

# FIRST STEPS

## Business reactions to implementing the Affirmative Action Act

A report to the Affirmative Action Agency  
September, 1992

Valerie Braithwaite

Research School of Social Sciences

Australian National University

# CONTENTS

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE: Introduction</b>	<b>2</b>
Rates of implementation .....	2
Research goals .....	3
Key variables .....	3
Plan of report .....	5
<b>CHAPTER TWO: Methodology</b>	<b>6</b>
The sample of EEO contact persons .....	6
Time frame for interviews .....	8
Implementation outcomes and structural characteristics .....	8
Sources of bias in the sample .....	9
<b>CHAPTER THREE: Implementation within the random sample</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: General beliefs and attitudes</b>	<b>13</b>
The informational base .....	13
Are these attitudes related to the implementation of the legislation in the workplace? .....	20
Summary .....	23
<b>CHAPTER FIVE: Specific beliefs and attitudes</b>	<b>24</b>
The eight steps .....	24
Are views on the eight steps related to implementation? .....	27
EEO initiatives .....	29
Are views on the initiatives related to implementation? .....	34
Benefits .....	35
<b>CHAPTER SIX: Priorities</b>	<b>38</b>
The priority for management .....	38
The priority for the EEO contact person .....	41
The priority for female employees .....	43
The priority for trade unions .....	47
Summary .....	47
<b>CHAPTER SEVEN: Sources of support</b>	<b>48</b>
Support from management .....	48
Support from employees and women .....	51
Support from trade unions .....	54
Support from outside .....	55
Summary .....	56

CONTENTS, cont.

<b>CHAPTER EIGHT:</b>	<b>Relations with the Affirmative Action Agency</b>	<b>58</b>
	Perceptions of the Affirmative Action Agency .....	58
	Perceptions of government and the community .....	63
	Improving EEO programs .....	66
	Summary .....	73
<b>CHAPTER NINE:</b>	<b>Dimensions of compliance</b>	<b>74</b>
	Procedural compliance: The number of steps implemented.....	74
	Substantive compliance: Our four star rating system.....	75
	What are the basic dimensions along which organizations differ? .....	76
	Paths to procedural compliance.....	81
	Paths to substantive compliance .....	82
	Summary.....	84
<b>CHAPTER TEN:</b>	<b>CONCLUSION</b>	<b>85</b>
	The business community's views on the legislation.....	85
	The value of the public report.....	88
	Information as the basis for change .....	91
	Social networks as the basis for change .....	94
	Sanctions.....	96
	Summary.....	98
<b>APPENDICES</b>		<b>99</b>
<b>REFERENCES</b>		<b>116</b>

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Interviews were conducted with 153 EEO contact persons from three geographical regions: Brisbane - Gold Coast, Sydney - Newcastle, Melbourne - Geelong. The sample is primarily random, but includes six organizations selected because they were reputed to be leaders in implementing the affirmative action legislation in Australia. The remaining contacts were obtained through a stratified random sample of business units taken from the Affirmative Action Agency data base for 1989-90.
- The extent to which companies had implemented the affirmative action legislation was indexed in two ways from their responses on their public reports for 1990-91. The first measure, called procedural compliance, reflected the degree to which the business unit had implemented the steps of the affirmative action legislation. Scores ranged from 10 to 20 with a mean score of 17. Scores below 15 were recorded for 12% of the random sample and scores of 19 or 20 for 17%.
- The second measure, called substantive compliance, reflected the degree to which the reporting unit showed an understanding of and commitment to the implementation of programs that would remove sex discrimination and improve employment opportunities for women in the workplace. Business units were assigned to one of four groups: 16% fell into category 1, that is, they were doing the minimum without demonstrating commitment to EEO; 43% belonged to category 2, meaning they were making some effort to do the right thing without changing workplace practice in a significant way; 30% belonged to category 3, they were meeting requirements to a high level and recognised a competitive advantage in some aspects of EEO practice; and 11% belonged to category 4, in that they were meeting the requirements of the legislation and were introducing initiatives to improve women's position in the workforce.
- In general, the business community saw compliance with the affirmative action legislation as part of being a good corporate citizen. They regarded the legislation as reasonable in that it was not particularly intrusive, it was effective in raising awareness and making employment practices fairer, it was not difficult to implement, and offered favourable outcomes for business.

- Overall tolerance was reflected in six of the eight steps of the legislation being seen as desirable and practicable and 14 of 16 EEO initiatives being considered desirable.
- At the same time, the sample was divided on whether women were actually discriminated against in the workplace. The sample was also divided on whether women should be singled out for special consideration in the workplace.
- The priority assigned to EEO programs tended to be low. Usually one person had responsibility and devoted less than 10% of his or her time to the program. In approximately 70% of reporting units, Occupational Health and Safety attracted more attention than EEO. By the same token, most claimed that EEO had been integrated into other programs in the business unit.
- Most EEO officers expressed commitment to the EEO program, but the majority had not set specific goals for it nor did they believe they were likely to bring about significant improvements in the program in the next 12 months.
- In the majority of business units, female employees were not seen to be particularly interested in EEO nor were unions reported to be active on EEO issues.
- EEO officers received little support within their organizations from either female or male employees, union representatives or senior management. Senior management was seen to be less sympathetic to the legislation and disbelieving of the need for the legislation. At the same time, opposition was not strong. EEO was simply not an issue of interest in the workplace.
- The majority of EEO contact persons did not discuss EEO issues with people outside the organization. Just under half had no links with other EEO officers on an informal basis and just under three-quarters had no formal links.
- The Affirmative Action Agency was positively regarded by the business community. Where doubts were expressed, they focused on the issue of authority, business expertise and its capacity to generate new ideas that can be picked up by the business community.

- Only a minority of companies responded negatively to the Affirmative Action Agency adopting a more active role in the areas of feedback to companies and consultation. Many companies welcomed the prospect of the Agency observing their EEO program in action and offering advice.
- Business units were generally hesitant about involving employees in EEO deliberations. This is likely to reflect lack of confidence in the program as well as concern about giving the program greater priority and accountability than is desired.
- Procedural compliance and substantive compliance were related to each other. Yet they were shown to have different correlates. Procedural compliance was higher in business units (a) where the EEO contact person was ideologically committed to the program and had close links with the Affirmative Action Agency, (b) where the EEO contact persons saw the legislation as reasonable and the basic steps as desirable and practicable, (c) where EEO contacts saw themselves and government as having a social bargain, and (d) where trade unions were active on EEO issues.
- Substantive compliance was more likely in companies (a) where the EEO contact person was ideologically committed to the program and had links with the Agency and (b) where there was strong support from the bottom up for the EEO program. In the latter context, EEO officers were working with female employees and had connections outside the organization, but not necessarily with the Affirmative Action Agency. Thus, both a supportive social network and a strong information base play a role in effective implementation of the affirmative action legislation.
- Policy recommendations based on this report include:
  - \* Increasing the priority of EEO programs through increasing the visibility of the Affirmative Action Agency and promoting dialogue within industry and between industry and government.
  - \* Refocusing educational campaigns so that they are targeted to particular industries and particular workplace issues. Issues need to be concretized in case study format rather than being discussed in the abstract.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Since the Affirmative Action Act came into operation in 1986 to cover higher education institutions and private sector employers with more than 100 employees, compliance with the legislation in terms of submitting an annual report to the Affirmative Action Agency has been consistently high, ranging from 96% to 99%. At the same time, concern has been expressed about actual practice and how adequately Australian business and tertiary education institutions are dealing with the issue of sex discrimination in the workplace.

The goals of the legislation are twofold - to remove sex discrimination from the workplace and promote equal employment opportunity for women. To guide companies toward the realisation of these goals, the Affirmative Action Act requires the setting up of affirmative action programs by employers in the private sector and in higher education institutions. The program must incorporate the following eight steps: (1) issuing an Equal Employment Opportunity policy statement to all employees, (2) assigning responsibility to a senior officer, (3) consulting with trade unions, (4) consulting with employees, particularly women, (5) the collection of statistics to observe the gender by job classification breakdown, (6) a review of personnel policies and practices, (7) the setting of forward estimates and objectives, and (8) the monitoring and evaluation of the program.

As such, this legislation directs companies and higher education institutions toward addressing structure and processes, not outcomes (Donabedian, 1966). Meeting the eight steps involves firstly the setting up of appropriate structures and policy within the company, that is, assigning a senior officer to be responsible for the program, having data on the gender breakdown for each job classification and developing an EEO policy statement. Once in place, processes of regular self-review are called for. Reviews focus on personnel policies and practices and the setting of forward objectives for reducing job segregation. Consultation with employees and program evaluation are essential aspects of the review process. The closest to an outcome specification in the legislation is the setting of forward estimates and objectives, but even here the requirement falls seriously short of outcome status in a regulatory sense. The objectives are not targets to which the company is legally committed, the objectives are set by the company without outside guidance, and ultimately evaluation of goal attainment is carried out by the company itself. The Affirmative Action Agency may express concern about a company's failure to meet objectives, but it cannot set outcome standards with which

- \* Providing feedback to companies to enhance the perceived integrity of the reporting system and to provide relevant information and assistance.
- \* Cooperating with industry to set up model EEO programs on a regional basis.
- \* Involving companies, trade unions and consultancy firms with useful experiences in implementing EEO in educational endeavours. Many companies need to talk with people who have had experience in putting the affirmative action legislation into practice.
- \* Setting up and supporting existing information networks so that EEO contact persons have an appropriate reference point for evaluating their programs and their own performance.
- \* Building on the regulatory pyramid to maximise the effective use of enforced self-regulatory strategies.



companies are required to comply. By setting their own forward estimates, companies must address the issue of what is a desirable male to female ratio at each level of the organization and develop a set of intermediate goals to achieve this level. As such, each company is expected to be involved in a process of self-analysis, not simply meeting an outcome standard.

A decade of research has demonstrated that the factors explaining women's workforce participation are multiple and complex, and that changes in workplace practices represent but one part of the social changes required if women's work roles are to diversify (Baxter & Gibson, 1990; Burton, 1991; Poiner & Wills, 1991). Nevertheless, changing outcomes is the *raison d'etre* for the affirmative action legislation. The logic is that if the structures and procedures are in place to enable regular review and subsequently change of practices which are discriminatory, one crucial nail will be put in the coffin of a workforce segregated by gender. While the nail is necessary for change to occur, it may not be sufficient in itself to bring about visible changes in job classification by gender profiles, particularly given the short time that has elapsed since the legislation was introduced. Evaluation of the programs and the legislation must rely, therefore, on the progress that industry and the Affirmative Action Agency have made in setting up the self-review processes on which hopes for increased diversity in women's labour force participation are based.

### **Rates of implementation**

The progress of companies in implementing the eight steps required by the legislation is monitored through the annual affirmative action reports. While the reporting procedure has been criticized because it presents business with almost endless opportunities for self-enhancement, if not fabrication of their own performance, the data collected over the first two years in which all companies covered by the Act were required to report (1989-90 and 1990-91) produced an interesting pattern of results. Ten questions taken directly from the report to represent compliance with the eight steps are given in Appendix I along with rates of implementation over the two reporting periods. First, a substantial proportion of companies were willing to acknowledge failure to implement the eight steps, and second, the uneven pattern of implementation suggested that some steps were more acceptable to industry than others. In particular, consultation, the setting of forward estimates and evaluation are requirements which are receiving relatively less attention in the business community.

The reporting requirement came into effect over a three year period, with band 1 employers being required to report in 1987, band 2 employers in 1988 and band 3 in

1989. A band 1 classification is given to employers with 1000 employees or more, band 2 to those with between 500 and 999 employees, and band 3 to those with 100 to 499 employees. The differences in rates of implementation for the eight steps were even more intriguing when band was taken into account. In 1989, band 1 companies were lodging their third report, band 2 companies their second, and band 3 companies their first. Since the Agency advocated the gradual implementation of the steps, one might have expected lower compliance on later steps because small companies had not had sufficient time to completely set up their EEO program. Levels of compliance were indeed lower in smaller companies, but the poorly implemented steps were the same irrespective of band (see Appendix II). Consultation, setting forward estimates and evaluation appear to be relatively unpopular within the business community.

### Research goals

The purpose of this research is to identify the factors that might explain the varying levels of commitment that organizations are showing to the implementation of the affirmative action legislation. A stratified random sample of business units reporting to the Affirmative Action Agency was selected and interviews were conducted with their nominated EEO contact person. The population from which the sample was drawn was restricted geographically to Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne and surrounding regions. The number of interviews conducted was 153.

The study was restricted to private industry, since higher education institutions were regarded as being distinctive in their goals, their funding base, and in the way in which their EEO programs operated (Wieneke & Durham, 1991,1992). Having a full-time EEO officer is common practice in tertiary institutions, but rare in Australian industry.

### Key variables

The types of variables considered particularly relevant to understanding the business community's actions in response to the affirmative action legislation were:

- (a) the general beliefs and attitudes that EEO contact persons and their companies held about sex discrimination in the workplace and the affirmative action legislation
- (b) the more specific attitudes they held toward implementing the eight steps and embarking on specific EEO initiatives
- (c) the priority assigned to the implementation of their EEO program within companies

(d) the support which EEO contact persons have to implement the affirmative action legislation

(e) the business community's perceptions of the Affirmative Action Agency and of community norms, and their views on how EEO programs can be made to work more effectively

In addition, five organizational characteristics were singled out as important determinants of implementation of the eight steps: (a) the size of the organization, (b) the percentage of women in its workforce, (c) the communication practices operating within the workplace, (d) the adoption of innovative management techniques and (e) employee benefit provisions. Both company size and the percent of women in its workforce were considered important determinants of the nature and extent of the resources likely to be devoted to an EEO program. The remaining variables emerged as important predictors of implementation in a secondary analysis of the Australian Workplace Industrial Relations Survey (Braithwaite, 1992; Callus, Morehead, Cully & Buchanan, 1991).

Industry type was not considered to be important in its own right at the level of implementation of the steps. Previous work with the Australian Workplace Industrial Relations Survey suggested that industry type did not contribute to explaining variation in the overall level of implementation, once the above variables were taken into account. Furthermore, overall levels of implementation of the eight steps were similar across industry groups for the 1989-90 reporting period and the 1990-91 reporting period (see Appendix III).

To point to similarity at the general level of implementation is not to deny the enormous differences which exist between industry groups in the ease with which they can implement specific EEO initiatives such as job sharing, flexible working hours and so on. The focus of the present research, however, is not to understand the implementation of specific programs, but rather the implementation of any which seek to reduce the effects of sex discrimination. Consequently, this study will sample across industry types and does not attempt to explain differences in implementation by industry type.

## **Plan of report**

The report is divided into ten chapters. Next the methodology of the study is outlined, followed by a discussion of the implementation of the eight steps in the reporting units sampled. The following five chapters focus on the five variable groups delineated above. Each chapter describes the responses of the random sample, and then examines the differences which emerged among subgroups of the population, defined by the number of employees in the reporting unit and the percent of employees who were women. The relationship of the predictive variables to the level of implementation of the EEO program is also examined. In the ninth chapter, the findings are integrated and linked with other organizational characteristics to give a profile of companies where the legislation is being implemented effectively and those where it is not. The tenth and final chapter discusses the relevance of these findings for policy.

## CHAPTER 2

### METHODOLOGY

The primary data base used for the selection of the sample was the 1989-90 public reports lodged with the Affirmative Action Agency for business units in the metropolitan areas surrounding Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne. The unit of analysis was reporting units, not companies nor workplaces. A reporting unit may represent a division of a company, a subsidiary, a company with one or several workplaces, or a conglomerate of companies. The Affirmative Action Agency does not specify how businesses should divide themselves up into reporting units. Whether the responsibility for reporting is assumed by a parent company or head office or whether it is delegated to divisions or subsidiaries is left to the discretion of the businesses concerned.

No attempt is made in this report to differentiate the type of reporting units involved in the study. The unit of analysis is always the reporting unit, and the terms business unit, firms, companies and organizations will be used interchangeably with this term.

#### **The sample of EEO contact persons**

The sample was stratified according to size and the percentage of women in the workforce. Equal representation was given to business units of different sizes: (a) 100-499 (b) 500-999 and (c) 1000 or more, and equal representation was given to firms with different proportions of women in the workforce: (a) <30% (b) 30-49% and (c) 50% or more. When considered conjointly, business units could be grouped into one of 9 categories. Business units were selected randomly from each category. Where possible, equal representation was given to each geographical region.

Associated with each public report lodged with the Affirmative Action Agency was the name and address of a contact person within each business unit. Letters were written to the contact persons explaining the purpose and importance of the study, identifying the sponsors, signalling a phone call from the researcher to arrange an interview in the near future, and ensuring anonymity for business units and for those interviewed. Where companies had gone bankrupt, a replacement business unit was randomly selected from the same stratum. In cases where the randomly selected business unit had been taken over or was in receivership, the EEO contact person from the controlling business unit

was approached. Of the 159 business units approached<sup>1</sup>, 142 agreed to participate (89%). The full length interview was completed by 95% of participants, while 5% completed a shortened version. The participation rates by size of the reporting unit and percent of women in the workforce appear in Table 1.

**Table 1: Percent of reporting units sampled with low (<30%), medium (30-49%) and high (>50%) representation of women in small (<500), medium (500-999) and large (>1000) workforces**

Number of wage & salary workers	Percentage of women			Row %
	low	medium	high	
low	12.7	9.9	14.1	37.3
medium	9.9	9.2	12.0	31.0
high	12.0	11.3	9.2	31.7
Column %	34.5	30.3	35.2	100.0

In addition, the EEO contact persons from 6 organizations which were regarded as leaders in the field of equal employment opportunity for women were interviewed for this study. This group was regarded as an elite sample, showing what was possible within the Australian business community. The sample is used for comparative purposes throughout the report. A further 5 interviews were conducted with people who had been EEO contact persons, but who had recently left this position and no longer had responsibility for EEO. Univariate descriptive statistics presented in this report are based on the random sample. When considering the interrelationships among variables, however, the random and non-random samples have been combined.

In the majority of cases, the person interviewed was the EEO contact person or a successor (91%). In the remaining cases, a more junior person in the business unit was nominated as the person most likely to be able to assist in the study. In all but one of these cases, interviewees identified themselves as having responsibility for some aspect of the EEO program. Discussions were held with persons who saw themselves as having primary responsibility for the operation of the EEO program in 86% of business units. Sometimes a more senior manager was regarded as having ultimate responsibility, although that person was not involved in running the program on a daily

<sup>1</sup> 162 reporting units were sampled initially. Over the course of the study, 3 of these companies were identified as being no longer in existence. It was too late at this stage to draw replacements and initiate contact with the new companies, leaving 159 reporting units in our sample.

basis. In very large companies with many workplaces, the person interviewed was just as likely to nominate more junior employees who had responsibility for implementation "at the coal face". One can say, however, that in all cases, the person interviewed played a significant role in compiling the report and monitoring the implementation of the EEO program. In 8 percent of business units, top management was interviewed, in 50 percent of cases the contact person reported to managing directors, in 8 percent to human resource managers, and in 34 percent to other managers.

The EEO contacts interviewed were aged between 21 and 68 years (mean = 41 years). Men and women were almost equally represented, the breakdown being 51% and 49% respectively. The majority had had responsibility for the EEO program for 3 to 4 years (51%). Twenty percent had had responsibility for 12 months or less. When asked if they planned to continue as the EEO contact person, 87% replied yes, and a further 4% said yes with reduced involvement.

### **Time frame for interviews**

Interviews were conducted over a seven month period from December, 1991 to June, 1992. The expectation was that all interviews would be completed by April 30, the end of the 1991-92 reporting period. Ninety-four percent were completed by March. Appointments could not be arranged with nine of the 153 companies, however, until May-June. Initial telephone contact to arrange an appointment was made by the researcher in 90% of cases. A third of the interviews were conducted by the researcher, and the remainder by 3 male and 4 female interviewers. Seven participants preferred to complete the questionnaire in their own time, returning it by mail to the researcher.

### **Implementation outcomes and structural characteristics**

Apart from the data collected through interviewing EEO contact persons, information was obtained about the business units from the 1990-91 public reports. First, the public reports provided information on band membership, number of employees and the percent of women employed in the business unit.

Second, a quantitative index of level of implementation of the eight steps was derived from the public reports. The development of this index has been described elsewhere (Braithwaite, 1991) and approximates the number of steps undertaken by the reporting unit. The ten questions in Appendix I correspond to the requirements of seven of the eight steps. Step 5, the collection of statistics showing a breakdown of jobs by gender, is the step not represented by the questions in Appendix I and is not represented in the

quantitative index. The reporting unit is assigned a 2 for a "yes" response to each question in Appendix I and 1 for a "no" response. Partial implementation of the three consultation questions earn a score of 1.5 in each case. This index will be referred to subsequently as procedural compliance.

Third, a qualitative index of performance based on the public reports was developed for this study. Two independent judges, one male and one female, were asked to rate each report on a four point scale. The judges were aged 21 and 22 and had a university education. One was majoring in economics and law, the other had majored in history. The judges were naive in the sense that they did not have experience with the legislation in either the business or government spheres. They were required to read the legislation and apply a set of guidelines (see Appendix IV) in the classification of each report. This qualitative index will be called substantive compliance.

The agreement rate on the independent ratings was 69%. In cases of disagreement, the judges discussed the reasons for their decision and reached consensus where possible. After consultation, the agreement rate was 98%. When agreement could not be reached, the mean rating was taken. The majority of disagreements (21) involved the distinction between categories 2 and 3. Categories 3 and 4 posed difficulties in 15 cases, and categories 1 and 2 in 13 cases. For only 2 reporting units were there differences involving non-sequential categories. Independent ratings of 3 and 1 were given to two companies. In both cases, consensus was reached after discussion.

### **Sources of bias in the sample**

Information from the public reports will be related to data collected in the interview in the following sections of the report. An important use for these data at this point, however, is to identify the sources of bias in the sample. Of the 159 persons approached in this study, 17 refused to participate. Since nearly all were approached by the researcher by phone, qualitative data were obtained on reasons for non-participation. Some did not have time, some had participated in another study of EEO and felt that they had already contributed as much as they could, while others were new to the job and not prepared to comment on the legislation. During the phone call, some openly expressed hostility about the legislation:

"We do what we have to do only once a year. It is not high on our agenda. It is an unnecessary evil."

and some mystification:

"I don't think we have any policy or direction on EEO".

Others were surprisingly ill-informed:



“It’s irrelevant to us. We are in the construction industry and most employees are men. If I have any opinion it’s that I resent government interference.”

When the reporting units that refused to participate were compared with those who did participate, the following differences were observed on structural characteristics. Band 1 companies constituted 40% of participants and 31% of refusals. Band 3 companies, on the other hand, constituted 44% of refusals and 39% of participants. From Table 2, refusals tended to come from smaller companies, with fewer female employees and with less success in implementation.

**Table 2: Mean scores on workforce size, female participation and procedural and substantive compliance for randomly selected reporting units that participated in the study and those that refused.**

Indicator	Participating units	Refusals
No. wage & salary workers	1986 (5682)	1601 (3429)
Percent women	41 (22.98)	38 (27.20)
Procedural compliance	17.35 (1.87)	16.79 (1.96)
Substantive compliance	2.36 (.88)	1.81 (.66)

Only one of these differences proved to be statistically significant. On the substantive index of implementation, business units that refused to participate performed more poorly than business units that participated. Of the participating companies, 41% obtained three or four stars on our rating system, compared with 12% of the companies that refused to participate. Thus, the sample appears to be somewhat biased toward companies that are positively disposed toward the legislation. The bias, however, is small and is unlikely to have serious consequences for interpreting the findings of this report.

