

Diversity @ Work

Profiling workforce diversity and equity in Education Queensland

Workforce Diversity and Equity Unit

<http://education.qld.gov.au/workforce/diversity/equity>

May 2003 Issue 3

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Diversity @ Work is published quarterly to raise the profile of workforce diversity and equity issues in Education Queensland. We welcome and encourage all feedback, contributions and suggestions.

Contact Andrea Roberts on (07) 3235 4275.

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EQ Overseas Trained Teachers Orientation Program



Class of 2003—Participants and presenters at the Overseas Trained Teachers Orientation Program held at Kangaroo Point campus, Southbank TAFE.

This year, the Overseas Trained Teachers Orientation Program was organised in conjunction with a nine week course for overseas trained teachers run by Southbank TAFE. The 3-day seminar, held on 6,7,8 May, aimed to provide the teachers with an overview of Education Queensland. Mr Jeff Hunt, Assistant Director, HR Operations, welcomed the participants and answered questions during a group-work exercise.

Topics over the three days included the structure of EQ, links between curriculum and planning, behaviour management, recruitment and selection, and employment conditions. Speakers from district and central offices provided these presentations.

Two principals—Mr Don Whitehouse and Ms Bronwyn Campbell spoke to participants about principals' expectations of teachers and provided some tips for getting supply and permanent work and surviving in a new school.

Teachers—Ms Nora Castillo and Mr Vinesh Chandra—both trained overseas and are now successfully working in Queensland schools — shared their success stories and provided practical advice and encouragement to the par-

tipants.

Presentations were also provided by union representatives and Dr Maureen Bella from the Board of Teacher Registration. Maureen coordinates the Overseas Teachers' Network.

One participant, Nandini Sen, said "the course was good preparation for the challenges ahead". Rosa Rother said "the program was very useful and provided a great opportunity to meet other overseas trained teachers".

Some participants plan to stay in contact and to share resources and ideas with the goal of achieving permanent teaching roles.

Ms Lucy Valeri, ESL lecturer and course co-ordinator for overseas trained teachers at Southbank TAFE, said that working in conjunction with EQ was a success and that she looks forward to future opportunities to combine resources for overseas trained teachers.

Education Queensland is developing a strategy for people from non-English speaking backgrounds. The Orientation Program is aimed towards attracting employees from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Stop Press—The Latest News in Brief

Legislative changes

After much speculation, the final amendments to the Queensland Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 were proclaimed on 1 April 2003.

The major changes include the introduction of new attributes:

- * Family responsibilities
- * Gender identity
- * Sexuality

These current attributes will be changed in the following ways:

- * Breastfeeding—to include all areas (previously goods and services only)
- * Lawful sexual activity—to mean a lawfully employed sex worker
- * Religion—to Religious belief or activity
- * Marital status—to Relationship status, including same sex relationships

The vilification provisions have been expanded to include sexuality and gender identity. Complaints of vilification can now be lodged by organisations on behalf of individuals.

Victimisation provisions have

been extended to cover people victimised before a complaint is made to the Anti-Discrimination Commission.

For further information about these changes, please contact the Workforce Diversity and Equity Unit on 3237 0824 or the Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland on 1300 130 670 or look at the ADCQ website <http://www.adcq.qld.gov.au>

Harmony Day

Harmony Day was celebrated on March 21, coinciding with World Poetry Day and International Day of Elimination of Racial Discrimination. EQ marked the occasion by holding a poetry competition—participants were asked to submit poems reflecting the themes of community harmony and inclusion.

Entry was open to all staff and entries were received from a range of different school, district office and central office poets.

The top six poems were published in Education Views on March 28 and some poems are now accessible on the Work-

force Diversity and Equity website: <http://education.qld.gov.au/workforce/diversity/equity>

A foyer display in Education House also exhibited the six top poems on Harmony Day. A big thank you to those who entered the competition and to those who stopped to read the poems.

Male Teacher and Indigenous Postcards

The WDE Unit has developed, in conjunction with Communications and Marketing, promotional postcards to attract males to teaching and to promote careers within Education Queensland in a range of roles to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. The postcard for male teachers is part of the broader "Make A Difference: Teach" campaign.

The postcards are aimed primarily at school students and the first batch of cards was handed out at the Indigenous Careers Expo at ANZ Stadium on 22 & 23 May.

Workforce Diversity & Equity—Looking Forward

Reasonable Adjustment Policy & Guidelines

A draft of the Reasonable Adjustment Policy and accompanying Reasonable Adjustment Guidelines have been sent out for internal and external consultation. The Workforce Diversity and Equity (WDE) Unit will analyse the feedback and make appropriate changes before launching the Policy and Guidelines.

The aim of the guidelines is to assist principals and managers with the practical side of implementing the Reasonable Adjustment Policy and to provide advice generally on employing people with a disability.

Diversity & Equity Awareness Package

The awareness package for diversity and equity is in the final stages of development and possible implementation strategies are being investigated. Rita De Joux of the WDE unit said "The awareness package will be a great opportunity for all staff to become familiar with their rights and responsibilities. It should have a positive impact upon the way in which we all work".

Success Stories

New success stories have been added to the WDE website and more will be added soon.

If you are interested in being featured in the success stories or if you would like to nominate somebody, please contact Andrea Roberts on 3235 4275 or by email:

Andrea.Roberts@qed.qld.gov

Important Dates

NAIDOC Week is from 6-13 July this year, for more information, visit: <http://www.atsic.gov.au/Events/NAIDOC/Default.asp>

Disability Action Week will occur from 14-20 July. More information is available at: http://www.disability.qld.gov.au/whatsondetail.cfm?wo_id=539

Steps in the right direction - towards a discrimination-free workplace

Employers are obligated to show reasonable steps to prevent the unlawful actions of their workers in regard to discrimination, sexual harassment and racial and/or religious vilification. Unless employers can show these reasonable steps they may be held legally accountable.

