

# 3 *educating the people of NSW*



Centre for Discrimination  
Board of New South Wales

*we aim to reduce breaches of anti-discrimination law through education*

## **Educating the people of NSW**

Resolving complaints about discrimination is only one of the ways that discriminatory attitudes and behaviour can be changed. Another approach is to give people enough information and advice so that they can:

- recognise the potential for discrimination and harassment in our community
- understand the many positive benefits of non-discriminatory behaviour
- prevent, confront and resolve incidents of discrimination themselves.

Our education initiatives seek to do two things. First, we target educational programs towards those groups about whom we receive the most complaints. Secondly, we attempt to reach those groups that are most likely to experience discrimination or unfair treatment but have little contact with the Board.

We use several strategies, for example:

- we deliver talks, information and training sessions all over NSW including presenting papers and workshops at major conferences
- we network, consult and develop 'outreach' projects
- we develop and distribute a wide range of targeted publications
- we maintain an accessible website
- we use all forms of the media to get our message across
- we have a specialist library linked with other libraries.

**What people have said about our training ...**

‘Excellent presentation — practical, informative & entertaining’

‘The best part of the session was the opportunity to explore different issues through open discussion’

‘Presenter’s relaxed, humorous style helped get the message across’

‘Well presented session at a pace that allowed plenty of time for discussion’

‘Extremely competent presenter — very knowledgeable and able to handle a diverse audience’

**Some of the people & organisations we trained in 1999/2000**

- AGL
- ANA Hotel
- Astra Automotive
- Colchester
- Energy Australia
- Fort Dodge
- Gosford Council
- Macquarie Bank
- Microsoft
- Newcastle Port Corporation
- NSW Art Gallery
- Powerhouse Museum
- Qantas
- Reuters
- Royal North Shore Hospital
- Sheraton on the Park
- SOCOG
- St George Bank
- Tomago Aluminium
- Warringah Council
- Woolworths
- Workcover

**Talks & training programs**

As expected, our talks and training program continued to be a great success. Some of the highlights over the year included:

- delivery of 708 information and training sessions attended by nearly 16,000 people. Although we delivered fewer training sessions than in the previous year this was offset by an increase in the length of the training sessions
- continuing acclaim for our employer seminar programs — once again held successfully in Sydney, Wagga Wagga, Parramatta, Newcastle and the Southern Highlands
- maintaining the level of revenue from our training fees and publications sales. The \$557,500 raised fully funded the education services we provided to employers and service providers (including the seminar series, the cost of four trainers on staff, two casual trainers and an administrative assistant). It also funded the travel, venue hire and other such costs associated with all our community sector training.

There are two aspects to our talk and training programs:

- services targeted towards potential respondents
- services targeted towards potential complainants.

**Employer training sessions**

	97/98	98/99	99/00
<b>number of sessions</b>	400	546	468
<b>people trained</b>	8,949	8,808	9,034

## Services for employers & service providers

Our approach to training employers and service providers involves a number of components:

- we attempt to target those groups that our statistics show need to do more to prevent discrimination or deal more effectively with discrimination complaints
- we help organisations develop policies and procedures
- we respond to requests for 'on-site' training sessions, that is, training within a particular organisation
- we run a seminar program for employers and service providers on how to use anti-discrimination law to their organisation's advantage
- we provide one-on-one intensive coaching sessions.

In 1999/2000 we conducted 468 sessions for employers and service providers and trained over 9,000 employers, managers and service providers from the private, public, local government and community and welfare sectors. Although there was a 14% decrease compared to 1998/99 in the number of sessions conducted, there was a 13% increase in the number of people trained. We also provided a greater number of full day training sessions, as opposed to half day or shorter sessions, than in the previous year.

We received so many requests for on-site training and information sessions that we were unable to accommodate everyone. Throughout the year there was a waiting time of approximately two to three months. Our range of standard on-site seminars is detailed in the publication *Training Sessions for Employers and Service Providers*. However, all our training is adapted to produce a tailor-made approach for each client.

