

Introduction

This is the twenty-third *Equity & Diversity Annual Report* of the Reserve Bank of Australia, as required under Section 9 of the *Equal Employment Opportunity (Commonwealth Authorities) Act 1987*.

Approach to Diversity

The Reserve Bank aims to embed equity and diversity principles in its work practices. To ensure that these practices remain appropriate, the Bank annually reviews its diversity profile, the take-up of its existing policies and programs, as well as any relevant external developments. This analysis helped determine initiatives for the Bank's *Diversity Plan 2009-2011*. 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.

The layout of this *Annual Report* reflects these priorities, as well as the need to focus on the 'designated groups' defined in the *Act* – women, people with a disability, people of a non-English speaking background, and indigenous Australians.

Responsibility for Equity and Diversity

The Reserve Bank's *Equity & Diversity Policy Committee* is a consultative body which includes representatives of management, Human Resources, the Finance Sector Union and other staff. The Committee makes recommendations on equity and diversity matters to the Governor, and is responsible for monitoring the development and implementation of equity and diversity initiatives, policies and practices. The Committee reports annually on these matters to the Governor. The Terms of Reference for the Committee are set out in the Appendix.

Responsibilities extend beyond the Committee:

- *All staff* are required to ensure that their actions in the workplace are consistent with the Bank's equity and diversity principles.
- The *Heads of each functional group* are responsible for equity and diversity activities and performance within their areas.

- *Diversity Contact Managers* are responsible for monitoring the implementation of diversity initiatives in their respective departments (which they report to the Committee) and for acting as intermediaries between the Committee and staff.
- The *Accessibility Consultative Group* makes practical suggestions for improvements to the accessibility of computing systems, information and building facilities. Representatives are drawn from relevant departments (namely Systems and Technology, Information, Facilities Management and Human Resources) and interested staff.
- *Human Resources* provides specialist services to assist in the development and implementation of the Bank's equity and diversity program.

Promoting Awareness

For equity and diversity principles to be integrated into normal work practices, staff must be well informed about the Reserve Bank's diversity related policies and relevant legislation. There are a number of ways in which the Bank strives to achieve this. These include:

- ensuring that all staff and managers are appropriately trained about their equity and diversity responsibilities via face-to-face and online programs. These programs are regularly reviewed and updated. During the reporting period the Bank introduced a new online learning module on 'Workplace Behaviour' which deals with expected behaviour under anti-discrimination legislation and contains information about the Bank's Diversity Program;
- conducting awareness sessions on diversity related issues and publishing topical articles in the monthly staff magazine, *Currency*;
- making equity and diversity related policies accessible on the intranet and communicating any policy changes via the staff newsletter, *Staff Matters*; and
- making available on the intranet diversity related resources, such as the Bank's *Diversity Plan*, the *Equity & Diversity Annual Report*, and guides for staff on diversity matters such as accessibility.

To help keep up-to-date on external equity and diversity matters, during the year the Reserve Bank became a member of Diversity Council Australia, an independent, not-for-profit diversity advisor to businesses in Australia.

Data Collection

Equity and diversity information is sought from staff when they commence employment at the Reserve Bank. It is provided on a voluntary basis and includes information on disability, ethnic origin and capabilities in languages other than English. The Bank's equity and diversity statistics are based primarily on these data. During the reporting period the Bank commenced transitioning to a new employee self service system where staff can view their personal details including the ethnic group recorded on their file.

The Reserve Bank's job applicant form was modified in 2010 to include an optional equity and diversity questionnaire, allowing the Bank to acquire a better understanding of the diverse backgrounds of people showing interest in working at the Bank.

The Reserve Bank's Diversity Profile

At the end of June 2010, the Reserve Bank employed 1010 staff, an increase of 21 people, or two per cent from a year ago. This continues the general upward trend in staff numbers evident over the past seven years. Most diversity groups have maintained a fairly constant share of employment at the Bank over the past decade (Graph 1). The exceptions to this have been staff with a non-English speaking background, whose representation has steadily increased, and staff with a disability, whose representation has fallen somewhat over the past few years. Further information is provided in the next section of this *Report*.

Graph 1
Diversity Profile at the RBA
 Per cent of total staff, as at June