## CHAPTER 3

### IMPLEMENTATION WITHIN THE RANDOM SAMPLE

The percent of randomly selected business units that reported implementation of each of the eight steps of the legislation is given in Appendix V. The rates are higher than those presented in Appendix I for the reporting population, but they show a similar pattern of implementation to that found in 1989-90 and 1990-91. When an overall implementation level (procedural compliance) for 1990-91 was calculated for the companies in the random sample the mean was 17.08. Scores ranged from 10 to 20 (standard deviation = 2.19). The population mean for the 1990-91 reporting period was lower, 16.74, but the difference was not statistically significant. The 1990-91 procedural compliance score for the randomly selected companies did not differ statistically from their 1989-90 mean of 16.92 (standard deviation = 2.06).

When the sampled public reports were assessed by two independent judges in terms of commitment to and understanding of EEO, the variability in their quality could be indexed in an alternative way. Of the random sample, 16% scored at level 1, meaning that the report indicated no commitment to EEO and no effort to engage in any of the processes designed to give self-insight into discriminatory workplace practices. Level 2 reporting units comprised the bulk of the sample, 43%. These companies were making some effort to do the right thing, yet were not initiating any important changes to improve women's position in the workforce. Level 3 companies differed from level 2 companies in that they were meeting the requirements to a reasonably high level and indicated a commitment to EEO as a way of gaining a competitive edge. The percent of reporting units falling into this category was 30%. Level 4 companies were defined as those that were not only meeting the requirements of the legislation, but were implementing initiatives which tackled the causes of women's segregation in the workforce. Level 4 companies were innovators with 11% identified as belonging to this category.

The procedural and substantive indicators of implementation for 1990-91 were substantially correlated ( $r = .60, p < .01$ ). Substantive compliance was related to the size of the reporting unit ( $r = .19, p < .05$ ), with larger companies performing better, but this relationship was not significant when using the procedural index ( $r = .12, ns$ ). This suggests that differences that were expected with the staggered introduction of the reporting system according to organization size were disappearing by early 1991. The relationship between the procedural index and size for the 1989-90 reporting period had

been significant ( $r = .21, p < .05$ ). Implementation was not related to the percentage of women in the workforce ( $r = -.05$  with substantive compliance and  $r = -.15$  with procedural compliance).

Finally, the organizations reputed to be leaders in the field of equal employment opportunity initiatives were compared with the random sample of participants on implementation. The significant findings on a range of key variables are presented in detail in Appendix VII. The elite group had higher scores on both the procedural and substantive indicators of implementation. Companies in the elite sample also tended to have larger workforces and all were classified as Band 1 companies by the Affirmative Action Agency. The data from the elite companies shall be used in this report as one indicator of what is possible in implementing the affirmative action legislation compared with what is being achieved by the majority of companies at the current time.

## CHAPTER 4

### GENERAL BELIEFS AND ATTITUDES

One classic approach to understanding changes in behaviour is based on the assumption that groups and individuals are more likely to adopt recommended practices if they believe that such practices are good and desirable. The transition from beliefs to actions rests on the premise that human beings value consistency. If they believe something, they are motivated to behave in a way which is consistent with this belief. In this section, eight types of beliefs and attitudes considered relevant to understanding implementation practices with regard to the Affirmative Action legislation are explored: (a) awareness of sex discrimination in the workforce, (b) perceptions of the reasonableness of the legislation, (c) beliefs about the legislation's fairness to men, (d) perceptions of the effectiveness of the legislation, (e) beliefs about the benefits to business of effective EEO programs, (f) self-perceptions of capacity to implement the legislation, (g) beliefs about being law-abiding, and (h) belief in a social contract with the government on the Affirmative Action legislation.

#### The informational base

A pilot study of 6 companies within the Australian Capital Territory revealed striking differences in the extent to which those responsible for EEO programs were prepared to concede that sex discrimination was a problem in the workforce. In the words of one interviewee:

"I understand women used to have it bad - before they had the vote - but now if women are good and suitable, they'll get appointed".

Another, more sympathetic to the need for EEO legislation, expressed his opinion in this way:

"Some years ago I asked about the company's EEO policy at a meeting. The manager replied 'The bird with the biggest tits gets the job'."

Thus, an appropriate starting place for this research was to measure whether or not EEO contact persons believed that women were disadvantaged in the workforce compared with men. Those being interviewed were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with each of four statements. They were also given the option of an "in-between" response. The persons interviewed were asked to express their own views first, and then were asked whether or not they thought senior management would agree or disagree with the

statement. This was not intended as a measure of senior management's attitude *per se*, but rather as a measure of the image senior management presented to the EEO contact person. The statements tapping awareness of discrimination and the percent agreeing with each statement appear in Table 3.

**Table 3: Percent of random sample agreeing with attitude and belief statements about the affirmative action legislation (N=142)**

Type of belief or attitude	% yes	
	Self	Perception of senior managers
<i>Awareness of sex discrimination</i>		
1 Women have just as good job opportunities as men do	40	53
2 Women have to be better at their jobs than men if they want to be promoted	46	22
3 Women are excluded from more jobs than men because of their sex	54	37
4 If a woman is good at her job she will get ahead just as quickly as a man would	57	74
<i>Intrusiveness of the legislation</i>		
1 The government has no right to tell business how to treat its employees	22	30
2 The affirmative action legislation is unnecessary interference by government	24	44
3 The government is creating problems for business with its affirmative action legislation	25	38
4 The legislation creates work for us that has no payoff	45	47
5 Useful things have been learnt through implementing the steps required by the legislation	58	48
6 What the affirmative action legislation requires of business is reasonable	66	58
<i>Fairness to men</i>		
1 The affirmative action legislation advantages women over men when they look for work or promotion	16	18
2 The affirmative action legislation is unfair toward men	23	32
3 Women should not be singled out for special consideration in the workforce	52	62
<i>Effectiveness of the legislation</i>		
1 The legislation is helping break down barriers that handicap women in the workplace	56	48
2 The affirmative action legislation is helping make employment practices fairer for everyone	67	60
3 The affirmative action legislation is important for setting standards for how men and women should be treated in the workforce	68	55
4 The legislation has raised awareness of the ways in which women are discriminated against in the workforce	83	75

(continued on next page)

Type of belief or attitude	% yes	
	Self	Perception of senior managers
<i>Favourable outcomes</i>		
1 The affirmative action legislation helps business make better use of their female workforce	49	36
2 Having an effective EEO program enhances business efficiency	57	49
3 Women's skills and capacities are not being fully utilised in the labour market	65	55
4 Removing the barriers facing women in the workforce should increase our pool of talent for future employment	84	82
5 By assisting women develop their potential, business can take advantage of an untapped human resource	87	82
<i>Difficulty in implementation</i>		
1 In the current situation we are struggling to keep our heads above water and cannot do much about EEO	21	23
2 It's difficult to know exactly what we are supposed to do to comply with the affirmative action legislation	30	33
3 We need more assistance and guidelines to know what is expected of us in implementing the affirmative action legislation	31	29
4 We would implement the affirmative action legislation more fully if we had the resources	36	38
5 We support EEO but have found implementation difficult	45	39
<i>Being law-abiding</i>		
1 Business should comply with the affirmative action legislation because it is the law	67	67
2 Business should do its best to implement the spirit of the affirmative action legislation rather than just satisfy basic requirements	92	74
<i>A social bargain</i>		
1 As long as government supports business, business should go along with the affirmative action legislation	43	43
2 If governments contribute to society's well-being, it is only right that we comply with their legislation	47	46
3 It is our duty as corporate citizens to implement the affirmative action legislation	80	77
4 Business should cooperate with government on affirmative action, so long as government cooperates with business	82	84

These responses show an almost even split among EEO contact persons in whether they personally believe women are discriminated against in the workforce. In general, senior management were perceived as being considerably less sympathetic to the idea that sex discrimination was a problem. Denial of discrimination was also clearly evident from the qualitative data. Only a small minority regarded discrimination as a problem in their own workplace. It was overwhelmingly regarded as a problem out there in other

the qualitative data. Only a small minority regarded discrimination as a problem in their own workplace. It was overwhelmingly regarded as a problem out there in other companies. The response is not surprising. Awareness of discrimination puts pressure on these executives to act to remedy the problem:

“They [senior management] only debate it when we are there to raise it. Otherwise they would not think about it - the same with other human resource issues - an ill-informed view on most aspects of human life.”

Awareness of discrimination may also have been detrimental to the career paths of some of those interviewed, particularly women and those in more junior managerial positions:

“EEOs who stay in EEO don't move up the ladder. In terms of a career, it's no good whatsoever.”

Another said:

“I was offered EEO full-time, but I said no. It would have been political suicide to take it on full-time.”

Where discrimination was seen to be a problem within their company, a degree of despondency was often also present:

“If the [Affirmative Action] Agency knew what went on here they would not be entirely happy. I don't know what I am going to write in the report this year.”

and fear of isolation and tar brushing:

“Solely EEO is such a continual fight, you get burnt out. If you have other responsibilities you at least get to agree with management on something. You get cautious about how you are labelled. They say 'here comes [X] again, on the bandwagon for women'.”

In spite of half expressing doubts about the seriousness of the problem, most of those interviewed regarded the legislation as making reasonable demands on business (see *intrusiveness* items in Table 3). Management was regarded as seeing the law as somewhat more intrusive than those interviewed, but complaints were in the minority. In general, the business community saw the legislation as being effective in raising awareness of discrimination, setting standards for workplace behaviour and making things fairer for everyone (see *effectiveness* items in Table 3). There was even considerable support for the idea that benefits would follow from women's increased participation in the workforce (see *favourable outcomes* items in Table 3). In the words of one senior manager:

“We want a skilled labour force. We are not doing it for the noble cause of affirmative action.”

And for another:

“We do it because we want the competitive edge... And we are protective and mindful of it.”

Nevertheless, consensus fell to the half-way mark, and below in some cases, at the suggestion that the demands of the legislation could directly contribute to the efficiency of industry. For some it didn't provide the help needed:

“The legislation doesn't help me do my job. I fill out the forms and hope I won't be queried. It's just more paperwork for business.”

for others it was superfluous:

“The legislation doesn't guide us. It's put in the bottom drawer. We've moved beyond the legislation.”

Two minority views, involving a quarter to a third of those interviewed, are worthy of comment. In both cases, they draw attention to the fact that there are pockets of misinformation and confusion in the business community. Some considered the legislation unfair to men (see under *fairness* in Table 3) and between 16 and 18 percent thought that it actually advantaged women over men. While this was a minority view, its base appears to be a more contentious issue: the extent to which women should be singled out for special consideration in the workforce. The attitude is captured by the following comment:

“We employ the best person for the job, that's all there is to it. To legislate to ensure this is happening is a joke. Now there is discrimination against men. You can't have EEO. Men don't get pregnant. Men have greater strength.”

In another interview, a more junior member argued strongly in front of her boss that women should be given special consideration:

“It's hard to get recognised for what you are capable of doing. Women need help to make up for all the discrimination in the past. There is a space to fill up, to equip women and overcome their conditioning - it doesn't just change like that.”

Her boss disagreed jokingly:

“The old ways were best - women stayed home to look after people - or men....The problem is the company will say I've got to do the right thing and shove a woman in a job.”

In the end, after a spirited and lengthy argument, she agreed:

“I don't think it's fair just to put a woman in a job because she is a woman...OK you should not single out women or men”.

This backdown was reminiscent of a male senior executive's perception of women aspiring to managerial status:



“Women don’t want to be seen to be standing out on the end of a pole by themselves.”

and of a young female executive’s view:

“The legislation tends to go overboard. Personally, I am a woman and I want to get ahead because of my attributes, not because of legislation.”

The opposing view was put succinctly by one female executive:

“To be given equality, they [women] may have to be singled out.”

and one male executive:

“[Women] should get special consideration. If not, the general thinking out there will suppress them. In an ideal society, it would not be necessary, but society is not ideal.”

The second minority response to the legislation claimed lack of know-how and lack of resources for the implementation of the Act. Given that the legislation, at a minimum, requires self-analysis and the removal of discriminatory practices, expense is unlikely to be a legitimate excuse for non-implementation initially<sup>2</sup>. The fact that the legislation requires companies to identify their problem areas and find their own solutions, however, means that human resources and ingenuity have to be focused on tailoring the legislation to the needs of individual companies in a meaningful and constructive way. Solutions are not handed to companies on a platter. They have to arrive at them for themselves. The majority of companies are clearly content with their efforts, but it is significant that a third of companies are not completely satisfied with their understanding of what can and should be done to comply with the legislation (see under *difficulty of implementation* in Table 3). At another point in the interview, contacts were asked how certain they felt that their EEO program met the expectations of the Agency. A significant 37% of EEO contacts claimed to be not at all certain or unsure. The chief executive officer of one smaller company said:

“I’m not too sure what the right thing is. We do it because it is legislation. We have been fortunate - we have found women very good for the job - they are right for it. But we need guidelines to live with and work with that don’t disadvantage anyone and recognise performance.”

A human resource manager of a small company responded in this way:

“Our problem is we are a 200 person industry. I don’t know the practical ways in which the industry can implement the legislation.

---

<sup>2</sup> The exception is that for some advanced companies that believed they had already eliminated negative practices, expansion of the EEO program involved considerable expense as they looked toward the provision of child care support.

We have limited budgets, we've been struggling during the two years of recession, we are small. We are NOT Nissan or Westpac. My impression is that for small business, as long as we put a report in, it doesn't matter".

In both these cases, industry specific discussion of EEO principles was needed through stronger industry networking facilitated by government or through feedback from government.

Companies may implement the legislation because they believe it is right or fair, or because they believe it is profitable and beneficial to themselves, or because it is the law and laws should be obeyed. The final series of statements tapped reasons for acceptance of the legislation which focused on being law-abiding and being a member of a corporate culture. EEO contacts were asked whether their compliance was driven by the law. Sixty-seven percent conceded this was the case. For the vast majority of the remainder, the thinking was clearly "we should be doing it anyway" because it was simply good human resources management. When questioned on whether companies should try to implement the spirit of the legislation, an overwhelming majority (92%) agreed without reservation:

"If you don't do it in a fair dinkum way, you'll employ people for the sake of employing them for jobs they shouldn't be in."

Yet 26% of those interviewed saw their senior management as being willing to settle for the basic requirements and no more. One senior executive described the situation prior to his arrival in this way:

"The organizational philosophy was to keep to the Act. To be seen to be doing it - no more. Just save the managing director from embarrassment and controversy."

And for another:

"They want us to do what is required by law - no more. They don't see the payback."

A second approach to understanding business' response to the legislation was in the context of their relationship with government in general. The notion of "contingent consent" has been offered as an explanation for when government obtains the cooperation of its citizens and when it does not (Levi, 1992). One proposition derived from this theory is that a bargain is struck between government and business and that the bargain will be honoured as long as each side meets its commitments to the other. Law violation will ensue when government is perceived to have reneged on its deal. In the context of affirmative action, companies may comply with the legislation, not

because they believe in it, but because it is part of a larger deal with government. If the business community goes along with government, government will look favourably on the business community. The distribution of responses in Table 3 under the *social bargain* section is surprisingly divergent. Companies clearly identify with the corporate citizen image and with the notion that they should withdraw their cooperation when government causes difficulties for them. In contrast, the two questions beginning with the phrases "if governments contribute to society's well-being" and "as long as government supports business" had lower endorsement rates. The discrepancy is thought to stem from the implication that the role of business is to dance to the tune of government. In the words of three female executives:

"Corporate culture does not respond well to being dictated to by government."

"We don't want government telling us what to do. We want a partnership."

"Management hates complying with laws."

The business community responded more positively to wording which explicitly allowed them to maintain control over the decision to comply: Business should cooperate with government so long as government cooperates with business.

Attitude scales were developed by summing responses to the items under each concept in Table 3. A score of 1 indicated disagreement, a score of 2 meant in-between, and a score of 3 was assigned to an agreement response. Details of the scaling procedure, alpha reliability coefficients, intercorrelations, scale means and range of scores for the remaining 7 scales are provided in Appendix VI. The one case where a scale was not developed was *being law-abiding*. These items were not sufficiently correlated to combine into one scale.

### **Are these attitudes related to the implementation of the legislation in the workplace?**

Scores on the attitude scales were correlated with organizational characteristics and with the implementation indices, procedural compliance and substantive compliance. The organizational characteristics considered important at this stage were size of workforce<sup>3</sup> and the percent of women in the workforce. Procedural compliance reflected the number of steps that had been undertaken in part or fully by the reporting unit. Substantive compliance represented our assessment of the public report on a four

---

<sup>3</sup> These data were grouped into 8 categories because of discontinuities in the distribution ( $\leq 199=1$ ; 200-399=2; 400-599=3; 600-799=4; 800-999=5; 1000-1999=6; 2000-2999=7;  $\geq 3000=8$ )

point scale in terms of the commitment it showed to the principles of EEO (see Appendix IV for criteria). The expectation was that the attitudes held by EEO contacts and their perceptions of the attitudes held by senior management would be linked with their firm's performance on the implementation indicators; more favourable attitudes being accompanied by better performance in implementing the legislation. The correlations presented in Table 4 show that this was the case for 11 of the 18 indicators. Furthermore, workforce size was associated with attitudes about the legitimacy of the legislation.

**Table 4: Pearson product moment correlation coefficients between the attitude scales and the structural and outcome variables**

Attitudes	Size	% Women	Procedural compliance	Substantive compliance
<i>EEO</i>				
Awareness	.06	.02	.08	.18*
Intrusiveness	-.34**	.01	-.33**	-.38**
Fairness	.32**	-.10	.15	.27**
Effectiveness	.14	-.07	.22**	.25**
Favourable outcomes	.27**	.05	.30**	.29**
Difficulty	.00	-.04	.03	.01
Law abiding 1	.02	-.02	.05	-.04
Law abiding 2	.12	-.01	.39**	.26**
Social bargain	.01	.01	.21*	.05
<i>Senior management</i>				
Awareness	-.06	-.11	-.05	-.08
Intrusiveness	-.29**	.08	-.21*	-.22**
Fairness	.21*	-.11	.09	.16
Effectiveness	.14	-.08	.21*	.19*
Favourable outcomes	.22*	-.03	.26**	.26**
Difficulty	.03	-.09	.05	.06
Law abiding 1	.03	.09	.00	.03
Law abiding 2	.12	-.01	.12	.04
Social bargain	.02	-.01	.25**	.09

\*\* significant at the .01 level

\* significant at the .05 level

Smaller companies were more likely to regard the affirmative action legislation as intrusive and unfair to men with few benefits to business. Higher performance on the implementation indices was associated with EEO contacts regarding the legislation as reasonable, as being effective in making employment practices fairer and as offering

real benefits to industry. Perceptions of senior management as being favourably disposed to the legislation were also linked with greater progress in implementation. When EEO contact persons saw themselves and senior management abiding by a social bargain with government, procedural compliance was likely to be high, but not necessarily substantive compliance. Three significant relationships involved EEO contact persons, but not senior management. Believing that companies should go along with the spirit of the legislation rather than satisfy basic requirements was related to both procedural and substantive compliance. The EEO contact person's awareness of discrimination and the perceived fairness of the legislation were related to substantive compliance, but not procedural compliance.

The attitudes of EEO contacts correlated highly with their perceptions of where their senior management stood on various issues (see Appendix VI showing the range from .66 to .89). In other words, more conservative EEO contact persons reported having more conservative senior management. Yet Table 3 clearly shows that overall, senior management projected a more conservative image than those with responsibility for EEO. When the attitudes of the EEO contacts were compared with their perceptions of senior management's attitudes, differences emerged on five dimensions (see Appendix VII). Senior management were seen to be less aware of sex discrimination, less aware of benefits to business through EEO, less convinced of the legislation's effectiveness and more concerned about the intrusiveness of the legislation and of its unfairness to men. Furthermore, senior management was perceived to be less interested in going along with the spirit of the legislation, rather than satisfying minimal requirements. These findings were reflected in the final message from one EEO contact:

"Government needs to get the message through to chief executives and the community that EEO is an issue."

When the opinions of the EEO contacts from the elite sample were compared with those from the random sample, differences emerged on awareness, intrusiveness, fairness, effectiveness, and favourable outcomes (see Appendix VIII). The elite group were more aware of sex discrimination, and more positive in their views about the benefits, fairness, reasonableness and effectiveness of the legislation. It was noteworthy, however, that their perceptions of senior management's attitude did not differ from the perceptions of EEO contacts in the random sample except on the basic dimension, awareness of discrimination. The elite sample saw senior management as being more aware of the problem, though not necessarily more favourably disposed to the legislation.

## Summary

The majority of EEO contact persons saw the legislation as reasonable and legitimate in that they believed that it was the government's responsibility to pass legislation opposing sex discrimination, and that this had been done in a way which was not harmful to business. The majority believed that they should comply with the spirit of the legislation, they did not find implementation difficult and they saw benefits. Most agreed that the legislation had raised awareness and that business could benefit from better utilizing women's skills.

At the same time, there was evidence of stumbling blocks to implementation. The stumbling blocks converged on that part of the legislation concerned with promoting equal employment opportunity for women. The first and most fundamental stumbling block is substantial resistance to acknowledging that sex discrimination is a problem. The second appears to be the assumption that fairness is achieved through treating the workforce as a homogeneous group. There was strong resistance to singling women out for special consideration and a minority were incensed by the way in which they believed the legislation advantaged women. Women were not the only target for anger:

"The only ones who don't get help these days are the poor white Anglo-Saxon males!"

Managing diversity through policies which cater to individual needs was generally not part of the discourse of the EEO officers. The process of not discriminating on physical characteristics took precedence over notions of exercising fairness through accommodating the different needs of different employees.

These data also showed that those with responsibility for implementation saw their senior management as being sceptical of the need for and purposes of the legislation. They were clearly getting the message that this legislation was not a high priority at the top of their organization. Larger business units also appeared to have a more favourable attitude to the legislation than smaller ones.

In terms of implementation, attitudes concerning the lack of intrusiveness, the usefulness, and the benefits of the legislation were very important, as was a belief in cooperating with government and endorsing the spirit of the legislation. The difference between substantive compliance and procedural compliance hinged on two types of attitudes. Awareness of the problem of sex discrimination and a belief that the legislation was not unfair to men were important for substantive compliance, but not for procedural compliance.

## CHAPTER 5

### SPECIFIC BELIEFS AND ATTITUDES

This section focuses on the more specific views that the business community have about the legislation and asks whether or not these views are linked with their levels of implementation of the eight steps and with the introduction of EEO initiatives. The eight steps required by the legislation will be examined first, followed by a review of the EEO initiatives which companies could be involved in to improve the status of women in the workplace. Finally, the question of perception of pay-offs is assessed - who benefits and how much.

