces and the organisation's view of social justice.
- The HR group generates draft policies and disseminates them through HR or management committees, where they are reviewed. Problems and difficulties are also identified in local management committees and result in changes to policies.
- Feedback comes from the HR Committee and from questionnaires which identify problems and suggest improvements. These are distributed to all employees annually. In some areas of the hospital, where literacy levels are low, questionnaires are completed by group discussion.

Communicating EEO policies

- There are written policies which outline responsibility for implementation at every level, and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are used in evaluating the policies.
- Personnel Manual which includes all EEO policies and guidelines for managers.
- Training in diversity matters occurs mainly at orientation of new staff.
- DASHCOs and some other managers have access to further training through workshops with HR professionals within the organization and with government agencies (eg DIR), legal experts, etc.

- Line managers have primary responsibility to implement and monitor EEO and work/life balance. On a day to day level, staff meetings and handovers provide a regular means of communication between managers and other staff.

Problems and difficulties

- One reason 'diversity' is preferred to EEO is the high proportion of female employees and the perceived need to provide for a work/family balance.
- Rosters are time consuming to prepare and manage, partly because of the commitment to flexibility and staff welfare. This is a significant management cost, but considered necessary to retain staff and ensure good staff morale. Some areas of the hospital are able to accommodate staff preferences better than others.
- Many employees have tertiary education and are highly literate, but in the support services area, some have no qualifications and/or low levels of literacy in English. These are considered to be disadvantaged groups, and specific equity policies are developed where appropriate.
- Disseminating policies to those employees who do not have access to the hospital's intranet is sometimes difficult. Hard copy newsletters and posters address this, perhaps not sufficiently well. Managers also make an effort to explain policy and process to the less well educated members of the workforce.
- Medical practitioners who are not members of staff (VMOs) also have status and power but are not always cognisant of policy and practice, or amenable to change.
- A lack of quality child care was identified as an issue, and one which may have to be addressed directly if on-site child care is provided at other hospitals.

Innovations

- This organisation has made the most elaborate efforts of all those in the study to accommodate staff with flexible working arrangements to suit a work/life balance. This may reflect the preponderance of women employees and the shortage of skilled workers in the health care industry generally.
- Some managers, including senior managers, work part time or job share. This was initially resisted, but has been in place for three years and is reported to be working well.
- Full-time, part-time and casual workers are rostered 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (except in some areas, such as food services, which close at night). Starting and finishing times and shift lengths vary (4, 6, 8 and 12 hour shifts for nurses) and some full time workers work 13 shifts a month. Employees can change from part time to permanent work, provided vacancies exist. Flexible working hours take account of family responsibilities, personal health and other commitments

- A wide range of services is offered to staff. These include access to hospital facilities such as physiotherapy or dietary counselling, and classes such as yoga. These are reportedly well used and contribute to Private Hospital being ‘a nice place to work.’
- Opportunities for training and further study are offered to part time and full time staff alike, although in some instances full-time workers have priority.
- Issues around bullying and harassment of staff by patients and other workers continue to be addressed. Discrimination and Sexual Harassment Contact Officers have had an impact on the workplace. These are trained in harassment procedures, are located in all departments and seem to have been well received by workers. The rate of complaints has increased, but this is seen as reflecting policy innovations and as part of a program to educate staff at all levels regarding these issues.
- There is 6 weeks paid maternity leave and one day’s paternity leave in addition to the statutory requirement. Long service leave arrangements are also flexible.

Appendix C.

Case Study: METALS MANUFACTURER

The Organisation

Metals Manufacturer is located just outside a major regional centre. Ownership is shared by overseas and Australian interests. There are 900-1000 employees of whom 5% are female. The approximately 55 women employees work as administrative staff, line managers, and 'other professionals' with one female apprentice. Seventeen of the 100 line managers are female, largely as a result of restructuring of the workplace. Three of these positions are attached to hot metal business units and *Manufacturer* regards this as a breakthrough in a male dominated area. These women have been recruited from the graduate program.

An older-aged and stable workforce, and a low level of external recruitment due to restructuring means there is limited opportunity to increase the number of women employees.

Fieldwork

Two researchers visited the workplace on one day in June 2004, and conducted a series of semi-structured interviews with a number of staff. These included the Human Resource Operations Leader with several years experience in various roles in the company, including a year spent hands-on working on the pot lines, the Communications and Systems Leader, who has responsibility for EEO matters and the Union (AWU) representative. A group of women with varying roles in the organization was also interviewed. All these people were asked about their understanding of *Metal Manufacturer's* policies and how they were implemented, as well as having the opportunity to talk about their own work roles and the impact of EEO policies and practices on them. Participation was voluntary, but participants were nominated by the HR manager who coordinated the visit. These interviews were taped and later transcribed.

