

VICTORIA

Auditor-General
of Victoria

SPECIAL REPORT No. 35

EQUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE
Women in Management

Ordered by the Legislative Assembly to be printed

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The President
The Speaker

Parliament House
Melbourne Vic. 3002

Sir

Under the provisions of section 16 of the *Audit Act* 1994, I transmit the Auditor-General's Special Report No. 35 on "*Equality in the Workplace: Women in Management*".

Yours faithfully

C.A. BARAGWANATH
Auditor-General

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Foreword

Women in management is an issue of increasing significance as we move towards the year 2000. A number of factors such as equal employment opportunity and merit and equity programs have contributed to the increase in the numbers of women in managerial positions to around 1 in 4. This ratio is well below that of women to men in both the workforce and the community.

The findings of the audit indicate there will need to be substantial changes in community and workplace attitudes if significant inroads are to be made into the existing under-representation of women in senior positions in both the public and private sectors.

Many of the issues presented in this Report should be of benefit to government in implementing policies regarding equal employment opportunity and women in particular. The Report is based substantially on the views of both men and women in the public sector workforce at all levels because I am of the opinion that it is of the utmost importance that established policies and practices be seen by staff as operating in the best interests of women as well as men. Without this, motivation of staff and productivity are likely to be affected.

In spite of some of the polarised views that emerged from the extensive public sector-wide survey undertaken by my Office, it cannot be disputed that women are under-represented in management positions. While it is arguable as to what all the underlying causes of the current position may be, the findings conveyed through the Report should contribute to the debate on this very important issue. Hopefully, the issues raised will promote an organisational environment and work ethic that is both conducive to women's employment and promotes equality for all.

C.A. BARAGWANATH
Auditor-General

Part 1

Executive Summary

Part 1.1

Overall audit conclusion

1.1.1 The audit examined the representation of women in management ranks throughout the Victorian public sector and identified factors that may have influenced their advancement into managerial positions. The principal purpose of this project was to assess, from the viewpoint of employees, whether the public sector was making the most efficient use of the human resources available in terms of the talent that women can bring to the decision-making ranks of an organisation.

1.1.2 Broadly speaking, the following main themes emerged:

- in most government organisations, managerial positions are predominantly held by men;
- in terms of the whole public sector, the representation of women in management is significantly higher than the private sector;
- a change in attitudes and behaviour in the workplace towards women would enhance their representation and effectiveness in decision-making roles;
- a number of family-related policies and training and development opportunities should be introduced for the benefit of both men and women; and
- promotion should always be based on merit in terms of capabilities and skills and not on whether a prospective appointee is male or female.

1.1.3 The audit revealed that between 30 June 1991 and 1994 the representation of women in managerial positions increased marginally in percentage terms in the Victorian Public Service. A comparison of the position in the State's public authorities at 30 June 1992 and 1993 showed a slight decrease. The fact that women, who occupy about one in every 4 management positions, continue to be under-represented in management ranks in the public sector was highlighted in a study conducted by the University of Southern Queensland in 1994. The aims of the study were to track over time the extent of inequity in Australian management and estimate how long it would take to achieve gender equity in management. The study found that in terms of the Australian workforce, if recent trends continue, the numbers of female managers will not reach parity with men for well over 70 years.

1.1.4 Based on the results of an extensive public sector-wide audit survey of men and women in management and non-management positions and former female employees, audit concluded that:

- some women may not have been given equal opportunity with regard to advancement to managerial positions as the survey shows that over half of public sector employees hold the view that promotion is in some cases based on gender or other considerations such as seniority;
- attitudes in the workplace have to some extent had a negative impact on the appointment of women to managerial positions; and
- flexible work arrangements, many of which are government policy, have not been widely introduced within agencies.

