



**Welcome to the latest edition of our eNewsletter**  
**Edition 15**  
**[www.emberin.com](http://www.emberin.com)**

*Firefly is a bi-monthly newsletter for CEOs, board members, organisational leaders and HR professionals who want to stay up to date with local and international developments in gender diversity and equality. emberin is Australia's leading gender diversity organisation, delivering gender inclusivity strategies for organisations, empowerment programs for women and gender leadership programs for men.*

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## Frankly Speaking

*More Australian businesses have come under the government's gender equality spotlight and the tiger now has teeth.*

Despite individual corporate initiatives and guidelines for the ASX Top 200 companies, the federal government has decided not enough is being done – and not enough is being achieved – in terms of advancement of women in the Australian workforce.

Note, the key word is 'achieved'. Results.

On 9 March 2011, the Hon Kate Ellis, MP, Minister for the Status of Women, announced a series of reforms to the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999 (EOWW Act) and Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency (EOWA). These are summarised below and further in this newsletter. In announcing these changes which come into effect in 2013 the Minister is clear: "No more good intentions – we want good outcomes."

"Where previously businesses were required to establish and report their workplace equity plans, programs and processes - we are now asking them to tell us about tangible outcomes – how women and men are actually faring in the workplace."

Since 2000 businesses with more than 100 employees have been required to report to EOWA on the status of women within their companies. Approximately 2500 organisations comply and of these nearly 100 have been recognised as "employers of choice" for women. As you can see plenty of room for improvement and with more than 6,349 business in Australia employing more than 200 employees – let alone 100 – there are plenty of organisations not self-identifying to this key government agency.

All that is about to change. The government is doubling its funding. Companies will be required to report on more indicators and the agency will be doing regular spot checks to ensure that the information supplied holds up.

It will work more closely with other government departments to identify the remainder of Australian businesses who should be complying with the Act but are currently escaping their obligations. And it will ONLY do business with organisations that comply with the Act – yes its annual \$42 billion annual spend will only go to companies that can demonstrate they have gender equitable workplaces.

It's a monumental initiative and one all businesses – regardless of their size – should heed. It's time to get on board with gender equality and it's time to make some real progress.

Because implementation and progress is at the heart of the matter, a point highlighted in a Mercer Consulting Report being released this week: Women's Leadership Development Survey conducted by Mercer in December 2010 in conjunction with Talent Management and Diversity Management magazines. (See separate article)

Principal of Mercer, Fiona Reed, said, "We have companies (in Australia) that have policies (to encourage women in the workplace) but we aren't implementing them as well as we should.'

The top programs offered by Australian and New Zealand organisations that target the needs of women leaders were; flexible work arrangements, mentoring, coaching, and diversity sourcing and recruiting. Notably, the same four programs were also identified as the most effective in developing women leaders.

I applaud the direction that we are heading in in Australia. To me there is clear hope of systematic change – although we clearly have a long way to go. The corporate environment is really heating up and companies can no longer hide from making some clear moves to address the imbalance. My advice is that companies need to get to the point and focus on initiatives that get results – and cut the 'fluff' and wastage of time around pondering – what is the problem and what can we do? The fluff just won't cut it any more – its outcomes that you will be held accountable for!



*Marcia*

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## Leadership in gender diversity

### **EOWA Reforms**

Additional Key reforms announced by Hon Kate Ellis, MP, Minister for the Status of Women include:

- EOWA to be renamed the Workplace Gender Equality Agency and the corresponding legislation renamed the Workplace Gender Equality Act to be more inclusive of men – in recognition of them being part of the gender solution and also to support them in increasing caring responsibilities.
- The objects of the Act will include pay equity, against which organisations will be required to report
- The Agency will develop industry level benchmarks and specific industry strategies to achieve gender equality. This will reflect the base positions of women within those sectors already.
- Businesses will be able to use an online portal, rather than the current hard-copy system as a way of streamlining reporting.

Commenting on the reforms, Federal Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Elizabeth Broderick said, "*Legislating to prevent procurement of goods and services by government from organisations which are non-compliant with the new Act will send a powerful message, not only to businesses, but also the wider community, that gender inequality in the workplace will not be tolerated.*"

At the end of this month, Ms Helen Conway will become the new Director of the Workplace Gender Equality Agency. She has impressive credentials holding senior leadership positions with Caltex, Airservices and NRMA, as well as being a lawyer in private practice. She was also Senior Judicial Member of the New South Wales Equal Opportunity Tribunal.