#### The eight steps

EEO contact persons were asked to give their opinion on the desirability and practicability of implementing the eight steps. They responded on a "yes" or "no" basis, but were given the option of responding "to a limited extent" if they had concerns or reservations. Subsequently, they were asked to give their views on how they saw senior management reacting to the legislation. The findings are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5: Percent of random sample who regarded the eight steps as desirable and practicable and the percent who saw senior management regarding the eight steps as desirable and practicable†**

Steps	EEO (senior management)	
	Desirable	Practicable
1 Issuing a policy statement to all employees	92 (86)	89 (85)
2 Appointing a senior officer	94 (90)	85 (82)
3 Consulting with trade unions	52 (45)	39 (36)
4 Consulting with employees, particularly women	86 (77)	71 (67)
5 Analysing the employment profile on gender	78 (72)	71 (65)
6 Analysing & reviewing personnel policies & practices	93 (91)	85 (84)
7 Setting forward estimates & objectives	56 (49)	34 (28)
8 Monitoring & evaluating the program	79 (72)	65 (60)

† These percentages represent those who answered "yes" versus "no" or "to a limited extent".

The majority of EEO contact persons regarded all eight steps as desirable, although some were considerably more popular than others. Issuing a policy statement, appointing a senior officer and reviewing personnel policies and practices were endorsed by more than 80% of those interviewed, and senior management was seen to support these steps as well. Not only were these steps considered desirable, but also practicable.

In the range from 60 to 80% endorsement were the steps that involved consultation with employees, analysing the employment profile, and evaluating the program. The concern that was expressed most frequently focused on how to go about doing these things and what would be achieved. The problems that company's had with these steps can be illustrated by the following comments.

*On consultation with women:*

"It's difficult to effect. For 70% it's just not an issue. There are more important issues."

"I have put notices on boards... organized meetings. They don't come. I'm seen as too close to management. They don't give me the opportunity to show what I think or do... The women here work 9 to 5, get their pay cheques, and want to get back to their private lives."

"I hope that we sow the seed of what they are entitled to and they will become aware of what is possible. But they say 'what do we have to do this for, have I got to read this?' I say 'I need your help. The government says we have to do it'. They say 'aw come off it!'"

Less common, but interesting, was the following contrasting concern:

"We consult only when we have something to discuss. Otherwise you raise expectations and that is as much a wrong as anything else."

"Management doesn't like it much. It's the opening a can of worms response."

*On analysing the employment profile broken down by gender:*

EEO contacts raised the problems of time:

"A huge exercise for those who do it. Senior management are not aware of how big a job it is."

"We don't have the data. The match is not there between our organizational statistics and ACSO."

and some doubted its meaning:

"It takes a lot of time and it's not clear what you've got at the end of the day. You end up feeling quite a bit aggravated by the whole thing."



"The company changes with takeovers and therefore the profile changes and is useless as a guide to our EEO success"

"The statistics can be misleading. Newly acquired companies can help your figures. Still the company can interpret this, even if the Affirmative Action Agency can't."

*On evaluation:*

"The problem is defining what we are trying to achieve. What is the benchmark? Is it the ratio of men to women?"

"The time frame is too short. You need a five year strategy plan and evaluate then. Perhaps mini-evaluations along the way."

Least popular, and considered desirable by roughly half and practicable by just over a third, were the steps concerned with consultation with trade unions and the setting of forward estimates and objectives. Companies are clearly having difficulties in these areas. The issue of trade union involvement will be dealt with in more detail later. Suffice it to say at this stage that complaints about trade unions paled into insignificance against the discontent of the business community over step 7, setting forward estimates and objectives.

*On forward estimates:*

"Number 7 is leading towards a quota basis, and we would fight its implementation. We would prefer to see it dropped altogether as I cannot see how it may be done from year to year - speaking for ourselves."

"I pull a figure out of the air. It doesn't mean anything."

"I have some problems with this - I don't like it at all. It's positive discrimination. We are at pains to avoid quotas and targets. It leads to active discrimination and retaliation"

"You can't overturn the merit principle."

"It's impractical because you can't get passed the view that the person who deserves the job should get the job, the person who deserves the promotion gets the promotion."

"This has caused a lot of people a lot of problems. It's seen as quotas. They are not distinguishing objectives from forward estimates. Even so, we need to have a couple of years - we have to rely on attrition for change to occur."

and finally, a more conciliatory view:

"It's not a big problem as long as you are not kept to it. Keeps people thinking, forward planning. If you don't have goals and aims, what are we doing?"

### **Are views on the eight steps related to implementation?**

The next question to be answered is whether or not assessments of desirability and practicability were related to implementation. The desirability and practicability ratings (no=1, to a limited extent=1.5, yes=2) were correlated with the responses on the public reports for each of the steps in both 1989-90 and 1990-91 (see Appendix IX). Compliance on four steps - consulting with trade unions, setting forward estimates and objectives, evaluating the program, and circulating to all employees the company's EEO policy statement - was significantly linked to opinions about their desirability and practicability. The absence of significant relationships for consultation with women was most probably due to an inability to get things going rather than a reluctant attitude to trying. In the case of the review of personnel policies and practices, it may be that for most companies this step was completed during an earlier reporting period. As one executive said "Once it's done, it's done" and it was the best implemented step on the public reports, after the fundamentals of issuing a policy statement and assigning responsibility to a senior officer.

Counts of the total number of steps regarded as desirable and the number regarded as practicable were made and used for further analyses. The mean and standard deviation for each of these aggregated indices is given in Appendix X. The indices were correlated with organizational size, percent of women in the workforce and procedural and substantive compliance (see Table 6). Larger reporting units found more of the steps desirable and practicable. Of particular interest was the tendency for companies with a high proportion of female workers to find fault with the steps. The relationship was not strong, but its direction was opposite to that which might have been expected. At first this effect was thought to be attributable to more female employees in small companies. Statistically partialling out the influence of company size, however, made no impact on the direction of the relationship. The answer may lie in this quote from a woman managing an all female workplace:

"We are all women. The legislation is irrelevant to us. We'd like to know what they'd like to see happen in a company like this."

Companies with relatively high representations of women tended toward the view that they were doing all these things anyway:

"We were already doing it. It's a pain to fill out the forms. We're too busy - tell them to get lost."

And to clinch the argument by establishing their credibility:

“We’re not going to shoot the goose that lays the golden egg.”

The overall desirability and practicability indices were linked to implementation in both a procedural and substantive sense. If management and those responsible for EEO saw the steps as desirable and practicable, they were more likely to have done more and to have done it with recognition of the goals underlying the legislation.

**Table 6: Pearson product moment correlation coefficients between the number of steps regarded as desirable and practicable and the structural and outcome variables**

Steps	Size	% Women	Procedural compliance	Substantive compliance
<i>EEO</i>				
No. desirable steps	.21*	-.17*	.47**	.32**
No. practicable steps	.18*	-.16	.46**	.23**
<i>Senior management</i>				
No. desirable steps	.10	-.16	.33**	.18*
No. practicable steps	.13	-.15	.45**	.21*

\*\* significant at the .01 level

\* significant at the .05 level

As was the case with the general attitude measures, the EEO contact’s perception of their senior management was similar to their own: The more positive EEO contacts perceived their senior management as relatively more positive. The correlations between the EEO contacts’ views and their perceptions of the views of their senior management were .71 on desirability and .86 on practicability. Nevertheless, EEO contacts, as a group, had a higher regard for the eight steps on both desirability and practicability than they perceived senior management as having. Details of these differences are provided in Appendix VIII.

When comparisons were made with the elite sample, a difference emerged between the EEO contacts on the desirability dimension but not on practicability (see Appendix VII). EEO contacts from leading companies were more positively disposed to the eight steps in theory at least. The differences between the elite and random samples in their perceptions of management were not significant.

## EEO initiatives

In implementing the affirmative action legislation, the emphasis has been placed on the first legislative requirement, "to eliminate discrimination", and not on the second requirement, to introduce "measures... to promote equal opportunity for women in relation to employment matters" (Affirmative Action Act 1986). Changing the workplace to make it more user-friendly for women has not been addressed systematically by companies. Such actions were represented in category 4 in our classification of the public reports and it will be recalled that only 10% of the randomly sampled companies fell into this category.

In an earlier report based on the data from the public reports lodged with the Affirmative Action Agency in 1989-90 and 1990-91 (Braithwaite, 1991), user friendly initiatives were called accommodating actions because they represented changes in workforce practices which took account of the relatively heavy commitments that the majority of women have to managing family life and caregiving in the private sphere. More recently, such programs have been incorporated under the more neutral banner of "managing diversity". A list of such programs and initiatives appears in Table 7. In the 1989-90 reports, the Affirmative Action Agency used keywords to indicate the introduction of some of these activities into the EEO program. An analysis of these data showed that at that time 84% of reporting units had undertaken none. In 1990-91, the percentage of reporting units without any keywords was 76%. It may be the case that these initiatives take time to implement and insufficient time has passed to have the programs up and running. Alternatively, to use the words of one executive, no one may want to know. The dominant view among those interviewed was that women must learn to fit into a work structure which should not be tampered with. As one senior and extremely successful young woman explained:

"The barriers are the hours and that women must play by men's rules.

They lack the role models to do that."

The present study provided an opportunity for gaining some insight into the business community's response to initiatives proposed to assist women's entry and advancement in the workforce. The central issues were whether industry considered them desirable and or practicable, and whether senior management as a group were seen to be supportive of them.

During the interviews, those responsible for EEO programs were asked what they thought about 16 types of initiatives which have been discussed in the literature and mentioned in the newsletters and publications circulated by the Affirmative Action

Agency. The method of responding was the same as that described in the previous section for the eight steps. Interviewees indicated whether they considered each initiative desirable and/or practicable, from their own perspective and later from senior management's perspective. The list of initiatives and the percent providing unqualified support are given in Table 7.

**Table 7: Percent of random sample who regarded the EEO initiatives as desirable and practicable and the percent who saw senior management regarding them as desirable and practicable<sup>†</sup>**

Steps	EEO (senior management)	
	Desirable	Practicable
1 Award restructuring, equal pay for work of equal value, career paths	87 (85)	79 (77)
2 Career break schemes	59 (45)	26 (16)
3 Leave to care for sick family members	71 (55)	37 (28)
4 Actively recruiting women in non-traditional fields	68 (60)	48 (43)
5 Paid leave or financial assistance for study for non-managerial staff	77 (73)	61 (59)
6 Training in career planning	84 (83)	68 (68)
7 Management development programs for women	58 (53)	52 (48)
8 Women's networks	45 (32)	36 (28)
9 Formal instruction program to develop skills	94 (94)	88 (88)
10 Child care facilities	69 (53)	19 (9)
11 Permanent part-time positions	88 (82)	77 (72)
12 Flexible working hours	79 (70)	50 (43)
13 Paternity leave	63 (51)	43 (31)
14 Maternity leave	85 (75)	67 (59)
15 Job sharing	66 (54)	41 (35)
16 Employment targets developed in consultation with AAA	20 (14)	11 (8)

<sup>†</sup> These percentages represent those who answered "yes" versus "no" or "to a limited extent".

Three of the 16 initiatives were strongly supported at all levels: award restructuring, a formal instruction program for skill development, and permanent part-time positions. Next most favourably regarded, and with majority support at all levels, were paid leave or financial assistance for study by non-managerial staff, career planning and maternity leave. These initiatives are well-entrenched in workplace practice, in some cases

through other government regulations, and in other cases through the ideology of successful management. They have to do with having a well-trained staff, low turnover and non-disruptive industrial relations.

The initiative involving management development programs for women was distinguished by its marginal status. There was almost an even split in judgements of its desirability and practicability by EEO personnel and in their perceptions of senior management's view. The ambivalence in the business community is evident in the following comments:

"Not for women only. Why discriminate?"

"Not women only. Not too much in favour of highlighting differences."

"Should educate men and women together. Men need to become aware of women's approach".

"No, women's ways will not rub off. Must have males to learn from - And men will learn too from women."

Falling into the category of being considered desirable, but impractical, were flexible working hours, the active recruitment of women in non-traditional fields and leave to care for sick family members. Career break schemes, child care facilities, paternity leave, and job sharing can best be described as marginally desirable but impractical.

These initiatives involve change in the way in which workplaces are structured and in the way in which work is done. They threaten tried and true methods of efficiency:

"They may not be able to catch up when they come back from leave.

The organization can be very different in a year's time."

"Career breaks are not feasible - They lose contact with the network."

"It's [job sharing] unclear how it works."

and they threaten the order of the workplace:

"[With job sharing] the changeover is chaos."

"There's confusion in the handover."

"Paternity leave is a reaction to maternity leave. It's to avoid positive discrimination. Both are disruptive."

"[Flexible hours] don't work. We're not big enough to handle absences easily."

In contrast, another firm saw flexible working hours as their challenge:

"Our business is changing. It's now a 24 hour operation. Flexible working hours - It has to be."

Impractical initiatives also posed new costs and new responsibilities:

“Career break schemes are like maternity leave on a grand scale. It’s hard to manage. You don’t have people you can put in [the vacant position] easily. You have to get a replacement but it’s insecure for them and it’s disruptive for us. And what if they are better than the other person. You have to put someone out of work who is competent and capable.”

“For me job sharing is no problem. But if my job was to administer it, I’d probably feel it was not worth the trouble.”

“We run a business. Child care is another business. Subsidising child care would be preferable.”

“[Child care] is a community concern. You should not transfer a community responsibility to the employers.”

The impractical initiatives also involve learning to work with women as workmates or supervisors in an effective and comfortable way:

“I wanted to appoint a female manager. The women said they wouldn’t work for a female manager.”

“We take jillaroos as well as jackaroos. Jillaroos don’t stick at it. They’re attracted by the adventure, but it’s too rough and tough out there for them. It’s biological. One jillaroo who showed promise was given supervisory responsibility over a herd of cattle. She ran off with the head stockman.”

And there is no doubt that the business community see these problems not as their fault, nor in many cases as their responsibility, but as a product of our culture:

“It can’t be a workplace issue. It’s a community issue...The change is needed in the community first. It doesn’t matter what happens in the workplace if things don’t change at home.”

“We tried to recruit women [with some creative advertising] but it didn’t work. Management thought it a waste of time.”

“Women are put off by the men’s attitude and the dirty factory.”

“The problem is one of changing culture: The government can say the culture needs changing but cannot say how it should be done... The government and business have different agendas.”

As deviations from set work practices and habits are encountered, new ways must be found to achieve organizational goals as efficiently as before or effort must be directed to maintaining the status quo. These changes cannot be addressed half-heartedly and without costs in the short term. For industries immersed in a recession with no shortage of labour, resistance is a rational response:

"In recession, EEO must take a back seat. It's hard to know what we can do [having eliminated negative practices] and women can go backwards. It's hard finding the fine line."

In some cases, the economic climate is irrelevant, it's a question of loyalties:

"We'll cooperate providing it doesn't cost us an arm and a leg. The cost is a cost to our shareholders. We will not take actions detrimental to them."

For others, their eyes are on the future:

"Companies that say that [they are struggling and can't do anything] have the wrong attitude. EEO is one strategy that will ensure their survival...It will give them the competitive edge."

Considered both undesirable and impractical across the board were women's networks and setting employment targets in conjunction with the Affirmative Action Agency. In the light of the earlier discussion about forward estimates, concern about targets requires no further elaboration. The issue of women's networks does warrant discussion in that it extends the earlier debate about whether or not women should be singled out:

"You have to be mindful of the whole picture. Within the organization it is divisive. Outside, it's part of one's personal development."

"It's discriminatory within a firm, but women can learn from the network outside. Then it's positive."

"We must learn as one team."

Others were simply horrified:

"It destroys everything you are trying to work for, which is equal opportunity."

"I have seen them become political and result in terrible problems."

### **Are views on the initiatives related to implementation?**

In order to relate responses to these 16 initiatives to organizational structure and implementation, four aggregated measures were developed: the number of initiatives regarded as desirable by the EEO contact, the number regarded as practicable, the number thought to be judged desirable by senior management, and the number thought to be judged practicable by senior management. The means and standard deviations for the measures are given in Appendix X. The indices were correlated with size, the percent of the workforce who are female, and procedural and substantive compliance. The results are presented in Table 8.



The number of initiatives considered both desirable and practicable by EEO contacts increased with workforce size. The EEO contact's assessment of the desirability and practicability of the initiatives was related to implementation in both a procedural and substantive sense. The EEO contact's perception of how desirable management would find the initiatives was linked with substantive compliance, the four star rating given to reports showing commitment to the principles of EEO.

**Table 8: Pearson product moment correlation coefficients between the number of initiatives regarded as desirable and practicable and the structural and outcome variables**

Initiatives	Size	% Women	Procedural compliance	Substantive compliance
<i>EEO</i>				
No. desirable initiatives	.23**	.07	.28**	.36**
No. practicable initiatives	.22**	.06	.19*	.26**
<i>Senior management</i>				
No. desirable initiatives	.06	.03	.16	.17*
No. practicable initiatives	.11	.00	.14	.15

\*\* significant at the .01 level  
 \* significant at the .05 level

The next question was how well did the EEO contact person's views on the desirability and practicability of the initiatives match with their perceptions of senior management's views. As in previous analyses, those interviewed perceived senior management as being significantly more cautious than themselves (see Appendix VIII). By the same token, more progressive EEO contacts reported having more progressive senior management ( $r = .68$  and  $r = .76$  for desirability and practicability respectively). When the random sample of reporting units was compared with the elite sample (See Appendix VII), only one significant difference emerged. EEO contacts endorsed more initiatives as being desirable. Practicability assessments and perceptions of senior management's views did not differ for the two groups.

One further analysis was carried out on these data to test a hypothesis which emerged in the course of the study. Comments from some EEO contacts suggested that changes

under the “work and family responsibility” umbrella was more acceptable than changes on the “women’s bandwagon”:

“We prefer work and family issues. We’ve moved beyond EEO. Our focus is on men and women and flexibility in the workplace. We are against anything that singles out women....We are strongly against anything discriminatory.”

If this response was widespread, the expectation was that work and family initiatives (2, 3, 10-15 in Table 7) would be more acceptable than women’s initiatives (7, 8), and that perhaps the distance between perceptions of senior management and self may be substantially less on work and family issues. When aggregated indices for these special types of initiatives were compared, however, one did not fair better than the other. The global index did not appear to be masking any trends.

### Benefits

As a direct test of the extent to which the business community thought that the affirmative action legislation brought benefits, interviewees were asked to rate the gains to (a) women (b) men (c) industry (d) the country, and (e) future generations. The response categories offered to respondents were a “significant amount”(scored 3), “somewhat” (scored 2) and “not at all” (scored 1). As can be seen from Table 9, “somewhat” beneficial was the most popular response for all but one case. When future generations were considered, 52% saw the benefits as significant.

**Table 9: The percent of the random sample using the response categories “a significant amount”, “somewhat” and “not at all” in answer to the question, how much will these groups benefit from the affirmative action legislation**

Groups	Significant amount	Somewhat	Not at all	Mean score
women	44	55	1	2.42
men	11	48	41	1.70
industry	36	55	9	2.28
the country	39	54	7	2.32
future generations	52	44	4	2.49

The relative benefits to various groups can be inferred from the mean scores given in Table 9. Men were seen to be the major losers, but industry, the nation, women, and future generations were seen to gain in that order. An overall benefits index was formed

by adding together responses across the five groups. Statistical details relating to this aggregate measure are provided in Appendix X. The overall benefits index correlated significantly with both procedural and substantive implementation ( $r = .26, p < .01$  and  $r = .30, p < .01$  respectively), showing that those who were more convinced of benefits to a variety of groups were more likely to belong to companies with higher implementation performance. EEO contacts also saw greater benefits when they belonged to larger companies ( $r = .19, p < .05$ ) and were part of the elite sample (see Appendix VII).

## Summary

Acceptance of six of the eight steps and over half of the EEO initiatives on the dimensions of desirability and practicability was reasonably high, although EEO contact persons again saw senior management as having more doubts than they themselves had. The problems that were encountered centred around change, implementation, and once again the issue of singling out women. Of the eight steps, changes involved in collecting statistics for an employment profile were difficult for some, and uncertainty and misinformation surrounded the issues of how such a profile should be used, what forward estimates mean and how an affirmative action program should be evaluated. Similarly, with the initiatives, untried programs met with caution. To be acceptable initiatives had to have a track record, to be suitable for everyone, not just women, and most importantly, to be compatible with the way in which work is currently done. There was no indication of business being prepared to suffer "short term pain" for future gain. While this response is to be expected during a recession, it is of note that the analysis of the 1988-89 public reports (Braithwaite, 1991) indicated little action in this regard previously.

These data point to the need for models for industry groups so that business units can see what can be done and how change can be brought about with positive outcomes. While uncertainty and lack of information were common problems, business units felt adamantly about three issues: avoiding trade unions, women's networks and employment quotas.

Implementation was higher when both steps and initiatives were regarded as desirable and practicable. Positive attitudes were again more common in larger reporting units. Of interest was the negative response of female dominated companies to the desirability of the eight steps. They did not see the point of it all and felt they should be exempted from the legislation.

Finally, the issue of benefits to various groups was addressed. Greater perceived benefits were linked with better implementation of the legislation. The consensus was that everyone would benefit from the affirmative action legislation - women, men, industry, the nation, and future generations. But men would benefit least of all.

## CHAPTER 6

### PRIORITIES

Beliefs and attitudes can be held on a range of issues, but they may never have any obvious influence on behaviour. Limitations on time and the subsequent setting of priorities are one obvious explanation for why we often observe inconsistency between what people say on the one hand and what they do on the other. From the pilot study based on six Canberra business units, the overriding impression was that EEO was not high on the agenda for anyone - either management, employees or trade unions. A number of questions were included in the main study to examine this proposition more systematically, and to look at how the priority assigned to EEO was related to the level of implementation of the eight steps.

#### **The priority for management**

The priority which the company assigned to EEO was inferred from four measures: (a) the number of people responsible for EEO at the time of the interview, (b) the percentage of the EEO contact's time that was devoted to EEO, (c) whether the EEO program was integrated into other programs in the company, and (d) the EEO program's priority relative to Occupational Health and Safety.

The data suggested that EEO was not a high priority in the majority of companies. On the positive side, 73% of the randomly selected companies regarded EEO as incorporated and integrated into the philosophy of the company as opposed to being a stand alone program. By contrast, all of the companies in the elite sample saw the EEO program as being integrated into other programs. Most companies (70%) said that they had one person responsible for EEO. A further 26% had allocated two people to the program. Of those interviewed, 85% said they spent less than 10% of their time on EEO and 12% reported spending 11-25% of their time on EEO. In the elite sample, one person tended to be responsible for the program, but most devoted more than 25% of their time to it. The most persuasive data on the low priority of EEO came through qualitative feedback:

“It's very easy. I fill out the report each year.”

“It's another thing I have to do. I do as little as possible to comply and implement EEO.”

“You have to be careful how you tread - it affects what you can achieve. They say ‘why is she spending so much of her time on EEO? What’s happening to her other work? When’s she going to do that?’”

Another EEO contact, hoping that she would not be around to have to write the next report, explained her frustrations in this way:

“I wanted to go out to companies to see if managers were really doing anything. [The general manager] wouldn’t let me. Nothing can be done without his approval. The EEO statement took more than 12 months. It’s like hitting your head against a brick wall.”

and

“I wrote a paper to be presented at the AGM. [A colleague] told me they ran out of time and didn’t discuss it. They just took a copy as they raced for the plane. The silence is deafening.”

