

Positive progress made in progressing diversity

The *Equity and Diversity Plan for the Public Sector Workforce 2006-2009* (EDP2) has been in operation for three years. EDP2 has provided clear direction for the public sector in building capacity and achieving results. It outlined the government's vision and commitment to creating an equitable and diverse public sector workforce that is representative of the Western Australian community.

Final evaluation of progress and the development and communication of the future direction for equity and diversity in the public sector workforce are priorities for the Office of Equal Employment Opportunity (OEEO) in 2009-10.



The journey

2006

EDP2 was launched following the conclusion of the first plan, the *Equity and Diversity Plan for the Public Sector Workforce 2001-2005*. EDP2 was developed through a cross-agency reference group and provided workforce participation objectives for the public sector. The focus was on improving equity in employment outcomes for women in management, people from culturally diverse backgrounds, Indigenous Australians, people with disabilities and youth.

2007

In January 2007 the First Progress Report on the EDP2 was issued. The report revealed a slow start in all areas, with representation levels below the set objectives for each of the diversity groups.

Premier's Circular 2007/08, issued in May 2007 reinforced the government's policy position on diversity. The circular highlighted the need for chief executive officers to monitor agency progress towards the achievement of objectives on a regular basis and adjust strategies to attract, recruit, retain and develop a diverse workforce in line with government objectives.

In December 2007 the Second Progress Report on the EDP2 again demonstrated that the sector had not achieved the objectives set. Agencies were advised to include practical strategies in EEO Management Plans and to ensure that the strategies were implemented, monitored and evaluated.

2008

In response to the shortfalls identified between agency commitments and government objectives in EDP2, the OEEO developed and issued the *Showing the Way* series of publications. These publications were designed to assist public authorities to recruit and retain a diverse workforce by providing a quick and easy-to-follow reference guide with useful strategies to improve equity and employment outcomes.

In December 2008, the Third Progress Report on the EDP2 was issued. The public sector exceeded the government objectives for the employment of people from culturally diverse backgrounds, Indigenous Australians and people with disabilities. Positive progress was achieved for women in management and youth, however the government objectives were not met.

2009

The following score card is a snapshot of the progress made for the lifecycle of EDP2.

Diversity group	Representation (%)				
	2006 Actual	2007 Actual	2008 Actual	2009 Objectives	2009 Actual
Women in senior management					
SES	23.7	22.7	23.7	30	25.1
Tier 1	19.8	24.8	23.5	30	22.3
Tier 2	29.8	31.3	33.9	41	33.9
Tier 3	32.8	32.7	33.6	45	33.4
People from culturally diverse backgrounds	8.1	7.9	12.4	13	12.8
Indigenous Australians	2.5	2.3	3.3	3.2	2.3
People with disabilities	1.5	1.5	4.2	3.7	2.8
Youth	5.7	5.9	6.7	8	6.6

EDP2 has been a key leadership tool which has assisted the public sector to achieve positive outcomes in the area of workforce diversity. Improved data collection methods such as the Workforce Analysis and Comparison Application system, the revised Annual Agency Survey, Employee Perception Survey and agency's commitment have all supported the government's policy position on equity and diversity.

The public sector has been faced with managing diversity in challenging economic times. This has impacted on the progress towards achieving the 2009 objectives. While there is a strong commitment to equity and diversity in the public sector workforce a greater effort needs to be made to improve workforce representation across the diversity groups. The OEEO will continue to work with the public sector to achieve this.

In December 2009, the fourth and final progress report against the EDP2 will be issued. The final report will highlight in detail the public sector workforce participation and distribution progress made across the diversity group.



Future direction

The public sector is encouraged to build on the progress made to date to improve employment outcomes for the diversity groups. An inclusive, accepting and welcoming workplace has benefits for all staff, not just members of diversity groups. Workforce diversity is a business imperative and should be part of good human resource management practices.

In 2009-10 the OEEO will work with the Public Sector Commission to develop innovative strategies to advance equity and diversity in a contemporary public sector.

The OEEO will continue to work with public authorities to monitor compliance, provide consultancy services and develop innovative diversity products to further progress equity and diversity in public employment.