## Telstra leading the way in Gender Diversity best practice – again

At the moment in corporate Australia, we are seeing many companies in a flurry – but unfortunately not a lot of innovation and creativity in terms of new ideas and steps forward in best practice. There are many companies who want to follow ‘best practice’, but in our opinion few who want to lead.

We have talked about the work at Telstra many times in this newsletter. It has certainly been an organisation that has been willing to lead – and they have achieved great results for their courage – no wonder they became the first Australian company to win a Catalyst Award last year in the USA!

We are pleased to see that Telstra is not resting on its laurels – they are continuing to come up with Australian first’s in best practice (one of the first being releasing a program for men with **emberin** in 2008). Telstra chose the 100th anniversary of the first International Women’s Day – the beginning of a movement for equality, recognition and achievement – to make its next big announcement.

Telstra announced the release of its new employment brand directed specifically at women. The message is clear – Telstra wants great women to work there – and is willing to publicly make statements around this – and of course, why women should want to go and work at Telstra.



Telstra CEO, David Thodey, called on more women to join the team at Telstra. He said, *“It is absolutely critical to the success of our business that we attract diverse and talented people, and that means that we want to be gender diverse and inclusive as well.”*

To spread the word about working at Telstra, and particularly connect with women who might be thinking of joining Telstra, the company marked [International Women’s Day 2011](#) with the launch of a new [Careers portal](#) specifically designed for women.

Women at Telstra features Telstra’s ground-breaking new employment brand for women, with stories of some fantastic Telstra women from all levels of the business, video content and social-media links, information about policy, inclusive practice, internal networks and external connections, and some good news about awards and recognition for Telstra’s results so far. Importantly, Women at Telstra will also include the stories of [100 Inspiring Women at Telstra](#).

What Telstra has done is a truly unique public statement – and again they have set the bar in Australia around EVP for the employment of women- check it out [www.careers.telstra.com/women](http://www.careers.telstra.com/women). Congratulations Telstra - we have heard a lot of companies talk about their need to develop strategies to attract women – and you have moved beyond the talking – and just done it!

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## Women's Village news

This is our new site for Australian women. We would love you to get involved personally –and please speak to us around how you might be able to use the site for your own female employees. Membership is free – and right now YOU GET A FREE EBOOK - 52 TIPS ON BEING ORGANISED IF YOU [SIGN UP](#).



Take a sneak peak at a few pieces of a recent blog on the site from Maureen:

### Women’s Village – time for you to get involved!

*We are very excited about the launch of the 2nd stage of [womensvillage.com](http://womensvillage.com)! So for those of you have joined us recently I really want to welcome you to [womensvillage.com](http://womensvillage.com). The establishment of this site has been a dream of mine for quite some time. For many years now we have been working in the corporate world in supporting organizations and women with our mentoring*

programs. We have seen fantastic success with women really stepping up, overcoming major obstacles and getting what they want in their careers.

What became really clear to me with our results around women and their careers was that what we were actually doing was building resilience, confidence and inner belief in a much broader sense than just career. And although we were able to achieve some amazing results from a career perspective -- I was just blown away with some of the personal stories I heard. These personal stories were not measured from a human resources perspective -- but they certainly hit a big chord with me.

What we saw was women achieving amazing things like -- massive weight loss, stepping up to do brand-new things that they never felt they could do before, really leaping out of their comfort zones and somehow becoming new and invigorated again, starting brand-new amazing relationships or having the courage to leave really awful relationships – and those are just a couple of examples. My dream in hearing these types of stories over the years has been -- how do we bring that kind of experience to everyday women in Australia - not just women who are working for big corporations and who happen to be lucky enough to be able to do our mentoring programs.

So that was the first part of my vision for women's village -- I'm truly hoping that in your journey with [womensvillage.com](http://womensvillage.com) that we will be able to support you in creating a brand-new life -- or perhaps support you in making your already fantastic life, even better.

The second part of my vision for women's village has been around what I would describe as "the sisterhood". I guess I sometimes see that women perhaps don't support each other as well as they should. I think however, that when women do support each other – it is tremendously powerful. And with my travels around the country and the work that I have done with thousands of women - what I see is that the majority of women really want to make a contribution and really want to make a difference in the lives of other women. [Womensvillage.com](http://Womensvillage.com) is going give you the opportunity to make a great big contribution to the lives of other women.

This site is all about creating a voice for women in Australia -- so I want you to participate. I don't want to just sit back and be a voyeur -- this is your chance to have your voice heard. Make sure you send us through your thoughts, your feelings and your questions. Make sure you get involved in our forums, meet fabulous new women and people, get your friends involved! We really look forward to hearing from you and hearing your views. Because you know why -- every voice is important – and one brave voice can change the world.