When those interviewed were asked to compare the EEO program with the Occupational Health and Safety program, the latter came out as a clear winner in terms of time spent, concern by senior management and employee involvement. The results are presented in Table 10. An overall index of prioritizing EEO over OH&S was developed by adding scores (3=EEO higher, 2=equal, 1=EEO lower) across the three criteria (see Appendix X for details). When these aggregate measures were examined, no differences emerged between the randomly selected companies and the elite companies.

**Table 10: Percent of EEO contacts who regarded the EEO program as having higher, equal and lower priority than the OH&S program**

Criteria	EEO	Equal	OH&S
Attracts more working hours	13	17	70
Attracts more concern from senior management	9	21	70
Attracts more employee involvement	14	17	69

The question of the priority assigned to EEO compared with OH&S is not important in itself. Companies can and did justify their priorities in terms of the demands of their particular industry. The important issue, however, is whether priority of one over the other has anything to do with implementation. To answer this question, all four indices of priority were correlated with procedural and substantive compliance as well as organizational size and percent of women in the workforce. The results of this analysis are given in Table 11.

**Table 11: Pearson product moment correlation coefficients between the priority indices and the structural and outcome variables**

Priority index	Size	% Women	Procedural compliance	Substantive compliance
No. responsible	-.12	-.06	-.12	-.03
Percent time	.35**	.10	.16	.32**
Integration	.21*	.13	.23**	.25**
EEO priority over OH&S	-.01	.45**	.10	.22*

\*\* significant at the .01 level  
 \* significant at the .05 level

Larger companies were more likely to have more time devoted to the EEO program and were more likely to have integrated programs. Firms with a high proportion of female employees were more likely to report giving relative priority to EEO rather than OH&S, a finding that undoubtedly reflects the nature of the industries in which women are more likely to be employed.

The priority variables were poorly related to procedural compliance but consistently related to substantive compliance. The absence of a relationship between number of persons responsible for EEO and the extent of implementation is not surprising. The practice of having more people responsible was not necessarily a good indicator of resources devoted to the program. Shared responsibility, in practice, often seemed to mean no-one doing anything much.

Priorities of management have emerged from this analysis as an important concept. Implementing the steps of the affirmative action legislation does not require companies to rethink their priorities. It's just one more thing to do. In contrast, if the EEO program is to be implemented in an effective way in keeping with the spirit of the legislation, the program needs to be prioritized in terms of the human resources devoted to it.

### **The priority for the EEO contact person**

Another way of inferring priority is through the personal characteristics of the person assigned responsibility for implementing the program. Individuals who are enthusiastic and able in relation to EEO are undoubtedly likely to devote more energy and

effectiveness to it than those who are not so predisposed. Apart from being a reflection of an individual executive's priorities, measures of personal characteristics may be an indirect way of inferring company priorities. The responsibility for EEO is generally given to someone who has responsibility for other matters as well. Thus, management can choose a person who is highly committed or they can choose a person who will "just do the bare essentials" and not let it interfere with their other work. In this context, it is interesting to recollect that 8% of those interviewed had no-one senior to themselves in the organization. These people had chosen not to delegate the responsibility for EEO to anyone else in the company and preferred to do the job with the help of a secretary or personal assistant. The data presented so far suggest that the justification for this is more likely to be control and containment than enthusiasm for implementing innovative EEO programs.

The priority assigned to EEO by the individual was assessed through the concepts of self-efficacy and outcome expectations, both derived from the work of Bandura (1986). Bandura argues that whether or not we choose to act in a certain way is a function first, of our belief in our own capacity to perform the behaviour and second, of the importance we place on the outcomes. The items used to infer confidence or belief that one can actually do what is required (*self-efficacy*) appear in Table 12, along with items representing commitment to EEO goals (*EEO achievement*).

The percent responding "yes" to the items in the self-efficacy scale are those showing low confidence or low self-efficacy. It follows from these percentages that around 60% of the sample had high self-efficacy in that they doubted neither themselves nor their program and they felt they were in control of what they were doing.

In looking at the responses to the items in the EEO achievement scale, greater diversity was evident. More than 60% believed in EEO, practiced it and gained satisfaction from their EEO successes. The sample was more evenly divided, however, on what they thought they could achieve over the next 12 months. The gloom may have been due to the recession. Some EEO contacts saw their challenge as one of holding ground rather than making advances:

"Our programs are loosely integrated. We have lots of little projects - any of them could be cut by senior management. The question for us now is how do we make it [EEO] a strategic issue."



Table 12: Percent of random sample endorsing items in the self-efficacy and EEO achievement scales

Items	% yes
<i>Self-efficacy</i>	
Do you suffer from doubts about the EEO program - whether you are doing the right thing? †	41
Do you have doubts about your own capacity to set up a good EEO program? ‡	34
As the EEO person do you risk becoming the meat in the sandwich between government and business?	41
<i>EEO achievement</i>	
Is it likely that you will bring about significant improvements in the EEO program of this company in the next 12 months? ††	42
Are your own feelings generally affected one way or the other by how the EEO program is going? ‡‡	52
Do you get a great sense of personal satisfaction when you do well on an EEO issue? ¶	84
Have you set specific goals for yourself for the next 12 months on EEO issues?	43
Do you feel you have a personal responsibility as the EEO officer to launch women in a career or give them a helping hand?	65
Do you believe EEO has something to offer women?	78
Have you adopted the role of "talent scout", spotting women who are particularly good and encouraging them to seek advancement in the workplace?	69

† The response categories were no, sometimes and yes. In this table, sometimes (29%) and yes (12%) have been combined.

‡ The response categories were no, sometimes and yes. In this table, sometimes (25%) and yes (9%) have been combined.

†† The response categories were less than 50/50, 50/50 and better than 50/50. In this table, the categories 50/50 (32%) and better than 50/50 (10%) have been combined.

‡‡ The response categories were no, sometimes and yes. In this table, the categories sometimes (35%) and yes (17%) have been combined.

¶ The response categories were no, depends and yes. In this table, the categories depends (26%) and yes (58%) have been combined.

The responses to the self-efficacy items were added together to give a self-efficacy score for each person interviewed. The higher the score, the lower the self-efficacy of the interviewee. Scale scores were also computed for EEO contact persons on the EEO achievement scale. In this case, a higher score meant greater commitment to EEO objectives. Statistical details for each scale are provided in Appendix X.

The self-efficacy and EEO achievement scales were compared for the elite and random samples, but no differences were evident. These scales were also correlated with the implementation indices and with the structural characteristics of the organization (see Table 13). Self-efficacy was not related to any of the variables. The story was different, however, for the EEO achievement scale. Valuing and aspiring to EEO achievements was an important predictor of performance on both the procedural and substantive dimensions. Companies had made greater progress in implementing the affirmative action legislation if their EEO contact person was committed to setting goals for the program and took pride in their achievement. This theme was captured most memorably by a young woman who had come up through the ranks from a secretarial position:

“When we first started no-one really wanted to do it - just send the report and forget the rest...[but] I am passionate on EEO. I want a woman on the board if it kills me. Being pregnant has meant I’ve had to take a couple of steps back - but I’ll get a woman on the board.”

**Table 13: Pearson product moment correlation coefficients between the self-efficacy and EEO achievement scales and the structural and outcome variables**

EEO contact person	Size	% Women	Procedural compliance	Substantive compliance
Self-efficacy	-.07	-.05	.05	.10
EEO achievement	.15	-.13	.32**	.23**

\*\* significant at the .01 level

### **The priority for female employees**

Women themselves were not asked about their views, just as senior management were not asked. The emphasis in this study has been on the perceptions that the EEO contact person has of other groups. While it is imperative not to confuse the contact person’s perception of others with what others really think, there are circumstances in which perceptions of others is the important factor influencing behaviour. This context is one such case. The priority assigned to EEO in the company will not only be a function of the EEO contact’s personal priorities, but will also be determined by how she/he sees the organizational climate. Perceptions of antagonism by management will lower the priority assigned to EEO by the person responsible. Perceptions of disinterest by female

employees is also likely to weaken the EEO contact's resolve to put effort into the EEO program.

The EEO contact's perceptions of the priority assigned to EEO by female workers was gauged through answers to three questions appearing in Table 14. The responses show that more than half of the female employees are seen to have, at best, a slight interest in EEO. The most discouraging figure from the point of view of the affirmative action legislation is that for almost 80% of the EEO contacts, approaches by women to raise EEO issues were rare.

**Table 14: Percent of random sample endorsing items relating to the priority female employees appear to give to EEO**

Items	% endorsement
Do you think the women in this organization sincerely believe that EEO has something to offer them?	42
How interested are the women in this company in EEO?†	59
How often do the women in this company approach you with ideas for the EEO program?‡	23

† The response categories were interested, slightly interested and not particularly interested. In this table, interested(25%) and slightly interested(34%) have been combined.

‡ The response categories were rarely, occasionally and often. In this table, occasionally (21%) and often (2%) have been combined.

It is important not to lose sight of the fact that these figures are not about what women think, but are about what EEO contact persons think women think. The qualitative data shed further light on how those interviewed saw women in the workplace. Many referred to women's limited aspirations:

“The secretarial staff have no aspirations. They are not career motivated.”

“They are working to put the fruit on the sideboard. They think they shouldn't complain.”

“The production line is not concerned about anything other than getting their pay packet and getting home.”

“Women work to educate their children or pay their house off.”

"A certain group is interested [in EEO]. You get the women who are going places, and those who do not see themselves as long term employees."

Others attributed lack of interest in the EEO program to naivety or disenchantment:

"Women doubt the EEO Act in their heart of hearts. It raised their expectations unrealistically in the beginning. They thought they had the key to the city. They are disillusioned. They didn't realize that hard work and sacrifice were needed as well."

"They don't understand it. They don't feel discriminated against."

"They are complacent - happy to accept a cup of tea in life. They are also conscious of what they have to do to survive and are careful. They are happy not to wave the EEO flag."

"They are very sceptical and suspicious. They don't like to be seen as having special needs. They want to be seen as much like men as possible."

"You can't push women into anything. All you can do is offer opportunities. Whether they take them is up to them."

"It's lack of awareness. They have to be dissatisfied to see something in it for them."

These responses raise interesting and important questions about how women actually see themselves in the workforce. One possible alternative to explanations of lack of sophistication, limited vision and wariness is that women have a very good sense of the way the system works. They see paid work as a way to enhance their well-being within certain limits. Knowing these limitations, they don't want to be embroiled in conflict and frustration. Women participate in the workforce up to their comfort limit. They don't get too involved and they don't expect favours. They have psychologically disengaged, thereby giving themselves considerable resiliency in an environment which can be less than hospitable. What managers may regard as naive may actually be a strategy for good adjustment.

This may not be any more adequate an account of women's workforce participation than those offered by the EEO contact persons. It does shift the focal point for change, however, from the women themselves to the workplace managers. This interpretation suggests that if senior managers offer hope, and women see women like themselves thriving rather than struggling in the work environment, greater engagement by women may follow.

Responses to the three items used to index the priority that women in the workplace appeared to place on EEO were summated to form an EEO priority for women scale (see Appendix X for scale statistics). This scale was correlated with the implementation indices and with the organizational characteristics of size and the percent of women in the workforce. Where female employees were seen to place a high priority on EEO, the company's performance on both procedural and substantive criteria was higher. Women were also more likely to be seen to place a higher priority on EEO in larger companies. The percent of women in the workforce was not related to the priority that female employees appeared to give to EEO. There was also no difference between the elite sample and the random sample in the priority female employees appeared to give to EEO.

**Table 15: Pearson product moment correlation coefficients between the EEO priority for women and trade union indices and the structural and outcome variables**

Priority index	Size	% Women	Procedural compliance	Substantive compliance
Priority for women	.26**	-.07	.28**	.22**
Union presence	.14	-.12	.12	.05
Union active on EEO	.11	-.05	.27**	.21*

\*\* significant at the .01 level  
 \* significant at the .05 level

### The priority for trade unions

EEO contact persons were asked whether or not there were union representatives at their workplace and whether or not unions were active on EEO issues. The percent of random sample workplaces with unions was 76%. A substantially lower 19% regarded unions as being active on EEO issues. No differences were found between the random sample and the elite sample on these variables. The responses of EEO contact persons converged on a common theme:

“Unions don’t want to know about it. Once in a blue moon we hear something [from one of them].”

“They fulfil the basic requirements - they come to meetings to which they are invited. That’s all, however. They don’t want things to change.”

"I gave one union rep a copy of our Affirmative Action policy. She needed to put one in herself....They are there to consult, to pay lip service. They have no suggestions."

"They are invited to all our meetings. One turned up once. He was from the all male production section."

When the two measures, union presence and active union presence, were correlated with the performance indicators, the findings were both interesting and important. Having one or several unions represented at the workplace did not, in itself, improve the implementation of the EEO program. As we have seen, EEO was not a high priority for unions in the majority of cases. In the minority of cases, however, where unions were active on EEO, implementation of the affirmative action legislation was more advanced in both a procedural and substantive sense.

### **Summary**

A company's performance on EEO is clearly related to the priority it places on these issues. Implementation is more advanced when the person responsible for the EEO program is highly committed, when management allows the program to be integrated with other programs and assigns to it adequate human resources, when female employees themselves are interested in what it has to offer them, and when unions are active on EEO issues. According to the majority of these indicators, however, the priority assigned to EEO programs across the random sample of business units was low.

## CHAPTER 7

### SOURCES OF SUPPORT

In the previous section, the emphasis was on the priority which various groups within the organization assigned to the EEO program. A related issue, but not necessarily a synonymous issue, is the degree of support given to the EEO officer in implementing the program. Support is conceptualized in terms of its source and its function. Support from management is defined as showing awareness for EEO principles in daily practice and supporting the EEO program. Support from employees is defined as acceptance of EEO principles and the cooperative participation of female employees in the EEO program. Support from trade unions is defined as being a useful source of information on what women need and on what should be done in the EEO program. Support of an informational kind can also come from outside the organization. In this section, the general question of reliance on people outside the organization for advice and feedback will be addressed. In the next section, the role of the Affirmative Action Agency will be the focus of attention.

#### **Support from management**

From the data presented so far, it is clear that perceptions of management's reaction to the affirmative action legislation has been seen as sceptical, at best and antagonistic, at worst. Consequently, the three questions asked of EEO contact persons tapped the degree of opposition they perceived from senior management to the EEO program rather than the amount of encouragement they had been offered. The questions appear in Table 16 with response percentages.

These results show that the majority of EEO contact persons do not feel that senior management obstructs them in their efforts to implement the EEO program. At the same time, we have seen that EEO contacts tend to have more progressive views than those they attribute to senior management generally. Do senior management, therefore, go along with EEO initiatives without disagreement? The qualitative data suggest that the situation is less straightforward than this. The proposals put before senior management for consideration are those that EEO contacts know are acceptable. If there is risk of controversy, the change is introduced surreptitiously:

"I know I'm at odds with the prevailing view. I try to sneak things through but don't call it EEO."

"No-one's actively against it - there are groups of senior management who are unconvinced. We do what we can until we are told we have gone too far."

**Table 16: Percent of random sample responding to questions about problems posed by senior management for the EEO program**

Question	Response categories	% using category
What proportion of senior management can you rely on to support you on EEO issues?†	> half	67
Have you been in a situation where senior managers have tried to block some aspect of the EEO program or have made it difficult for you to introduce it?	no	77
Have you considered senior managers to be unaware of EEO issues when making their decisions?	no	56

† The actual response categories were none (2%), less than half (17%), half (14%), more than half (40%), and all (27%).

Whatever the method, it must be remembered that the public reports show that EEO activities do not involve radical assaults on workplace practice. In general, most of what is being done could be found in text books on effective management. From the qualitative data, the explanation lies in the concept of priority. At senior levels, executives are not prepared to devote time, let alone argument, to issues that are not considered to be important. And overall, EEO is not regarded as important:

"They don't actively oppose it because they know that would be inappropriate. But they don't support it either. They wouldn't dare say it, but their question is, do we really need it?"

"Senior management are exposed to the ideas so they know what they should say."

"The senior managers are apathetic - might as well support it - it's neither here nor there."

"The female accountant oversees it, but she doesn't know a thing and doesn't want to know. I make all the decisions."



EEO contacts were asked if they were left out of important discussions on EEO. The overwhelming majority, 86%, said this was not a problem, the reason again being priorities:

“Nothing is happening behind my back. Nothing is happening full stop. I have to initiate everything. I put up the proposals and ideas. Then nothing happens.”

**Table 17: Pearson product moment correlation coefficients between support from senior management and employees and the structural and outcome variables**

Scale	Size	% Women	Procedural compliance	Substantive compliance
Senior management problems	.30**	.03	.02	.13
Resistance from employees and middle management	.08	.02	.14	.08
Cooperation from women	.13	-.04	.31**	.34**
Meeting with only women in past year	-.23**	.03	.10	.00
Availability of report	-.12	.09	.20*	.05

\*\* significant at the .01 level  
 \* significant at the .05 level

While conflict was low in most organizations, some of those interviewed were experiencing difficulties with senior management. This raises the question of whether the extent of implementation of the affirmative action legislation suffered in these organizations. The answers to the questions in Table 16 were added together to form the problems with senior management scale (see Appendix X for details). These scale scores were then correlated with the implementation indices and the organizational characteristics. As can be seen from Table 17, reports of problems with senior management were not associated with the implementation of the affirmative action legislation. Problems were more likely to be reported in larger companies, however, perhaps because EEO contact persons in larger companies had programs which had been running for longer and which had more ambitious goals. The elite sample did not differ from the random sample in problems experienced with senior management.

## Support from employees and women

EEO contact persons were asked where resistance to EEO came from in their organization. "No resistance at all" was the response of 21% of those interviewed. The majority, however, had encountered some resistance at the level of middle management and/or among employees (60%). A variety of reasons were given. Most commonly, mention was made of the difficulties of practicing EEO:

"Middle management - because they have to implement the thing and deal with the practicalities."

"Middle managers have to deal with the interrelationships. Gives them more headaches and worries than they have now. It's difficult bringing women into a male dominated workplace."

Some saw supervisors and employees as the people most likely to be affected by the EEO policy:

"They want to hold on to their jobs. The competition worries them. They are threatened."

Others dismissed it as "their way":

"They are more down to earth and honest about it all - senior management are diplomatic."

Middle management was also seen to be less familiar with the ideas:

"There is a fog there - there are so many that it's difficult to get to them all."

This was borne out by a phone call from a supervisor during one of my interviews. He was wondering if he should put one of the seasonal workers off because she was pregnant. "You can't put her off because she is pregnant. It's got to be skills based" was the definitive reply.

The extent to which the EEO contact person had the support of female employees was assessed through five questions given in Table 18. These questions incorporated not only the notion of involvement in the EEO program, but also of cooperation and dialogue between the EEO contact person and female employees. Committees and meetings were not a commonly used forum for finding out what women thought about certain issues. Surprisingly, seeking women's support or opinions about particular EEO issues on a less formal basis was also an unlikely course of action to be taken by the EEO contact person. One type of communication engaged in by just over half of those interviewed (58%) was telling women what the EEO program had to offer them, what might be considered a basic requirement under the affirmative action legislation. In short, these data show very poor communication between managers of the EEO

program and the supposed major beneficiaries. While women may not be interested in EEO, the majority of EEO contact persons do not appear to be going out of their way to let women know that they value their opinions.

**Table 18: Percent of random sample responding to questions about the cooperation and participation of women in EEO**

Question	Response category	% using category
To what extent do you rely on formal meetings for all women to find out what female employees need or think about certain issues? <sup>†</sup>	a little or a lot	18
To what extent do you rely on a joint committee to find out what female employees need or think about certain issues? <sup>‡</sup>	a little or a lot	40
How often can you rely on employees to support you on EEO issues? <sup>¶</sup>	sometimes or usually	35
When you are considering EEO issues, whose opinions and reactions do you value most?	junior female employees	29
Do you tell the women in this organization what you think EEO has to offer them?	yes	58

<sup>†</sup> The response categories were not much (82%), a little (12%) and a lot (6%).

<sup>‡</sup> The response categories were not much (60%), a little (21%) and a lot (19%).

<sup>¶</sup> The response categories were rarely or not necessary (65%), sometimes (14%) and usually (21%).

Responses to two further questions also suggested low levels of dialogue between the EEO contact and female employees. When EEO contact persons were asked if they had met with only female employees in the past 12 months, 80% had not. A further 11% had held one such meeting. Part of the explanation for not engaging in this activity is the widespread view that meetings with only women are discriminatory. In the elite sample, no-one had held a meeting of only female employees in the last 12 months. The philosophy of “not having separate meetings” was well entrenched in this group for reasons of employee cohesiveness, team building, developing communication skills across gender groups, and problem solving. “Men often have the solutions” was the response of one interviewee. This issue will be discussed at further length in Section 9

when "the invitation list" for such meetings and their content are pulled apart for analysis as discriminatory activities.

The second question revealing widespread lack of involvement of employees asked whether the affirmative action report was discussed with employees or made available to them via tea rooms or notice boards. No such action occurred in 46% of the randomly selected sample of firms. A further 24% said they showed the report to employees on request. The remaining 30% said they discussed the report routinely with their employees.

When the indices of employee involvement were correlated with the implementation indices and organizational characteristics (see Table 17), the most important variable was the participation and cooperation of female employees in the program. Their involvement was linked with effective implementation both procedurally and substantively. Furthermore, a comparison of the elite and random samples showed women to be playing a more active role in the elite companies (see Appendix VII).

In keeping with the reported reluctance to hold meetings for only women in the elite companies, it was not surprising to find this practice being avoided in the larger, and therefore more experienced companies generally. The only other significant relationship in Table 17 showed companies who shared their report with employees as having undertaken more steps in the public report. Sharing the report, however, was not correlated with the judged quality of the program.

These data suggest that the low involvement of employees, particularly women, is a two-way process. Women may be reluctant to come forward, but management is reticent about building up support. Comments such as the following are not satisfactory rationales for low levels of dialogue:

"What would we talk about?"

"We'd just raise their expectations for things we can't deliver."

Some EEO contact persons were finding ways to involve women:

"The problem is that they don't know what it could be like - they don't miss what they haven't got. But if they are hurt, it's different.

Issues can be raised through complaints - through stories of injustices.

This relates directly to what they do."

“Women are interested - but I don't use the term EEO. The policy is not meaningful to them. I talk with them about bread and butter issues.”

“Women are more interested if the issues are positioned as work and family. If EEO, no. I say to them ‘Don't be afraid to talk about work and family issues. They are valid concerns.’”

And most importantly, some had impressive insights into what was a challenging task for EEO personnel:

“You have to communicate to empower women. You have to convince them of its legitimacy. You show them that what they are involved in is a learning experience. You don't try to get everyone - you target strategic groups - then encourage them to help others. Getting employees involved is a process.”

The notion of empowering women and the importance of repeated dialogue and feedback in this process was something that was sadly missing from conversations with EEO contact persons about their responsibilities.

### **Support from trade unions**

EEO contacts were asked how often they relied on union representatives to find out what women thought about certain issues. Of those interviewed in the random sample, 68% replied “not much”, 23% “a little” and 9% found the unions helpful “a lot” of the time. Generally, EEO contact persons saw the unions as a source of trouble rather than a source of support:

“They'd just raise child minding again.”

