

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 2010*, which reviews the Bank's diversity profile, employee engagement with existing policies and progress with the program, was tabled on 29 October 2010.

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 Diversity Program, namely existing policies and procedures, and the Diversity Plan. While the existing policies and procedures aim to embed equity and diversity principles in work practices, the Diversity Plan provides specific initiatives that highlight priorities, raise awareness and ensure 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 continued to work on initiatives outlined in the current 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; and
- 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 gender-based employment trends at the Reserve Bank, the major focus this year was on enhancing the Bank's culture of inclusiveness, with a number of initiatives relating to gender, disability and indigenous employment. The Bank also focused on the accessibility of information and systems. As this marks the last year of the current Plan, a new Diversity Plan is currently being prepared.

Full details and outcomes of the equity and diversity program will be included in the Reserve Bank's *Equity & Diversity Annual Report 2011*.

Work Health & Safety, Compensation and Rehabilitation

The Reserve Bank is required, in terms of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 1991* 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 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 employees, contractors and visitors. The Bank's strong track record in all aspects of work health and safety, and compliance with the relevant legislation and the Bank's Conditions of Licence, was confirmed by Comcare audits of the Bank and robust performance against Commission benchmarks. In light of these results, the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission renewed the Bank's licence for the period 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2015. The Commission also confirmed that the Bank has retained the highest possible rating for its prevention, claims management and rehabilitation practices during this year, with the Bank maintaining Tier 3 status in each area.

A key focus of the Bank's activities this year was ensuring that employees were aware of their work health and safety obligations. The Bank facilitated this by providing ongoing education for management in contemporary occupational health and safety issues, the prevention of injuries and the need for continuous improvement in the Bank's work practices. An online training module on occupational health and safety was made available to all employees to help raise awareness.

The Bank also continued to promote its Health & Wellbeing Program, which is designed to promote the physical and psychological health of employees. This is achieved through the implementation of a range of initiatives targeted at work health and safety risks, attitudinal and behavioural change, and the provision of a supportive and safe workplace environment. Some of these initiatives included the provision of ergonomic assessments for all new employees by the Bank's Occupational Health Centre, the Employee Assistance Program, lunchtime seminars, subsidised fitness classes and mental health awareness workshops for management.

During the year to June 2011, there were 42 reported incidents, which resulted in five accepted claims for workers' compensation, compared with 46 incidents and eight accepted claims in the previous financial year. Of the incidents that resulted in injury, almost all were minor in nature, requiring simple first-aid treatment. Ten occurrences required notification to Comcare.

Freedom of Information (FOI)

The Reserve Bank is an Australian Government agency subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act). Part 2 of the FOI Act establishes an Information Publication Scheme (IPS) for agencies subject to the FOI Act. The IPS commenced on 1 May 2011 and requires agencies to publish a broad range of information on their website. Agencies are also required to publish a plan that explains how they intend to implement and administer the IPS.

The Reserve Bank website has pages dedicated to the IPS and compliance with the FOI Act, which can be found at www.rba.gov.au/foi.

Eighteen requests for access to documents under the FOI Act were received in 2010/11. Access was granted in full in response to five requests and in part in response to seven requests. No relevant documents were found in response to two requests. Access to documents was denied in response to two requests, and two requests were withdrawn. One request outstanding at the end of 2009/10 was finalised early in the 2010/11 financial year, with access granted in part. Since 1 November 2010, the Reserve Bank has published on its website information that has been released in response to FOI access requests, in line with the requirements of the disclosure log under the FOI Act.

No applications were received in 2010/11 for the internal review of a decision.

The estimated number of staff hours spent dealing with all aspects of FOI requests in 2010/11 was around 450 hours. The total cost to the Reserve Bank of administering the FOI Act in 2010/11 is estimated to have been about \$134 100, compared with around \$35 600 in 2009/10. Application fees received prior to their abolition from 1 November 2010 totalled \$150, while charges levied and received amounted to around \$1 800. Of the 18 requests received during the 2010/11 financial year, four were received prior to the commencement of the revised FOI Act on 1 November, and 14 were received subsequently.

Ministerial Directions

The Reserve Bank received no directions from its responsible Minister, the Treasurer, or from any other Minister during 2010/11. The Reserve Bank continues 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 procurement¹; and
- 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 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 2010/11.

¹ For the Reserve Bank, covered procurements are those where the value of the property or service being procured exceeds \$400 000 for non-construction services or more than \$9 million for construction services.