So - I want to challenge you to get involved -- I want you to want to make a difference in the lives of Australian women - and to not just be passive. I want you to be daring enough to make a difference in your own life as a starting point. Become an active part of this village and let's see what we can do together! Come and follow me on [twitter](https://twitter.com/), join our [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/) site – and get those amazing women in your world involved!

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## Gender Diversity News

### Gender Equality Summit



Emberin is pleased to be participating in the second annual [Corporate Gender Equality Summit](http://Corporate Gender Equality Summit) to be held on 8 – 9 June in Melbourne. Maureen will be presenting on the first day on Getting to actual results – Identifying the ten impact areas in order to succeed and Clare Booth will be the MC for part of the proceedings. See *the attached Program for more details*

It was a terrific event last year with many new ideas around gender diversity being discussed and tabled. This year's event promises to be very practically-bent – covering best practices and areas of future focus. We look forward to the summit not just being about ideas but also actions. A copy of the conference program is included in this email.

### Another baby bonus

Aside from the government's paid parental leave scheme if you are a working women who is pregnant, considering getting pregnant or you are a HR Manager coordinating parental leave for your staff then **emberin's** [my mentor Parental Leave](#) program will help manage the transition from work to motherhood to return to work.

The program presents strategies women need to consider at work and at home in order to balance everything on their plates. It provides advice on what to plan for, what to expect, how to negotiate, how to communicate issues concerning parental leave, and it has practical tips and templates for busy working women about to embark on one of the biggest challenges of their careers – having a baby – and keeping their work life on track.

Like my mentor it includes CDs, a workbook and a DVD that features interviews with approximately twenty of Australia's top executive women who are mothers.

This valuable program covers many of the questions that women or managers don't think to ask because it's mostly new territory for all parties involved. But with increasing pressure on organisations to retain their female staff, supporting them during their pregnancy, whilst on maternity leave and easing their return to work is critical in securing women as long-term high-potentials in your female talent pool.

Contact [emberin](#) for further information or read more [here](#).

### On the global front

#### UK Stock exchange addressing gender equality

Following Australia's lead, The UK Stock Exchange (FTSE) is reviewing a report by a steering committee on diversity, headed by Lord Davies, one of the world's leading bankers. The recommendations of the committee were:

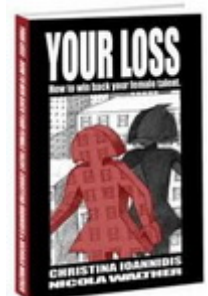
*All Chairmen of FTSE 350 companies should set out the percentage of women they aim to have on their boards in 2013 and 2015. FTSE 100 boards should aim for a minimum of 25% female representation by 2015 and we expect that many will achieve a higher figure. Chairmen should announce their aspirational goals by September 2011. Also we expect all Chief Executives to review the percentage of women they aim to have on their Executive Committees in 2013 and 2015.*

They also recommended annual disclosure of the proportion of women on the board in Senior Executive positions and female employees in the whole organisation.

#### UK Study looks at cost of replacing lost women

Meanwhile in the UK, a new book, [Your Loss: How to Win Back your Female Talent](#), reveals that 48% of women leave companies to carve their own paths outside of corporate culture.

Christina Ioannidis, co-author, said the stereotyped perception is that women are leaving their corporate employers due to childcare responsibilities. However, our research has shattered that stereotype: women are delving into entrepreneurship in order to carve out their ideal jobs and follow their passions. They are taking control of their own careers whilst managing their family responsibilities. However, companies can cut their losses and redress this brain-drain, by creating gender-savvy cultures.



"We calculated that, to an organisation with 10,000 employees, the cost of replacing lost women could be as much as £200 million over 15 years. The international consultancy Bain and Co has concluded that if corporations lose 5% a year of their talent base for 10 years, then investment in recruitment would need to be increased by 20% (from 30-50%) in order to keep up with the losses."

### **Accenture study show where women need to step up**

Accenture has released the results of a global study on attitudes toward work, surveying 3,400 business executives from medium to large organisations across 29 countries.

Half of the respondents (42% of males and 43% of females) are not happy with their current work situation. Yet at the same time, most aren't looking for a new job.

The percentages of individuals who had negotiated a raise were fairly similar, with only a slightly lower percentage of females (44%) having done so than men (48%). But what was surprising was that the percentage of males (39%) who had asked for a promotion was significantly larger than that of females (28%) – and with that promotion comes a higher payer packet.

The study reveals that while about the same percentage of women (32%) and men (31%) had formal or informal mentors, they're relying on them for different kinds of support. Significantly more men (49%) than women (40%) had planned career moves with a mentor, while more women (47%) than men (38%) used their mentor as a sounding board.