“They are not very approachable. They are dogmatic and totally against employers. They won't listen, no matter what.”

“It makes it harder if you have to talk with the unions. Often they have another hidden agenda apart from affirmative action.”

Where dialogue was common between management and unions, however, things got done. Reliance on unions for information and feedback was correlated with procedural compliance, though not with substantive compliance. The elite sample was no more likely than the random sample to rely on trade unions for information.

**Table 19: Pearson product moment correlation coefficients between support from trade unions and outsiders and the structural and outcome variables**

Type of support	Size	% Women	Procedural compliance	Substantive compliance
Trade union support	.11	-.07	.24**	.16
Formal contact	.12	-.02	.23**	.23**
Informal contact	.17*	.02	.12	.28**
Outside support	.25**	.00	.22**	.15
Outside support needed	.06	.02	.04	.04

\*\* significant at the .01 level  
 \* significant at the .05 level

### Support from outside

We have seen that the responsibility for EEO usually rests with one person and that EEO contact persons often perceive themselves as being more enlightened about EEO than most in their organization. Under such circumstances, availability of support from outside the organization becomes important.

First, it should be acknowledged that the majority of those interviewed (71%) did not believe they needed more support from outside their organization. Many had support networks in place that cut across companies. Interviewees were asked whether they were in contact with others responsible for EEO through formal or informal channels. Formal links were mentioned in 27% of cases, involving EEO practitioner associations, human resource management associations and similar professional bodies, and the Council for Equal Employment Opportunity established by the Business Council of Australia. Informal associations with other EEO officers were mentioned by 56% of those interviewed.

Interviewees had been asked whose opinions on EEO they valued the most (see Table 18). Responses were coded in two ways. The first was described earlier (see Table 18) and represented consultation with junior women in the organization. The second, used in relation to outside support, was consultation with someone outside the organization. An outsider was mentioned in 38% of cases.

Outside contact was associated with procedural compliance, but only association with others responsible for EEO was linked with better performance at a substantive level.

Those with informal associations with other EEO personnel appeared to do better on the quality of the implementation, but not on the extent to which the steps had been implemented. Informal networks may be the means for transmitting particular projects and ideas as EEO initiatives: Innovation may be a social phenomenon. Consistent with this line of thought was the finding that the elite sample was more likely to have both formal and informal associations with other EEO personnel. Their informal associations were very often advice giving rather than advice receiving. Informal EEO contacts were more common for those belonging to larger companies, as was outside contact in general.

### **Summary**

This chapter demonstrates that support for EEO programs is low in most workplaces. For senior management, EEO was not a high priority. EEO personnel saw senior management as being unaware of EEO issues in many cases, and as being uninterested in finding out more.

Support from below was similarly in short supply. Most EEO contact persons had encountered resistance from either middle management or employees. Again the central problem seemed to be the changes it brought or threatened to bring to daily work life. Communication and cooperation between EEO contact persons and female employees was also limited.

Nor was contact with and reliance on support from others outside the organization commonplace. In spite of trade union consultation being a requirement of the legislation, unions were rarely involved in a meaningful way in the development of EEO programs. In some cases, union participation was unwelcome.

While EEO officers were reporting low levels of support, the majority also maintained that they did not need support of any kind from outside the business unit. The general picture of low support and no outside interference was in keeping with the low priority assigned to EEO in the workplace. In addition, there was some reason for thinking that management preferred not to involve employees in the process of implementing the EEO program. Such involvement would run the risk of loss of control, and while women and trade unions appeared so disinterested, there was nothing to be gained by taking such risks.

Yet, the active participation of women and trade unions, and having connections with those interested in EEO outside the organization were important for effective implementation of the legislation. The connections which EEO officers have with other EEO personnel were particularly important for substantive compliance, possibly because of opportunities to learn and model innovation.



## CHAPTER 8

### RELATIONS WITH THE AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AGENCY

The Affirmative Action Act not only requires employers to promote equal employment opportunity for women, but also established an office of the Director of Affirmative Action with responsibilities for monitoring employer programs, advising and assisting employers, promoting community understanding and discussion, undertaking research and evaluating the effectiveness of the Act. These functions are performed through the Affirmative Action Agency. It was not the aim of this study to provide a detailed analysis of business's view of the effectiveness of the Agency in each of these areas. However, data were collected on the business community's general evaluation of the performance of the Agency and its views on changes which might be made to improve the effectiveness of EEO programs within industry.

#### **Perceptions of the Affirmative Action Agency**

The scaling technique used to assess the degree to which the business community felt positively or negatively toward the Affirmative Action Agency was the semantic differential (Osgood, Suci, & Tannenbaum, 1957). EEO contact persons were presented with 23 bipolar adjectives or descriptive phrases (e.g. unhelpful - helpful) and were asked to locate the Affirmative Action Agency on each continuum using a rating scale from 1 to 5. The midpoint of the scale (3) represented a neutral view, neither positive nor negative. Many of the bipolar adjectives presented in Table 20 had been used previously in a study of nursing home regulation (Braithwaite et al., 1990).

The responses of EEO contact persons have been collapsed into three categories for ease of presentation. The percent giving positive, neutral and negative responses are given in Table 20. About 12% of those interviewed had no view of the Agency at all on any of the criteria and were assigned to the neutral category (3) in each case. Thus, the neutral category in Table 20 should be interpreted as having a baseline of 12%.

The ratings on the criteria tend to be overwhelmingly favourable. Where they are not, the neutral category tends to be used quite heavily. One could argue that the EEO contact persons were exercising a degree of diplomacy in expressing their views about the Agency. Nevertheless, interesting insights into the perceived weaknesses of the Agency can be gleaned by focusing on the criteria which attracted most criticism or ambivalence.

Table 20: Percent of random sample giving the Affirmative Action Agency  
negative, neutral and positive ratings on 23 criteria

Rating scales	Negative	Neutral	Positive
<i>Support</i>			
unhelpful - helpful	4	37	59
not approachable - approachable	4	29	67
rude - courteous	0	35	65
negative, critical - positive, supportive	8	45	47
adversarial - cooperative	7	28	65
unfair - fair	3	39	58
not understanding, not sympathetic - understanding, sympathetic	9	49	42
police like - not police like	20	47	33
unreasonable - reasonable	9	36	55
uncompromising - compromising	11	55	34
<i>Competency</i>			
not generous with ideas and information - generous with ideas and information	5	48	47
not authoritative - authoritative	12	52	36
not hardworking - hardworking	2	58	39
not committed - committed	2	29	69
not very informative - very informative	10	39	51
incompetent - competent	1	44	55
not persuasive - persuasive	10	59	31
silly ideas - good ideas	6	53	41
not worth listening to - worth listening to	7	35	58
<i>Strength</i>			
permissive - firm	7	59	34
weak - tough	1	70	29
<i>Extras</i>			
unsophisticated in their understanding of business - sophisticated in their understanding of business	20	51	29
lacks the full support of government - has the full support of government	18	47	35

The three criteria attracting the most negative response were being police-like, being unsophisticated about business and lacking the support of government. Approximately 20% of those interviewed agreed with these descriptions of the Agency. Also of interest are those criteria which attracted a high proportion of neutral responses. More than 50% remained non-committal on the extent to which the Agency was authoritative, persuasive, tough, had good ideas, and was sophisticated about business.

Generally speaking, the Agency was perceived by the majority as being fair, reasonable and cooperative; as being approachable, courteous and helpful; and as being committed, competent, informative, and worth listening to. Where reservations were held, they challenged the Agency's authority and toughness:

"At the end of the day, ..[the Director] knows she has no power. And most companies know she is a toothless tiger. She can bark as much as she likes but...."

"The Agency was set up, left and ignored."

"They have a defensive role and can't afford to be creative."

"Valerie Pratt is the authority you respect. Without her, the Agency would have low credibility."

"They have been busy monitoring. Few ideas have come out. They haven't been a driving force...They come from the back foot all the time. They have a role to play and they should be strong and play it."

its business sophistication:

"There are women running the whole Agency. They need men and people from business on the team. They'd get a better hearing from business."

"They need more practical people from business - they have just a lot of activists at the moment."

"They've got to move out into business, they need to understand different types of business."

"Yes, they give you information but it has nothing to do with our business."

"Few in the Agency come from the corporate world. It operates very differently."

and its persuasiveness and generation of ideas for EEO programs:

"They send booklets that we don't have time to read.... What they want is to go to government with their success stories. They are not interested in whether the water is deep. They are superficial."

"The Affirmative Action Agency don't have time to listen. They are so stressed out. On the phone you can see the panic in the

background. We need counsellors - so you can ask stupid questions and not feel bad about it."

"The Agency won't go beyond the eight steps, but they should move beyond the legislation and broaden their focus. They should spend time with companies and involve other companies in advising."

"There are too many people there who want to do noble work. It turns industry off."

"They are too removed from us, the practitioners."

In the aftermath of these critical comments, it was interesting to hear comments from smaller companies where EEO had been a mystery:

"There is a difference between their formal communication and their personal communication. They are much more positive in verbal communication."

"When I had contact with the Agency, they were good. You know, they let you know that you weren't as dumb as you thought you were in the first place. We're on the right track now."

Before further analyses involving these criteria were undertaken, they were aggregated into three scales. These scales were based on the results of a principal components analysis (see Appendix XI). Three of the four components corresponded to the dimensions that have traditionally been identified as underlying semantic differential ratings: evaluation, activity, and power. The first dimension represented good relations with the Affirmative Action Agency and was called supportiveness. The second was concerned with the Agency's effectiveness in spreading the word and dispersing information and was called competency. The third dimension represented the strength of the Agency as a regulatory agent. Two other criteria, business sophistication and support from government, did not correlate sufficiently highly with any of these three groupings of items, but were of interest in their own right. Therefore, they shall be included as individual items in subsequent analyses.

The correlations of the three aggregated measures and two single items with the implementation and organizational indices are given in Table 21. The significant relationships that emerged between EEO contact persons' views of the Agency and their degree of implementation of the affirmative action legislation were not particularly strong, but were of considerable importance in interpreting the above criticisms. Business units that had more of the procedures in place were more likely to regard the

~~X~~ Agency as high on competency, supportiveness and business sophistication. A higher rating on substantive compliance was accompanied by endorsement of the competency

of the Agency. This suggests that some of the criticism referred to previously may have been based on hearsay rather than first hand experience. These findings are also a reminder that criticism does not necessarily have a logical base. I asked the following question of the senior executive previously quoted as saying he didn't have time to read the booklets he was sent by the Agency :

“Would you send [newly appointed young female executive] to a seminar run by the Agency then - to save time?”

The reply:

“No, it doesn't apply to us.”

**Table 21: Pearson product moment correlation coefficients between views about the Affirmative Action Agency and the structural and outcome variables**

Indicator	Size	% Women	Procedural compliance	Substantive compliance
Support	.11	-.17*	.18*	.16
Competency	.07	-.06	.21*	.18*
Strength	-.02	.15	.02	-.01
Business sophistication	.24**	-.13	.23**	.15
Government support	-.14	.01	.12	.05

\*\* significant at the .01 level

\* significant at the .05 level

Where the Affirmative Action Agency was seen as being sophisticated in its understanding of business and supported fully by government, more steps of the legislation had been implemented. Larger companies were also more likely to regard the Agency as sophisticated in its understanding of business. Elite companies, on the other hand, saw the Affirmative Action Agency as more supportive than the randomly selected companies, but did not perceive them differently on the other dimensions. Some of the elite companies saw themselves as ahead of the Agency and of the legislation and as the experts advising others on new initiatives and ideas:

“The Agency works to the lowest common denominator. The more experience you have, the fewer ideas you get from them.”

“I think we've given more back than we've got out of them.”

“We haven't got any good ideas from the Agency. They are still tied to the legislation. We've moved beyond that point.”

As in previous analyses, workplaces with a high percentage of female employees were more likely to be critical of the Affirmative Action Agency. Again this seems to stem from the view that they should be exempt from the Agency's scrutiny because the legislation is irrelevant to them.

### **Perceptions of government and the community**

In the findings presented so far, the business community and the government have been conceptualized as two groups who have different agendas as far as the affirmative action legislation is concerned. Government has undertaken to change the business community's practices and to monitor the changes, while the business community's role is to respond to these demands. The response may vary from resistance, through minimalist compliance, to going beyond the requirements of the legislation. One question which has yet to be addressed, however, is whether the business community perceives itself as having a different view to the government on equal employment opportunity. After all, some companies saw themselves as being ahead of government policy and as having an EEO policy long before the government passed its legislation:

"The legislation won't change our attitudes because we have always had an equal employment opportunity policy, it's part of our philosophy. We have a high proportion of women here. We don't need legislation...Women themselves are the barriers."

Their confidence in their position was such that they did not know what the eight steps of the legislation were. Other companies, more familiar with the legislation, still maintained that they themselves had little to learn from it:

"This company is advanced - the principles and policies were already in place. The legislation simply highlighted what needed to be done."

"The legislation is a hook to hang EEO on, a justification for what we are doing anyway. It's helpful in that respect ... but basically EEO is in our own interest. We are after talent."

EEO contact persons were asked how widespread they thought support for EEO was in government, in industry and in the community. From Table 22, government was seen as being more strongly committed than industry, and the community was seen as being on a par with business. This finding was consistent with comments made by industry about change having to take place in the community before it can take place in the workplace:

"It's hard to attract female school leavers. The company has a strong link with the schools. We invest a lot of time and effort in public awareness raising through our schools program. But the results are not there to see. We got two women on the last round. The girls that apply

are often not committed. Those who apply are applying for anything because they are desperate.”

“Most [in top management] do not have wives who work. This limits their capacity to understand.”

**Table 22: Percent of random sample regarding EEO as having weak, moderate or strong support in various groups**

Group	weak	moderate	strong
Government	12	38	50
Industry	29	68	3
Community	31	62	7

Perceptions of how much support there was for EEO in different groups were related to organizational characteristics and to the implementation indices (see Table 23). No significant relationships were found, nor did the views of elite companies differ from those of the random sample. This suggests that companies which are implementing EEO programs are not doing so because they perceive others to be doing so. There are other motivational factors which are important, including the previously mentioned “competitive edge”.

**Table 23: Pearson product moment correlation coefficients between views about support for EEO and the structural and outcome variables**

Indicator	Size	% Women	Procedural compliance	Substantive compliance
Support in government	.01	-.13	.00	-.06
Support in industry	.12	-.12	.07	.02
Support in community	.07	.08	-.04	-.04

\*\* significant at the .01 level

\* significant at the .05 level

If companies are being driven by the desire to be innovative rather than the desire to keep up with everyone else, do they care about what the government thinks of what they are doing? This question was asked of EEO contact persons in the following ways. First, the contact persons were asked how important it was for the Affirmative Action

Agency to approve of their program. They were also asked how important it was for the Affirmative Action Agency to believe that their judgements on EEO were correct. These responses were contrasted with how important it was for their own company to approve of the program and believe their judgements were correct (see Table 24). Not surprisingly, company views were overwhelmingly important to EEO contact persons. They were far more ambivalent about the views of the Affirmative Action Agency. The majority (70%) did not believe that the approval of the Agency rated an important or very important response. Just over half (53%), however, did regard it as important that the Agency accept their judgements on EEO as correct.

**Table 24: Percent of random sample attaching importance to the opinions of the Affirmative Action Agency and the company**

Group	not at all	somewhat	important	very important
Agency				
approval	37	33	22	8
judgements accepted as correct	19	28	38	15
Company				
approval	1	2	37	60
judgements accepted as correct	2	4	39	55

These variables were correlated with the organizational and implementation indices (see Table 25). The opinions of the Agency were not related to the performance of the company, but the opinions of the company did matter. EEO contact persons from companies scoring highly on both procedural and substantive compliance were more likely to regard it as important for the company to believe that their judgements on EEO were correct. Their success depended on their credibility within the company. Elite companies did not differ from the random sample on any of these variables.



**Table 25: Pearson product moment correlation coefficients between the importance of others' views of the EEO program and the structural and outcome variables**

Indicator	Size	% Women	Procedural compliance	Substantive compliance
Agency				
approval	-.01	-.10	.15	.03
judgements accepted as correct	.07	.00	.12	.06
Company				
approval	.15	-.05	.04	.16
judgements accepted as correct	.06	-.05	.28**	.30**

\*\* significant at the .01 level

\* significant at the .05 level

### Improving EEO programs

EEO contact persons were asked to give their opinions on a variety of changes that could be made to the way in which the affirmative action program is administered by the government. A major focus of these questions was the business community's reaction to giving the legislation teeth through sanctions, incentives and greater government involvement in the implementation process. The 16 proposals, presented in Table 26, were rated on a five point scale ranging from counterproductive to effective. In Table 26, the popularity of each of the measures is reported after combining the response categories "somewhat effective" and "effective" and the categories "somewhat counterproductive" and "counterproductive". The proposals are grouped into four categories: punitive, consultative, evaluative, and incentive oriented.

Punitive measures to improve EEO programs such as negative publicity, fines and specification of how companies should implement the affirmative action legislation were regarded as counterproductive by the majority of interviewees:

"The problem with the punishment idea is that it encourages lip service."

"A lot still don't fully understand. They'd see the government making extra money [through fines] and that's all. Some industries may be unable to do what is required. The result would be a build up of barriers between government and industry."

"All that would do is increase false reporting and negative feelings."

"Scare tactics encourage companies to say the right things but they may not do it."

"Negative publicity can hurt EEOs. EEOs are doing their darndest and they are held fully responsible. Others say she hasn't been doing her job properly and it's all a waste of money."

"I am a believer in regulation, but the negative publicity doesn't pay. This has happened twice in Queensland. The females say no problem. The company says no problem. What do you do next time?"

Another person responded to the same incident in the following way:

"Any publicity is good publicity. They got media attention, business boomed and they're laughing all the way."

Yet a third of those interviewed believed punishment would be effective when applied to a clearcut criterion such as the submission of the report:

"It starts to get people thinking."

"It's the only thing they understand. But you need to fine them big bikkies, not small amounts."

"You need the punitive aspect. We're talking about male dominated organizations - they don't care - they want the pretty one with the big tits."

Reservations about punishment were more likely to accompany proposals where the criterion was less clearly specified and ambiguous, such as the implementation of the eight steps:

"How do you determine how much is enough?"

"The results are not predictable or quick. You shouldn't punish a company for doing the right thing but not achieving the results."

Table 26: Percent of random sample rating the 16 proposals for change as counterproductive, neutral, and effective

Proposal	Counter-productive	Neutral	Effective
<i>Punitive</i>			
Increasing negative publicity for companies not submitting a report	58	7	35
Ranking companies and making the rank order public through the media	63	25	12
Introducing financial sanctions for companies not submitting reports	63	5	32
Specifying the changes that should be made in the workplace, rather than leaving it up to companies to make the decision	60	15	25
Introducing penalties if companies are not implementing the eight steps	68	14	18
<i>Consultative</i>			
Visits to companies by the Affirmative Action Agency to see their EEO program first hand	22	23	55
Returning unsatisfactory reports to the companies for resubmission	35	18	47
Having more direct contact with the Affirmative Action Agency	13	42	45
Having a strict deadline for report submission	25	27	48
<i>Evaluative</i>			
Giving companies feedback on how they are going on an excellent to unsatisfactory scale for example	14	11	75
Giving companies feedback on how they rank in relation to other companies	19	16	65
Making the report and the company's rank order public in the company (e.g. putting it on a notice board)	39	29	32
Holding an annual meeting with female employees to discuss the company's report to the Affirmative Action Agency	35	29	36
<i>Incentives</i>			
Giving good publicity to companies with interesting EEO programs	3	10	87
Providing modest government financial support for initiatives which assist women (study leave, child care)	16	16	68
Publicizing good EEO programs as models for industry groups	3	6	91

In contrast to punitive measures, there was enormous support for incentives. In particular, business was enthusiastic about having industry models, a response which is consistent with widespread uncertainty about what a good EEO program should look like and what benefits it can bring:

"You get further faster by encouraging companies. An evolutionary approach is more effective than a revolutionary one. This company will comply with all legislation, it is not interested in assisting the position of women. Industry must learn that it can benefit, it can help itself if EEO gets moving. Otherwise we, like other companies, do the bare minimum. It's like tax. We spend more time working out how to avoid it than how we can help society through paying more."

"It would be good to know who's out there doing good stuff - as a benchmark type of thing."

"Models of other companies doing the right thing are very important. But they must be validated so that people can't say that they are just saying that."

It was interesting to find that some companies were uncomfortable about too much good publicity:

"Within the company we were being asked 'why don't you do things inside rather than get glory outside?'"

"Outside we are seen as hot stuff. Yet that is not the perception held within the company."

Others were sceptical:

"There are big companies blowing their own trumpet and waving the flag. We are doing just as much, but we do it quietly."

Nevertheless, good publicity for successful programs was valued more highly by industry than modest financial incentives to assist with child care programs and study leave schemes. On child care and study programs:

"That's the company's responsibility."

"They're about good business management. Government shouldn't pay handouts."

And from a chief executive officer:

"Companies want to do these things or they don't. The government shouldn't have to do this."

Next most popular among the proposals put to EEO personnel were those involving feedback. A significant proportion felt that they needed more than they were currently receiving upon submission of their reports:

"It would be nice to know someone read them."

"Nothing comes back from the reports - smaller companies just don't know."

"I was disappointed on the second report. We didn't get any feedback. It would be good if the government gave mini-brownie points to chief executives who were trying."

"[The Agency] should suggest a range of changes that can be made - stories about what others are doing."

"Even good performers want to know how they are going. We are supposed to be up there, but are we? What are the criteria for five stars - as they have in the Occupational Health and Safety system?"

"What would be helpful are industry specific guidelines and establishing a network within the industry to discuss what we can do. The Agency could facilitate communication between industry groups. It would be more productive if they are offering benefits to business."

At the same time there was concern about how the Affirmative Action Agency could and should evaluate EEO programs:

"Depends on how it's done. It'd be good if there are suggestions and information is passed on."

"Depends on the criteria they'd use."

"How can you compare?"

"Feedback would be good as long as they looked at companies individually. It would be confusing to compare different industries. You've got to compare apples with apples."

"They should give feedback to the companies on how they are going now compared to where they were. Holding up other companies as the model doesn't work. Companies are different with different philosophies."

And some were unimpressed by the feedback they had received:

"We got a lot of feedback, pages of it. But it was not useful."

While increased feedback was generally seen as a desirable change, only about a third of EEO personnel saw anything to be gained by involving employees in the exercise. Again a significant number qualified their response to meeting with female employees to discuss the report in the following way:

"Not just female employees. You can't exclude men. Men need the information as well."

By the same token, publicizing the report and the company ranking in-house was considered effective by only 32%.

"It's irrational and would create dissension. We have [x] men and [y] women and no opportunity for change. I would say you should ask yourself: 'Is it going to be beneficial? Is it going to make them feel better?' My goal is to keep morale high."

The random sample was almost evenly divided on the desirability of consultation and dialogue between the Affirmative Action Agency and business. Some saw this as an opportunity to learn and develop:

"A good development experience for everyone. The Agency would become more focused and more visible."

"It would be good if companies had a contact person at the Agency. Someone who looked after that company. You need some continuity of staff for that of course."

"We get involved in talking to industry groups. It's part of our community involvement. Naming in parliament is silly. It's better to go in and talk."

and some thought it could be a good initiative under certain circumstances:

"As long as it was to provide assistance, not police."

