

EQUITY AND DIVERSITY PLAN 2001 - 2005

Over recent years, there has been increasing recognition that organisational effectiveness can be linked to the successful management of workplace diversity.

Studies in Europe, North America and Australia have shown a strong correlation between good diversity practices and better organisational performance. Specific performance benefits include:

- Increased productivity – a diverse workforce means that an organisation can tap into a full range of talent, utilising a broad range of skills, knowledge and experience to achieve greater productivity;
- Ability to attract and retain superior employees – an organisation that values and encourages diversity is more likely to be an employer of choice than one that does not. Costs associated with high turnover of staff are therefore significantly lower;
- Better innovation – diverse groups tend to come up with more creative, innovative, feasible and effective solutions to business problems by offering a variety of perspectives; and
- Improved customer service – a workforce that reflects the diversity of the community is better able to understand and meet the needs of a diverse range of customers, thus leading to improved customer service.

Poor management of diversity, on the other hand, is associated with such factors as lower productivity, increased staff turnover and higher absenteeism.

Research also suggest that organisations are unlikely to successfully establish and maintain a diverse workforce unless they have appropriate diversity management plans and strategies in place.

The Government has developed an Equity and Diversity Plan for the Public Sector Workforce 2001 – 2005. This is in line with its commitment to develop a public sector workforce which is representative of the Western Australian community at all levels of employment, thereby improving the performance and increasing the overall effectiveness of the WA public sector.

Specific objectives and priorities have been identified for Indigenous Australians, people with disabilities, people from culturally diverse backgrounds, youth and women. These are as follows:

- improved distribution of women at higher levels, particularly in management positions;
- greater workforce diversity through improved representation at all levels for Indigenous Australians, people from culturally diverse backgrounds and people with disabilities; and
- increased representation of youth.

As a WA public sector agency, the Department is required to develop specific objectives for the organisation that will contribute to the achievement of these sector wide objectives, and ultimately contribute to improved organisational performance. These specific objectives are to be forwarded to the Office of Equal Employment Opportunity by 30 May 2002.

Accordingly, proposed objectives in relation to each of the priority areas have been developed, and are attached at Appendix 1. In determining these objectives, the following factors were considered:

- representation of diversity groups in the WA community. Note that women comprise 52% of the WA community, Indigenous Australians 3%, people from culturally diverse backgrounds 12%, and people with disabilities 4%;

- employee turnover rates in the Department. Note that turnover rates at lower classification levels are considerably higher than at upper management levels;
- recruitment rate to achieve changes;
- number of recent graduates from diversity groups with qualifications relevant to the Department, eg. almost two thirds of graduates in the environmental and biological sciences are women;
- number of employees from diversity groups at each level currently in the Department; and
- current and/or proposed relevant diversity strategies in the Department, for example, the Mentored Aboriginal Employment and Training Scheme. The Department has an EEO and Diversity Management Plan which outlines the organisation's existing diversity strategies. This is soon to be reviewed by a new Equity and Diversity Taskforce (subject to Corporate Executive approval for the Taskforce) with a view to modifying and amending the Plan as appropriate to help ensure that the objectives are met;
- diversity groups/areas of particular relevance to the Department. Specifically:
 - given the Department's mission to manage the lands and waters of Western Australia, and to conserve its biodiversity, the lack of representation of Indigenous Australians (as traditional custodians) across all levels of the Department is a significant concern. The wealth of knowledge that Indigenous Australians can contribute to the organisation is considerable, and this is recognised by the relatively high targets already set for this diversity group in a separate submission to Corporate Executive in December 2001 that endorsed implementation of the Aboriginal Employment and Training Scheme. Directors have identified Indigenous Australians as the first priority in terms of the diversity objectives.
 - the under-representation of women, particularly at senior management level, is also of concern given that women comprise 52% of the WA community and have a range of skills, knowledge and experience that is not currently being fully utilised by the Department. Directors have identified women as the second priority with regard to the diversity objectives.