1.1.5 Many of the conclusions drawn from this audit mirror and/or complement those that have been expressed by the Victoria Women's Council. In its Discussion Paper released in December 1994 on *Women in Management*, the Council reported that the document aimed to facilitate further debate in the context of the recent decline in the percentage of women in senior positions and the factors which influence women's opportunities to progress in the corporate sector. According to the Council, "... women are significantly under-represented at local, state and federal government levels and in senior management of trade union and public service ranks, despite the fact that women comprise 42 per cent of the total Australian labour force and 75 per cent of the part-time labour force". Importantly, the Council indicated that it is imperative that the organisation itself is seen to support the advancement of women. Also, the ability of women to achieve advancement is frequently dependent upon their ability to gain acceptance and recognition within the organisational environment. According to the Council, reasons why many women fail to gain these fundamental requirements fall broadly into the categories of attitudes towards women in the workplace, lack of networking and assertiveness skills, and a reduction in representative numbers of women at senior levels which limits their ability to have a major impact upon organisational culture.

1.1.6 In relation to promoting women to middle and senior management ranks, it should be of concern to the Government that in describing the culture in their organisations, the audit disclosed that:

- Around one in every 4 female managers consider that women come up against an invisible barrier when they want to move into a management position and that sexual discrimination occurs in their organisations at a senior management level;
- Four in every 10 female employees consider that there is a culture in their organisation that involves excessive working hours which is equated with commitment and productivity. In their opinion, this environment disadvantages those women who find it difficult to work beyond normal working hours; and
- There is a pronounced view among female managers that informal networks exist between men which exclude women, and the male way of doing things is the accepted norm.

1.1.7 In addition, one-third of current employees consider that promotion processes have favoured men in their organisations. A higher proportion of women than men, especially those who had ceased employment, hold this view.

1.1.8 In audit opinion, if the progression of women into the decision-making ranks of government is to increase, it is essential that selection processes implemented by senior management be not only equitable and based on merit, but also importantly be seen by staff as being free from gender bias. Attitudes and behaviour towards women in the workplace should not be regarded by staff as unfavourable in comparison with those towards men. Judging from the survey results which disclosed a strong sentiment across public sector agencies of male dominance in the workplace, there is considerable scope for improvement across the whole public sector. Practices and attitudes in the workplace that are not conducive to the advancement of women to managerial positions should be of concern to the Government.

1.1.9 In terms of the future, many constructive suggestions were given by respondents to the survey. In general, some of the more common views were as follows:

- promotion must be based on merit rather than gender;
- enhanced training in management, leadership and career planning would assist in the development and progression of men and women; and
- there needs to be a cultural change in both society and the workplace if there is to be an increase in the representation of women in management.

□ **RESPONSE** provided by Acting Public Service Commissioner

The Office of the Public Service Commissioner (OPSC) supports the general thrust of the audit report and considers that it will be a valuable resource in assisting public sector organisations to realise the potential of women in the workplace as a basis for optimising organisational effectiveness.

The audit notes that the representation of women in the Victorian Public Service (VPS) did not achieve the 5 per cent increase stated in the 1991-94 Women's Employment Strategy. This Employment Strategy was the third in a series of 3-year action plans aimed at advancing EEO for women in the VPS. The 5 per cent target was based on the rate of increase achieved over the 1988-90 period when the public sector was growing at between 1.5 and 2 per cent per annum.

It is interesting to note that the 1.7 per cent increase of women in Executive Officer positions during the 1991-1994 period occurred at a time of major workforce reduction and limited recruitment. During 1993-94, for example, the proportion of women in Executive Officer positions increased by 3 per cent, notwithstanding an overall reduction in VPS employment of 9.4 per cent. With the exception of the ACT Public Service (23 per cent of women in Executive Officer positions), Victoria leads all other State Public Services and the Australian Public Service in its representation of women in Executive Officer positions (20.6 per cent).