EEO Policy and Practices.

As a male-dominated workplace, *Manufacturer* is at pains to abide by the requirements of the relevant legislation in EEO matters, but it was also stated that women had brought skills to team work and leadership that would be otherwise lacking, and women were often promoted faster than men.

The organisation has well documented policies and practices which are reviewed regularly by HR professionals. Audits are conducted to ensure compliance with the law and with company policy.

Training in EEO is carried out internally and with the aid of the Ant-Discrimination Board, although individual staff members commented that they were not aware of specific policies, but of 'the way in which all policies are applied across the board, irrespective of whether you are male or female.' Access to training and opportunities for promotion was seen as being available to all, although one participant reported that personality and individual assertiveness was also needed.

Paid maternity leave for five weeks and paternity for two weeks has been introduced recently, Flexibility in working hours and arrangements is easier to achieve in the office environment than on the plant, where shift work and the requirements of the job are limiting factors.

In recent years equipment has been modified to make it possible for women to perform some previously heavy or dangerous work, and this is regarded as making the plant safer for all workers.

In this organization, EEO and related matters closely associated with occupational health and safety matters since safety is emphasized and harassment etc can be easily understood in terms of making the workplace safer for all.

Both the union and company representatives emphasized the need for individuals who consider themselves harassed or poorly treated to have their complaints dealt with swiftly and confidentially. Recurring issues were the display of inappropriate material, a problem which they reported has been largely solved, and problems associated with the work-life balance, which they saw as effecting both men and women who have family responsibilities. For instance, a lack of quality child care was regarded as a difficulty for men and women, including lone fathers.

Formulating and Evaluating Policy

- Policies exist within the framework of the relevant anti-discrimination legislation, and are in keeping with other policies which respect difference and seek to encourage responsible and caring relationships in the workplace.
- Policies and procedures are reviewed by HR professionals and include inspection of work sites.
- Priorities for action are identified in preparing EOWA reports and in recent years have focussed on providing suitable equipment, protective clothing etc, for women and removing offensive material from the plant and the company's intranet.
- A site EEO Committee is active in identifying and assessing issues.

Communicating and Implementing EEO Policies

- Written policies are published on the intranet, including information about how and to whom to report harassment or unacceptable behaviour. This is widely accessible to all employees, either personally or through other members of their work team.
- Contact Officers throughout the organisation are trained to deal with EEO and discrimination issues. The organisation has a procedure for managing performance; this is used in cases of alleged unfairness.
- The need for high standards of occupational health and safety is stressed by management and recognised by all employees. The concepts of maintaining a safe workplace and minimising risk are used in staff training at the formal and informal levels, including in areas of equity or harassment.
- EEO training is part of the induction process for new employees and is repeated from time to time. The last complete EEO update was two years ago.
- A company culture of mutual respect, where differences are acknowledged and individual needs, for instance for flexible working hours or part time

work, is encouraged where possible. This might be seen as a way of managing diversity rather than one of EEO.

Innovations

- The same model used in educating staff in occupational health and safety is used for issues related to discrimination, harassment and equal opportunity. This is regarded as an appropriate way to communicate with employees in this industrial setting.
- Career development and succession planning is aimed at encouraging female employees.
- There is an active program of recruiting females through high schools and the nearby University. However, there have been disappointingly few applicants especially at the trades apprenticeship level.
- There is a female mentoring program and several females are engaged in TAFE or University study funded by the company.
- Flexibility of working hours within the constraints of the industrial process, work from home, part time work has been provided for employees returning from maternity leave. Carer's leave was used by many employees.
- Six weeks' paid maternity leave and two weeks' paid paternity leave has been introduced.
- In recent years equipment has been modified to make it possible for women to perform some previously heavy or dangerous work, and this is regarded as making the plant safer for all workers.
- The display of inappropriate material was a problem a few years ago, but the levels of non-compliance have fallen from around one third to only 6% currently. This has been achieved through education and repeated audits.

Appendix D

Case Study: AMUSEMENT PARK

The Organisation

Amusement Park is jointly owned by a US corporation and an Australian publicly listed company. It is located in a major tourist and holiday destination. It operates seven days a week, throughout the year, with significant peaks in the summer and Easter school holidays. Theme Park employs approximately 1000 employees of whom about 60% are women. Administrative, HR and financial functions are shared with other related enterprises. Conditions are set down in union-negotiated enterprise agreements, although union presence is not strong within the workplace. *Amusement Park* has been granted the accolade Employer of Choice for Women in recognition of its commitment to women employees.