A new service offered in 1999/2000 was intensive one-on-one counselling sessions between a senior Board employee and a person identified by an employer as having behaved inappropriately in the workplace. We conducted 27 of these sessions.

## Seminar program

We ran our seminar program again this year, and regularly offered a number of half day and one day courses for employers, managers, employee relations professionals, human resource managers and equal employment opportunity (EEO) practitioners in Sydney, Newcastle, Wagga Wagga and the Southern Highlands. These courses aim to increase participants' understanding of how to maintain a workplace free of all forms of discrimination and harassment. The courses are detailed in our annual training calendar, the latest of which was published in January 2000. The seminar program was attended by 170 people throughout the year.

Seminars covered:

- introduction to EEO
- EEO for managers
- recruitment
- preventing harassment
- skills training for contact officers
- developing grievance procedures
- key skills in grievance handling
- train the trainer.

## Training in rural areas

As in past years, we have continued to extend our training to areas outside Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong. The country areas in NSW we visited included:

Albury	Armidale	Broken Hill
Bulli	Coffs Harbour	Cooma
Deniliquin	Dubbo	Glen Innes
Grafton	Griffith	Gunnedah
Kariong	Kempsey	Kurri Kurri
Lake Macquarie	Lismore	Maitland
Menindee	Morpeth	Moruya
Mudgee	Murwillumbah	Muswellbrook
Nambucca Heads		Nowra
Port Stephens	Queanbeyan	Shellharbour
Taree	Tumut	Ulladulla
Unanderra	Wagga	Walgett
Wallarawang	Wallsend	Wyong

### Consultancy service for checking EEO related policies and procedures

We continued our free consultancy reviewing service for employers and service providers during 1999/2000. At no cost to any employer or service provider, we reviewed organisations' EEO related policies and procedures. We examined policies on eliminating harassment in the workplace, grievance procedures, promoting diversity in the workplace and policies on handling recruitment. During the year we reviewed 167 procedures and policies from 79 organisations — a 16% decrease compared to 1998/99. Part of this decrease can be attributed to organisations adopting the Board's model policies and procedures which are available on disk. Since they were released in October 1998, we have sold 320 copies of the disk.

This reviewing service has proved to be very popular and yet another way of establishing ongoing contact with many employers. It has also been responsible for a large number of significant and positive changes to policies and procedures in many organisations.

*Below: Anthea Lowe, Manager, Education Services Branch.*



### Long term consultancy

Increasingly, we work with many employers over long periods of time — reviewing their policies and procedures, consulting at all levels within their organisation, advising on development of appropriate strategies and providing training for all levels of staff. For example, we spent five months of this year working with a major public sector institution on devising the most appropriate harassment prevention system for this organisation.

### Local government project

In 1998/99 we started work on a joint project with the Department of Local Government aimed at reducing discrimination in local government and complaints against local councils. The project reached its conclusion in 1999/2000 with:

- the publication of two guidelines for local government — *Anti-Discrimination Guidelines for Managers of Local Councils* and *Anti-Discrimination Guidelines for Local Government Councillors* — to help local councils meet their responsibility to provide non-discriminatory services
- placement of downloadable files of the local government guidelines on the Department of Local Government's website at <http://www.dlg.nsw.gov.au>
- a focus on training council management and staff about discrimination issues — we conducted 120 training sessions for local councils in 1999/2000
- publication of articles about ways to reduce discrimination in the Department of Local Government's newsletter.

### Small business project

In 1999/2000 the Board's education services targeted small businesses to help increase their awareness of how discrimination law impacts on their service delivery and employment practices. We:

- produced a small business factsheet — *Anti-discrimination law and the small business owner* — which is also available on our website and the Department of State and Regional Development's website

- submitted articles on how to prevent harassment to trade journals servicing areas from which we are told harassment issues arise, for example, the meat industry, car sales and repairs industry, cleaning industry and security industry
- started writing guidelines for small business which we plan to publish in the next financial year.