A number of OPSC initiatives are consistent with both the recommendations of the audit report and the recent Karpin Report on Leadership and Management Skills, particularly the need to develop a positive enterprise culture and better management skills through education and training. Relevant OPSC initiatives include:

- *Promotion of a "managing diversity" approach to EEO which is based on valuing differences and developing a workplace culture that empowers employees to contribute to organisational goals;*
- *Development of core managerial competencies for Executive Officers which will form the basis of VPS and agency management development programs;*
- *Co-ordination of a Graduate Recruitment Scheme (GRS) on behalf of VPS agencies. The aim of the GRS is to recruit, train and retain persons of ability and potential to ensure a quality source of supply of future leaders for the VPS. The intake for the GRS in 1994 was 53 per cent women and 47 per cent male (30 graduates) and in 1995 was 66 per cent women and 34 per cent male (33 graduates);*

□ **RESPONSE** provided by Acting Public Service Commissioner - continued

- *Offering scholarships (up to 50 per cent of course fees) to promote the participation of staff from country locations and designated EEO groups in the Public Sector Management Course. This Course is a joint initiative of the Commonwealth, States and Territories Governments for middle managers in the public sector. On completion, participants receive a Graduate certificate in Public Sector Management from Griffith University; and*
- *Development, in conjunction with departments, of a Code of Practice on People Development for the VPS. The principles contained in the Code promote the Recognition of Prior Learning as particularly relevant for women in recognising the skills they bring to the workplace.*

The OPSC is committed to accessing national and international research data on best practice in people management as a means of ensuring continuous improvement across the VPS.

□ **RESPONSE** provided by Director, Office of Women's Affairs

The Office of Women's Affairs welcomes the Auditor-General's study on Equality in the Workplace: Women in Management.

The application of quantitative research methodologies to the measurement of perceptions held by women and men on this matter is useful. The cross-section of agencies and the number of respondents selected provides a more than adequate indication of opinion, and the range of questions asked allows for crosschecks for consistency. Critics of the study may argue that the survey instrument and indeed audit's specific focus on matters pertaining to the organisational culture of agencies and policies and practices affecting employees with family responsibilities has contributed to the fairly high degree of dissatisfaction expressed. However, in its work with agencies in the public sector, and its contacts with agencies in other States, the Office of Women's Affairs hears the sorts of responses made to this survey repeated regularly.

This study has made it clear that within the public sector too many managers and other employees are not aware of policies and practices which promote merit and equity in the workplace; too few respondents believe promotion is in all cases based on merit regardless of gender; too many respondents believe that family responsibilities have resulted in women being disadvantaged in relation to promotion; and too many respondents believe that the dominant male culture of agencies is a barrier to the promotion of women to management positions.

Audit's focus on the implementation of policy is important. Findings demonstrate that strong policy stances, even those included in legislation, have little effect on change if they are not known and understood by management. The Women's Employment Strategy, a key focus of this study, was the third 3 year action plan developed under the auspices of the former Public Service Board. Principles underpinning the strategy have, therefore, been formally adopted with the Victorian Public Service for over 8 years, and by many other public sector agencies for a similar length of time.

Significant progress has been made across the public sector in relation to formal selection processes for recruitment, transfer and promotion, and to monitoring and reporting progress. This study's value is that it provides advice on the 2 main directions for future action within public sector agencies if women are to have genuine access to management positions (namely, the fuller implementation of family-related policies and change to the culture of organisations).

The conflict between work and family responsibilities was the issue on which men and women responding to the survey most closely agreed. Men and women reported feeling disadvantaged by training courses which were conducted after normal work hours or away from the workplace, and meetings that were scheduled before or after normal working hours. Findings of the study that there is a lack of knowledge of existing entitlements to part-time work and family leave are of concern, as is the level

□ **RESPONSE** provided by Director, Office of Women's Affairs - continued

of uncertainty about whether these conditions of employment applied to all agencies. Beliefs held by respondents that they would be disadvantaged if they took up existing leave entitlements and reports by other respondents that they had been disadvantaged by taking breaks from employment for maternity leave and/or part-time work indicate the existence of workplace practices which are contrary to the Government's industrial relations policy and the Government's Policies for Women.

