

NATIONAL EEO NETWORK FOR AFP

THE AFP now has a network of Equal Employment Opportunity contact officers Australia-wide. Senior Sergeant David Bennett (AFP EEO co-ordinator) prepared this report.

"The White Australian-born male is discriminated against by this legislation as women must be promoted over men."

"EEO is simply a forum for women to air their misguided greivances."

"Non-Australians, disabled people and Aborigines now have ready-made legislation with which they can obtain benefits in employment which are unfair to others."

"EEO is like FOI, after a while it will die down."

THESE and similar comments are totally incorrect. Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) is not positive discrimination to the exclusion of the white Australian born male nor is it an ineffectual "buzz phrase".

EEO literally means what it says: Equal Employment Opportunity for all.

AFP employees, including public service support staff (the significant contribution of which was extensively highlighted in the September issue of *Platypus*) are fully eligible for promotion, transfer, training, staff development and all other matters relating to employment providing, of course, they satisfy the relevant criteria applicable at the time (formulated of course in accordance with EEO principles).

Q: How can discriminatory practices within the AFP be identified and eliminated?

A: Quite easily: By asking employees within the organisation to report which problems exist.

Public Service officers of the AFP were surveyed as part of a service-wide census conducted by the EEO Unit of the then Public Service Board in 1986. The results of this survey were used as a basis for preparation of an EEO Management Plan which was approved in July, 1987.

Identification and resolution of discriminatory practices within the AFP has been achieved by a two-pronged approach. In the first instance, an anonymous survey was



Sen. Sgt. David Bennett

conducted within the AFP in May, 1988.

Secondly, a network of EEO contact officers has been set up Australia-wide. These Contact Officers are available to give advice to victims of discrimination and to conduct seminars on EEO principles.

Q: How many employees were surveyed?

A: Within the AFP a total of 2,716 from a total of 2,726 were anonymously surveyed. Assistant Commissioners and above were not surveyed on the grounds of the small numbers and the fact that such members may have been readily identifiable.

Q: What was a return rate?

A: 72.9%

Q: What were some of the more interesting results of this survey?

A: The survey data indicates that seven people identified as Aborigines, one of whom was female.

(N.B. Aboriginal is defined as 'born in Australia of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Island descent'.)

It also found the following:

- Generally women have higher educational qualifications than men particularly in regard to the HSC or equivalent. At the C.A.E., diploma, degree and post-graduate diploma levels, the ratio is approximately 2 to 1 in favour of women.
- 89% of women have less than 11 years service while 51% of men are of similar experience. 64% of women have less than 5 years service with 29.5% of men for the same period.

- Recruiting of people from non-English speaking backgrounds is running at 9.5% which is creditable.
- Of 1,318 respondents 71.1% of the women and 69.7% of the men indicated they have received no encouragement to study for, or undertake, promotional courses. 71.6% of people with ethnic backgrounds also indicated the same lack of encouragement.
- 78% of women and 73.4% of men see the need to appoint career counsellors.
- There is insufficient knowledge of the following conditions/entitlements of the AFP: Superannuation (539), Study Leave/Time (437), Promotion System (424).
- Women take more sick leave than men. Women take more long term sick leave than men. In the short term (one week or less) the figure is reversed being 56.4% men and 52.1% women. Ethnicity has no effect on sick leave taken.
- 73.5% of women are clustered between the 21 to 29 years age mark, whereas most men are clustered between the 25 and 49 years age scales, (1,495 or 78.7%).
- At May 31 1988, the actual strength of the AFP was 2,726 people (100%) and the gender ratio was: women: 403 (14.8%); men: 2,322 (85.2%).
- A total of 79 people (9 women and 70 men) said English was not their first language and a total of 56 people (13 women and 43 men) spoke English and another language.
- Regarding unwelcome suggestions/propositions of a sexual nature; 64 women and 33 men answered "yes". 17 of the total "yes" responses were from a non-English speaking background and 59 came from the "never married" category. (Note: As the responses were anonymous there can be no indication of whether the approaches were of a heterosexual nature or otherwise).
- 29 women and 7 men answered "yes" to the question on being victims of sexual advances/suggestions for achievement.
- In order of preference, females stated they would go to their immediate supervisor, the police welfare officer and the EEO Co-ordinator if harassed over sex or ethnicity. The male preferential order was immediate supervisor, branch commander and police association.
- 47.2% (926) of respondents knew nothing about the AFP require-

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ments under the Public Service Reform Act 1984.

TO REMEDY the last disclosed deficiency, an ongoing training programme is being conducted which will result in all AFP employees being presented with the facts on EEO.

A draft EEO Management Plan is being evaluated by the Commissioner and details will be released once consultation with the Australian Federal Police Association and the Public Service Commission has been finalised.

Section 22B of the Public Service Reform Act (P.S.R.A.) 1984 applies directly to AFP employees and makes it unlawful under the Racial Discrimination Act 1975 and the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 for unjustified discrimination to take place in areas of employment.