### Discrimination training for the legal profession

The *Legal Profession Amendment Regulation 1999*, which came into operation in October 1999, makes it clear that legal practitioners must comply with State and Commonwealth discrimination and harassment laws in their capacity as employers and service providers.

Unlawful discrimination occurs where a legal practitioner treats a person adversely in connection with the practice of law because of that person's race, colour, nationality, ethno-religious origin, sex, marital status, pregnancy, homosexuality, transgender status, disability or age.

Staff at the Board have been advising legal practitioners of the need to develop effective anti-discrimination and harassment policies. We ran 24 training sessions for members of the legal profession during 1999/2000.

### Sessions targeting potential complainants and/or their advisers

The second part of our training strategy is to target those groups of people most likely to experience discrimination, particularly their advisers. The way we do this is to:

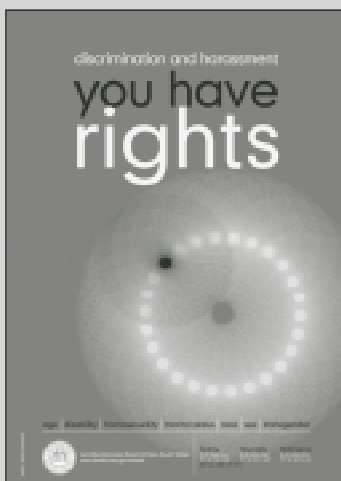
- respond to requests for training sessions
- develop specially targeted outreach and training programs.

Over the year we conducted 240 training sessions targeted towards complainants and their advocates. While we continued to work with advisers servicing all sectors of the community, we also specifically targeted advisers working with migrants, people with disabilities, youth and older people. Examples of general rights-based education sessions conducted include:

- educating staff at employment agencies about their rights and responsibilities
- training staff from community welfare centres, councils, and multicultural and youth networks.

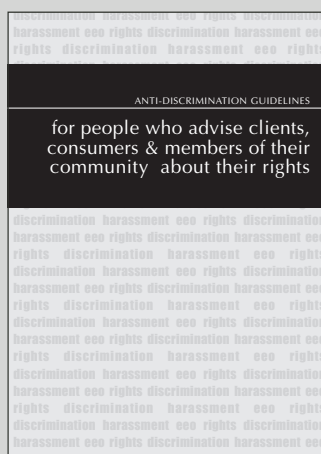
Our community outreach projects and training seminars included:

- Community Workers Seminar Program
- Indigenous Outreach Program
- Regional Outreach Programs.



### New rights posters

In June 2000, the Board published a series of three vibrantly coloured posters designed to help raise people's awareness of their rights under anti-discrimination law. As well as a poster generally promoting the Board's services, one poster is aimed at an Indigenous audience and the third poster is aimed at people from a non-English speaking background. The posters have been freely distributed to organisations such as community centres and legal centres that advise people about their rights. Otherwise the posters are available at a minimal cost of \$3 per poster.



### Community worker guidelines

In October 1999, the Board published substantially revised anti-discrimination guidelines for community workers.

These guidelines are for anyone who works in or for the community sector in NSW, and advocates on behalf of or advises others about their rights. This includes people who do this work voluntarily, such as community leaders, management committee members or union delegates. It also includes frontline workers in local councils and government departments.

*Anti-Discrimination Guidelines for people who advise clients, consumers and members of the community about their rights* will help people:

- give accurate advice to clients about their rights under anti-discrimination law
- be able to recognise when unfair treatment is probably against the law
- understand how to best use the Board, including how to help someone lodge a complaint if appropriate
- develop and implement strategies to resolve cases of unfair treatment locally.

The guidelines are also available in full on our website at:

<http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/adb.nsf/pages/communityguide1>

## Community Workers Seminar Program

Our training program targeted at community workers continues to be highly successful. Community workers have been broadly defined as anyone who is a 'first point of contact' for individual members of the community.

This training program provides an update on anti-discrimination law for community workers so they can advise individuals about their rights. The program also focuses on developing advocacy strategies that can empower individuals and communities to sort out discrimination problems themselves.

