

# 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 and Diversity Annual Report 2009, which reviews the Bank's diversity profile, the take-up of existing policies and progress with the program, was tabled on 21 October 2009.

The Reserve Bank aims to ensure that all staff are treated with dignity and respect in the workplace, and experience equal opportunity throughout their careers with the Bank. This commitment is underpinned by a Diversity Program comprising two elements: the Bank's existing policies and processes, which aim to embed equity and diversity principles in work practices; and new diversity initiatives that the Bank supports over the near term, as outlined in the Bank's Diversity Plan 2009–2011. 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 Diversity Plan 2009–2011. A major focus this year was on gender-based employment trends at the Bank. A number of initiatives were introduced that are designed to ensure that the Bank provides a superior work environment and that women are not disadvantaged. The Bank continued to support an employer-sponsored childcare facility for its staff. During the period the Bank also developed a number of new online training modules on workplace behaviour and accessibility, which are being made available to all staff. Full details of the equity and diversity program will be included in the Bank's Equity & Diversity Annual Report 2010, which is scheduled to be tabled in Parliament later this year.

## Health and 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 well being of its employees, contractors and visitors. The focus of the Bank's activities this year was on educating management on contemporary occupational health and safety issues, the prevention of injuries and continuous improvement in the Bank's work practices. A new online training module on occupational health and safety was introduced and made available to all staff. The Bank also continued to promote its Health & Well Being Program, which is designed to promote the physical and psychological health of employees. This is achieved through the implementation of evidence-based initiatives targeted at occupational health and safety risks, attitudinal and behavioural change, and the provision of a supportive and safe workplace environment.

The Reserve Bank's Health & Safety Management Arrangements were updated following consultation with staff, the Reserve Bank Health & Safety Committee, Comcare and the Finance Sector Union. Two additional Health & Safety Representatives were appointed to the Health & Safety Committee to ensure a wider coverage of designated workgroups.

During the year there were 45 work-related incidents, which resulted in eight claims for workers' compensation, predominantly related to lunch-time sporting injuries, compared with 47 incidents and 10 claims in the previous financial year. There were no dangerous occurrences requiring notification to Comcare.

The Reserve Bank's strong track record in all aspects of occupational health and safety, and compliance with the relevant legislation and the Bank's Conditions of Licence, was confirmed by external audits of the Bank and strong performance against Commission benchmarks. The Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Commission confirmed the Bank's highest possible rating for its prevention, claims management and rehabilitation practices during the year.

## Freedom of Information

### Section 8 Statement

**Organisation and functions:** The Reserve Bank of Australia is Australia's central bank. In 1911, legislation established the Commonwealth Bank of Australia, which undertook central banking functions. In 1959 this original body corporate was preserved as the Reserve Bank of Australia in legislation, specifically to carry on the central banking functions; at that time, the commercial and savings banking functions were transferred to a new institution, which carried on the old name of Commonwealth Bank of Australia. The Reserve Bank's functions, powers and responsibilities are specified in the *Reserve Bank Act 1959*, the *Banking Act 1959*, the *Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997*, the *Payment Systems (Regulation) Act 1998*, the *Payment Systems and Netting Act 1998*, the *Corporations Act 2001* and the *Financial Services Reform Act 2001*, and in Regulations made under those Acts. An overview of the structure of the Bank is provided in the organisational chart, which appears on pages 110 and 111.

**Categories of documents:** The Reserve Bank publishes speeches, reports, articles, conference volumes, information booklets, minutes of the monetary policy meetings of the Reserve Bank Board, media releases, statistical data and various other documents. These are available on the Bank's website ([www.rba.gov.au](http://www.rba.gov.au)), which also provides other information about the Bank. Until December 2009, the Bank published a monthly statistical bulletin that included speeches, reports, media releases, articles of interest and updated series of statistical data maintained by the Bank. As the Bank's website evolved to become the principal means by which users access these statistical data, it was decided that production of these series in hardcopy form was a duplication of more up-to-date data readily available on the website. As a result, since the start of 2010 the *Bulletin* has been published quarterly and no longer contains statistical data. Other documents are held in the form of working notes and files covering policy and operational matters, statistical data, personnel, premises and general administration.

The right of access to documents in the possession of Australian Government agencies in terms of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act) applies to the Reserve Bank. However, the Bank is an exempt agency under the FOI Act in respect of documents concerning banking operations (including individual open market operations and foreign exchange dealings) and exchange control matters.

**Facilities for access and Freedom of Information procedures:** Enquiries under the FOI Act, including requests for access to documents, should be directed to the Secretary of the Reserve Bank. Applications should be accompanied by the application fee (currently \$30). Facilities to inspect documents to which access has been granted are available.

### Section 93 Statement

Four requests for access to documents under the FOI Act were received in 2009/10. Access was granted in part in response to one request and no relevant documents were found in response to one request. One request was in relation to a document that was deemed not to be a document of the agency in terms of the Act. The applicant on that occasion requested an internal review of the decision, whereby the original decision was reaffirmed. One request, which was received towards the end of the financial year, had not been finalised at the end of June 2010. A request that was outstanding at the end of the 2008/09 financial year was finalised, with several documents released in full and others withheld in accordance with provisions of the Act.

The estimated number of staff hours spent dealing with all aspects of FOI requests in 2009/10 was around 77.5 hours. The total cost to the Reserve Bank of administering the FOI Act in 2009/10, including legal fees, is estimated to have been about \$35 600, compared with \$70 300 in 2008/09. Application fees of \$160 were collected; no additional charges were levied.