The three areas identified by the Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland (ADCQ) in their article *Reasonable Steps, how many, how big and how reasonable** are: Policy, Training, and Complaint Procedures.

Policy

It is important to note that what is reasonable in one workplace may not be in another. Policies must reflect a range of variables depending on the characteristics of the employees.

Education Queensland has a Workforce Diversity and Equity Policy and a Workplace Bullying, Harassment and Violence Policy. These are available on the WDE website:

<http://education.qld.gov.au/workforce/diversity/equity>

Training

The ADCQ suggests awareness training for all staff on the Policy and anti-discrimination legislation with a longer training component for managers and supervisors focussing on their responsibilities.

It is important to provide subsequent training due to legislation changes, new staff coming on board and policy reviews.

See page 2 of this edition of Diversity @ Work for an update on the EQ Diversity and Equity Awareness Package.

Complaint Procedures

Complaint procedures need to

be written clearly and copies provided for all staff. The ADCQ recommends that the following are included in complaint procedure guidelines:

- The company's commitment to a fair process
- The process for lodging a complaint – informality is recommended
- Confidentiality of complaint lodgement
- Timeframes for investigating complaints
- The seriousness with which complaints will be handled
- Who's responsible for dealing with complaints
- Training for the person investigating the complaint
- Range of outcomes possible for complaint resolution
- What records will be kept, how, and by whom
- How complaint data, including the outcomes, will be monitored
- The contact officer and their role
- Victimisation.

The EQ EdInfo website provides information on preventing and resolving grievances:

<http://iwww.qed.qld.gov.au/workdept/hr/er/grieve1.htm>

Ways to check if policies and procedures are working (some suggestions from the ADCQ):

- Conduct a survey of staff about issues at work
- Conduct exit interviews with staff to check their views of the workplace
- Use feedback from contact officers and other networks to see how things are going
- Monitor data from complaints such as type of behaviour, outcome etc and other information which

doesn't identify individuals

- Run a confidential hotline at work to test progress.

Some companies have been able to place a high dollar value on the benefits of reducing or eliminating unlawful behaviour through improvements in productivity, reputation of the organisation, staff turnover, morale, absenteeism, publicity and workplace health & safety. However, apart from making good business sense, a discrimination-free workplace is better for everyone.

*Balancing the Act – The newsletter of the ADCQ Issue Fifteen-October 2002.

Did You Know???

- Only 1 percent of Australia's Top 500 companies' CEOs is female.
- In 2001, only 10 per cent of private sector board members were women;
- Men outnumber women in managerial and administrative jobs by more than three to one;
- Women comprise just 13 per cent of generalist managers and 27 per cent of specialist managers;
- In contrast, women represented approximately 89 per cent of all advanced clerical and service workers and 73 per cent of all intermediate clerical and service workers.

Source: ABS Cat no.6203.0 - Labour

Force, Table 51, November 2001.

Cited on www.eowa.gov.au

Herstories Project Launched

Timed to coincide with International Women's Day, the *Herstories* project was launched at the Parliamentary Annexe in March. The 2003 Education Queensland *Herstories: Inspiring Women* event was the first in a series to be held around the state.

Minister Anna Bligh provided the opening address which highlighted the importance of career development for women in Education Queensland and the commitment to the *Women's Strategy* launched in May 2002.

'Inspirational Women Speakers' Rachel Hunter, Public Service Commissioner, and Sarina

Russo, CEO of the Russo Group shared their career stories and provided some insight into their career progression.

After the speeches, participants were able to network with the Minister and guest speakers as well as senior managers such as assistant director-generals and directors.

Melissa Morris, Principal Personnel Officer of the WDE Unit said that an important aspect of *Herstories* was recognising different aspects of success for the female staff of Education Queensland. She said "for some women, this may mean successfully balancing work

and family life or re-entering the workforce after having a child. The *Herstories* project is aimed at encouraging women to gain the inspiration to achieve their personal career goals".

Approximately 150 staff attended from schools and district and central offices. Future *Herstories* events will be held in a variety of regional areas and will profile other well-known women speakers.

Further information will be available soon on the WDE website. Please contact the WDE Unit if you have any questions.

Scholarships Awarded at Parliament House

Minister for Education, Anna Bligh, presented 12 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Teaching Scholarships and 5 Bid O'Sullivan Teaching Scholarships at Parliament House in February.

The scholarships provide \$20,000 in financial assistance during the four years recipients study for a Bachelor of Education degree.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Scholarship recipients consisted of six Year 12 school leavers, one post-graduate student and five existing Education Queensland employees. After completing their studies, scholarship holders are guaranteed employment with the department for a time equivalent to their full-time study. The first group of scholarship recipients are due to complete their qualifications at the end of 2003.

The Bid O'Sullivan scholarships are named after the woman who founded the first

School of the Air in Queensland in 1960. These are offered to students in rural and remote areas to assist in overcoming barriers preventing students in these regions from completing further education.

The first Bid O'Sullivan Scholarship recipient started teaching last year with four more following this year.

The scholarships are awarded to provide increased opportunities to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and students from remote areas to undertake tertiary study and gain employment. An important aim of the program is to develop a workforce that is reflective of the diversity of the community it serves and the cultures in Queensland schools. Attracting students from these cultures and areas also adds to the diverse skills base of Queensland teachers.

EQ has organised an on-line

community for all scholarship holders to access for support and advice from both teaching and non-teaching staff.

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EEO Survey Reminder!

The due date was 17 April 2003 but please continue to submit your EEO Census forms if you have not already. Contact the WDE Unit on 3235 4275 if you have any questions.