The courses were detailed in the biennial training calendars we published in September 1999 and March 2000. In 1999/2000 a total of 34 seminars were held across NSW, including at Ballina, Murwillumbah, Griffith, Wagga Wagga and Sydney, and were attended by 196 community workers. Seminars covered:

- discrimination rights, advice and strategies
- train the presenter
- non-discriminatory community management.

The train the presenter course has had a large impact on the Board's dissemination of anti-discrimination information. We are now able to refer any overflow of training requests to the people who have completed this course who then use our kit to train. Presenters have reported enjoying giving the presentations as well as making valuable contacts in their local communities.

## Indigenous Outreach Program

For more information about this program please turn to pages 30–31.

## Regional Outreach Program

For more information about these programs please turn to pages 32–35.

### Video training resource

The community educators spent part of 1999/2000 working on the script development of an 18 to 20 minute video explaining people's rights under anti-discrimination law and the options they can use to resolve discrimination problems. The video is being produced in conjunction with the University of Technology, Sydney and work will continue on this project in the next 12 months.

### Community involvement

In 1999/2000, the Board continued its policy of participating in public events to provide information about people's rights under anti-discrimination law and answer specific enquiries. We had stalls at:

- Grey Mardi Gras 1999
- Riverina Business Expo 1999
- Arabic Carnivale 1999
- AIDS Trust Food & Wine Fair 1999
- Access Week 1999 (stalls at Eastgardens and Randwick)
- Survival Day 2000
- Mardi Gras Fair Day 2000
- Indigenous Women's Day 2000
- Aboriginal Careers Expo, University of Western Sydney

Staff from the Board once again participated in the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade. The futuristic theme of the Board's entry was 'Safe Space' and slogans such as 'safe work', 'safe court', 'safe streets', 'safe homes', 'safe from violence' and 'safe neighbourhoods' encapsulated the wish that there should be 'safe space for us' and 'safe space for everybody'. On this occasion we were joined by colleagues from other parts of the Attorney General's Department.

### Forum on age discrimination

In November 1999, to help celebrate the United Nations International Year of the Older Person, the Board held a Forum on Age Discrimination. The Forum was attended by 50 people from a variety of organisations including women's organisations, community organisations, unions and government agencies. Participants examined what constitutes age discrimination under the law, how people experience it, if there are areas that are not covered by the law, and what strategies can be used to counteract age discrimination. A number of recommendations were made to the NSW Government.

### Forum on disability discrimination

Following the success of the Forum on Age Discrimination, one of the Board's education officers spent time working on preparations for a forum on disability discrimination concentrating on issues affecting people with an intellectual disability. The aim of the forum is to improve policy and service outcomes for people with intellectual disabilities. It will be held in August 2000.



*Right: Some of the participants in the Board's entry in Mardi Gras.*

## Publications

Our publications program continued to provide information and educate employers, service providers, and members of the public about their rights and responsibilities under anti-discrimination law. In 1999/2000 we distributed almost 10,000 copies of our publications, slightly fewer than last year. This decrease in requests for material was almost certainly due to increased use of the Board's comprehensive website (see page 45). Around 900 callers requesting material were directed to the website by our Enquiry Officers. All of the Board's information on people's rights under anti-discrimination law is downloadable free of charge from our website.

While the first copy of most of the Board's publications is available free of charge, a few are not and bulk supplies of publications are generally charged for. Sales of these publications paid for approximately 80% of the cost of printing and reprinting all Board publications in 1999/2000.

We have two main types of publications — factsheets and guidelines. Factsheets are written for people who may have complaints of discrimination. They explain a type of discrimination and the procedure for lodging a complaint. The other major type of publications are guidelines for employers and service providers who have responsibilities to keep businesses and services free from harassment.