The failure of workplaces to provide a level of flexibility which allows employees to manage their family responsibilities is related to the second major direction for change identified by the study: "the male culture" of organisations. The prevailing culture of most organisations was seen by many respondents as a barrier to women's advancement to management positions.

The culture of an organisation is a factor which this and other studies have identified as a major obstacle to change. It explains why the implementation of merit and equity policies appear to have stalled.

Many respondents in this survey considered that change will occur when there are more women in the feeder groups for middle and senior management; when women receive more training for management positions; and when there are more women managers to provide role models.

Audit generally appears to support this advice and it is no doubt appropriate where occupational segregation by gender has meant that in some technical areas women have not had sufficient professional experience to equip them for management. However, it does not explain why the proportion of women in management in education, health and community services, and the arts does not more closely reflect the proportion of women in the workforce in those industry areas.

The Office of Women's Affairs notes findings of the study that in many areas there are many qualified and experienced women in the field who are ready to take on management positions, and the Office would argue that present managers (male and female) need more training to enable them to develop a culture within their organisation which promotes merit and equity. Given the high proportion of men currently in senior management positions, it would seem that the role models most needed are male managers who understand and demonstrate excellence in this aspect of human resource management.

This Special Report of the Auditor-General will be an important resource for agencies intent on creating workplaces which fully recognise and develop the management skills and competencies of their employees, both men and women.

Part 1.2

Summary of major audit findings

GENERAL COMMENTS MADE BY RESPONDENTS

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- Based on the constructive opinions expressed by respondents to the audit survey, there is an opportunity for the Government to elicit views from public sector employees in the future to assist in evaluating personnel policies and principles dealing with merit and equity in the workplace. *Para. 3.3*
- In providing input into audit's inquiries, some of the more common themes expressed by respondents centred on:
 - the need to appoint people to positions based on merit and not gender;
 - a greater level of training should be provided to men and women to assist in their development and progression;
 - more encouragement needs to be given to women to apply for managerial positions;
 - various social issues, including striking an appropriate balance between work and home; and
 - certain alleged discriminatory practices.*Paras 3.4 to 3.5*

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- In addition to the responsibilities placed on departments and public authorities to promote equal employment opportunities in their organisations, central organisations also have a role, to varying degrees, in overseeing the application of these policies and practices as they relate to men and women.

Paras 4.6 to 4.22

- In comparison with the Australian Public Service, the Victorian Public Service has a slightly higher proportion of women in managerial positions. When compared with the private sector, the representation of women in management is substantially higher in the Victorian public sector.

Paras 4.23, 4.24, 4.38 and 4.39

- In the Victorian Public Service, the representation of women in managerial positions has increased by 1.7 per cent over the 3 years ended 30 June 1994, compared with a performance indicator outlined in the Government's Women's Employment Strategy of 5 per cent.

Para. 4.24

- With regard to public authorities, female representation in managerial ranks has decreased by 1.5 per cent over the 2 year period ended 30 June 1993.