Feedback and advice was sought from all Directors following submission of the original objectives to Corporate Executive on 6 May 2002. Following discussion with the Manager, People Services Branch and Manager, Workforce Services and Planning, Director's responses were incorporated as appropriate into this proposal and the proposal concerning formation of an Equity and Diversity Taskforce. A summary of key points raised by Directors is attached at Appendix 2.

Although there was a general feeling that the targets were somewhat high, particularly for women, most Directors considered that with the implementation of appropriate strategies, these would be achievable. The objectives therefore remain unchanged from those of the original proposal submitted to Corporate Executive on 6 May 2002.

Explanatory notes regarding some of the objectives are attached at Appendix 3. A summary of projections for each diversity group at each Public Service Level is attached at Appendix 4. Data Projection Sheets used to help derive the proposed objectives are attached at Appendix 5.

The proposed objectives and the means by which they have been derived have been discussed with Mary White and Helen Saunders of the Office of Equal Employment Opportunity, who have confirmed that these are acceptable.

The final strategies for achieving the equity and diversity objectives will be developed by the proposed Equity and Diversity Taskforce (the formation of which is subject to Corporate Executive approval). Existing strategies are outlined in the Department's EEO and Diversity Management Plan. Strategies proposed by Directors are included in the summary at Appendix 3. These will be considered by the Taskforce and further developed and incorporated into a revised Plan as appropriate.

RECOMMENDATIONS APPROVED BY CORPORATE EXECUTIVE:

1. Diversity objectives endorsed.
2. Noted that achievement of the objectives will require the review, further development and implementation of diversity strategies in the Department's EEO and Diversity Management Plan. Successful implementation of the strategies will necessitate pro-active leadership and sponsorship by Directors.

Appendix 1

Department of Conservation and Land Management Equity and Diversity Plan 2001 - 2005

Submission to the Office of EEO						
Improved Distribution of Women	Conservation and Land Management				Date:	
	2001 Actual		2003 Objective		2005 Objective	
Distribution (Equity Index)	38		40		46	
(Percentage)	4.6%		7.7%		10.8%	
Greater Workforce Diversity	2001 Actual		2003 Objective		2005 Objective	
	Workforce %	Equity Index	Workforce %	Equity Index	Workforce %	Equity Index
People from Culturally Diverse Backgrounds	2.0%	25	4.9%	9	6.7%	11
People with Disabilities	0.2%	N/A	1.6%	44	3.3%	43
Youth	1.6%	263	1.9%	206	2.5%	140
	0.0%		0.4%		1.3%	

Appendix 2

SUMMARY OF DIRECTORS' RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS REGARDING EQUITY AND DIVERSITY OBJECTIVES

1. In respect to the proposed targets, how relevant and achievable do you think they are? If they are not relevant and/or achievable, can you offer alternatives, and give reasons for doing so?

In general, there was a feeling that the proposed objectives were somewhat high, particularly for women. However, most felt that with the implementation of appropriate strategies, these might still be achievable, although some felt that in setting such high targets the Department might be setting itself up for failure.

It was also suggested that the move towards flatter structures might make it harder to meet objectives for increasing the number of women in management tiers two and three, although it was widely recognised that the lack of women at senior management level in the Department is a problem.

One Director suggested that the targets for women at higher classification levels were too low, given the pool of capable women at levels three and four in the Department, and the potential for movement upwards via reclassification, as well as through the advertised vacancy process.

A minority considered that targets for Indigenous Australians were too high to be achievable; however, it should be noted that these targets have already been endorsed by Corporate Executive in a previous proposal regarding the Aboriginal Employment and Training Scheme.

In general, the objectives considered most relevant were for Indigenous Australians (first priority) and women (second priority). It was considered that there is a stronger business case (given the land management role of the Department and the number of women in the community) for increasing the representation and distribution of people from these two groups. Comments regarding the remaining diversity group objectives for people with disabilities, people from culturally diverse backgrounds and youth, ranged from "relevant, but less important than Indigenous people and women" to "not particularly relevant to this Department".

