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The Key is published four times per year

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ISSN 1321-568X

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Recruiting with a purpose

With a name like Consumer and Employment Protection, you'd be right in thinking that DOCEP has a reputation to uphold. As the State's premier agency for labour relations law, how does DOCEP fare when it comes to their own recruitment?

During 2002/03, DOCEP had approximately 250 recruitment activities, ranging from expressions of interest to pool recruitment drives. Of these, no breaches of procedures were found. That says something about DOCEP's procedures, standard of training and commitment to getting it right first time, every time.

DOCEP uses pool recruitment drives for multiple generic positions (such as WorkSafe and Consumer Protection Inspector positions), as well as for single vacancies such as a HR Officer, Level 2. In some cases, they have advertised multiple vacancies of varying classifications at the same time - such as the Labour Relations Advisors at Levels 3,4,5,6 or 7.

The attraction and versatility of using application pools lies in the economies of scale and that they are valid for between 6 to 12 months. This allows managers to recruit from the pool at any time without the need to readvertise.

Appointment pools are made as flexible as possible, with vacancies being advertised as full time, part time, permanent, fixed term contract and secondment opportunities. Appointment from within the pool is dependent upon a suitable vacancy arising that meets the applicant's skills, knowledge and expertise.

For temporary vacancies, DOCEP's new Expressions of Interest policy makes applying a more equitable experience. Temporary vacancies must now be readvertised instead of rolled over, thereby giving other people another shot at the opportunity. Exceptions to the rule are possible, but only under exceptional circumstances.

DOCEP is proud of their commitment to employing people with disabilities, and believe more can be done. Where some agencies see barriers, they see opportunities. For instance, DOCEP has successfully sought exemptions from the Public Sector Entrance Exam to employ people with disabilities, some of whom have become their most valued and respected employees. DOCEP also pays for the parking of some physically disabled staff who are unable to use public transport.

DOCEP is pleased with its achievements in the area of recruitment, but is under no illusion that more cannot be achieved. DOCEP believes that unless Human Resources Directorates take the lead in keeping the pressure on other areas within their agency, nothing changes. It's easy to say it's too difficult, or too hard. For DOCEP, it has been an incredibly enriching experience. Maybe that's why they won Biz Link's Employer of the Decade Award and were nominated for a Prime Minister's Award.



Director's Comment

I am delighted that "Leadership in Equity and Diversity" is one of the categories in the Premier's Awards for Excellence in Public Sector Management this year.

This award is designed to encourage best practice in managing diversity in the WA public sector. I know how well some agencies are achieving this, and I hope their examples will be inspiring for others.

Workforce diversity is about ensuring an organisation recruits widely and makes the fullest use of the skills, talents and perspectives of people from different backgrounds.

Congratulations to those organisations who have nominated for the "Leadership in Equity and Diversity" award. Your leadership will be showcased to the rest of Western Australia and place you as an employer of choice.

Details on the Premier's Awards for Excellence in Public Sector Management, and the Leadership in Equity and Diversity category, can be obtained by emailing: premiersawards@dpc.wa.gov.au.

Noela Taylor

Director of Equal Opportunity in Public Employment

Did you know?

Are you missing out on customers who cannot contact you? Are your services truly accessible to all your clients? Here's a free and easy way to improve your telecommunications.

The Australian Communication Exchange (ACE) provides a National Relay Service to help organisations ensure they are accessible via the telephone to people who are deaf, have a hearing impairment, or a speech/communication impairment.

ACE is a not-for-profit, Australian organisation dedicated to empowering those who are deaf or have a hearing, speech or communication impairment, to obtain access to telecommunication networks.

Using the National Relay Service (NRS), you can easily conduct your business with clients who use this service. All calls are relayed with the strictest confidentiality.

You do not need to install or purchase any additional equipment. However, it may be useful to consider training for staff so they know how to deal with incoming NRS calls, and how to initiate outgoing calls via the NRS.

ACE can provide suggested wording for you to advertise this service to clients.

For more information check out the ACE website at www.aceinfo.net.au or phone them on 1800 555 660.

Indigenous Traineeships: Insurance Commission of WA

The Insurance Commission is aiming to develop an employee profile that reflects the diversity of its customers and the community it serves.

The Insurance Commission has a long standing commitment to the development of its people and seeks to become an "Employer of Choice". Diversity management strategies are an important way in which the Insurance Commission aims to achieve this. Key diversity strategies included in the organisation's strategic Balanced Business Plan aim to increase the representation of women, people with disabilities and young people. These strategies have been developed in line with government policy and ongoing business needs.

Detailed analysis of the Insurance Commission's EEO demographics led to a shift in the recruitment of Trainees over the past two years. In 2002 the organisation decided to specifically recruit Indigenous Trainees and introduced the Indigenous Employment Program.

Already committed to developing youth employment and training, the Insurance Commission offers at least four youth Traineeships each year. In 1998/99 they recruited two Indigenous Trainees, but due to limited support mechanisms, the organisation found it difficult to integrate and manage these employees into the Insurance Commission. Subsequently, one trainee left part way through the Traineeship and the other completed his Traineeship but elected not to remain with the Insurance Commission.

The new Indigenous Employment Strategy included each member of the Human Resources Division participating in a cross-cultural training program provided by Kim Bridge and Associates as a precursor to its 2002 recruitment for the Indigenous Employment Program. This enabled the Human Resource Division to assist employees to better understand cultural, family and historical issues and how they may impact on the work environment.

As part of the Traineeship program, employees are appointed for a 12 month contract and undertake the Certificate II in Business. Each Trainee is rotated through the major business divisions: Motor Vehicle Personal Injury Division, RiskCover and the Corporate Service Divisions.