"You could get input this way. As long as it was a partnership and not the government telling you what to do."

"As long as it was a two way street. More offering advice and guidance than imposing practices."

"Depends - have to be careful not to be police-like."

"Depends if they badger or assist in developing the program."

Others simply saw this as an opportunity for government interference and monitoring:

"We are reluctant to get involved with government. It bureaucratizes things, more paper work, more forms to fill out."

The basis for classifying the proposals as punitive, consultative, evaluative or incentive oriented was a principal components analysis of the ratings given by EEO personnel (see Appendix XII for details). The items were subsequently aggregated into scales representing punitive measures, consultative measures, evaluative measures and incentives. The only proposal excluded from a scale on psychometric grounds was meeting with female employees to discuss the report. Details are provided in Appendix XII.

These scales were correlated with the organizational and implementation indices (see Table 27), with few significant relationships emerging. Consultative and incentive strategies were supported more strongly by those who had done more toward implementing the legislation both procedurally and substantively, perhaps because these companies were most likely to be the ones experiencing the benefits of such schemes. Consultative strategies were also more strongly supported by the elite companies (see Appendix VII).

The lack of significant relationships here is an important finding. One might have expected that those complying with the legislation and those not complying properly would have different views on effective sanctioning methods. In particular, one might have expected those who were not implementing the legislation to be more antagonistic to punishment than those who were trying to do the right thing. This was not the case. Effective compliers and ineffective compliers appear to agree on the relative merits of criticism and punishment.

**Table 27: Pearson product moment correlation coefficients between views about proposals for change and the structural and outcome variables**

Proposal type	Size	% Women	Procedural compliance	Substantive compliance
Punitive	.11	.05	.04	.10
Consultative	.13	-.01	.24**	.18*
Evaluative	.04	-.01	.03	.05
Incentive	.13	-.01	.29**	.29**

\*\* significant at the .01 level

\* significant at the .05 level

### Summary

The Affirmative Action Agency was regarded favourably by the business community, with positive regard being greater among business units that were making more progress in implementing the legislation. Where criticisms were made, they focused on the Agency's lack of authority, business sophistication and capacity to generate new ideas. While government was seen to be the strongest supporter of affirmative action, stronger than either the business sector or the community, there appeared to be some doubts about the strength of government backing for the Affirmative Action Agency.

Of note was widespread lack of concern for what the Affirmative Action Agency thought of the business unit's EEO program. A partial explanation for this result is undoubtedly the Agency's lack of enforcement power. Part of the response is also likely to be a function of the distance between the company and the Agency. For many companies, an annual report is submitted and that is the end of it for another 12 months. Minimal contact does not provide a basis for building mutual respect and understanding.

On the issue of sanctioning strategies, incentives were viewed as the best while punishment was viewed as the worst. Of interest and importance were the requests for feedback and dialogue. Companies in general seemed receptive to ideas for how they could make their EEO programs work more effectively.



## CHAPTER 9

### DIMENSIONS OF COMPLIANCE

This research has shown that self-reported procedural and substantive implementation of the Affirmative Action Act is related not only to beliefs and attitudes about the problem of sex discrimination and about the legislation, but also to the EEO contact person's social networks and reference groups. The next question to ask is whether these factors are interconnected in some way to produce a limited set of dimensions along which high and low compliers differ. Before exploring this issue, the findings related to procedural and substantive compliance will be summarized.

#### **Procedural compliance: The number of steps implemented**

Business units which had undertaken more of the steps required by legislation had the following characteristics:

- (a) They saw the Affirmative Action legislation as reasonable and not as intrusive.
- (b) They regarded the legislation as being effective in breaking down barriers.
- (c) They regarded the legislation as having favourable outcomes for business.
- (d) They regarded the legislation as having overall benefits for Australian society.
- (e) They regarded the eight steps as desirable and practicable.
- (f) EEO officers regarded EEO initiatives (changes in the workplace) as desirable and practicable.
- (g) EEO officers believed their company should comply with the spirit of the legislation, not just basic requirements.
- (h) EEO officers were highly committed and achievement oriented with regard to EEO.
- (i) The EEO program had been integrated into other programs in the company.

All of the above are characteristics which are consistent with theories which look to beliefs and attitudes, and consistency between beliefs, attitudes and actions to explain human behaviour. The following characteristics add an additional dimension to the picture presented above. While not denying the importance of one's informational base, these other correlates link implementation to supportive social networks within the organization and outside the organization.

More steps had been implemented where:

- (j) Female employees prioritized EEO as a workplace issue.
- (k) Union's prioritized EEO as a workplace issue.

- (l) The EEO officer and female employees cooperated in the implementation of EEO.
- (m) The EEO officer and the union consulted on EEO.
- (n) The EEO officer was in contact with EEO officers from other organizations through professional bodies.
- (o) The EEO officer sought the opinions of outsiders.
- (p) The Affirmative Action Agency had credibility in the eyes of the EEO officer in that it was seen to be supportive, competent and sophisticated in its understanding of business.
- (q) EEO officers regarded it as important that the company believe that his/her judgements on EEO were correct.
- (r) EEO officers believed in the effectiveness of consultative and incentive strategies.
- (s) EEO officers saw themselves and senior management as part of a social bargain between business and government.
- (t) The affirmative action report was available to employees.

#### **Substantive compliance: Our four star rating system**

The ratings which our judges gave the reports (see Appendix IV) were based on the degree to which companies showed not only a commitment to removing discrimination, but a commitment to changing workplace practices to create a level playing field in which the merit principle could be applied. This four star rating system which we have called substantive compliance throughout this report had very similar correlates to the procedural index. Therefore, only the differences will be mentioned below.

Substantive compliance was not related to four of the social networking variables:

- (i) seeing business and government as entering a social bargain.
- (ii) making the affirmative action report available to employees.
- (iii) & (iv) using outsiders and trade unions as sources of support.
- (v) seeing the Affirmative Action Agency as sophisticated in its understanding of business and supportive.

These are variables which might edge EEO officers into meeting the basic requirements, but they are unlikely to motivate EEO officers to do more than the minimum, that is, push for changes to the way in which work is done to incorporate EEO principles.

The variables which were related to substantive compliance but not procedural compliance were:

- (i) The EEO officer's awareness of the problem of sex discrimination in the workforce.

- (ii) The EEO officer's belief in the fairness of the legislation for men as well as women.
- (iii) The EEO officer's perceptions of senior management regarding EEO initiatives as desirable.
- (iv) The EEO officer spending a greater proportion of time on EEO.
- (v) The company prioritizing EEO over OH&S.
- (vi) The EEO officer being in contact with other EEO persons informally.
- (vii) The EEO officer's respect for the competency of the Affirmative Action Agency.

These were the variables which appeared to make the difference between meeting the basic requirements specified by law and moving toward the fundamental goals of the legislation, the removal of sex discrimination and the introduction of workplace changes that provide women with equal employment opportunities.

#### **What are the basic dimensions along which organizations differ?**

In order to answer this question, the 31 characteristics identified in Chapters 4 to 7 as correlates of procedural or substantive compliance were subjected to a principal components analysis followed by a varimax rotation. While the predictors of implementation such as beliefs, attitudes, priorities and social support were discussed separately and were regarded as conceptually distinct, strong empirical relationships were expected among them. For instance, if female employees prioritized EEO as an issue, they may also be likely to cooperate and support their EEO officer. This analysis provided the means for grouping together the variables which were highly intercorrelated, and in so doing, reduce the number of dimensions we need to consider in summing up the findings.

Apart from singling out only those variables which were related to one or both implementation indices, the variables used in this analysis were restricted in two other respects. First, the variables included only those that focused on the meeting of legislative requirements and did not include those considered in Chapter 8, that is, perceptions of the Affirmative Action Agency and the effectiveness of changes to the legislation.

Second, the EEO contact's perception of senior management's position tended to be very highly correlated with their own. Entering both, therefore, was redundant. Yet the extent to which EEO personnel saw their position differing from that of senior management was a variable of theoretical interest. Consequently, this analysis includes

the views of the EEO officers and substitutes a discrepancy score where senior management's view also correlates with implementation. The analysis was conducted on cases for which there was no missing data, resulting in a reduced sample size of 106. The results of the rotated principal components analysis are presented in Table 28. Six components were extracted accounting for 52% of the variance.

Dimension 1 was defined by strong factor loadings for the attitudinal and belief scales reflecting support for the legislation's legitimacy, reasonableness, fairness, effectiveness, and its benefits to industry and society. Also dominating the factor were loadings on beliefs in the desirability and practicability of EEO initiatives such as management development programs, child care provisions, leave, and permanent part-time positions. The personal commitment of EEO officers toward achieving these goals and the extent to which they involved female employees in the enterprise also contributed strongly to the factor. Factor 1 was labelled *ideological commitment*.

Contrasting with the first dimension was the fourth dimension. This component was defined by acceptance of the legislation as reasonable (not intrusive), acceptance of the eight steps as desirable and practicable, and the integration of EEO principles into other aspects of the business. Companies scoring well on this dimension would be meeting the basic procedural requirements of the legislation and would be committed to getting rid of discriminatory practices. They would not necessarily support initiatives, however, designed to enhance women's opportunities in the workforce. Since no explicit commitment to promoting opportunities for women accompanied this orientation, the dimension was called *lip service*.

From Table 28, factor 2 was defined by discrepancy scores, the difference that EEO contact persons perceived to exist between themselves and senior management. Discrepancy scores were obtained by subtracting the EEO contact person's perception of senior management's view from their own view on the attitude and belief scales measured in Chapters 4 and 5. Dimension 2 was defined by the extent to which the EEO contact person felt more favourably disposed than senior management to the desirability and practicability of the eight steps, to the desirability of EEO initiatives, to the legislation's reasonableness, effectiveness and its opportunities for good business outcomes. The dimension was called *dissent*, meaning that the EEO contact person considered him or herself to be out of step with a more conservative senior management.

Table 28: Factor loadings for six components underlying the belief, attitude, priority and support correlates of implementation of the affirmative action legislation

Indicators	Rotated principal components					
	Ideological commitment	Dissent	Priority	Lip service	Union activity	Social bargain
Awareness	.62	.30				
Good outcomes	.79					
Fairness	.53		.30			
Intrusiveness	-.43			-.46		
Social bargain	.36					.60
Effectiveness	.67					
Spirit of legislation					-.38	
Discrepancy - good outcomes		.69				
Discrepancy - intrusiveness		-.62				
Discrepancy - effectiveness		.60				
Discrepancy - social bargain						.66
Steps desirable	.38			.68		
Steps practicable				.83		
Initiatives desirable	.64					
Initiatives practicable	.46					
Discrepancy - steps desirable		.84				
Discrepancy - steps practicable		.85				
Discrepancy - initiatives desirable		.77				
Benefits overall	.73					
Percent time	.36		.45			
Priority over OH&S			.37			
Integration				.54	-.33	
Women-active	.33		.62			
Union-active					.76	
Women-support	.48				.36	
Union-support					.69	
Contact EEOs-formal			.47			
Contact EEOs- informal			.67			
Outside support		.34	.47			
Sharing report with employees						-.47
EEO goal directed	.58					

Dimension 3 was defined by measures reflecting the prioritizing of EEO: spending time on EEO issues, contacting other EEO officers particularly informally, having a network outside the organization to discuss EEO issues, the organization prioritizing EEO over OH&S, and female employees actively pursuing EEO objectives. Unlike dimension 1 which was primarily concerned with having an informational base, this dimension was concerned with having a social network within the company and outside that assigned importance to EEO. The dimension was called *priority*.

The fifth and sixth factors were relatively specific. Factor 5 was defined by having unions at the workplace who were active on EEO and to whom the EEO contact person could turn for information on how female employees felt about certain issues. This factor was also defined by greater ambivalence about going along with the spirit of the legislation. The dimension was called *union activity*.

The sixth and final factor was defined by the social bargain scale and by the extent to which EEO contact persons saw themselves as adopting this position more strongly than their senior managers. Also loading significantly on this factor was the practice of not sharing the affirmative action report with employees. Interpreting this factor is difficult, and additional analyses did not prove enlightening. Consequently, the most important variable defining the factor, the social bargain scale, was used by itself in subsequent analyses. Factor scores were calculated for each company on the first five dimensions.

Scores on *ideological commitment*, *dissent*, *priority*, *lip service*, *union activity*, and *the social bargain* were subsequently related to several characteristics: procedural and substantive compliance, the size of the reporting unit and the percent of women in the workforce, the business community's opinions regarding the Affirmative Action Agency and their views on sanctioning in relation to the affirmative action legislation. The commitment of the organization to human resource management was also of interest given the importance of these variables in a previous study (Braithwaite, 1992). Three measures were used. The employee relations scale represented the availability of five benefits to employees: (a) canteen, (b) recreational and fitness facilities, (c) medical and/or dental care, (d) welfare or counselling services, and (e) social club. The communications scale represented the variety of ways in which information was communicated in the organization and comprised 8 items: (a) newsletter, (b) regular meetings between senior management and employees, (c) working parties, (d) regular meetings between supervisors and employees, (e) daily walk around by senior management, (f) ongoing formal joint consultative committee, (g) quality circles, and

(h) regular social functions. The innovative management scale comprised 7 items representing strategies for improving job performance: (a) employee relations training for supervisors, (b) formal training schemes, (c) job re-design, (d) skills audit, (e) staff appraisal, (f) quality circles, and (g) total quality control. Descriptive statistics for the human resource management scales are provided in Appendix X. The correlations of factor scores with indicators of implementation, organizational structure, human resource management practices and support appear in Table 29.

**Table 29: Pearson product moment correlations of factor scores with implementation, organizational and managerial characteristics and support indicators**

Indicators	Ideological commitment	Dissent	Priority	Lip service	Union activity	Social bargain
<i>Implementation</i>						
Procedural compliance	.28**	.08	.10	.27**	.23*	.21*
Substantive compliance	.33**	.15	.32**	.11	.06	.05
<i>Organizational characteristics</i>						
Size	.18	.19	.25*	.14	-.16	.01
% Women	.08	.13	.12	-.09	-.23*	.01
<i>Human resources management</i>						
Employee relations scale	.07	-.04	.27**	.20*	-.05	.04
Communications scale	.05	-.14	.22*	.24*	.03	.16
Innovative management scale	.16	-.10	.12	.20*	-.03	.09
<i>Views of Affirmative Action Agency</i>						
Supportiveness	.24*	.14	.09	.24*	.06	.17*
Competency	.27**	.18	.07	.28**	.08	.24*
Strength	.04	-.07	.01	-.01	-.07	.01
Business sophistication	.20*	.10	.07	.09	.20*	.04
Government support	-.13	-.04	-.12	.05	.13	.06
Values its approval	.28**	.13	.13	.12	.20*	.33**
Values acceptance of judgements	.30**	.02	-.06	.21*	.01	.18
<i>Opinions about sanctioning strategies</i>						
Punishment	.37**	.31**	.14	.17	.01	.26**
Incentives	.39**	-.05	.14	-.04	.05	.42**
Evaluation	.23*	-.03	.01	.21*	.06	.33**
Consultation	.44**	-.04	.10	.25*	.12	.32**

In addition, the factor scores were related to a categorical variable constructed from the two law abiding items presented in Chapter 5. Reporting units were divided into three groups: (1) those where senior management was perceived as being unlikely to comply with the affirmative action legislation because it is the law and who also reject going along with the spirit of the legislation (n=6), (2) those whose senior management is committed to obeying the law but nothing more (n=20), and (3) those whose senior management wishes to do its best to implement the spirit of the legislation (n=80). Average factor scores for each group were compared by means of analysis of variance (see Appendix XIII).

The most important findings to emerge from these analyses are the profiles of business units which are satisfying the procedural requirements of the legislation compared with those of business units coming to grips with the substantive requirements. As the following discussion shows, there appear to be different paths to achieving different outcomes, and even different paths for the same outcome.

### **Paths to procedural compliance**

Lip service, union activity, and the social bargain scale were related to procedural compliance, but not substantive compliance. The dimension which was labelled lip service was defined principally by acceptance of the legislative requirements in its basic form. The correlations appearing in Table 29 show that business units with high scores on this dimension had a commitment to human resource management. This commitment was reflected in the offering of employee benefits, in the adoption of a variety of methods for communication, and in the use of techniques to enhance job performance. They also had a positive view of the Agency in terms of its supportiveness and competency, and valued the respect of the Agency with regard to their judgements about their EEO program. While high scorers on this dimension were not making substantive changes to their workplaces, there was no evidence of open hostility or rejection of EEO principles. If anything there appeared to be a degree of uncertainty and inexperience with regard to EEO. High scorers on this dimension believed that EEO programs could generally be improved by feedback from and dialogue with the Agency.

The lip service dimension was not related to perceptions of senior management's interpretation of its legal obligations. This was an important and unexpected finding. It suggests that for lip service companies, performance at a procedural rather than substantive level had little to do with a deliberate decision to do the minimum that the law required. By the same token, it is probably true to say that without the law, many



high scorers on the lip service dimension would not be doing anything. In the words of one interviewee:

“The reality is if the legislation is there you do it. If the legislation is not there, you don’t.”

Procedural compliance was likely to be high where the level of union involvement in EEO was high. Union activity was most likely to occur in male dominated workplaces and in workplaces where senior management were perceived to be unyielding to the law and uninterested in implementing the spirit of the legislation. Where union activity was high, EEO contact persons expressed the view that the approval of the Affirmative Action Agency for the EEO program was important. Thus, while there was little evidence of unions being effective in bringing about substantive change in workplace practices, they appear to be useful in fulfilling a watchdog role. The importance of this role in more general regulatory contexts will be discussed in the next chapter.

Where EEO contact persons saw themselves and senior management as having a social bargain with government, procedural compliance tended to be enhanced. The social bargain perspective was also related to the company having a favourable orientation to the Affirmative Action Agency and supporting all forms of sanctioning as means of improving EEO programs. The social bargain scale was correlated with three other factors, suggesting that it may represent a more generalized orientation to government and to the law. A social bargain world view was more likely to be found among those who were ideologically committed ( $r = .36, p < .01$ ), among those adopting a lipservice approach ( $r = .33, p < .01$ ) and among those reporting high union activity in the business unit ( $r = .18, p < .05$ ).

### **Paths to substantive compliance**

Substantive compliance was associated with two paths, one primarily informational, the other primarily social. The informational path was represented by the ideological commitment dimension. Unlike all other factors ideological commitment was associated with both procedural compliance and substantive compliance. Business units in which the EEO contact person was ideologically committed were likely to have implemented more steps and were also more likely to be introducing workplace changes that would enhance equal employment opportunities for women. EEO contact persons with high scores on this factor valued the opinions of the Affirmative Action Agency and regarded the Agency as supportive and competent. The links between the Affirmative Action Agency and EEO officers from these companies were strong. While there was no evidence that senior management obstructed high scorers on this

dimension, there was obvious frustration in getting EEO programs implemented effectively. High scorers on this dimension tended to see senior management as committed to legal requirements rather than to the spirit of the legislation. Furthermore, those who were ideologically committed were strong supporters of all possible sanctions for improving EEO programs, be they punishment or incentive oriented, evaluative, or consultative.

The second path associated with substantive compliance was described by the priority factor. Unlike the ideologically committed, those who had prioritized EEO were not necessarily doing well on procedural compliance. Nor did they have particular views or links with the Affirmative Action Agency. Yet they appeared to understand the changes that were required to bring about equal employment opportunity and they were able to make progress toward implementing these initiatives. Prioritizing EEO was more likely to characterize large organizations and those with good employee relations programs and internal communication procedures. What was most interesting about this dimension was that it represented change which was arising out of grass roots support and peer networks. The more powerful actors who one would expect to have a controlling influence, that is, senior management and the Affirmative Action Agency, appeared to be almost irrelevant to the changes that were taking place. Needless to say, both could have asserted their authority if they chose to, but they had not.

The last factor, dissent, was not related to compliance of either a procedural or substantive kind. One possible explanation was that dissent would be highest in business units where EEO contacts were most ideologically committed. Ideological commitment would push compliance up, while dissent would push it down, resulting in no relationship emerging between dissent and compliance. This argument, however, was not supported by further analyses. When ideological commitment was statistically controlled, dissent remained unrelated to compliance. The most likely explanation for this finding lies in reports of senior management's attitude to EEO programs. Chapter 6 documents the low priority senior management assigned to the program. While senior management may have held a different view from the EEO contact person, the issue was not important enough for senior management to curtail the activities of the EEO officer or to interfere in the shaping of the program. The only variable that was significantly related to the dissent dimension was punishment. EEO contact persons who reported dissent were strong advocates of punishment as a means of improving EEO programs. EEO contacts with high scores on the dissent dimension were likely to feel ostracized and stigmatized, frustrated and betrayed. In many cases they had burnt themselves out trying to sell EEO to senior managers. In their view, the use of coercion was the only thing left.

## Summary

Although procedural and substantive compliance are highly correlated, they are distinguishable and are achieved through different paths. Procedural compliance is more likely to be found in business units in which unions are active on EEO matters, in business units which see the requirements of the legislation as reasonable and the basic eight steps as desirable and practicable, and in companies which view their relationship with government as a social bargain.

Substantive compliance, on the other hand, appears to occur where there is a strong informational base or where the social network prioritizes EEO issues. Ideological commitment to EEO and strong links with the Affirmative Action Agency guaranteed some business units a high score on substantive compliance. In other cases, neither the Affirmative Action Agency nor senior management appeared to play an important role. Effective substantive implementation was associated with female workers who were interested in EEO and with contact persons who devoted time and effort to their needs and to networking with other EEO personnel outside the company.

## CHAPTER 10

### CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this research shed light on five issues which are central to future policy directions for affirmative action legislation. The study has produced data from a stratified random sample of reporting units which allows conclusions to be drawn on: (a) the business community's views about the affirmative action legislation, (b) the value of the public reporting procedure, (c) the importance of the information base in implementing the legislation, (d) the importance of social networks to implementation, and (e) the views of the business community on strategies to improve EEO programs.

#### **The business community's views on the legislation**

##### *Findings:*

The majority of the business community regarded the legislation as reasonable in that it was not intrusive, it raised awareness of possible social injustice, and it offered benefits to business and to the community in highlighting underutilized human resources. Approximately three quarters of those interviewed found six of the eight steps both desirable and practicable, and more than half found 14 of the 16 EEO initiatives desirable.

The extent to which business has responded positively to the legislation is undoubtedly due, in part, to its low key and gentle nature. The eight steps require companies to set up processes for developing an affirmative action program, but at the same time give companies freedom to implement the legislation as they wish according to their needs. Reporting progress to the Affirmative Action Agency on an annual basis is compulsory, but again business units have considerable freedom in how they report. Some have even chosen to submit a blank report.

In spite of acceptance of the legislation in general terms, this research clearly shows the pockets of resistance that still exist and impose a ceiling on just how much can be achieved under the legislation. A substantial number of those responsible for EEO and an even higher proportion of senior management are not convinced that women are discriminated against in the workforce. Blatant sex discrimination was recognized and condemned. Subtler forms were a complete mystery, and faded into insignificance against the view that women put up their own barriers and could play the game as equals with men if they wanted to. There was often little insight into the inaccurate

assumptions and stereotypes associated with "the good employee", "the employee with potential", "the highflyer" or "the one who wanted a challenge" and how such misconceptions lead to talented women being overlooked within industry. In fact, the debate was not even on the table. Where assumptions were discussed, they were raised by female EEO contacts articulating what they were up against in order to succeed. Being "unable to shoot the breeze" after work with the boys because of family commitments was recognized as a disadvantage for senior women.