Para. 4.29

FACTORS IMPACTING ON THE APPOINTMENT OF WOMEN TO MANAGERIAL POSITIONS

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- Access to family-friendly policies is generally lacking throughout the public sector.
Paras 5.10 to 5.13
- A number of public sector employees experience difficulties in the work environment as a result of having family commitments and consider such responsibilities limit the representation of women in management.
Paras 5.14 to 5.19
- Some women hold the view that they were disadvantaged by taking a break in their career.
Paras 5.20 to 5.21
- The views of public sector employees, in describing cultural attitudes in their organisations towards promotion and women in the workforce, place some doubt on whether the equity principle and anti-discrimination legislation are followed rigidly throughout the public sector.
Paras 5.28 to 5.31
- A much higher percentage of employees feel that their organisations always or often regard women as responsible and recognise their skills and professional approach than those who consider that such conditions are seldom or never pursued.
Paras 5.32 to 5.35
- Many women and some men consider that in their organisations:
 - acceptance as *one of the boys* is important in getting a job at a managerial level and promotion processes favour men;
 - male executives hold certain stereotypes that exclude women;
 - informal networks exist between men which exclude women;
 - the male way of doing things is the accepted norm;
 - women are not given adequate opportunity to broaden their experience;
 - the skills of women are not sufficiently recognised; and
 - cultural attitudes that discriminate against women limit the representation of women in management.
Paras 5.36 to 5.61
- There is a lack of female role models in agencies to inspire women to strive for greater heights in their careers.
Paras 5.62 to 5.63
- Insufficient career opportunities and training are seen by some as a limitation to women progressing to a managerial position in their organisation.
Paras 5.64 to 5.73
- A shortage in the numbers of women deemed suitable for promotion and the lack of ambition in many cases are regarded by certain public sector staff to be important factors affecting career progression.
Paras 5.74 to 5.79
- Some women and men have personally experienced situations that have adversely affected their career advancement to a management position as a result of their gender.
Paras 5.80 to 5.82

THE FUTURE**Page 69**

- As women are under-represented in management relative to men in all public sector departments and public authorities, it is not likely that any dramatic improvement will be achieved in the short-term.
Paras 6.4 to 6.5
- On the premise that the proportion of women in management in the Victorian public sector should reflect either the gender make up of the population or the representation of women in the labour force, the proportion of women in managerial ranks of around 25 per cent in aggregate terms would need to increase considerably.
Para. 6.6
- Forty-two per cent of public sector employees hold the view that there should be more women in managerial positions in their organisations.
Paras 6.8 to 6.9
- Approximately two-thirds of public sector staff support the contention that women bring different managerial qualities to the operation of organisations, e.g. they are more caring, are willing to listen and have a more flexible approach.
Para. 6.10
- The survey reveals that urgent attention needs to be given to the introduction of various measures aimed at increasing the representation of women in managerial ranks.
Paras 6.11 to 6.12
- Various practices relating to management recruitment, work arrangements and training were identified by audit which, if introduced by agencies, would assist both men and women in career advancement.
Para. 6.14

Part 2

Conduct of the audit

WHY WAS THIS PROJECT CHOSEN?

2.1 In terms of value added, the project provided an opportunity for audit to:

- examine an important human resource management issue across the whole public sector;
- convey examples of best practice as a guide to agencies for improving future performance; and
- provide input into the implementation of the human resources component of the Government's Management Improvement Initiative.

AUDIT OBJECTIVE

2.2 The audit objective was to examine issues relating to the advancement of women to managerial positions throughout the Victorian public-sector with a view to assessing the extent to which any policies or practices discriminated against women. In particular, the audit evaluated, on a public sector-wide basis, whether:

- equal opportunity for women was adequately promoted with regard to employment;
- any attitudinal or behavioural impediments existed in relation to the appointment of women to managerial positions; and
- appropriate flexible work arrangements were in place to enable staff to combine work and family responsibilities.

SCOPE OF AUDIT

2.3 Management positions have been regarded by audit in line with the levels prescribed in the Government's Women's Employment Strategy (1991-94). In current terms, this equates to those job categories that attract an annual salary in excess of \$44 200. In using salary as a benchmark for quantifying those employees in management positions, it is recognised that some men and women occupying positions in this category would be fulfilling specialist and technical roles.