### **In Australia**

#### **International Women's Day documents women's progress in Australia**

As you know the 100th Anniversary of International Women's Day was celebrated on 8th March in Australia and around the world. The day was used as a platform to mark the progress made with respect to women's equality and to signal future goals. Some of the announcements included:

- In Australia, just two months after it came into effect, more than 6,700 women were receiving government funded Paid Parental Leave.
- Women in rural areas had the highest rate of workforce participation of all Australian women aged over 35, according to a Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation report. One in four rural women is self-employed, and many Australian women are running and operating successful farms and rural businesses.
- Senator Joe Ludwig Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry said women still occupy less than 20 per cent of paid management and board positions across agriculture companies, RDCs, commodity councils and rural representative bodies. Senator Ludwig stated the Australian Government was determined to address this.
- Foreign Affairs Minister Kevin Rudd announced Australia will contribute \$500,000 over two years to the World YWCA's Power to Change Fund, which has already provided training to young women in health, politics and microfinance in the Solomon Islands.

World YWCA is a global movement of 125 million women and girls working for justice, peace, health, human dignity, freedom and the environment in 125 countries. It develops women's leadership to find local solutions to the global inequalities women face.

#### **Fixing female leaky pipeline – major challenge for Australian businesses**



A survey released by international human resource consultants Mercer shows the biggest concern for Australian organisations when it comes to advancing women is not the lack of female talent, but the leaky pipeline whereby women drop out at senior ranks at disproportionate levels.

The survey, conducted in December 2010, included responses from more than 1,800 human resource, talent management and diversity leaders at organisations across the world, including 99 from Australia and New Zealand.

According to a Marianne Roux, Leader of Mercer's Human Capital Talent Management segment in Australia, companies were worried about not having work-life programs that attracted and retained senior women, and that women were not advancing at the same rate as men in the promotional pipeline.

Ms Roux said organisations that want to create a leadership profile that truly reflects their current business context and requirements, will need to identify high-potential women in the pipeline, invest in their development and move them into high-level roles.

“They will also need to engage the organisation by developing an integrated leadership development and talent strategy that values gender, ethnic and cultural diversity. This broader approach is particularly valuable for global organisations, as well as midsize companies that are expanding in the new markets,” she said.

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## Emberin Tips

### 5 Ways to Keep Your Women's Initiative on Track

The following tips come from Melanie H. Axman, a contributor to [The Glass Hammer](#), who has studied successful US organisations that have managed to maintain their focus on gender initiatives in the face of the economic challenges of the last three years.

#### 1. Form a long-term strategic plan.

Without a plan your focus can be taken away from important issues and initiatives. With a strategic plan in place an organisation can create a map of its resources, as well drive direction forward, despite a demanding and evolving landscape. Nancy Calderon, chair of KPMG's Women's Advisory Board (WAB) attributes part of the success of women's advancement in the firm to a far-sighted vision of an objective.

#### 2. Treat initiatives as corporate values.

Many companies view women's initiatives as an extra benefit or perk, however companies like General Mills recognize it as an integral and valuable culture in the workplace. Ken Charles, VP of Diversity and Inclusion, explains, “Some businesses are better positioned to invest in initiatives but every business can make progress. Inclusion is free. Respect is free. Having a manager who listens is free. These aren't programs, they're values. As leaders within our enterprises we set the tone and establish the expectations. If we rise to the task and lead, we can achieve the transformation we seek.”

#### 3. Create a 'gender intelligent' organisation.

With more than 60 percent of its 60,000 employees worldwide being women, American Express has kept advancement of its female executives as a top priority. To achieve this goal, they launched “Women in the Pipeline and at the Top.” The company conducted focus groups and individual interviews with senior women and men to identify barriers and opportunities that impact advancement to the most senior levels. The research revealed a lack of access to networking opportunities, the characterization of top leadership culture being molded by male-behaviors, and the limited number of role models for women aspiring to senior positions. With this knowledge Amex was able to address the needs of their women employees.

#### 4. Identify and highlight cost savings attained through initiatives.

Women's initiatives and similar programs can be associated with unnecessary expense, rather than viewed as a mechanism that can save businesses money. However, programs like the Inclusion Initiative (jointly launched by Accenture, American Airlines, Comcast, DuPont, Exelon, General Mills, GlaxoSmithKline, Microsoft, Prudential, Sempra, and Walmart) found that the initiative helped them trim costs.