2. One of the means proposed to both develop and create ownership of strategies for achieving the targets is the setting up of a cross-divisional Equity and Diversity Taskforce. Do you agree with this, and do you have any suggestions that could improve on this proposal?

All Directors agreed that an Equity and Diversity Taskforce was an appropriate strategy for the development and implementation of strategies for achieving the objectives. Comments/suggestions for improvement can be summarised as follows:

Functions:

There was general agreement with the proposed functions of the Taskforce. However, one Director felt that these were too generalised and did not convey a sufficient sense of importance or urgency.

One Director made the point that the Taskforce would need clear terms of reference – perhaps developed by/in conjunction with People Services Branch – in order to function effectively.

Another Director indicated that monitoring and reporting on progress in terms of meeting the objectives should be a function of Corporate Services Division, rather than the Taskforce.

Structure:

Comments regarding the proposed structure were varied. Some commented that it was important to have “high quality” members who are enthusiastic and committed to diversity. Most agreed that cross-divisional representation was important, although some felt that a smaller focus group of no more than half a dozen would be more appropriate. Some also mentioned that where possible, membership should comprise people from diversity groups.

A number of Directors suggested that a fellow director should chair the Taskforce, to ensure senior commitment and top-driven implementation.

Implementation of Proposal:

One Director considered that the proposal should emphasise more strongly that more frequent meetings of the Taskforce would be required during the initial stage of reviewing the EEO and Diversity Management Plan.

Approximately half of the Directors felt that following this initial stage, quarterly meetings would be too frequent. One Director indicated that meeting once or twice a year should be sufficient. Some Directors felt that the Taskforce should have a limited lifespan (perhaps 6 – 12 months?), suggesting either that it shouldn't need to be ongoing if set up appropriately (over time, there would insufficient work for the Taskforce to do), or that the ongoing functions should be carried out by a separate group or person – in the case of a group, possibly one already in existence, such as the People Reference Group or Disability Services Planning Committee.

One Director felt that representatives should be chosen by the Chair of the Taskforce (a Director) in conjunction with the other Directors, rather than the Corporate Executive Subcommittee on Aboriginal Affairs.

General Comments:

One Director was concerned that the Taskforce would not have sufficient ‘corporate commitment’ to be truly effective; another was concerned that competing demands and priorities of Taskforce members would limit its effectiveness.

3. If you do not agree with this proposal, what alternative means do you think could be used to develop appropriate strategies?

N/A

4. Are there any particular strategies that you think should be implemented to achieve specific objectives?

Key strategies proposed by Directors can be summarised as follows:

- I. Aboriginal Employment and Training Scheme. Needs to be actively promoted and properly resourced, including appointment of a full-time officer to run the Scheme. Department needs to be seen as an employer of choice, particularly by Indigenous people (including Indigenous women, who have a unique set of skills and knowledge to offer).
- II. Achievement of diversity targets and initiatives needs to be built into performance criteria. Managers and Directors must be made accountable for achievement/non-achievement of these.
- III. Need to be collaborative and work in partnership with Aboriginal groups and communities, and universities, to encourage Indigenous people to gain relevant qualifications and ensure that universities offer courses relevant to Indigenous and Departmental needs.
- IV. Ensure that there is effective measurement of diversity groups in the Department, to address under reporting.
- V. Need to identify what the key barriers are for people from diverse groups (particularly Indigenous Australians and women), and work at removing these, so that the best possible candidates are recruited into and promoted through the Department.
- VI. Need to increase scope when advertising vacancies, so as to reach the broad community or target key groups – Intersector not likely to be accessed by most diversity groups outside the public sector.
- VII. Create opportunities for people from diversity groups through movement of staff into special projects, acting, etc. to allow them to gain the necessary skills and experience for promotion.
- VIII. Ensure that diversity issues are regularly included as agenda items for meetings of senior management.
- IX. Scrutinise selection processes to ensure that any impediments affecting people from diversity groups are identified and removed.
- X. Develop mentoring and succession planning programmes, and ensure that people from diversity groups are priority participants.
- XI. Arrange presentations to highlight the achievements of people from diversity groups.
- XII. Ensure that flexible working arrangements are in place and that people are encouraged to make use of these.
- XIII. Increase the number of Carer's Rooms across the Department.
- XIV. Extend cross-cultural awareness training so that employees gain greater understanding of Indigenous culture, are introduced to Indigenous people working in the Department, and gain an awareness of how they can better support and relate to Indigenous people.