A further impediment to the development of EEO programs was the fear that the merit principle was under threat and that singling out women was discriminatory. These fears echoed across the interviews from the most senior person to the most junior, from the largest company to the smallest, and from women and men alike. Again, issues were not on the table for debate, creative solutions were not being sought, but rather fixed positions were being stated. The practice of appointing women to positions because they were women was judged unfair, irresponsible and was condemned. Of concern was the fact that for so many this was seen as an option arising from the legislation. Far less common was a discussion of the way in which female job applicants could be more fairly scrutinized and evaluated. Comparing the qualifications and relevant experience of a 40 year old woman who has raised a family and a 25 year old man without family responsibilities in a job interview is a difficult task. Defining relevant experience in the first place is a challenge, to say nothing of predicting their likely job performance in the short and long term. There is no simple formula for deciding these issues, but there is a wealth of experience in the business community as to how these decisions are made. Critical self-analysis of this data base could enhance the sophistication and effectiveness of personnel practices. In general, however, there was little evidence of this experience being used to improve the fairness of selection procedures and to ensure talent was not lost. The specifics were rendered irrelevant by sweeping principles with ambiguous meanings. Again positions were being stated, rather than solutions negotiated.

When discussing management development programs for women, the discriminatory nature of this initiative brought one of two responses: Opposition on the grounds that one group benefitted while another did not, or support on the grounds that the gap brought about through past discrimination would be closed, making the playing field more level for women and men. One interviewee asked "we don't say would all shy people come forward. Why should we say all women come forward?" The point is a revealing one. Indeed, we do not ask all shy people to come forward, but we do offer social skills training in workplaces with these people in mind, and we give supervisors the responsibility for informing employees who might be interested or who might

benefit from such courses. A parallel strategy avoids the incompatible positions that so many EEO personnel put themselves into when considering management development programs for women. Programs can be set up which address problems preventing women from reaching their potential. The program can be open to all since some men may be having the same problem as many of the women. Supervisors can steer employees who could benefit from such instruction in the direction of the course. Needs becomes the criterion for attendance, not sex.

The fact that these kinds of discussions were not taking place in the majority of companies was in keeping with the finding that little discussion about EEO took place at any level. EEO was a low priority. Senior management was seen to be unaware of either the problems or the principles and not at all interested in finding out. Female employees as a group were sceptical and disinterested, and other employees were antagonistic and resentful, seeing changes to workplace practice as troublesome and threatening. EEO officers were often not in close contact with unions. They appeared to be marginalized from where the action was, from the board room to the shop floor. Furthermore, the seniority of the contact person did not reflect importance attached to the EEO program. In fact, responsibility being taken by top management seemed to be a way of containing the influence of the legislation in many cases.

Without a base of support, therefore, it was little wonder that EEO officers were cautious in their appraisal of some of the less familiar EEO initiatives put to them for their evaluation. Many EEO officers did not have a lot of room in which to move, preferring to tread quietly, not attracting too much attention to their cause for fear of a backlash.

Fear of change was the third impediment to full implementation of the affirmative action legislation. At the time of a recession, such fear is understandable. There was no evidence, however, that things would happen once the recession had passed. The business community was not waiting for an opportunity to revamp workplace practices. Those that were thinking along these lines stood out like solitary beacons, showing the capacity of organizations to change when the goals they were striving for demanded them to do so. In most cases, however, implementing the affirmative action legislation meant tinkering at the edges of programs that were already in existence. Few realized or were prepared to contemplate the possibility that there may be alternative, fairer and perhaps even more effective ways of achieving their corporate goals. Some had the wisdom of time on their side:

“Ten years ago we use to say you couldn't have women in industrial relations - it's too tough for them. But look at them now!”

But most who thought about such issues tended to be frustrated and angered by the lack of responsiveness of those around them.

*Policy implications:*

The attitudinal data show that many varied views about the affirmative action legislation exist in the community and highlight the fragile nature of the cooperation that exists between the business community and government. If the affirmative action legislation is to be implemented properly, the priority assigned to the program must be increased. Strategies to increase priority, however, will have limited effectiveness without the business community having a better understanding of what issues it should be addressing and what benefits this can offer. Currently, discussion of EEO takes place in a relatively closed shop, often among the ideologically committed. Progress from this point depends on dialogue between government and industry, between like industries, between trade unions and industry, and across all levels within the organization. Facilitation of dialogue and discussion that has a specific focus on workforce issues is a function which the Affirmative Action Agency is still required to perform.

**The value of the public report**

*Findings:*

The reporting procedure has been criticized as being boring, tedious, a waste of time, and not worth the paper it is written on. Without doubt, there will be a discrepancy between what business units say they do and what they actually do, just as there is commonly a discrepancy between what a good resume and good references say a job applicant can do and what that person actually does do.

At the extreme, when EEO officers present the company in the best possible light, they may be sailing close to the wind with regard to fraud. EEO contact persons perceived this as an enormous problem. Perceptions of others cheating the system leads to perceptions of unfairness and will undoubtedly undermine the legitimacy of the reporting exercise in time.

Just as it would be naive to deny fraudulent reporting, it is dangerous to exaggerate it. This study suggests that in the vast majority of cases, companies are telling it pretty much as it is. The aggregated public report data do not convey a picture of the business community enthusiastically embracing EEO programs. The reports do not glow with political correctness and impress with innovative programs. Through the public reports,

the business community acknowledges that it is not doing a great deal. Australian industry has simply taken a few tentative steps in the right direction. Companies were accepting of some requirements of the legislation and not of others. These views were reflected in their filling out of the public report. When interviews were conducted with EEO contact persons before the next reporting period, these same views were expressed. When the public report data were correlated with the interview data, there was an impressive correspondence between the two sources of data. The public reporting procedure, while not perfect, had far more predictive validity than many expected.

If industry is prepared to express its views and opinions through the public reporting procedure, it has value within the company, for the Affirmative Action Agency, and for the business community in general. For industry, the public report is the only requirement that leads to the affirmative action legislation working its way up the priority list for at least two days of the year. As one EEO officer explained about the strict deadline for report submission:

“If you didn’t have it, you wouldn’t get it.”

At best, the public report can prioritize EEO for employers and employees alike and act as a checklist to review past achievements, consider past gains, and plan for the future. Seminars can be held which seek information and ideas. For example,

- (a) had all new recruits seen the EEO policy statement;
- (b) what were their thoughts on it, did they understand it;
- (c) what was the gender balance for new recruits and promotions over the past 12 months;
- (d) did the selection criteria hold up in view of the outcomes;
- (e) where was the greatest talent in the company, were women seen in this light, and if not, why not;
- (f) were there lessons learnt about how to better deal with re-entry of women into the workforce, maternity leave, part-time work and the like;
- (g) were employees having difficulty juggling work and family and was this to the detriment of the company;
- (h) what progress had been made toward reducing gender biases within the company;
- (i) were employees prepared for the fact that gender balances would change and that their behaviour might also have to change to accommodate their new co-workers;



(j) had the company developed its understanding of workforce diversity, particularly in relation to women, migrants and workers with family responsibilities, and with what benefits.

These exercises in self-appraisal and information exchange within companies were expected to take place across Australian industry when the eight step process requirements were implemented. They have tended not to happen. The processes have been put in place, but the discussants have not been at the table, otherwise occupied from the top of the firm to the bottom. It is little wonder that the reporting process seems such a waste of time to EEO officers. Metaphorically speaking, they are all dressed up with nowhere to go and no-one to go with.

One company explained how it achieved exchanges of information on a range of issues (much broader than EEO) through small group seminars taking a slice of individuals from across the organization. Incorporating public reports into discussions of this kind makes them useful for the organization. In this way, different perspectives will emerge and can be placed side by side for analysis and debate. Such views may not always be sympathetic to the affirmative action legislation, but at least information is being shared about the legislation and what it is aiming to achieve.

By including employees from more junior positions and from trade unions, the public report is also opened up for scrutiny within the company, something that does not happen in the majority of cases. The legislation has tended to be implemented at the top with the notion that no-one else needs to bother themselves with it: It's about policy, not "bread and butter stuff". Yet the companies have the responsibility to turn it into bread and butter stuff. They clearly need greater incentives to encourage them to do so.

One set of incentives that this study exposed are those relating to knowledge and experience. This report puts forward the proposition that misinformation and ignorance remain plausible explanations for why EEO programs have been slow to develop. Supporting this view are the data from industry asking for feedback, evaluation and consultation to find out how to go about meeting regulatory requirements.

The public reports provide a basis for feedback to the companies: They can be informed on the rate of development of their program relative to other similar companies, they can be informed of both the positive and negative experiences of companies who have faced similar problems and sought similar solutions. In other words, the public report should be the starting point for dialogue between industry and government. Furthermore, it can serve as the basis for setting up industry networks on EEO, business

units that can help each other through sharing information and ideas and collectively seeking advice and support from the Agency.

Finally, the reporting process has value in that it can inform on when sufficient change has taken place for the sun to set on the legislative requirements. Some claimed that the reports had already outlived their usefulness. This study suggests that this is not the case; that if they are used as an impetus for discussion, they can educate and develop EEO programs within the organization. Representatives from one of the elite companies expressed the state of play in these terms:

“My role is to self-destruct....But at the moment it all still has to be driven by a person.”

#### *Policy implications:*

Given that EEO programs are still in their infancy, enhancing the fairness of the reporting system has to be seen as a high priority for government. Random audits by the Agency, requiring trade union delegates to co-sign the report, intra-industry review panels, and consultant reports are ways in which blatant misreporting of EEO practices can be minimized. Making the reports available on notice boards for comment by employees is another way of increasing the accountability of those compiling and signing the report.

Feedback on individual reports and on the successes and failures of like industries is important for maintaining the integrity of the reporting procedure. If companies have doubts about whether anyone reads them, they are less likely to take them seriously. Regulatory systems need to ensure that they don't lose credibility in the eyes of those who are playing by the rules in their bid to catch those who are not. This study shows that EEO officers who are trying to implement the legislation, sometimes against a tide of corporate opinion, need to have their efforts recognized. EEO Practitioners' Associations, as valuable as they are, are a poor substitute for recognition by the Affirmative Action Agency.

#### **Information as the basis for change**

##### *Findings:*

This study has shown that compliance with the legislation, in a procedural and substantive sense, is related to one's knowledge base, that is, the information that individual's have about the affirmative action legislation, the legitimacy of its goals, its

effectiveness, its reasonableness, its fairness, and the benefits it offers to oneself and to others. Earlier in this chapter, it was pointed out that many in Australian industry are still non-believers, and this was particularly likely to be the case among top management. At the same time, the Affirmative Action Agency has been very active in distributing information and booklets and offering seminars. The question raised is what limits the effectiveness of current educational strategies.

The priority assigned to EEO in most companies suggests that much reading material may stay in the in-tray of the EEO officer to be read in the spare moment that never actually comes along. The "not enough time" phenomenon, combined with the widespread belief among companies that they are already implementing EEO (it's simply good human resource management), lessens the likelihood that educational materials will make an impact on practice. The challenge for the Affirmative Action Agency is to prioritize their message.

*Policy implications:*

Communicating principles, generalized messages about benefits and process strategies have been appropriate educational endeavours for the first six years. Some have heard the messages and been convinced of their importance, but many others have not. New educational initiatives can seek to prioritize their message in a variety of ways from punishments to incentives. The data of this study, however, show considerable support for feedback and evaluation based on the public report and visits with the companies.

Feedback and evaluation prioritize education in three ways. First, the educational message is personalized and for this reason captures attention. Second, the educational message is grounded in a specific context. The feedback is about the appropriate or inappropriate application of a principle and bridges the gap between theory and practice. Knowledge and understanding from one domain do not automatically translate into another. EEO officers, their employers and their fellow employees must learn how to apply EEO principles. An excellent example of the lack of ability to translate from abstract rules to practice occurred in a company that believed it was time to close the books on reporting to the Agency. During the interview, a supervisor phoned to check with the personnel officer over whether they should put a casual worker off because she was pregnant and having difficulty coping with the heat. In a specific context, different and conflicting principles and ideas about the right thing to do spring to mind and implementers of legislation are left confused. Dialogue is essential for resolving these dilemmas and the need for education is no less important in the applied setting than in

the setting in which company executives have the law translated for them into general principles.

Third, research in other contexts has drawn attention to the way in which the meaning and application of rules is learnt, not through abstract discourse but through story telling. Shearing and Ericson (1991) make this point in relation to how police officers make decisions. They point out that it is simply not true that police officers make decisions by reference to rules. Police learn how to handle difficult situations by hearing stories about how competent officers handled similar situations or by telling their own stories to others. Police culture, according to Shearing and Ericson, is not a book of rules, but rather a story book. Understanding and experience is acquired through immersion in these stories.

This same phenomenon was observed in a recent study of nursing home regulation. While the regulatory context is different from that of affirmative action, one major obstacle to compliance was the same. The regulations had changed in line with a new corporate philosophy, one with which nursing homes were not familiar. The new approach was to be resident centred and inspectors had to deal with such issues as whether or not the nursing home was providing a home-like environment and respecting the privacy of residents. These new rules caused concern for both regulators and the regulated. The strategy which was observed being used most effectively by officers of the Department of Community Services, Housing and Health to deal with these anxieties was story telling.

During interviews for the affirmative action study, consultants reported using stories to demonstrate points, to discuss concerns and to convince recalcitrant companies that they should toe the line. EEO officers who were achievement-oriented on EEO talked to me by relating one story after another and reported using stories to convince others to implement the program. Effective communicators tell stories. The problem is not that the Affirmative Action Agency does not have effective communicators. The problem is that the Agency has limited opportunity for communicating with companies at this level.

Thus, providing feedback on reports to companies not only contributes to the integrity of the reporting process, but provides the Affirmative Action Agency with opportunities for story-telling and tailor made education. This is particularly likely to be effective if the mechanism is in place within the company (e.g. a consultative committee) for providing feedback to a cross section of the organization.

## Social networks as the basis for change

### *Findings:*

While compliance with the law depends on knowing what is required, knowing is not always sufficient. Modelling the behaviour of others is a powerful way of changing behaviour. We model ourselves on those whom we respect, often without regard for the consequences, and sometimes without really knowing why we are doing it. Modelling without knowledge can be dangerous, underlying much of the sex discrimination that the affirmative action legislation has sought to stamp out. The well known adage "do as I say and not as I do" captures the dangers of thoughtless modelling that we are all exposed to from time to time. Modelling with knowledge, however, has the potential for improving the rate and quality of implementation of the affirmative action legislation.

For modelling to take place, effective social networks must be in place. This study has demonstrated that this is not the case. Distance rather than networks is the most appropriate term for describing relationships between employees and EEO officers, between EEO officers from different companies, and between companies and the Affirmative Action Agency. Paper passes between these groups more often than conversation and face to face discussion. Without a social network, where are the role models to facilitate change in environments that are bound by conventional patterns of behaviour?

In companies where social networks were operating, the benefits were measurable. Two types of networks emerged from the study: a top down network and a bottom up network. In the top down network, the EEO officers were the change agents with strong links with the Affirmative Action Agency. In the bottom up network, female employees and EEO officers were working together for change, the EEO officers had professional contacts outside, often through practitioner's associations, but the Affirmative Action Agency was irrelevant to their mode of operation. Both networks appeared to be effective in bringing about change. What was of interest was that the Affirmative Action Agency was central to one and peripheral to the other. The latter shows the potential for setting up industry based networks where companies with more developed EEO programs can assist those who are not sure how to proceed.

The importance of networks is particularly relevant to EEO officers where they are sometimes the only ones interested in their EEO program. In the course of the interviews, some EEO officers expressed demoralization and frustration about fighting

a "one person" war. More commonly, however, EEO officers drifted toward the views that they saw their senior management adopting. Where EEO contacts have little involvement with others who are interested in EEO issues, this phenomenon is to be expected. Turner (1990) has argued that we all need social validation of our views. We need others to confirm that they see the world as we do, and if they do not, we feel uncertain and lack confidence in our judgements. The position of many EEO officers has been compromised by the unsympathetic culture in which they must work, and the absence of a strong base with which they can regularly and readily connect to validate the importance of the EEO program.

The results of this study also suggest that innovation in the EEO context is facilitated by supportive social networks. Part of this explanation undoubtedly lies in the validation process described above. But problem solving may also be enhanced by involvement in a social group committed to generating ideas, creativity and finding solutions. Cultures of cooperative enquiry can promote hope and ingenuity.

*Policy implications:*

Steps need to be taken to strengthen support networks for EEO contact persons for the purposes of modelling effective EEO programs, for self-validation and for innovation. Practitioner's associations are filling this need to some extent. The Affirmative Action Agency has a role to play, nevertheless, in encouraging networks for other EEO officers. Networks can be strengthened through setting up model EEO programs on a regional basis, through involving more successful business units in programs to assist those having difficulty, and through encouraging industry based networks on a regionalized basis so that similar business units can share ideas and compare their performance. This strategy appears to have worked successfully in the finance sector in which the initiatives of one company are quickly assessed, adopted, and adapted by others in a bid to either gain the competitive edge, or at least, stay in the game.

The involvement of trade unions is an important step in the networking process. Their capacity to draw on the experiences of a wide variety of companies means that they are positioned to play a central role in supporting and negotiating new EEO initiatives. That they have not done so is a question of their priorities.

## Sanctions

### *Findings:*

The business community favoured incentives as a way of improving EEO programs and objected to penalties. Objections to penalties were understandable. No-one wanted to be cast in the role of a recalcitrant and there was widespread concern that they could be put in this role. A substantial 37% were uncertain that their EEO program met the expectations of the Affirmative Action Agency. At the same time, those supporting penalties were not doing so without reason. Where EEO contact persons were conscious of the fact that their senior management were less aware and accepting of EEO principles than they were, support for penalties was high. The prevailing view was that everything else had been tried and nothing had worked.

These findings are reconciled formally in John Braithwaite's pyramid of regulatory enforcement strategies (Braithwaite et al., 1987; Ayres & Braithwaite, 1992). In one such pyramid, the base is defined by self-regulation, a strategy which is preferable to all players when it works well because it is least burdensome. The next layer of the pyramid can represent increased government intervention in the form of enforced self-regulation. Above this may be command regulation with discretionary punishment, and then the peak of the pyramid can be defined by command regulation with nondiscretionary punishment. The pyramid has two messages. First, it is in everybody's interests for the regulatory objectives to be achieved through playing at the base of the pyramid. It is less troublesome and more efficient for everyone. Second, and most importantly, the existence of the peak of the pyramid gives everyone an incentive to channel as much of the regulatory action as possible to the base of the pyramid - to the domains of persuasion and self-regulation. According to Ayres and Braithwaite (1992), "Escalation up this pyramid gives the state greater capacity to enforce compliance but at the cost of increasingly inflexible and adversarial regulation. Clear communication in advance of willingness by the state to escalate up the pyramid gives incentives to both the industry and regulatory agents to make regulation work at lower levels of intervention". (pp. 38-39)

### *Policy implications:*

The Affirmative Action Agency has used a pyramid approach to gaining compliance with the legislation up to this point in time. The standard operating procedure has been to assume cooperation and willingness to comply, and only after that avenue has been

exhausted proceed to the next level. Up until 1991, the Agency devoted considerable resources to chasing up companies that were out of compliance. They wrote letters, made phone calls, and gave business units considerable opportunities to explain their non-compliant behaviour before taking action against them.

The problem with this approach has been two-fold. First, the affirmative action regulatory pyramid is without a peak. There is no such thing as command regulation with nondiscretionary punishment. Naming a company in parliament for not submitting a report is left to the discretion of the Director of Affirmative Action. The second problem is that for some business units, the pyramid does not soar to sufficient heights to have a motivational impact. Being named in parliament holds greater deterrence value for some companies than for others. For large companies in the public eye, this was a powerful sanction. For others, who saw the community as having the same views as themselves, it was construed as an act of heroic defiance. In between these two perspectives were views such as this:

“Initially being named in parliament created a bit of urgency about EEO. Then the attitude emerged ‘so be it’. It’s time to up the sanction.”

Adding a peak to the pyramid achieves the purpose of having a means of communicating with business units that refuse to cooperate at the levels of low government intervention. It may also encourage businesses to cooperate more fully at the base of the hierarchy. The recently announced intention of making government contracts contingent upon compliance with the affirmative action legislation can be seen as construction work on the upper layers of the pyramid.

A major point of discussion in relation to negative sanctions was fairness in their allocation. The criteria which could be used were seen as ambiguous and as a source of contention between the Agency and the business community. For this reason, submission of a report was seen as a clearer basis for negative sanctioning than the quality of the EEO program. Saying that clear criteria are not immediately obvious, however, is not to say that clear criteria which take account of quality cannot be developed. In the present research we were able to develop such an index for our purposes which held up well to tests of its reliability and validity. In other regulatory contexts, the Australian government has successfully shown that the measurement of the subjective can be accomplished to the satisfaction of most key players (see Braithwaite et al., 1990, 1992 for a discussion of quality of care standards in the nursing home industry).



## Summary

This research shows that the affirmative action legislation and the Affirmative Action Agency have been accepted reasonably well by the business community. At the same time, the first steps taken to establish EEO programs have resulted in them having low priority in the majority of companies. There is a singular lack of confidence among industry leaders that business can be done better with an active EEO program. There remains disbelief that Australian industry is losing talent through not giving higher priority to EEO programs.

It is time for those charged with the responsibility for implementing EEO programs within Australian industry to make their presence felt. It is time for them to stop calling from the sideline and assume their rightful place on the playing field. They cannot do this, however, without a team to represent and to support them. The challenge facing the government in the next five years is to move the dialogue of equal employment opportunity into the workplace, connecting with those in organizations who are committed to EEO, and developing a range of support bases of EEO culture from which individuals can draw confidence, direction and stories for implementation. In this way, the mystification and fragmentation of equal employment opportunity culture will become problems of the past.

## APPENDIX I

### IMPLEMENTATION RATES FOR BUSINESS UNITS IN 1989-90 (N=2363) AND 1990-91(N=2340)

Step	Question <sup>4</sup>	% yes (1989-90)	% yes (1990-91)
1	1 Has the business unit issued an affirmative action policy statement to all employees?	79.6	86.6
2	2 Has the business unit assigned responsibility for the affirmative action program to a senior person(s)?	92.9	94.8
3	3 Has the business unit consulted with unions whose members are affected by the affirmative action program?	21.6 <sup>†</sup> 21.8 <sup>‡</sup>	20.0 <sup>†</sup> 22.9 <sup>‡</sup>
4	4 Has the business unit consulted with women employees over the affirmative action program?	24.6 <sup>†</sup> 44.2 <sup>‡</sup>	21.1 <sup>†</sup> 54.0 <sup>‡</sup>
4	5 Has the business unit consulted with employees in general over the affirmative action program?	27.0 <sup>†</sup> 44.9 <sup>‡</sup>	20.2 <sup>†</sup> 51.5 <sup>‡</sup>
6	6 Has the business unit started a review and analysis of personnel policies and practices during the year ending 31 January 1990?	70.5	82.3
7	7 Has the business unit set objectives for its affirmative action program during the year ending 31 January 1990?	63.1	70.6
7	8 Has the business unit set or updated forward estimates for its affirmative action program during the year ending 31 January 1990?	35.8	37.1
8	9 Have monitoring procedures been set in place?	60.1	73.6
8	10 Have evaluation procedures been set in place?	55.8	68.4

† all  
‡ some

<sup>4</sup> Questions 3 to 10 were worded somewhat differently in 1990-91. The major difference is the addition of 'during the reporting period' in the 1990-91 form. These changes appear in Appendix II.

