



# Strategies at Work

## Enhancing employment opportunities for people from culturally diverse backgrounds

The articles below outline programs and strategies that have been developed by Western Australian public sector agencies to enhance employment opportunities for people from culturally diverse backgrounds.

### Central TAFE

Central TAFE employs around 2,200 people in administration and lecturing, across a wide range of study areas. In addition to a strong commitment to achieving the targets set in the *Equity and Diversity Plan for the Public Sector Workforce 2006-2009*, Central TAFE recognises the importance of employing people who reflect the diversity that exists in their student base, particularly those from culturally diverse backgrounds.

The college researches the specific needs of people from culturally diverse backgrounds, with a view to attracting and retaining culturally diverse staff by meeting their needs. They also research their student profile and diversity data to determine what culturally diverse students are studying, compare the diversity data of staff to that of students in portfolio areas (with the intention of matching the workforce to reflect the student population) and identify teaching areas with high diversity support needs.

The attitudes of management towards increasing the number of culturally diverse staff are varied. To address any concerns, success stories from previous recruitment campaigns are shared and extra human resources support is provided for managers recruiting diverse staff.

Increasing the number of culturally diverse staff required some changes to existing processes, such as:

- amendments to job advertisements to encourage culturally diverse applicants to apply;
- some positions are quarantined for culturally diverse applicants; and
- panel training is undertaken to accommodate culturally diverse needs.

This strategy has allowed Central TAFE to focus on and incorporate equity and diversity needs into their workforce planning. Cultural diversity is now an embedded part of the culture at Central TAFE.



## University of Western Australia

The University of Western Australia (UWA) developed and implemented a Workforce Diversity Strategy (WDS) with a view to maximising opportunities for all Western Australians to actively participate in employment. Launched in 2001, the WDS has provided a framework for identifying priorities and harnessing the benefits of workforce diversity through utilising the widest possible pool of skills available.

Strategies designed to increase and improve the employment of people from culturally diverse backgrounds have included:

- a diversity audit to identify recruitment barriers;
- development of a mix of employment options including work experience opportunities, seasonal and casual work and fixed-term positions;
- establishment of a Diversity Job Bank where vacancies can be matched with suitable applicants;
- specialist orientation for successful Job Bank applicants; and
- development and implementation of culturally appropriate employment support initiatives.

Since the implementation of the WDS, at least 75 staff from culturally diverse backgrounds have been recruited, some of whom have been promoted to higher levels or pursued higher education options since their commencement.

Employees throughout UWA unanimously endorsed the continuation and expansion of the WDS. Further strategies have been developed for the 2005-2009 period, including:

- heads of organisational units will receive annual feedback on their WDS participation as part of their overall equity and diversity responsibilities;
- conduct ongoing staff development workshops on diversity and intercultural awareness;
- develop promotional materials describing the positive experience of managers adopting best practice in workforce diversity;
- ensure WDS staff receive site visits within three months of commencement and receive an orientation package;
- implement English language support initiatives for existing and new WDS recruits;
- implement a monitoring scheme for new and existing WDS staff; and
- encourage staff to seek opportunities for secondments, higher duties and targeted professional development.

This approach illustrates UWA's commitment to employment of people from culturally diverse backgrounds.

## WA Police

A key initiative in the WA Police's Equity and Diversity Management Plan is to increase and promote the representation and participation of people from culturally diverse backgrounds.

WA Police has implemented a program of adult traineeships targeted at people from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds and women looking to get back into the workforce.

Participants gain experience in working at the agency and receive an accredited Certificate of Business. Completion of the two-year program is the equivalent of passing the public sector entrance exam and places participants in a competitive position to gain permanent employment with WA Police or the wider public sector.

WA Police also maintains a register of employees who can speak languages other than English and involves employees from culturally diverse backgrounds in strategies aimed at reducing ethnic-based crime.

This successful strategy has enabled WA Police to increase the representation of people from culturally diverse backgrounds in their workforce.

### **Gold Corporation (The Perth Mint)**

With 33 percent of staff being from culturally diverse backgrounds, Gold Corporation, or as it is more commonly known, The Perth Mint, has clear motivation for implementing employment strategies that specifically target this group. Staff from culturally diverse backgrounds are well distributed throughout the organisation including manufacturing, marketing, corporate (including finance and information systems) and the Visitor Experience which incorporates tourism and retail.

Up to 40 percent of tourist centre customers are international tourists. Brochures for the Visitor Experience are produced in ten different languages. Staff from culturally diverse backgrounds are drawn upon to assist with developing the brochures, as well as speaking to overseas customers.

To encourage a comfortable working environment for new employees from culturally diverse backgrounds, The Perth Mint has introduced a buddy system to reduce possible language barriers. Inductions for new staff are also translated in other languages when required. Signs at The Perth Mint have also been produced in languages other than English to ensure safety standards and requirements are met for all employees.

Gold Corporation has successfully matched their workforce profile with their client base and this assists with their service delivery.

### **More information**

If you would like further information on strategies for enhancing employing opportunities for people from culturally diverse backgrounds contact a senior consultant at the Office of Equal Employment Opportunity by phone on (08) 9219 6000 or email at [deope@opssc.wa.gov.au](mailto:deope@opssc.wa.gov.au)



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