

# Statutory Obligations

## Equal Employment Opportunity

The Reserve Bank is required under the *Equal Employment Opportunity (Commonwealth Authorities) Act 1987* to report to the Australian Parliament each year on its equity and diversity program. The *Equity & Diversity Annual Report 2011*, which reviews the Bank's diversity profile, employee engagement with existing policies and progress with the program, was tabled in Parliament on 22 September 2011.

The Reserve Bank aims to ensure that all employees are treated with dignity and respect in the workplace, and experience equal opportunity throughout their careers with the Bank. This commitment is underpinned by the two key elements of the Bank's Diversity Program, namely existing policies and procedures, and the Diversity Plan. While the existing policies and procedures seek to embed equity and diversity principles in work practices, the Diversity Plan provides specific initiatives that highlight priorities, raise awareness and aim for continuous improvement. The Program is governed by the Bank's Equity & Diversity Policy Committee, a consultative body responsible for monitoring the development and implementation of equity and diversity initiatives, policies and practices.

During the year, the Reserve Bank finalised initiatives outlined in the current Diversity Plan. The four priorities of the Plan are to:

- gain an understanding of the issues related to work-life balance that are important to staff, and use that information to contribute to equity and diversity policy deliberations
- better understand the factors influencing the career experience of women
- continue improving the accessibility of the Bank's computing systems, information and building facilities for its staff and the community
- understand the needs of a maturing workforce, and use that information to assist in workforce planning and knowledge retention.

While the focus for the previous reporting period was on enhancing the Reserve Bank's culture of inclusiveness, the major focus this year was to better understand the equity and diversity issues associated with career progression and development, employee participation and work-life balance. To do this, the Bank commissioned a focus group study, which provided useful information for the Bank to consider in developing the new Diversity Plan. Consultation through the Equity & Diversity Policy Committee and Diversity Contact Managers also provided useful feedback in preparation for release of the new Plan to employees.

Full details and outcomes of the equity and diversity program will be included in the Reserve Bank's *Equity & Diversity Annual Report 2012*.

## Work Health & Safety, Compensation and Rehabilitation

The Reserve Bank is required, in terms of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (WHS Act) and the conditions of its licence as a Licensed Authority under the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988*, to report each year on matters of work health and safety, workers' compensation and rehabilitation, as they affect the Bank.

The Reserve Bank is committed to the safety, health and wellbeing of its workers, including contractors and other persons involved in the Bank's operations. The Bank has a strong track record in all aspects of work health and safety (WHS), and compliance with the relevant legislation and the Bank's Conditions of Licence was confirmed in 2012 by external audits of the Bank's safety, compensation and rehabilitation arrangements. The Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission subsequently confirmed that the Bank retained the highest possible rating for its prevention, claims management and rehabilitation practices for 2012/13, by maintaining Tier 3 status in each area. From 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2012, there were 60 reported WHS incidents. Of these, six resulted in accepted claims, two additional claims were accepted for incidents occurring outside of this period. The accepted claims were supported by in-house rehabilitation case management when required. Of the reported incidents, eight were notified to Comcare while the remaining incidents were relatively minor in nature. Twenty-eight of the 60 incidents were sustained during lunchtime sporting activities.

The Reserve Bank continued to foster a preventative, proactive and duly diligent safety culture by demonstrating visible commitment to safety from the Bank's senior and executive management. A key focus of the Bank's activities during the year was to ensure robust implementation of the WHS Act across the Bank's worksites. As part of the Bank's continuous improvement program, it facilitated a project aimed at ensuring the Bank would fully comply with the new legislation, involving a review of all WHS-related policies and procedures across the organisation and establishment of consultation arrangements with workers and relevant external organisations. The Bank continued to provide ongoing training to workers, health and safety representatives and management on the legislative changes and contemporary WHS matters, including mental health. The Bank's Health & Well Being Program also provided education and promoted physical and psychological health, through the implementation of evidence-based initiatives, which are targeted at WHS risks, attitudinal and behavioural change, and the provision of a supportive and safe workplace environment.

## Freedom of Information (FOI)

The Reserve Bank is an Australian Government agency subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act). The section of the Bank's website dedicated to the FOI Act can be found at [www.rba.gov.au/foi](http://www.rba.gov.au/foi).

Sixteen requests for access to documents under the FOI Act were received in 2011/12. Access was granted in full in response to one request and in part in response to four requests. No relevant documents were found in response to six requests. Access to documents was denied in response to one request, and four requests were withdrawn. The Reserve Bank continued to publish on its website information that has been released in response to FOI access requests, in line with the requirements of the disclosure log provisions of the FOI Act.

No applications were received for the internal review of a decision in 2011/12.

The estimated number of staff hours spent dealing with all aspects of FOI requests in 2011/12 was around 294 hours, down from an estimated 450 hours in 2010/11. The total cost to the Reserve Bank of administering the FOI Act in 2011/12 is also estimated to have fallen to about \$88 000, from around \$134 000 in the previous year. Charges levied and received amounted to \$865. The reduction in both staff hours and costs is attributable to receiving two fewer requests this year and the overall complexity of requests being significantly less than in 2010/11.

## Ministerial Directions

The Reserve Bank received no new directions from its responsible Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister and Treasurer, or from any other Minister during 2011/12. The Bank continued to be bound by:

- the Finance Minister's (CAC Act Procurement) Directions 2009, which require the Reserve Bank to apply the Commonwealth Procurement Guidelines when undertaking a covered procurement, i.e. where the value

of the property or service being procured exceeded \$400 000 for non-construction services or more than \$9 million for construction services. From 1 July 2012, the Bank is bound by the Finance Minister's (CAC Act Procurement) Directions 2012, which require the Bank to apply the Commonwealth Procurement Rules when undertaking a procurement above the same thresholds

- the National Code of Practice for the Construction Industry and the Australian Government Implementation Guidelines for the National Code of Practice for the Construction Industry.

No General Policy Orders made under section 48A of the *Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997* (CAC Act) were first applied, or continued to apply, to the Reserve Bank under section 28 of the CAC Act during 2011/12.

