EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE COMMITTEE

Initiatives progressed in recent meetings held at Wollongong Catholic Education Office
On 24th February and 28th April 2004

Committee Members in Attendance
Colleen Bluett, Margaret Chittick, Jane Comensoli, Margaret Macmillan, Cynthia McCammon, Christine McCormack, Kim Stutchbury, Rosemary Tinning, Amanda Wilson and Karen Young.

Apologies
Paul Longobardi (very involved in EOWC work, unable to attend at this time)

1. **Update, overview & reading** – included relevant articles and tabled professional development opportunities to support the work of the EOW Committee.

2. **Priorities targeted for action in EOWA reporting period for 2003-4:**

   **2.1 EOW Promotion** – conversation with employees:
   - Logo developed (as above) - on website and on EOW Committee developed documentation
   - CEO Website: EOW remains high on the CEO web - Plan to retain this with themes and stories, including
     - (i) Job Sharing … the kit Teachers Sharing Teaching: A School Resource is also being including online
     - (ii) Casuals survey feedback … Employee Services developing a kit for school induction/support of casuals
     - Connecting with parents too through an inclusion about EOW in the school newsletters - to include initiatives re teachers sharing teaching and reference to the CEO website for further details/contact.
   - On 2 March 2004 the EOW Committee mingled with others working in this field and heard from a panel of interesting speakers at the EOWA launch in Sydney of a book *Chief Executives Unplugged: Business leaders get real about women in the workplace*. For information on this book click here.
   - EOW reaching out to student representatives … … initial consultation with students [(i) initially with teachers sharing teaching, and (ii) later with sexual harassment] showed students can contribute a unique perspective and insight on issues relevant to EOW - Planning to broaden the conversations with student representatives on EOW issues as a target area for the future.
   - Cluster meetings of Principals and Assistant Principals  – Arranged to address cluster meetings on EOW priorities.
   - EOW promotion and recognition through awards, for instance:
     - EOWA Business Achievement Awards  – when lodging the 2003-4 EOWA annual report (31 May)
     - BAA Nomination Coversheet and Organisation Details package - to be lodged by 31 July.
     - ACCI & BCA National Work & Family Awards  … recognising organisations that are taking positive steps to achieve work/life balance  - nominations closing later (October).
     - EOW Committee membership and photo provided as requested for IEU publication.

   **2.2 Leadership**
   - *Leadership Framework* … draft presented by Head of Employee Services, Jane Comensoli for discussion. This provides a statement about a range of leadership levels; it seeks to clarify models of leadership and to map expectations. It can be seen to feature the evolving role of the job-team and shared responsibility, as well as recognising varied means of ongoing learning. It can be used as a self reflective and career planning tool. Recognising that some women may have been reluctant to put themselves forward for promotion, need to consider the implications of the *Leadership Framework* for EOW. Recognised need for communication of such a new framework. Need also to consider how to optimise that women are empowered by such change.

   **2.3 Casu als matter** - mapping, support
   - School induction – Employee Services is gathering school resources to develop a resource kit for school induction/support of casuals.
   - Network facility - Employee Services is also planning (with the changing employment and payroll technology) to develop the facility for casual staff to access the fuller resources and information base of the school and CEO via the CEO web and Intranet.
   - Self evaluation/mentoring - There appears not to be an immediate priority to develop the self-evaluation tool and school feedback process for casuals generally. However, this is available when warranted.
   - A nominated contact person or buddy at the school for casuals is also considered worth developing.
   - Casuals are encouraged and welcome to participate in essential training offered - eg, Child Protection.
2.4 Part-time / Job sharing - resourcing, support:

- Job sharing Teachers Sharing Teaching (day workshop held on 1/12/2003 (@ Centacare, Wollongong). This was considered a great success and an important EOW initiative. Child care offered was highlighted as a positive feature. Planning to offer again in 2004 and to promote it well ahead as a key element for entering into a job sharing arrangement. Planning to offer such workshop/s for interested staff again in late 2004.

- Teachers Sharing Teaching: A School Resource … This draft school resource kit was distributed to schools participating in the workshop, IEU and others on request. Following further development the kit is being distributed to all schools and is also available online where it can easily be added to.

- Parent brochure – the material in the school resource kit can be used to develop a parent brochure for the local situation. Planning to collect these as a developing resource.

- Policy review/rewrite … - Planning to follow-up the development work that has already occurred with policy review; envisage this will involve a wider reaching Flexible Work Practices approach, which would include the job sharing arrangement as one aspect of flexible work practices.

2.4+ Flexible work practices – Work/Life balance

- See previous point … - Employee Services with the EOW Committee will take the lead in consulting with schools and developing this. Some consideration to date included a review of Australian web material, the need for a statement of commitment, clear policy, mapping what is already in place (leave, etc) and where job sharing fits in.

- Recognising a tension in striking a balance between the need to meet the requirements of administrative procedure and the need to ensure reasonable flexibility – seeking to make reasonable, just and appropriate decisions/adaptations.

- Work/life balance – Plan to consider how this relates to the leading role of schools in relation to children

2.5 Re-entry into the profession

- Following some initial research into re-entry into other professions (eg nursing) this has been progressed at this stage through related inquiries and/or initiatives (refer to 2.2, 2.3, 2.4 and 2.4+ above).

3. Review actions to address these priorities and evaluate effectiveness

Evaluation/comment on the action taken to address the identified priorities during the last year will be included in the EOWA Report for the past year (2003-4).

4. EOWA Statistics - staff profiles over the reporting period (2003 - 4)

The statistical staffing profiles, updated at the end of March each year, were tabled for the EOW Committee. These profiles were used to consider progress and future priorities in preparation for the 2003 – 4 EOWA Report. These statistical profiles will be included as an attachment to the EOWA Report and available online in June 2004.

5. Future – setting priorities and actions for 2004-5

I. EOW Promotion - Conversations with employees and with leadership and with students and parents

- Recognising the unique nature of schooling in shaping the future generation

- Integrating EOW initiatives into our organisation’s core business as educational leaders

II. Leadership

- EOW stewardship and the introduction of a new leadership framework

III. Flexible work practices and work/life balance

- Developing statement of commitment, policy and practice

- Referring to “A Head Start for Australia: An Early Years Framework” with options for action, jointly developed by Queensland and NSW Commissions for Children and Young People. For more information refer to the website and the Summary Report (in pdf format).

- Recognising the key role of schools as educational leaders (as in # 1. above)

IV. Ensuring past priority initiatives are maintained, for instance -

- Safe work/school environment to counter sexual harassment (drawing on student interest raised through workshops recently arranged by HREOC and the Federal Sex Discrimination Commissioner and the school kit Tackling Sexual Harassment).