2.4 The audit included:

- a comparison of the aggregate number of women in managerial positions in the Victorian Public Service at 30 June 1991 and 30 June 1994, and the equivalent situation in public authorities at 30 June 1992 and 1993;
- an analysis of the representation of men and women in managerial and non-managerial positions across public sector agencies;
- an evaluation of how successful the Government has been in meeting the objectives set out in the Women's Employment Strategy (1991-1994) of maintaining the rate of increase in the representation of women in middle and senior management categories in the Victorian Public Service (the Strategy set a performance indicator of a 5 per cent increase to be achieved over the 3 years ended 30 June 1994);

- the conduct of a comprehensive public sector-wide survey to obtain the opinions of both females and males on issues relating to the appointment of women to managerial positions; and
- discussions with representatives of the following agencies on related matters:
 - Office of the Public Service Commissioner;
 - Department of Business and Employment;
 - Department of Health and Community Services;
 - Office of Women's Affairs; and
 - The Affirmative Action Agency.

2.5 In conducting the audit, reliance was placed on figures supplied by the Office of the Public Service Commissioner and the Department of Business and Employment, obtained by way of annual returns from agencies, in relation to the representation of women in management.

PUBLIC SECTOR-WIDE SURVEY

2.6 To examine issues relating to the appointment of women to managerial positions throughout the public sector, there was an obvious need to survey a wide range of current employees, irrespective of their positions and gender, and to seek the views of former female employees.

2.7 The issue of a questionnaire to current employees (1 720 males and 1 720 females) and former female employees (880) on a random basis was the means chosen to canvas attitudes of males and females (and draw comparisons, where appropriate) on matters relating to:

- dissemination of information concerning equal employment opportunities and associated strategies as they relate to women;
- the impact of family commitments on the working environment and the use of family-friendly working arrangements in organisations;
- the effect that career breaks may have had on promotional opportunities;
- the operation of equal employment opportunity and grievance committees;
- organisational culture regarding the employment of men and women in the workplace;
- the extent to which the desired conditions for the employment of women is actively pursued by organisations;
- any factors which have been influential in limiting the increase in the representation of women in managerial positions;
- measures introduced to encourage women to apply for managerial positions;
- any discriminatory practices that may have been employed;
- the managerial qualities that women can bring to an organisation; and
- the level of urgency of introducing measures to increase the representation of women in management ranks.

2.8 In developing the questionnaire, extensive consultation took place with both men and women from various groups, including representatives from the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, the Department of Business and Employment, and the Department of Health and Community Services. Input was also sought from current male and female employees and former female employees. All views obtained from this participative approach were taken into account in framing the questionnaire.

2.9 Due to the sensitivity of this topic, audit elected to adopt a less personalised method of gathering views from employees by way of a confidential questionnaire, rather than also using focus group discussions and interviews.

2.10 The public sector-wide survey was conducted in conjunction with Quadrant Research Services (Vic) Pty Ltd, a specialist market research firm engaged to provide technical advice in relation to:

- sample size and selection;
- questionnaire implementation;
- analysis and interpretation of responses;
- ensuring that the questionnaire was free from bias; and
- enabling the survey to be conducted in a professional manner and produce results which can be regarded as representative of the entire public sector workforce.

2.11 The market research firm also conducted follow-up calls to ensure the response rate achieved was sufficient to sustain valid conclusions and to measure the impact of any non-response bias.

2.12 In order to facilitate the sample selection process, current payroll data from the randomly selected organisations was downloaded by audit and reference was also made to listings of those women who had left the organisation since 1 July 1993. Individual respondents were then selected by the use of a random number generator applied to a sequential listing of employees classified according to gender, management or non-management position held and segment of the public sector (department or public authority).

2.13 A summary of responses to the questionnaire is outlined in Table 2A.

TABLE 2A
QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSE RATE (a)

Outcomes	Victorian Public Service				Public authorities			
	Males	Females	Total	%	Males	Females	Total	%
Responded	420	560	980	45	410	490	900	42
No response	460	750	1 210	55	430	800	1 230	58
Total sent	880	1 310	2 190	100	840	1 290	2 130	100

(a) The results of the survey were weighted to reflect the overall composition of the Victorian public sector between males and females.