#### 5. Recognize the growing voice of women in the workforce – and this holds true for Australia

With the economy impacting the gender of breadwinners and women in the US exceeding men on the country's payroll the demographics of the workplace have changed. Women's Initiatives were once tools only used by progressive companies. With

women making up 50% of the workforce, how can employers afford not to recognise the challenges and successes of the women who will change the face of their businesses?

## Best Practice

### Mentoring critical to Gen Y

In their book, [The 2020 Workplace](#), Jeannie C. Meister and Karie Willyerd report that the top three things Gen Ys or Millennials want from their bosses are

1. Straight feedback,
2. Coaching and mentoring, and
3. Personal development.



They warn there is a danger in not providing these kinds of learning experiences in as one in four Gen Ys anticipate leaving their present employer or work setting within the next year and one in three Gen Ys admit they are not putting their full energies into their current job – major employee engagement challenge.

Interestingly, in **emberin's** *my mentor, Mastering Gender Leadership* program, one of our experts highlighted this issue by emphasising that many of the things Gen Ys are looking for in a work environment are the same things women have been asking for, for many years.

Gen Ys are 75 million strong in size and are characterized as being self-confident, focused on learning and moving up quickly, team-oriented, well networked, and technologically savvy.

However, no matter how smart and confident they are, because they are new to the professional workplace, they need and want mentoring. In addition, the timeline for leadership development is ramping up. Gen Ys may be thrust into leadership roles faster than any other leaders in the last thirty years, as there are not nearly enough Gen X workers to fill the ranks of the departing Baby Boomers. The good news is that they want to be leaders, claim the authors.

**emberin** agrees that smart organisations have a great deal to gain from mentoring eager graduates – and a lot to learn. By establishing a mentoring relationships with young staff you will open the channels of communication and improve the flow of ideas. Young people need to know how businesses work – the dynamics – they don't learn this at university – similar Gen Y are more in-tune with new possibilities and technologies that will help business stay relevant.

It's a win-win for companies.

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## Women who inspire us - *my mentor graduates*

The value of a peer mentoring group is evident to a group of Telstra women from metropolitan and regional South and Western Australia who completed my mentor over two years ago and are still reaping the benefits from the program and their ongoing connections.



'Being able to talk to like-minded women with similar aspirations has helped reduce the impact of physical distance and provided impetus to my career direction,' said Shona McKeen a Retail Specialist for Telstra Consumer & Countrywide based in Port Lincoln. 'That's something not readily available where I live.'

Through my mentor many of us learnt we had a tendency to undersell ourselves. Now, we are more invested in what we are trying to accomplish with our careers.'

Whilst doing my mentor the group would get together weekly in a meeting room and dial in their distant colleagues. Today, they meet for an hour on the last Wednesday of each month and pick up the phone whenever they need to in between.

They have seen members of their group go on maternity leave and return, illustrating how to combine motherhood with a career. They have brainstormed over performance reviews, job structures that are a win-win for both parties and pay increases as they strive for equal pay across genders. Plus, they have shared their experiences with the group so all can benefit.

Sharon Taylor who is a Team Leader within Telstra Operations recalls, 'I have never had a lot of self-confidence or liked networking. Taking risks and increasing visibility were two stand-outs from the program for me after some recent experiences. I realised I needed to be more proactive about positioning myself and getting my name out there.



'Previously I would hesitate going to work forums as I was often the only female in the IT or networking based roles I've had over the last 12 years. Now, I make myself go, tell myself it won't be as bad as I think and quite often it's not. This has rolled over into my private life. I have joined Curves and lost 14 kilograms and now enjoy going to functions where I know people only in passing.'

Shona, a state basketball coach in her spare time, has done several personal development programs but for her what set my mentor apart was its in-depth nature and corporate perspective.

'I interact with many female staff in our retail stores and the goal-settings skills have helped all of us become a lot more focused in what we are trying to achieve in our professional and personal lives.

'Plus, by talking about career pathways within our Telstra peer mentoring group we have learned that opportunities still exist for advancement, irrespective of our age. Many of us have been inspired to continue professional development through work-related or external offerings.'

For Sharon the networking aspect has been a definite aid. "By knowing people in different parts of the business, I've been able to source information more quickly.' Shona also added that having an understanding of other people's roles was very beneficial as you knew where you could help them.

Their recommendations on running a mentoring group is to have a core that drives it and to have the dates set in everyone's calendar. They circulate agendas, future topics, minutes and action points to the group which now includes other women invited from S.A & WA. 'We sometimes revisit our "Top 100 things to do before we die list" which helps keep our lives balanced,' noted Sharon. 'We also have guest speakers on a topic that is highly relevant to our professional development. It's very worthwhile.'

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