As a result of the current intake, three Trainees commenced their Certificate II in Business with one undertaking a Certificate III. Two Trainees successfully completed their Traineeship and one is due to complete theirs by March 2004 (one employee did not complete his Traineeship).

The Insurance Commission is committed to the development of the trainees who are provided with three to four hours per week during work time to complete the academic components of their Traineeship. Trainees are also offered external training opportunities related to their Traineeship. The Insurance Commission uses the Australian Medical Association (AMA) as its Registered Training Organisation to assess the required competencies of the trainees.
(cont..)



Stuart Woodley (pictured) was recently awarded the Managing Director's Special Commendation Award for outstanding achievements whilst undertaking his Traineeship.

Indigenous Traineeships at ICWA (cont)

The Insurance Commission also involves the trainees in key projects. One trainee was heavily involved in the inaugural "Indigenous Art for Road Safety" Competition sponsored by the Insurance Commission.

In this project, young people aged between 14 and 24 living in the Kimberley region were targeted because of their high rate of road trauma and invited to submit a message about the dangers of drinking and driving in the form of a drawing or painting incorporating an Indigenous style of art. The trainee's involvement included administration of the competition, organising promotional activities, liaising with community groups, and as a member of the judging panel with Vic Evans the Managing Director of the Insurance Commission.

In consultation with Indigenous community organisations, the 2003/04 intake of Indigenous Trainees will continue with the organisational objective to offer 50% of the Traineeships to Indigenous youth.

Whilst the percentage of Indigenous employees remains relatively low (0.7% as at 30 June 2003) in the Insurance Commission, the continuation of the Indigenous Employment Program should enable the Insurance Commission to exceed the public sector target in future years and provide mutual benefit for the Insurance Commission and indigenous youth.

INNOVATIVE RECRUITMENT

NEW TOOL TO HELP WIN THE WAR FOR TALENT

Looking for innovative strategies so you can effectively compete for a skilled, talented and diverse workforce? A recent publication from the Western Australian Government has the answers.

Innovative Recruitment contains **practical tips, proven case studies and good practice examples**. These are used to highlight how organisations that are serious about attracting, recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce have taken proactive steps to ensure they **attract the right people, with the right skills**, to meet both current and future business needs.

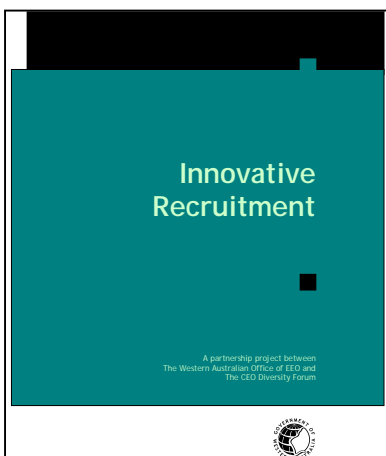
Other sections examine how organisations can:

- **improve their profile** against competitors;
- develop more encouraging application processes that **target specific recruitment groups**; and
- consider **a range** of selection techniques.

As a **useful and practical** resource tool, *Innovative Recruitment* examines each stage of the recruitment and selection process. It suggests where value can be added by adopting a fresh approach, and includes **tips from the Office of the Public Sector Standards Commission**. Although primarily intended for the public sector, the publication has also received acclaim from the private sector - including mining companies and other major employer groups.

Innovative Recruitment is a joint publication from the Office of Equal Employment Opportunity and the Chief Executive Officers' Diversity Forum.

For more information contact the Office of Equal Employment Opportunity: deope@opssc.wa.gov.au. A pdf version can be supplied free of charge for public sector employees.



Case study: Disability Discrimination in Employment

How much effort do employers need to make to rehabilitate an injured worker?

Can you dismiss an employee who is unable to return to pre-injury duties, if you have made attempts at rehabilitation and complied with the statutory time limits under workers' compensation laws?

A recent case highlights that an employer may be held liable against a claim of disability discrimination if further matters are not considered.

Before dismissal, employers must first make some attempt to find out if assistance can be provided to help the employee perform those duties, and also consider if all the existing duties are essential to the position.

In New South Wales, a complainant was employed as an armoured vehicle operator, a member of a crew that collected, transported and delivered cash, valuables and payrolls for clients.

The complainant suffered a back injury at work in 1992, after which he was placed on light duties. Despite rehabilitation attempts, he was unable to return to his pre-injury duties (which included lifting weights). The employer terminated the complainant's employment in 1996 on the basis that all attempts at rehabilitation had met with limited success, and that there was no certain prognosis for his return to pre-injury duties.

The complainant alleged discrimination in a number of respects, including disability. The employer argued that it that the employee could not carry out the inherent requirements of the job, which was accepted by the NSW Administrative Decisions Tribunal. However, the Tribunal found that the employer had not attempted to assess if the employee could have carried out the job requirements with the assistance of services and facilities. Providing such services and facilities to do the job is required of the employer unless it will cause unjustifiable hardship.

The complainant was awarded \$16,365 in damages (*Perlidis v Brambles Security Services trading as Brambles Armoured* [2003] NSWADT 11).

There are similar requirements in the Western Australian *Equal Opportunity Act (1984)*. Section 66Q notes it is not unlawful to discriminate in employment on the grounds of their impairment if the person is unable to carry out the required work or would require services or facilities to be provided which would impose an unjustifiable hardship on the employer.

The employer must take “all reasonable steps to obtain relevant and necessary information concerning the impairment”.

Such information about the impairment and the available services, facilities and assistance can be gained from the employee's medical and rehabilitation advisor, the relevant trade union, the relevant disability association, and consultants in ergonomics and occupational health and safety.

(Article adapted from Equal Time, Newsletter of the Anti-Discrimination Board of New South Wales, No. 56, May 2003, pp4-5).

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