More than a third of the workforce is casual, and one fifth part-time employees. Women fill almost all the part-time and three quarters of the full-time and casual positions in intermediate level clerical and service worker categories. At the lowest skill level, women predominate, in full-time and part-time positions. Casual workers (often students) are used during the peak demand periods as well as on a regular basis. The majority of part-time professionals are women, and there is an even number of male and female full-time professionals. There are a number of women in senior roles and some in non-traditional roles, although recruitment still mostly follows traditional lines with more women applying for administrative jobs and men for technical and trades jobs. There is a wide skill range within the organisation. A number of employees are performers or entertainers, others have technical skills in operating and maintaining attractions, while retail, food and beverage, and grounds care are also significant sources of employment.

Fieldwork

Two researchers visited the workplace on one day in July 2004, and conducted a series of semi-structured interviews with a number of staff. These included the HR manager, employee relations and administration coordinators, attraction supervisor, operations manager and front gate person. All these people were asked about their understanding of the organisation's policies and how they were implemented, as well as having the opportunity to talk about their own work roles and the impact of EEO policies and practices on them. Participation was voluntary, but participants were nominated by the HR manager who coordinated the visit. These interviews were taped and later transcribed.

EEO Policies and Practices

Amusement Park, like some others in the study, assumes and accepts diversity for all employees without necessarily identifying them as EEO policies for women. Employees are able to work full time, part time or on a casual basis with a reasonable chance of transferring from one status to another. One employee said that she had been able to study and work full time because of flexible hours arrangements. Casual employees are able to multi-hire, so they may work in different areas of *Theme Park* at different times, and to 'bank' hours so that they can receive some pay while not at work. Promotion from within is encouraged. Employees with recognised potential or who are effective in current work roles are encouraged with internal awards.

A number of those interviewed had experienced significant role changes involving promotion, for instance from performer to manager. Others were looking for advancement within their professional category (eg Human Resource managers) or were happy to continue in their current role (eg front gate).

There is a 100% rate of return from maternity leave, attributed to managers making an effort to keep in touch, and continuing to offer staff incentives (eg movie tickets) to those on maternity leave

Issues such as equal pay, sexual harassment, women in senior roles, and access to leadership training have been addressed in EOWA reports and seem to be well understood by employees. Training is available at the work place and is accessible. Casual and part time employees can attend courses in their own time but without cost, but fitting training around rosters and life outside work makes it more difficult for these people. Some women had been promoted within the organisation and others anticipated doing so, regardless of family responsibilities. All were aware that employment and advancement were by merit, regardless of gender, but they also reported a satisfactory degree of flexibility in working hours.

Sexual harassment has occurred, been reported, and dealt with successfully, but management is aware of the dilemmas employees face in making such reports and have addressed these issues through informal workshops and by appointing area coordinators who are regarded as approachable.

We were told that weekend work, for instance, suited some individuals and an approach of accommodation in rostering (trying to roster employees at times which suited them) was mostly successful.

Employees interviewed reported a positive workplace experience. Being an EOCFW adds prestige to the organisation, but good day to day practices and word of mouth are regarded as more important in recruiting quality staff in the park.

Formulating and Evaluating Policy

Theme Park policies have been formulated with close attention to the legislation. Another driver is the EBA process, with flexible work hours and banking of hours resulting from these negotiations, although conditions are applicable to all and do not wear an EEO for women label. The recognition that a high proportion of staff want to work part time in order to balance work and family has resulted in more part time positions being created, so in this sense, the labour market has dictated changes in work organisation. Policies and practices are evaluated and updated in response to regular staff surveys or when a particular need arises (for instance relating to breast-feeding).

Communicating EEO Policy

The induction process and on the job training emphasise appropriate behaviour. Generally the working conditions are set out in EBAs and will be included in the employment handbook. Specific employees are appointed as mentors or buddies, to encourage reporting of harassment, and where harassment has taken place, the education of fellow employees in the relevant section has been thorough. While supervisors and managers are aware of the policies, individual employees take as read that they will be treated equitably.

Challenges and difficulties

- This is a seven day a week operation, with peaks during school holidays. This makes work and family balance hard to achieve.

- Some young and inexperienced employees may be reluctant to report harassment or inappropriate behaviour to older staff. Employees are given a variety of individuals with whom they can discuss such matters.
- Recruiting staff in non-traditional areas, eg women into technical roles.