There are also provisions within the P.S.R.A. to ensure merit and efficiency determine such matters as appointment, promotion at all levels and selection for long term higher duties. The provisions specifically prohibit patronage and favouritism.

Section 33(3) prohibits discrimination in the areas of appointments, transfer and promotions on the grounds of political affiliation, race, colour, ethnic origin, social origin, religion, sex, sexual preference, marital status, pregnancy, age, physical or mental disability — in addition to discrimination which is unlawful under the Racial Discrimination Act and the Sex Discrimination Act — and any other unjustified discrimination.

Q: Why did EEO legislation come into force?

A: To make up for unfair treatment in the workforce over many years. "Designated Groups" (i.e. Aboriginal people, people of non-English speaking backgrounds and people with physical or mental disabilities) have been nominated for special attention as: "Persons from those groups still occupy in the main positions of lower grades and are within a restricted range of occupations in the Public Service" (OAFP EEO Programme Police Statement 1987).

Q: A lot of discussion has taken place concerning Sexual Harassment. What is it?

A: It is unwelcome, unsolicited or uninvited conduct of a sexual nature and may take many different forms, including: offensive jokes, suggestions or verbal abuse of a sexual or sexist nature; leers or offensive gestures; subtle pressure for sexual activity; distribution or display of material

regarded as offensive; offensive telephone communications; physical contact such as patting, pinching or constant brushing against another's body; unwanted propositions for sexual activity; demands for sexual favours, accompanied by implied or direct promise or preferential treatment or threats concerning an individual's employment status; questioning about aspects of a staff member's private life; and sexual assault.

Q: Once the AFP EEO Programme has been approved what happens then?

A: The objectives are implemented to achieve EEO in all areas of employment including: job advertising; recruitment/selection/promotion; training and development; other personnel practices.

Q: What happens as an ongoing process with the EEO Programmes?

A: A yearly review of all plans and the overall progress of the programme focusing on achievements and results.

Q: Who is responsible for adherence to EEO principles?

A: Sub-section 5 of S22B of the Public Service Reform Act 1984 states: "The Secretary of a Department shall take any action necessary to give effect to the equal employment opportunity program for the Department and any person who exercises powers in relation to employment matters in the Department shall have regard to the program in exercising those powers."

Effectively, this means the Commissioner through Deputy Commissioner J. Johnson (the senior executive responsible for EEO in the AFP) requires all employees with responsibilities for others to adhere to EEO principles through the AFP's EEO Programmes.

Q: With regard to EEO principles, have any initiatives been implemented or planned for review?

A: Yes, for AFP members guidelines for pregnant members have been published in Administrative Circular 280; grievance handling procedures are being reviewed and a feasibility study on permanent part-time employment is at the information-gathering stage. A comprehensive review of the Public Service part of the EEO Programme is taking place.

Q: Who do I contact for more information on EEO?

A: The AFP EEO Co-ordinators, Senior Sergeant David Bennett, Phone (062) 757190 and Mr Tim Conlon, Phone (062) 757195 or any

of the following EEO Contact Officers: ACT: Miss Louise Riethmuller, HQ Building, (062) 757141, Senior Constable Nan Cribbes, City Station, (062) 497444, Miss Kim Pearson, City Station, (062) 457264; Eastern Region: D/Senior Sergeant Tony Sampson, (02) 6908666, Mr Don Gow, (02) 6908804; Southern Region: First Constable Catherine Tosolini, (03) 6077640, Mr Simon Jacobs, (03) 6077529, Senior Constable Roxanne Griffin, (03) 6077753; Northern Region: Senior Constable Carmel Crawley-Selva, (07) 3685888, Mrs Dorothy Poggio, (07) 3685912; Central Region: Senior Constable Gina Capaldo, (08) 2748858, Mrs Shirley Rogers, (08) 2748830; Western Region: First Constable Amanda Roberts, (09) 4218220, Mrs Nadia Painter, (09) 4218214; Northern Territory: Station Sergeant Barry McKenzie, (089) 845288, Ms Jacki Foley, (089) 845288; Tasmania: First Constable Adrian McShane, (002) 310166, First Constable Marty Rosenberg, (002) 310166.

The required changes to the AFP will occur over a period of time but experience world-wide has shown that adherence to EEO principles improves productivity and morale.

Organisations which have displayed leadership in the EEO field have gained recognition within the general community by providing desirable career opportunities. This enhances their reputation and assists in competing in the labour market for talent.

Members of those organisations are thus employed in an environment conducive to the development of the full potential of individuals.

This may sound very creditable for the AFP but for EEO to work effectively, commitment and co-operation at all levels is required.

"EEO Programmes are most commonly successful where there is:

- *public support from the head of the organisation for the EEO Programme, and the participation of senior management in the development and implementation of the Programme;*
- *Integration of the EEO Programme into the corporate management planning process thereby ensuring the participation of managers in attaining the EEO objectives; and*
- *management accountability for the progress of the EEO Programme"*.

(EEO Programs, Guidelines No. 1, September 1984.

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