We produced 21 new publications this year:

- Annual report 1998–1999
- Know your rights posters (x 3)
- Seminar program annual calendar
- Seminar reminder brochure (x 2)
- Community workers training calendar (x 2)
- Equal time newsletter (4 issues)
- Anti-discrimination guidelines for people who advise clients, consumers and members of the community about their rights (revised edition)

- Anti-discrimination guidelines for hoteliers
- Anti-discrimination guidelines for local government councillors
- Anti-discrimination guidelines for managers of local councils
- Identifying and eliminating discrimination from industrial awards and agreements (joint publication with Department of Industrial Relations)
- Discrimination and harassment: The rights and responsibilities of employees (training kit for vocational teachers)
- Anti-discrimination guidelines for people providing goods and services (revised edition)
- Services for you, your clients and communities brochure

We also continued to reprint our existing stock of publications to meet demand, making any necessary revisions to keep them up to date.

*Equal Time*, the Board's quarterly newsletter, is mailed out to approximately 5,000 people. We introduced an electronic subscription in 1998/99, which organisations can provide to all employees via their email or intranet. This has continued to be popular with many people choosing to switch from a hard copy to an electronic subscription.

The harassment posters published in June 1998 have been very popular with employer groups and over 3000 copies have been sold.

This year, the Victorian Equal Opportunity Commission published the Board's workplace guidelines under licence for distribution in Victoria. This means that for the first time, employers with sites in both Victoria and NSW have access to consistent information and advice about their responsibilities. The Board is hoping to develop further publications jointly with other State offices.

For a complete list of all Board publications, see page 62.

## Internet even more popular

The Board's website is a complete guide to people's rights under NSW anti-discrimination law. As part of Lawlink NSW, it is a gateway into legal resources on the internet. Use of the Board's website has increased during 1999/2000, averaging 81,049 hits per month. This is a 120% increase over the average 36,704 hits per month in 1998/99.

The Board's website is user friendly and, because it is written in plain English, gives people easy access to information about their rights and responsibilities under discrimination law. The information on the site explains:

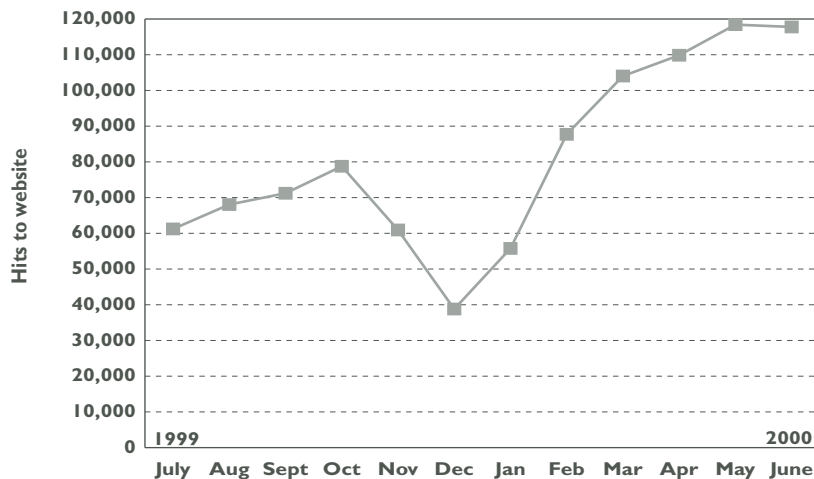
- what the Board does
- what discrimination and harassment are
- the responsibilities of employers and service providers under anti-discrimination law
- how to make a complaint to the Board
- how the Board handles complaints.

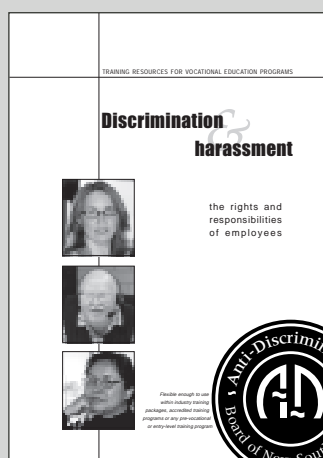
Basic information about people's rights is also provided in 23 community languages. All our factsheets are on the website in full. Extracts from some of our workplace guidelines are included, as well as information about our seminar and training programs. People can also download publication order forms. Links to other human rights agencies are a useful resource for researchers and students.