Appendix 3

EXPLANATORY NOTES REGARDING EQUITY AND DIVERSITY OBJECTIVES

Note that actual figures appearing in the data projection and summary sheets reflect employee data as at 30 June 2001, and include substantive occupancies only.

Improved Distribution of Women

A target increase of only 2 points has been set for the 2003 equity index for women. However, unlike the public sector generally, in the Department of Conservation and Land Management the overall representation of women is low. This is in addition to the under-representation of women in management that is sector-wide.

Consequently, there is an immediate need for the Department to recruit more women at all levels, including the lower levels. This means that the equity index for 2003 remains somewhat low (40). However, this rises to 46 in 2005 as the pool of available women for possible promotion increases with the predicted overall greater representation of women in the Department over time.

Indigenous Australians

The objectives for Indigenous Australians show a drop of 16 points in the Equity Index for 2003 (from 25 to 9), with this rising back up to 11 in 2005. This drop in the Equity Index reflects the Department's new Mentored Aboriginal Training and Employment Scheme, which offers 3 year traineeships to suitable Indigenous applicants. As a result of this Scheme, it is anticipated that representation of Indigenous Australians at the lowest classification level will increase significantly over the next couple of years as greater numbers are recruited as trainees, thereby initially lowering the Equity Index. However, over time, increased representation will lead to improved distribution as Indigenous Australians complete their traineeships and gain appointments commensurate with their new skills and abilities in appropriate higher level positions in the Department.

People From Culturally Diverse Backgrounds

The current Equity Index could not be calculated due to the low number of employees appearing in this group. It is considered that this current low figure is a result of significant under-reporting, and it is anticipated that this issue will be addressed in the Department's new Equity and Diversity Management Plan.

People With Disabilities

The current Equity Index for people with disabilities is extremely high (263), showing good distribution of people with disabilities throughout the organisation. However, overall representation of people with disabilities is low (1.6%). Due to the low turnover rate at the upper levels, greater recruitment (to increase representation) is more achievable at the lower levels. The predicted increased representation at the lower levels lowers the predicted Equity Index to 140 by 2005. However, this is still considered high.

Appendix 4

Projections For Each Diversity Group At Each Public Service Level

				Projections for 2003 & 2005			
1. Women	Actuals 2001			Projections 2003 & 2005			
Equivalent Public Service Levels	Total Staff	Actual Women 2001	% Women 2001	Predicted change 2001-2003	Projected 2003	Predicted change 2003-2005	Projected 2005
1	426	154	36.2%	12	166	15	181
2	194	68	35.1%	7	75	10	85
3	157	49	31.2%	5	54	6	60
4	145	41	28.3%	4	45	5	50
5	108	22	20.4%	4	26	5	31
6	78	13	16.7%	1	14	1	15
7	38	5	13.2%	1	6	1	7
8	31	0	0.0%	1	1	1	2
9	4	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0
10	7	0	0.0%	0	0	1	1
Total	1188	352	29.6%	35	387	45	432
Percentage		29.6%			32.6%		36.4%
Equity Index		38			40		46
Management Tiers 2 & 3	65	3	4.6%	2	5	2	7
		4.6%			7.7%		10.8%
2. Indigenous Australians	Actuals 2001		Indigenous Australians - Projections 2003 & 2005				
Equivalent Public Service Levels	Actual Total Staff 2001	Indigenous 2001	% Indigenous 2001	Predicted change 2001-2003	Projected 2003	Predicted change 2003-2005	Projected 2005
1	426	12	2.8%	33	45	12	57
2	194	6	3.1%	1	7	6	13
3	157	2	1.3%	0	2	2	4
4	145	2	1.4%	0	2	1	3
5	108	1	0.9%	0	1	1	2
6	78	1	1.3%	0	1	0	1
7	38	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0
8	31	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0
9	4	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0
10	7	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0
Total	1188	24	2.0%	34	58	22	80
Percentage		2.0%			4.9%		6.7%
Equity Index		25			9		11
3. Culturally Diverse	Actuals 2001		Cultural Diversity - Projections 2003 & 2005				
Equivalent Public Service Levels	Total Staff 2001	Culturally Diverse 2001	% Culturally Diverse 2001	Predicted change 2001-2003	Projected 2003	Predicted change 2003-2005	Projected 2005
1	426	0	0.0%	6	6	7	13
2	194	0	0.0%	4	4	5	9
3	157	1	0.6%	3	4	3	7
4	145	0	0.0%	2	2	2	4
5	108	1	0.9%	2	3	2	5
6	78	0	0.0%	0	0	1	1
7	38	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0
8	31	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0
9	4	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0
10	7	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0
Total	1188	2	0.2%	17	19	20	39
Percentage		0.2%			1.6%		3.3%