APPENDIX II

IMPLEMENTATION RATES FOR BUSINESS UNITS IN 1990-91 BY BAND

(N=2318)

Question	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3
1 Has the business unit issued an affirmative action policy statement to all employees?	93.9	92.7	82.7
2 Has the business unit assigned responsibility for the affirmative action program to a senior person(s)?	97.3	98.6	94.1
3(a) Are any employees of the business unit members of unions? (b) Have these unions been consulted during the reporting period about the affirmative action program? <sup>††</sup>	19.4 <sup>†</sup> 32.9 <sup>‡</sup>	21.9 <sup>†</sup> 25.3 <sup>‡</sup>	20.3 <sup>†</sup> 17.4 <sup>‡</sup>
4 Has the business unit consulted with women employees during the reporting period over the affirmative action program?	19.7 <sup>†</sup> 61.8 <sup>‡</sup>	17.4 <sup>†</sup> 58.3 <sup>‡</sup>	23.1 <sup>†</sup> 49.8 <sup>‡</sup>
5 Has the business unit consulted with employees in general during the reporting period over the affirmative action program?	21.4 <sup>†</sup> 57.8 <sup>‡</sup>	21.5 <sup>†</sup> 55.2 <sup>‡</sup>	19.6 <sup>†</sup> 48.3 <sup>‡</sup>
6 During the reporting period, has the business unit reviewed personnel policies and practices to ensure that women are not discriminated against?	86.6	83.4	81.2
7 Has the business unit set broad aims or goals for the affirmative action program for the reporting year ahead?	79.7	72.1	66.4
8 Has the business unit set or revised forward estimates (numerical or otherwise) for the affirmative action program for the reporting year ahead?	44.4	40.3	33.1
9 Does the business unit have ways of making sure the planned program of affirmative action occurs?	84.0	80.0	67.8
10 Did the business unit determine if the affirmative action program activities undertaken during the reporting period achieved their aims?	79.2	70.0	63.3

<sup>†</sup> all  
<sup>‡</sup> some

<sup>††</sup> To make the question comparable to that used in 1989-1990, the percent is taken of all reporting units, regardless of union presence.

### APPENDIX III

#### IMPLEMENTATION SCORES FOR DIFFERENT INDUSTRY GROUPS OVER THE 1989-90 AND 1990-91 REPORTING PERIODS

Industry group	No. companies	Mean 1989-90	No. companies	Mean 1990-91
Agriculture	27	15.72	27	16.31
Mining	67	16.70	69	17.16
Manufacturing	868	16.39	908	16.91
Electricity, gas & water	4	17.00	1	15.00
Construction	81	15.46	79	16.01
Wholesale & retail	326	15.93	310	16.52
Transport & storage	73	15.80	81	16.74
Communication	2	17.0	-	-
Finance	338	16.44	309	16.77
Health, education & community	50	16.10	53	16.45
Entertainment, recreation & personal	113	16.26	134	16.54

## APPENDIX IV

### GUIDELINES FOR CLASSIFYING THE PUBLIC REPORTS

#### CATEGORY 1

- . Merely meeting basic requirements, that is, completing the form
- . No indication of commitment to the principles of Equal Employment Opportunity
- . No efforts made to consult, set objectives, review personnel policies and practices, monitor and evaluate program

Overall aim - to avoid consequences of not completing report.

#### CATEGORY 2

- . EEO policy in place and distributed to some extent
- . Structures in place and operating to some extent, but no evidence of a genuine commitment to the principles of Equal Employment Opportunity
- . Some effort made to consult, set objectives, review personnel policies and practices, monitor and evaluate program, but with the following limitations:
  - objectives too broad and general or not far reaching enough
  - consultation with staff limited in scope or purpose, that is, selective in who was consulted and/or tagging Equal Employment Opportunity on to consultations held primarily for other purposes

Overall aim - to meet the basic requirements of the Affirmative Action Act; some effort made to appear to be doing the right thing, yet not really initiating any important changes for the advancement for women in the workforce

#### CATEGORY 3

- . Making a concerted effort to comply with the requirements of the Affirmative Action legislation
- . A genuine commitment to the principles of Equal Employment Opportunity out of a realisation of the benefits which the organisation can gain rather than for women's betterment
- . Meeting the requirements to a reasonably high level, that is, setting objectives, good consultative mechanisms, reviewing personnel policies and practices, monitoring and evaluating the program

Overall aim - to meet the necessary requirements of the Affirmative Action legislation not only to avoid the consequences which may occur from not doing so, but also out of a realisation that the organisation can gain from good Equal Employment Opportunity policies

(continued)

#### CATEGORY 4

- . Taking on Equal Employment Opportunity with vigour and commitment, and using the guidelines of the Affirmative Action legislation to improve the position of women in the organisation
- . Meeting the requirements of the legislation, that is, setting objectives, good consultative mechanisms, reviewing personnel policies and practices, monitoring and evaluating the program
- . In addition to meeting the requirements, using initiative to make real change, tackling the causes of women's underrepresentation rather than just the symptoms. For example:
  - child care facilities
  - increasing part-time work and job sharing
  - improved maternity leave conditions, etc
  - incentives for women to remain, to improve their position, to develop their abilities
  - training schemes designed to improve the position of women

Overall aim - to improve women's position in the workforce

APPENDIX V

IMPLEMENTATION RATES FOR PARTICIPATING RANDOM SAMPLE OF  
BUSINESS UNITS, 1990-91 PUBLIC REPORTS (N=142)

Question	% yes
1 Has the business unit issued an affirmative action policy statement to all employees?	89.4
2 Has the business unit assigned responsibility for the affirmative action program to a senior person(s)?	93.7
3(a) Are any employees of the business unit members of unions? (b) Have these unions been consulted during the reporting period about the affirmative action program?	17.6† 31.0‡
4 Has the business unit consulted with women employees during the reporting period over the affirmative action program?	16.9† 59.9‡
5 Has the business unit consulted with employees in general during the reporting period over the affirmative action program?	16.9† 59.2‡
6 During the reporting period, has the business unit reviewed policies and practices to ensure that women are not discriminated against?	86.6
7 Has the business unit set broad aims or goals for the affirmative action program for the reporting year ahead?	78.2
8 Has the business unit set or revised forward estimates (numerical or otherwise) for the affirmative action program for the reporting year ahead?	46.5
9 Does the business unit have ways of making sure the planned program of affirmative action occurs?	78.9
10 Did the business unit determine if the affirmative action program activities undertaken during the reporting period achieved their aims?	78.9

† all

‡ some

## APPENDIX VI

### ATTITUDE AND BELIEF SCALES: SCORING PROCEDURES AND DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

#### *Scales*

Each item is scored 1(disagree), 2(in-between) or 3(agree). Scores are added to form each scale, although in some cases the scoring of items needs to be reversed first. The items with reverse scoring are noted below. The scales are:

- A Awareness of sex discrimination: reverse score 1 & 4, the higher the score the greater the awareness
- B Intrusiveness of the legislation: reverse score 5 & 6, the higher the score the greater the intrusiveness
- C Fairness to men: no reversals, the lower the score the greater the unfairness
- D Effectiveness of the legislation: no reversals, the higher the score the greater the effectiveness
- E Favourable outcomes: no reversals, the higher the score the more favourable the outcomes
- F Difficulty in implementation: no reversals, the higher the score the greater the difficulty
- G A social bargain: no reversals, the higher the score the stronger the perception of a bargain

#### *Responses of EEO contact persons*

Scale	No. items	Mean	Range	Standard deviation	Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient
A	4	8.30	4-12	2.86	.75
B	6	9.98	6-18	3.22	.72
C	3	6.87	3-9	1.83	.60
D	4	10.12	4-12	2.11	.67
E	5	12.72	5-15	2.28	.62
F	5	8.78	5-15	2.71	.54
G	4	9.61	4-12	2.13	.64



*EEOs' perceptions of senior management*

Scale	No. items	Mean	Range	Standard deviation	Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient
A	4	6.77	4-12	2.40	.64
B	6	11.57	6-18	3.14	.65
C	3	6.32	3-9	1.79	.48
D	4	9.52	4-12	2.34	.68
E	5	12.02	5-15	2.34	.60
F	5	8.97	5-15	2.86	.62
G	4	9.59	4-12	2.13	.64

*Intercorrelations among the EEO and perceptions of senior management scales*

EEO contact	EEO contact							senior management						
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
A														
B	-.36													
C	.33	-.38												
D	.32	-.45	.25											
E	.48	-.54	.43	.54										
F	.24	.10	-.02	.08	.13									
G	.19	-.38	.06	.36	.44	.23								
senior management														
A	.66													
B		.71												
C			.74											
D				.80										
E					.78									
F						.89								
G							.88							
								.10	-.32	.02	.29	.36	.21	

## APPENDIX VII

### COMPARISON OF THE ELITE SAMPLE AND THE RANDOM SAMPLE ON KEY INDICATORS

Independent t-tests were used to compare the mean scores of the random sample (N=142) and the elite sample (N=6). Means for each sample are given below along with the t value and its significance level. All tests of significance are two-tailed.

Scale or indicator	Random	Elite	t value
Workforce size	4.07 (2.29)	7.60 (.55)	-11.23** ‡
Procedural compliance	17.00 (2.19)	19.20 (.57)	-6.97** ‡
Substantive compliance	2.36 (.88)	3.42 (.49)	-2.91**
Awareness	8.04 (2.80)	11.67 (.82)	-8.86** ‡
Intrusiveness	10.18 (3.23)	7.17 (1.60)	2.27*
Fairness	6.75 (1.80)	9.00 (.00)	-14.76** ‡
Effectiveness	9.99 (2.13)	11.50 (.55)	-5.25** ‡
Favourable outcomes	12.56 (2.93)	14.67 (.82)	-5.45** ‡
Awareness of senior managers	6.64 (2.31)	9.00 (3.74)	-2.20*
No. desirable steps-EEO	6.28 (1.63)	7.83 (.41)	-7.20** ‡
No. desirable initiatives-EEO	11.13 (3.01)	14.67(1.03)	-7.20** ‡
Overall benefits index	11.20 (2.29)	13.17 (1.47)	-2.08*
Cooperation from women	7.34 (1.85)	9.83 (2.93)	-3.14**
Supportiveness of AAA	36.85 (6.87)	44.67 (3.20)	-2.77**
Consultative strategies	13.27 (3.48)	17.00 (1.90)	-2.60**

\*\* significant at the .01 level

\* significant at the .05 level

‡ Separate variance estimates were used because the variances of the two groups differed significantly.

## APPENDIX VIII

### STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF PERCEIVED DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE EEO CONTACT AND SENIOR MANAGEMENT

Dependent t-tests were used to test the statistical significance of differences between the EEO contact's opinion and that which they perceived senior management to hold. The means for each scale are given below along with the t value and its significance level. All tests of significance are two-tailed.

Scale or indicator	EEOs' view	Perceptions of senior management	t value
Awareness	8.28 (2.88)	6.77 (2.40)	8.31**
Intrusiveness	9.99 (3.24)	11.57 (3.14)	-7.95**
Fairness	6.87 (1.83)	6.32 (1.79)	5.12**
Effectiveness	10.11 (2.12)	9.52 (2.34)	5.03**
Favourable outcomes	12.70 (2.29)	12.00 (2.34)	5.50**
Law abiding 2	2.92 (.27)	2.72 (.45)	5.64**
No. desirable steps	6.28 (1.63)	5.81 (1.87)	4.59**
No. practicable steps	5.35 (1.71)	5.04 (1.91)	4.30**
No. desirable initiatives	11.13 (3.01)	9.77 (3.19)	6.62**
No. practicable initiatives	7.95 (3.05)	7.07 (2.80)	5.99**

\*\* significant at the .01 level

APPENDIX IX

CORRELATIONS BETWEEN DESIRABILITY AND PRACTICABILITY RATINGS AND IMPLEMENTATION IN THE PUBLIC REPORTS

Steps	Implementation 1990-91		Implementation 1989-90	
	Desirable	Practicable	Desirable	Practicable
1 Issuing policy statement to all employees	.37**	.31**	.23**	.23**
2 Appointing a senior officer	insufficient variability in sample on compliance			
3 Consulting with trade unions	.48**	.40**	.42**	.40**
4 Consulting with employees, particularly women	.26**	.15	.17	.15
5 Analyzing the employment profile on gender	no readily useable counterpart on public report			
6 Analyzing & reviewing personnel policies & practices	-.08	-.13	-.04	.10
7 Setting forward estimates & objectives	.38**	.42**	.28**	.23**
8 Monitoring & evaluating the program	.32**	.33**	.28**	.26**

## APPENDIX X

### DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR AGGREGATED MEASURES AND SCALES

Aggregated indices	Mean	Standard deviation	Range	Alpha reliability coefficient
No. desirable steps (EEO)	6.39	1.62	1-8	not relevant
No. practicable steps (EEO)	5.39	1.71	0-8	not relevant
No. desirable steps (senior management)	5.83	1.90	1-8	not relevant
No. practicable steps (senior management)	5.06	1.91	0-8	not relevant
No. desirable initiatives (EEO)	11.38	3.05	2-16	not relevant
No. practicable initiatives (EEO)	8.17	3.11	0-15	not relevant
No. desirable initiatives (senior management)	9.88	3.17	1-15	not relevant
No. practicable initiatives (senior management)	7.11	2.81	0-13	not relevant
Overall benefits	11.34	2.32	6-15	.84
Relative priority of EEO over OH&S	4.30	1.84	3-9	.83
Self-efficacy	4.38	1.37	3-8	.59
EEO achievement	12.37	2.40	7-17	.66
Priority for women	4.62	1.44	3-8	.64
Senior management problems	5.03	1.60	3-8	.53
Cooperation from women	7.45	1.96	5-13	.54
Employee relations	7.50	1.42	5-10	.57
Communications	13.73	1.68	8-16	.54
Innovative management	12.31	1.53	8-14	.56

## APPENDIX XI

### PERCEPTIONS OF THE AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AGENCY: DEVELOPMENT OF AGGREGATED MEASURES

The five point ratings given to the Affirmative Action Agency on the 23 bipolar adjectives were analyzed using principal components analysis with a varimax rotation. The intention was to reduce the data set to a more manageable number of variables. The results of this analysis are given below. Using the scree criteria, the number of components extracted and rotated was four. Together they accounted for 59% of the variance.

A reliability analysis was used to further refine the scales derived from the components analysis. Responses were summed to form three scales representing supportiveness (1), competency (2) and strength (3). The items belonging to each scale are indicated by having their loadings in bold type in the table below. The most significant departure from the results of the principal components analysis concerns the items which loaded heavily on the third and fourth components. These items behaved in a very unstable fashion as the number of components changed.

The supportiveness scale had a mean of 37.38, a standard deviation of 6.97, and an alpha reliability coefficient of .91. The competency scale had a mean of 32.50, a standard deviation of 5.54, and an alpha reliability coefficient of .86. The strength scale had a mean of 6.70, a standard deviation of 1.28, and an alpha reliability coefficient of .73.

Criteria	Rotated principal components			
	1	2	3	4
unhelpful - helpful	.60	.48	-.03	.17
not approachable - approachable	.60	.43	-.08	.03
rude - courteous	.71	.33	.25	.08
negative, critical - positive, supportive	.59	.55	-.13	.04
adversarial - cooperative	.76	.15	.08	-.07
unfair - fair	.77	.18	.26	-.20
not understanding, not sympathetic - understanding, sympathetic	.68	.25	-.16	.30
police like - not police like	.71	-.04	-.08	.21
unreasonable - reasonable	.76	.24	.03	.19
uncompromising - compromising	.63	.13	-.26	.26
incompetent - competent	.56	.44	.34	.09
silly ideas - good ideas	.40	.60	-.02	.22
not worth listening to - worth listening to	.41	.62	.11	.27
not authoritative - authoritative	-.04	.60	.08	-.10
not hardworking - hardworking	.33	.60	.17	-.32
not committed - committed	.49	.44	.23	-.32
not persuasive - persuasive	.14	.61	.17	.23
not generous with ideas and information - generous with ideas and information	.38	.56	.05	-.01
not very informative - very informative	.30	.57	.26	.17
permissive - firm	-.09	.27	.74	.04
weak - tough	-.07	.38	.69	-.25
unsophisticated in their understanding of business - sophisticated in their understanding of business	.23	.18	.11	.74
lacks the full support of government - has the full support of government	.14	-.21	.62	.33

## APPENDIX XII

### PERCEPTIONS OF PROPOSALS TO IMPROVE EEO PROGRAMS: DEVELOPMENT OF AGGREGATED MEASURES

The five point ratings from counterproductive to effective given to the 16 proposals were analyzed using principal components analysis with a varimax rotation. The intention was to reduce the data set to a more manageable number of variables. The results of this analysis are given below. Using the scree criteria, the number of components extracted and rotated was four. Together they accounted for 58% of the variance. The significant loadings used to define the components are in bold type in the table below.

Component 1 was defined as punitiveness and led to the development of the punitiveness scale. Component 2 was represented by the evaluative proposals and was the basis of the evaluative scale. Component 3 captured the value of consultative interactions between the Agency and the business unit and formed the consultative scale. Component 4 represented incentives and resulted in the incentives scale. Scale scores were formed by summing the ratings given on the proposals identified with each scale.

The punitiveness scale had a mean of 11.69, a standard deviation of 5.14, and an alpha reliability coefficient of .76. The evaluative scale had a mean of 10.28, a standard deviation of 3.17, and an alpha reliability coefficient of .78. The consultative scale had a mean of 13.55, a standard deviation of 3.53, and an alpha reliability coefficient of .66. The incentive scale had a mean of 12.70, a standard deviation of 2.23, and an alpha reliability coefficient of .60.



Proposal	Rotated principal components			
	1	2	3	4
<i>Punitive</i>				
Increasing negative publicity for companies not submitting a report	<b>.76</b>	-.09	.22	.14
Ranking companies and making the rank order public through the media	<b>.46</b>	.55	-.07	-.13
Introducing financial sanctions for companies not submitting reports	<b>.77</b>	.13	.21	.06
Specifying the changes that should be made in the workplace, rather than leaving it up to companies to make the decision	<b>.51</b>	.25	.08	.16
Introducing penalties if companies are not implementing the eight steps	<b>.72</b>	.38	.09	-.03
<i>Evaluative</i>				
Giving companies feedback on how they are going on an excellent to unsatisfactory scale for example	.04	<b>.78</b>	.24	.35
Giving companies feedback on how they rank in relation to other companies	.06	<b>.76</b>	.18	.34
Making the report and the company's rank order public in the company (e.g. putting it on a notice board)	.42	<b>.65</b>	.21	-.02
<i>Consultative</i>				
Visits to companies by the Affirmative Action Agency to see their EEO program first hand	.30	-.02	<b>.68</b>	.13
Returning unsatisfactory reports to the companies for resubmission	.26	.27	<b>.58</b>	-.05
Having more direct contact with the Affirmative Action Agency	.11	.10	<b>.66</b>	.31
Having a strict deadline for report submission	.01	.20	<b>.68</b>	-.01
<i>Incentives</i>				
Giving good publicity to companies with interesting EEO programs	.02	.13	.13	<b>.82</b>
Providing modest government financial support for initiatives which assist women (study leave, child care)	.31	.14	-.21	<b>.65</b>
Publicizing good EEO programs as models for industry groups	-.03	.07	.41	<b>.68</b>
<i>Extra</i>				
Holding an annual meeting with female employees to discuss the company's report to the Affirmative Action Agency	.30	.35	.29	.01

APPENDIX XIII

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SENIOR MANAGEMENT'S PERCEIVED APPROACH TO THE LAW AND THE EEO OFFICER'S APPROACH TO IMPLEMENTATION

Factor scores for implementation	Senior management			F statistic
	Neither committed to the law nor to the spirit of the law	Committed to the law, but not to the spirit of the law	Committed to the spirit of the law	
Ideological commitment	-.55	.44	-.07	3.20*
Dissent	.26	.80	-.22	10.03**
Priority	.27	-.03	-.01	.24
Lip service	-.50	.10	.01	.86
Union activity	1.05	-.25	-.02	4.17*
Social contract	8.8	10.2	9.5	1.83

## REFERENCES

- Ayres, I. and J. Braithwaite (1992), *Responsive Regulation: Transcending the Deregulation Debate*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bandura, A., *Social Foundations of Thought and Action: A Social Cognitive Theory*, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Baxter, J. and D. Gibson (1990), *Double Take: The links between paid and unpaid work*, Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service.
- Braithwaite, J., et. al. (1990), *The contribution of the standards monitoring process to the quality of nursing home life: A preliminary report*. Canberra: Department of Community Services and Health.
- Braithwaite, J., et. al. (1987), 'An enforcement taxonomy of regulatory agencies', *Law and Policy*, 9:323-351.
- Braithwaite, J., et. al. (1992), *Raising the Standard: Resident centred nursing home regulation in Australia*, Canberra: Department of Health, Housing and Community Services.
- Braithwaite, V. (1992), 'The Australian Government's Affirmative Action legislation: the road to human resource management or social change?' unpublished paper.
- Braithwaite, V. (1991), 'How are things going? An analysis of the data base containing the 1989 public reports to the Affirmative Action Agency', a report to the Affirmative Action Agency.
- Burton, C. (1991), *The Promise and the Price: The struggle for equal opportunity in women's employment*, Sydney: Allen & Unwin.
- Callus, R., et. al. (1991), *Industrial Relations at Work: The Australian Workplace Industrial Relations Survey*, Canberra: Commonwealth Department of Industrial Relations.
- Donabedian, A. (1966) 'Evaluating the Quality of Medical Care', *Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly*. 44:166-206.
- Levi, M. and S. DeTray (1992) *A Weapon Against War: Conscientious Objection in the US, Australia and France*, Administration, Compliance and Governability Program Working Paper No. 4, Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University.
- Osgood, C. E., G. J. Suci & P. H. Tannenbaum (1957), *The measurement of meaning*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Poiner, G. and S. Wills (1991) *The Gifhorse: A critical look at Equal Employment Opportunity in Australia*, Sydney: Allen & Unwin.
- Shearing, C. D. and R. V. Ericson (1991), 'Culture as figurative action', *British Journal of Sociology*, 42: 481-506.
- Turner, J. C. (1991), *Social Influence*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Wieneke, C. and M. Durham (1992), 'EEO as a Management-Driven Enterprise: Contradictions and consequences for EEO practitioners in selected Australian universities', paper submitted to Administration & Society (Sage Publications).

Wieneke, C. and M. Durham (1991), 'Regulating the Equality Agenda: EEO in Higher Education', paper presented to The Australian Sociological Association 1991 Annual Conference, Murdoch University, Perth.