

# DEOPE work and activities

## Improving diversity planning and evaluation

Section 145 of the EO Act requires public authorities to prepare and implement an EEO management plan. In July 2015, there were 264 public authorities in scope under this section of the EO Act and the DEOPE holds plans for 79% of these public authorities.

Along with other resources, a range of templates are made available on the Commission's website to assist public authorities in the preparation of their EEO management plans. One key resource is the short 'checklist' plan available online to reduce the reporting burden for smaller public authorities. Table 1 provides an overview of the number of checklist plans in place across public authorities.

**Table 1: Types of EEO management plans in public authorities**

Public authority groups	Numbers			Plans due 2014/15
	Full plans	Checklists	Total	
Public sector entities	73	30	<b>103</b>	39
Non-public sector authorities	36	125	<b>161</b>	149
<b>Total</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>188</b>

Source: Plans recorded by the DEOPE's office

Overall, 41% of all public authorities have full EEO management plans (includes those authorities who have integrated workforce and diversity plans) in place and 59% have checklists. In 2014/15, a total of 188 plans expired of which 21% were in public sector entities and 79% in non-public sector authorities.

## Identification of diversity status

### Collaborating for better data

The DEOPE continues to work collaboratively with public authorities to improve the collection of diversity data through the Human Resource Minimum Obligatory Requirements (HRMOIR) and annual EEO survey process. In July 2015, the DEOPE visited a number of key public sector agencies to discuss some of the issues faced when collecting diversity data from staff. The objective of the discussion was to better understand the complex nature of engaging with staff to encourage self-identification in diversity groups, and to identify what further support could be provided to improve survey response rates through the diversity data collection process.

It was found agencies with a high survey response rate achieved these through:

- strong buy-in from managers and senior leaders (for example promotion through staff broadcasts, manager commitment to achieving high rates, and regular reporting to corporate executive)
- staff resources being dedicated to activities promoting a high response rate
- regular reminders (e.g. emails, reminders through online human resources system, support from managers to remind staff to complete in person) or incentives to complete (e.g. no access to payslips until EEO data is entered).

A number of agencies identified capturing data for staff that do not work on a computer remained their biggest challenge, as most EEO data was collected through online forms.

The agency discussions were very positive and provided the DEOPE with valuable insight into some of the current practices and future system changes being considered to improve the collection of diversity data.

The DEOPE intends to further engage with public authorities and provide them with ongoing support to build on the positive steps taken to assist them develop and implement future workforce and diversity programs and priorities.

## Equal employment opportunity management plans

### Advice and assistance

This year, 188 of the 264 public authority EEO management plans expired. Given the large numbers, the focus of the past 12 months has been on providing a more efficient and effective service to assist authorities to develop and implement new plans.

To complement existing support to authorities, the DEOPE has worked closely with the Commission's Centre for Public Sector Excellence to develop a coordinated approach to assist authorities build quality diversity initiatives into their future plans. It is notable that this new approach has resulted in the majority of authorities (83%) developing and lodging a new plan with the DEOPE.

In the past 12 months, the DEOPE has provided advice and assistance to 129 public authorities across the sector, with high level EEO planning advice provided to six public sector agencies developing an integrated workforce and diversity plan. The DEOPE conducted 23 agency visits and responded to numerous requests over the telephone, to provide advice and assistance to authorities developing new plans.

**Evaluation of plans**

In 2014/2015, collaboration with public authorities has been extensive, supported by improved diversity evaluation tools that provide a more efficient feedback process on plans. A substantial increase in the number of expired EEO management plans (134) across local government authorities required an adaptive and flexible response to support the sector in developing and implementing new EEO management plans.

A key initiative was the development of an EEO management plan template and a sample diversity questionnaire for local government authorities, to streamline the planning process and reduce the burden on the smaller shires and councils.



## Online resources

A key focus for DEOPE in 2014/15 has been to provide advice and assistance to public authorities via online resources. A greater emphasis has been given to the equal opportunity in public employment section on the Commission's website by placing it under 'Top content' on the homepage. Included has been an update and expansion of the services and resources available on the website.

The Commission's website now provides information on the following key areas as a means of ensuring public authorities have access to advice and support to assist them in building a diverse workforce:

- Equal opportunity in public employment
  - EEO reporting
  - women in senior leadership
- Toolkit
  - workforce planning model
- Workforce data
  - HRMOIR
  - quarterly reports
- EEO for local government.

## Women in leadership

Extensive research has been conducted in both the public and private sector to identify the barriers that exist to the progression of women into senior management roles. This research has helped shape the widely held view, that to assist in increasing the proportion of women in leadership positions, the development and implementation of practical strategies and initiatives is now what is required.

In March 2014, the DEOPE partnered with the Department of Local Government and Communities and the Equal Opportunity Commission to present the a International Women's Day event for public and private sector leaders.

The theme was 'Standing together for change', and promoted a collective approach to progressing gender equality in Western Australia by encouraging the full participation of women in society, business, government and the community.

The Minister for Women's Interests led a discussion around how women can be encouraged to consider pathways for future leadership roles, and how the private and public sector can help women achieve greater representation in management positions and in those careers which traditionally have not attracted women.

Following the success of this event, and the recognition of International Women's Day 2015, the DEOPE released a number of new resources to assist public sector agencies to increase the representation of women in senior leadership.

The resources included:

- an overview of research undertaken in the WA public sector to identify factors that enable and challenge women's mobility in the public sector
- information about practical strategies and actions to improve the representation of women in senior leadership roles
- a comprehensive list of relevant website resources and research.

The resources are available on the Commission's website and provide a key reference point for chief executives seeking to increase the representation of senior women in their organisations.

## **Aboriginal employment strategy governance group**

Following the release of the DEOPE's report in 2014 titled *An evaluation of Aboriginal employment practices - a report on key performance factors to support Aboriginal employment outcomes*, DEOPE continued to work with the Commission's Aboriginal Employment Strategy Governance Group to focus on long term sustainable opportunities and career pathways for Aboriginal people across the public sector. The DEOPE is pleased to be part of the work of the group in overseeing the development of a new employment strategy to replace the current one that expires at the end of 2015.

## **Preventing workplace bullying**

The DEOPE continued to participate as a member of Worksafe's Senior Officers' Group on workplace bullying and associated issues. The group comprises a number of agencies with sector-wide responsibilities for preventing and managing workplace bullying. The DEOPE has highlighted to the group the sector wide legislation and policies which promote and underpin positive workplace relationships, including the Commission's programs and resources which assist public sector bodies in building their capacity to prevent and effectively manage workplace bullying.

## Future activities

The DEOPE has planned a number of activities for 2014/15, including:

- continue to provide public authorities with advice and assistance to develop EEO Management Plans, and integrated EEO and workforce plans, that strive to increase the representation of diversity groups in public employment
- follow up with those public authorities who submitted new EEO Management Plans in 2015 to work collaboratively on progressing key strategies and continuing the focus on delivering outcomes for diversity groups
- build on the enhanced online resources and evaluation tools, and work collaboratively with public authorities to identify and share best practice to showcase innovation and improvements in diversity outcomes
- continue the focus on the collection of EEO data in public authorities to improve the robustness and accuracy of statistics on the representation of diversity groups in public employment
- progress actions, if any, that flow from Government's consideration of the review of organisational structures under the EO Act
- present information to smaller authorities where requested, and prepare information for public authorities to use in their own awareness raising on the value and business outcomes that can be achieved through greater diversity in employment.