Equity Index		N/A			44		43
4. People with Disabilities	Actuals 2001		People with Disabilities - Projections 2003 & 2005				
Equivalent Public Service Levels	Actual Total Staff 2001	Actual PWD 2001	% PWD 2001	Predicted change 2001-2003	Projected 2003	Predicted change 2003-2005	Projected 2005
1	426	3	0.7%	2	5	5	10
2	194	4	2.1%	1	5	1	6
3	157	5	3.2%	0	5	0	5
4	145	2	1.4%	0	2	1	3
5	108	1	0.9%	0	1	1	2
6	78	2	2.6%	0	2	0	2
7	38	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0
8	31	1	3.2%	0	1	0	1
9	4	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0
10	7	1	14.3%	0	1	0	1
Total	1188	19	1.6%	3	22	8	30
Percentage		1.6%			1.9%		2.5%
Equity Index		263			206		140
5. Youth	Actuals 2001		Youth - Projections 2003 & 2005				
	Actual Total Staff 2001	Actual Youth 2001	% Youth 2001	Predicted change 2001-2003	Projected 2003	Predicted change 2003-2005	Projected 2005
	1188	0	0.0%	5	5	10	15
		0.0%			0.4%		1.3%

Appendix 5

Data Projection Sheets Used To Help Derive Equity and Diversity Objectives

				Group Name							
Occupational Level Description	Equiv Public Service Level	Total Staff	Women	Indigenous Australians	Cultural Diversity	People with Disabilities	Positions filled / year	Turnover %			
	1	426	154	12	0	3	86	20.2%			
	2	194	68	6	0	4	25	12.9%			
	3	157	49	2	1	5	12	7.6%			
	4	145	41	2	0	2	11	7.6%			
	5	108	22	1	1	1	11	10.2%			
	6	78	13	1	0	2	2	2.6%			
	7	38	5	0	0	0	1	2.6%			
	8	31	0	0	0	1	2	6.5%			
	9	4	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%			
	10	7	0	0	0	1	0	0.0%			
Total		1188	352	24	2	19	150	12.6%			
Youth - all levels		77	0	0	0	0					
Management Tiers 2&3		65	3	0	0	1	2	3.1%			
				Group Name	0						
Occupational Description	Total Staff 2001	Women 2001	% Women 2001	Predicted Change 2001-2003	Projected 2003	Predicted Change 2003-2005	Projected 2005	Positions filled in 2 years	Turnover % in 2 years	Recruitment rate to achieve change 2001-2003 2003-2005	
0	426	154	36.2%	12	166	15	181	172	40.4%	43.1%	47.7%
	194	68	35.1%	7	75	10	85	50	25.8%	49.1%	58.7%
	157	49	31.2%	5	54	6	60	24	15.3%	52.0%	59.4%
	145	41	28.3%	4	45	5	50	22	15.2%	46.5%	53.8%
	108	22	20.4%	4	26	5	31	22	20.4%	38.6%	46.8%
	78	13	16.7%	1	14	1	15	4	5.1%	41.7%	42.9%
	38	5	13.2%	1	6	1	7	2	5.3%	63.2%	65.8%
	31	0	0.0%	1	1	1	2	4	12.9%	25.0%	28.2%
	4	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	7	0	0.0%	0	0	1	1	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	Percentage	29.6%			32.6%		36.4%				
	Equity Index	38			40		46				
		2001			2003		2005				
Whole agency Management Tiers 2&3	65	3	4.6%	2	5	2	7	4	6.2%	54.6%	57.7%
	Percentage	4.6%			7.7%		10.8%				
		2001			2003		2005				

