

Preface

Making the Link 15

Making the Link: Affirmative Action and Employment Relations 15 brings together papers from the 2003 *Women, Management and Employment Relations* Conference and some additional papers as appendices.

Chapter One is presented by Dominique Beck and Ed Davis. It explores the impact of recent economic and political developments on pursuit of greater equity in Australian workplaces. It suggests that the pace of progress is slow and more attention is required from political and corporate leaders.

Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Pru Goward, explores in Chapter Two the 'collision' between work and life that many women and men are experiencing. She looks at a range of measures which might diminish the adverse consequences; among them the proposal for national paid maternity leave. ACTU President, Sharan Burrow, also examines the pressures on working women. In Chapter Three she indicates that employers must be encouraged to provide greater flexibility and choice at work.

Juliet Bourke is Foundation Chair of the EEO Network of Australia. She presents, in Chapter Four, the results of a survey into EEO practices in Australia. Key findings include a failure to translate corporate strategies into practice and a lack of managerial accountability for EEO outcomes. More attention is required to the implementation and monitoring phases in EEO plans.

Professor Robin Kramar investigates the extent of diversity management in Australia in Chapter Five. She concludes that diversity management often represents a relabelling of EEO initiatives. Few organisations seek out and welcome diversity in their ranks. Chief Executive of the Australian Industry Group, Heather Ridout, concludes the section on women and work. In Chapter Six, she gives some personal insights into the pressures on working women. She has committed her organisation to support strategies which tackle the obstacles facing women at work and to assist them to obtain greater balance in their lives.

The next section looks at women in leadership. Sue Collins is a Station Officer in the New South Wales Fire Brigades. She provides, in Chapter Seven, some fascinating insights into her role and in particular the experience of working in an environment stereotyped as male. In Chapter Eight Amanda Henson, a petroleum geologist, describes her job which has included many stints on oil rigs. As she indicates, these have commonly been all-male preserves but she has been part of a wave of change at the margin of the oil industry. Avril Henry contends in Chapter Nine that women must learn to nurture themselves if they are to thrive under the array of pressures they face. Self leadership is critical.

The final group of chapters explore workplace bullying and strategies to prevent and eliminate it. Kate Jenkins, a Partner at Freehills, examines in Chapter Ten the approaches taken by Australian states and Territories. She notes that bullying is rarely defined in legislation; instead it is covered in codes, guidelines and reports. There is considerable evidence that bullying is damaging to individuals and to organisational performance. The onus is on employers to develop preventative strategies, monitor their effectiveness and respond. Andrew Heys, from MGSM, follows in Chapter Eleven. He presents a framework to improve understanding of the nature of bullying, its expression and approaches to deter it. In Chapter Twelve Jim Porteous comments briefly on policy and experience in Australian Defence.

There are four appendices. These explore respectively the tension between work and family responsibilities; recent experience in EEO in the UK; the implications for EEO following significant demographic change and a HREOC summary of its report into sexual harassment in Australia.

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Ed Davis and Valerie Pratt
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