Innovations

- There are a number of Operations Supervisors a technical role which was formerly male dominated. An increasing number of women at more senior management and supervisory levels, and confidence among female staff that promotion was possible has contributed to a gradually changing staff profile.
- Breast feeding policy allows mothers to take unpaid time from work to feed the baby in a secure and private environment on site.
- ‘Banking’ of hours for casual workers, who can accumulate unpaid hours in order to receive some income when taking time away from work.
- Extended leave, other than maternity leave, but taking the same form as maternity leave, for some employees, e.g. for travel, other family time.
- Multi-hiring, so casual employees can work different hours in different roles to suit their own work/life balance.
- Part time employees have varied contracts to suit their work life balance, with varied commitment to set hours of work.
- Buddy system to support young, new or inexperienced employees.
- Where sexual or other harassment is reported, in at least one instance the organisation has used a relaxed group discussion to de-brief and educate staff around these issues. This is in addition to more formal training

Appendix E.

Case Study: TECHNOLOGY

The Organisation

Technology is the local division of US based multinational corporation. Its Australian headquarters are located in a suburb of a capital city. It is involved in designing and supplying control systems to manufacturers and in supply and maintenance of building infrastructure.

Just over 17% of approximately one thousand employees are women and by far the majority of employees are full time (EOWA report, March 2004). These are mainly categorised as clerks and para-professionals, with some women in management, professional roles and sales, and almost none as tradespersons. The part time workforce is predominantly female, while males make up most of the full time and casual workers. While the number and proportion of women being recruited is increasing, this is still a male dominated workplace. Current issues for women have been identified by an Equal Opportunity and Diversity Committee and include recruitment, transfer and promotion as ongoing issues.

Fieldwork

Two researchers visited the workplace on one day in September 2004, and conducted a series of semi-structured interviews with a number of employees. These included the HR professionals, marketing executive, and a group of women employees. All these people were asked about their understanding of the organisation's policies and how they were implemented, as well as having the opportunity to talk about their own work roles and the impact of EEO policies and practices on them. Participation was voluntary, but participants were nominated by the HR manager who coordinated the visit. These interviews were taped and later transcribed.

EEO Policies and Practices

Technology employees interviewed expressed a general level of satisfaction with the workplace. A number of long-standing (and older) employees in administrative and support roles reported that they had always felt that they were fairly treated and given as much flexibility as they needed. Not all employees interviewed recognised flexible working hours or work from home as EEO issues, but regarded them as equally applicable to everyone.

Technology remains a male dominated workplace. Efforts to address this imbalance include sponsoring a summer program for senior school students and an active recruitment program involving such initiatives as participation in careers fairs and attention to the way information is disseminated to potential employees. Women in professional and technical roles remain in the minority and recruiting women into these non-traditional areas is necessarily slow. One woman manages a technical area where most of the workforce is male with technical skills, another manages the transport fleet. Women are well represented in administrative and financial services, less so in technical roles.

Part time, job sharing and flexible (eg work from home) arrangements are becoming more acceptable, and more consistent across different parts of the organisation. Current issues include better communication with women on maternity leave, and maintaining the focus on graduate and tradesperson recruitment. Return from maternity leave can be staggered and there are formal work from home arrangements,

part time work and job sharing available. Not all roles within the company lend themselves to these arrangements, for instance some technicians need to be on site during the working day. Others' need to travel or to communicate across time zones calls for a high degree of flexibility and commitment from employees.

A review of all policies related to employment is taking place and information placed on an intranet site. E-mail questionnaires and group e-mails are used to gather and disseminate information on EEO issues.

Legislation is the main driver in this organization although labour market forces (the need to recruit skilled people of either sex) is also important. Maintaining a company culture of equity and fairness to all is also seen as important and is reflected in policy and practice. EEO is strongly supported at senior management level.

As the Australian division is also responsible for the company's operations in Asia, cultural differences between expectations for men and women are also emerging as areas to be addressed. However, policies and practices from the parent company in the US seem to be of little or no importance in the way *Technology* manages its Australian workforce.

Formulating and Evaluating Policy

- Leadership is given from senior management, and the company encourages a culture of teamwork where individual differences are respected.
- Policies have arisen in response to legislation, and labour market forces.
- Feedback is through regular staff surveys, informal contact, HR professionals, and an active EEO and Diversity Committee.
- Submitting reports to EOWA annually is preferred to waiving, as it keeps the focus on EEO issues.
- Policies are set out on an intranet. The EEO and Diversity Committee's work is promoted via email bulletins and a poster.