3. Projected Changes for Indigenous Australians				Group Name	0						
Occupational Description	Total Staff 2001	Indigenous Australians 2001	% Indigenous 2001	Predicted Change 2001-2003	Projected 2003	Predicted Change 2003-2005	Projected 2005	Positions filled in 2 years	Turnover % in 2 years	Recruitment rate to achieve change 2001-2003 2003-2005	
0	426	12	2.8%	33	45	12	57	172	40.4%	22.0%	17.5%
	194	6	3.1%	1	7	6	13	50	25.8%	5.1%	15.6%
	157	2	1.3%	0	2	2	4	24	15.3%	1.3%	9.6%
	145	2	1.4%	0	2	1	3	22	15.2%	1.4%	5.9%
	108	1	0.9%	0	1	1	2	22	20.4%	0.9%	5.5%
	78	1	1.3%	0	1	0	1	4	5.1%	1.3%	1.3%
	38	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	2	5.3%	0.0%	0.0%
	31	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	4	12.9%	0.0%	0.0%
	4	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	7	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	Percentage	2.0%			4.9%		6.7%				
	Equity Index	25			9		11				
		2001			2003		2005				
4. Projected Changes for Cultural Diversity				Group Name	0						
Occupational Description	Total Staff 2001	Culturally Diverse 2001	% C/Diverse 2001	Predicted Change 2001-2003	Projected 2003	Predicted Change 2003-2005	Projected 2005	Positions filled in 2 years	Turnover % in 2 years	Recruitment rate to achieve change 2001-2003 2003-2005	
0	426	0	0.0%	6	6	7	13	172	40.4%	3.5%	5.5%
	194	0	0.0%	4	4	5	9	50	25.8%	8.0%	12.1%
	157	1	0.6%	3	4	3	7	24	15.3%	13.1%	15.0%
	145	0	0.0%	2	2	2	4	22	15.2%	9.1%	10.5%
	108	1	0.9%	2	3	2	5	22	20.4%	10.0%	11.9%
	78	0	0.0%	0	0	1	1	4	5.1%	0.0%	25.0%
	38	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	2	5.3%	0.0%	0.0%
	31	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	4	12.9%	0.0%	0.0%
	4	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	7	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	Percentage	0.2%			1.6%		3.3%				
	Equity Index	N/A			N/A		N/A				
		2001			2003		2005				
5. Projected Changes for People with Disabilities				Group Name	0						
Occupational Description	Total Staff 2001	People with Disabilities 2001	% PWD 2001	Predicted Change 2001-2003	Projected 2003	Predicted Change 2003-2005	Projected 2005	Positions filled in 2 years	Turnover % in 2 years	Recruitment rate to achieve change 2001-2003 2003-2005	
0	426	3	0.7%	2	5	5	10	172	40.4%	1.9%	4.1%
	194	4	2.1%	1	5	1	6	50	25.8%	4.1%	4.6%
	157	5	3.2%	0	5	0	5	24	15.3%	3.2%	3.2%
	145	2	1.4%	0	2	1	3	22	15.2%	1.4%	5.9%
	108	1	0.9%	0	1	1	2	22	20.4%	0.9%	5.5%
	78	2	2.6%	0	2	0	2	4	5.1%	2.6%	2.6%
	38	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	2	5.3%	0.0%	0.0%
	31	1	3.2%	0	1	0	1	4	12.9%	3.2%	3.2%
	4	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	7	1	14.3%	0	1	0	1	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

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