*Above: Susan Hawkeswood, the person responsible for keeping the Board's website up-to-date.*

**Website usage 1999-2000**





### New training resource

*Discrimination & harassment: The rights and responsibilities of employees* was specially piloted and developed for use in entry-level training in the vocational education and training sector.

Published in February 2000, the resource aims to make people of all ages entering or re-entering the workforce aware of their rights and responsibilities in relation to discrimination and harassment at work. More practically, it demonstrates some steps that students can take themselves to deal with and prevent discrimination and harassment at work.

These resources have been written in sufficient detail to give teachers and trainers with no experience in teaching about discrimination and harassment the confidence to include these topics in their programs.

These resources were developed with funding from the Australian National Training Authority, through the NSW Department of Education and Training. Copies of the publication were distributed to all vocational and educational providers. Extra copies can be either bought from the Board or downloaded free of charge from our website at:

<http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/adb.nsf/pages/vocational>

## Media

In the past year, human rights issues have again been given prominence in the electronic and print media. This was reflected by the level of inquiry and requests for information on the Board and its President's perspectives on current issues.

A vacancy in the Media Officer position for six months of the year had an impact on the Board's ability to take advantage of media opportunities. However, staff at the Board dealt with many requests from the media.

Among the issues in which the media showed a particular and continuing interest relevant to the Board's statutory responsibilities were:

- discrimination on religious grounds, especially in relation to recruitment and employment practices, and delivery of services
- Olympic games issues including discriminatory effect of not allowing people to take their own food and water into Olympic venues, and access to Olympic venues
- the discriminatory implications of psychological testing
- reconciliation and racial vilification of Indigenous Australians
- family-friendly work practices.

## The Library

The Board's move from Redfern to the city provided a good chance to re-evaluate the layout of the library. The reference collection of dictionaries, encyclopedias, Australian Bureau of Statistics publications and legal looseleaf services has now been situated together for easy access. A new workstation installed in the library allows staff to access both the library catalogue and internet.

To bring the Board's library into alignment with other libraries in the Attorney General's Department, the library catalogue is now run on Dynix. This means that staff at the Board have improved access to resources as they can search for material in all departmental libraries. The immense cataloguing backlog

(which included monographs and the entire serial collection) has been eliminated with the help of temporary staff and through intensive cataloguing by the librarian.

Reference inquiries reflect the work being done at the Board. Literature searches on pregnancy discrimination, pay equity, and discrimination in awards supported Legal and Policy's research. Information to be used as the basis of speeches was also provided to the President on such topics as homophobia in schools, and intellectual disability and employment. The librarian also searched for cases for complaints work and kept abreast of current employment issues for the Education Branch. There was also continued user education for new and existing staff members, especially in the use of the Internet.

Information has been retrieved from an increasingly large number of sources. There has been an increase in interlibrary loans and research visits to other libraries, and the librarian has made increasing use of the Board's membership of the Department of Industrial Relations Library to help with the Board's industrial relations work. The librarian has also been involved in the government library network's group consortium committee investigating the possibility of sharing costs of on-line databases between government libraries and trialing new products. Closer co-operation and sharing of resources between small special libraries is also envisaged as a result of a new shared interlibrary loans database being developed.



Above: Anna Forsyth, Librarian.

### Hotelier guidelines

*Anti-Discrimination Guidelines for Hoteliers*, a joint publication with the Australian Hotels Association (NSW), has been produced to help hoteliers and their employees understand their responsibilities under anti-discrimination law.

The guidelines aim to help prevent discrimination and harassment, and reduce the number of discrimination complaints lodged against hotels.

These guidelines discuss particular issues that commonly cause problems, including:

- dress rules
- refusing service or barring people
- charges and special or free deals
- accommodation.

This publication is a handy guide for hoteliers and hotel managers. It clearly sets out what anti-discrimination law is, how it applies to hotels, and how to make sure you follow the law.