Problems and Challenges

- Recruiting and keeping skilled staff. There is a competitive labour market in some geographic and some skill areas, and an industry-wide tendency for employees to move on after a few years.
- Ensuring consistent and fair promotion and transfer practices across different work areas and locations. This includes offering all employees encouragement to apply for other positions.

Innovations and Achievements

- Success in recruiting female engineers (21% of new appointments) is seen as the direct result of having good EEO policies and promoting them to potential employees. The company has devoted considerable resources to promoting women in engineering and technical areas.
- Focus on training new employees in appropriate behaviour, etc relating to sex-based harassment and inappropriate material, as well as how and to whom to report harassment.
- Formalisation of telecommuting in terms of consistent policy, and OH&S aspects of the home workplace.
- Paid maternity leave is under discussion, and the provision of child care arrangements is to be addressed in the near future.

Appendix F.

Case Study: ELECTRICS

This group of companies is privately owned and is engaged in machinery, instrument and equipment design and manufacturing, chiefly for the coal mining, mineral processing and electricity generation sectors. It is situated near a major regional centre, but has employees deployed over a number of sites, some within the same region, but others at remote locations. Of a total workforce of just over 300, about 13% are female and are concentrated in the administrative and clerical categories. There are only a handful of part time or casual employees, and these are almost all women. More women are currently being recruited than are leaving the organisation, but few women are recruited into non-traditional areas, and managers are generally promoted from within the existing workforce, which means that they are male (21 out of 220). All the full time engineers are men, but there have recently been two or three female professionals in finance and IT. There are relatively few opportunities for advancement in most areas where women are employed. In some geographically remote areas, women have been employed in non-traditional roles, especially where men with similar skills can earn more working for mining companies. Harassment training has been provided for some employees. Staff development for managers has also been undertaken in conjunction with a nearby university.

EEO Policies and Practices.

In this rapidly growing enterprise, many policies are not set out in a formal way. They have been developed in response to legislation and at the prompting of senior management. The staff manual is currently being updated. Training has been offered to a number of employees in different locations.

All employees are full time, and there is no provision for part time work, flexible working hours (except in a very limited way) or job share. This is a male dominated organisation with traditional work practices; employees are expected to work 40 hours with set start and finish times. Some individual managers are more flexible than others in terms of giving workers a few hours here and there, which can be made up at another time. These are informal arrangements made on an individual basis. Male employees were on the whole satisfied with this arrangement, but women were less so. There is no paid maternity leave, and although women may work part time during the 12 months in which leave is taken, there is no provision for part time work after that as all workers are full time employees. Workshop employees are entitled to rostered days off, but this is not available to the majority of female employees, however several said that they would like some time to attend to personal or family matters. While most men interviewed were happy with current workplace arrangements, but this was not the case with women employees who expressed resentment at what some considered unnecessarily inflexibility.

Formulating and Evaluating EEO Policy

Some feedback comes informally, from staff social events and the like. Managers report issues at a monthly executive meeting, which is also an opportunity to discuss EEO matters.

Preparing the annual report for EOWA provides the responsible person with an opportunity to reflect and review existing policy as well as to set priorities for change.

Communicating EEO Policy

There is currently no consistent way in which employees at all levels of seniority are made aware of EEO policies, although at the time of the interviews a revised employee handbook was being prepared. Managers are reminded of EEO issues at a monthly meeting with the CEO. They have attended sessions run by the Anti-Discrimination Board and the organisation is considering other ways of providing further training.

Some leading hands and supervisors have also received formal training in dealing with harassment in the work place. Female employees have made themselves aware of such EEO policies as are formalised, however we were told of at least one male employee who was unaware that he was entitled to paternity leave.

Problems and Difficulties

- Few women apply to work in non-traditional areas.
- Rapid expansion and amalgamation of different companies adds to the challenge of formulating and implementing consistent, fair policies.
- Women employees expressed considerable dissatisfaction at the lack of flexibility within the workplace and considered that *Electrics* is not a family friendly workplace.
- There is very little flexibility available in terms of varied working hours, part time work or job sharing. While there are constraints on flexibility for those engaged in some manufacturing processes, in other areas of the organisation, working arrangements fall below industry benchmarks.
- Lack of opportunity for part time work or job sharing is seen as a disadvantage, especially (but not exclusively) by women employees.
- In general, employee awareness of policies and the conditions of employment were inconsistent.
- There is no HR professional in the organisation.