2.14 Non-respondents comprise:

- staff included in the sample who were ineligible to participate in the survey, as they were statutory appointees;
- staff who have left their last known address and could not be contacted by audit;
- staff recently employed by the public sector who felt they had insufficient experience to comment on the organisational culture; and
- staff who, for whatever reason, elected not to respond to the questionnaire.

2.15 The overall response rate to the mail survey was 44 per cent. Quadrant Research followed-up 640 non-respondents and obtained completed questionnaires from them. A comparison of results between the initial sample and the followed-up non-respondents indicated that no significant differences in opinions were found between the groups on key issues. Material non-response bias would therefore appear absent, although this cannot be guaranteed for 3 organisations which elected not to provide contact addresses.

2.16 As part of the survey, respondents were requested to provide overall comments they felt were necessary in relation to the appointment of women to middle or senior management positions. Some of the more common themes and particular views expressed are contained in Part 3 of this Report.

2.17 A profile of current and former employees according to their field of work is shown in Table 2B.

TABLE 2B
PUBLIC SECTOR WIDE PROFILE
(per cent)

<i>Field of work</i>	<i>Current employees</i>	<i>Former female employees</i>
Administration	19	18
Engineering	4	1
Finance/Accounting	3	1
General management	4	1
Health/Medicine	19	30
Human resources	3	3
Information technology	3	3
Law	5	1
Natural resources	4	1
Public relations	2	2
Research	3	2
Teaching	26	36
Transport	5	1
Total	100	100

2.18 Based on the number of responses received, on statistical grounds audit is 95 per cent confident that views expressed by respondents based on the full sample, are within ± 3 per cent of the total population's views or opinions. The findings presented throughout this Report, which are based on the survey results, are expressed on a public sector-wide basis.

2.19 At the time of issuing the questionnaire, comments were invited from the chief executive officers of the agencies surveyed in relation to the appointment of women to managerial positions.

2.20 Audit would like to express its appreciation to staff, both past and present, from the public sector agencies (11 departments and 34 public authorities) that participated in the market survey and the 2 Department Heads that provided comment on the issue. In relation to one agency selected, payroll data was not provided to audit in time for employees from this agency to be included in the survey.

2.21 The assistance provided by the Office of the Public Service Commissioner, the Department of Business and Employment, and the Department of the Health and Community Services to audit in the framing of the questionnaire is also acknowledged.

Part 3

General comments made by respondents

OVERVIEW

3.1 Respondents were given the opportunity to make any comments they felt were relevant in relation to the appointment of women to middle or senior management positions. It was pleasing to find that many of the respondents provided thought-provoking input to this aspect of the survey.

3.2 Many of the comments have equal applicability to men and women and support the merit and equity principle; a principle strongly supported by the Government. General views expressed also covered training, encouragement to women and cultural attitudes towards women in the community and the workplace.

3.3 In audit opinion, based on the numerous constructive comments received from the audit survey, there is an opportunity for government to seek the views of its public sector employees on a regular basis, in order to progressively evaluate whether its personnel policies and principles in relation to merit and equity are in fact effectively applied in the workplace.

GENERAL COMMENTS MADE BY RESPONDENTS

3.4 In analysing the opinions expressed by respondents, some of the more common views that have relevance to the future are listed below:

- **merit must be the sole means of appointing people to positions; appointments should not be based on gender;**
- **there is a need to enhance skill, management, leadership and career training for both men and women to assist in their development and progression;**
- **there needs to be more encouragement of women in certain professional areas such as engineering, mathematics and science;**
- **women should be encouraged to apply for middle and senior management positions;**
- **there is a need for more women to be in feeder groups (i.e. non-managers suitable for promotion);**
- **there is a challenge for government agencies to create a work environment which strikes a balance between achieving organisational objectives and enabling staff to fulfil their home related responsibilities; and**
- **there needs to be a change in both society and the workplace for women to achieve equality.**

3.5 Some of the particular comments made that have relevance for the future direction of women in management are listed below according to categories of females and males surveyed.

Women in management positions

- *I want to see the best people appointed to management positions. I find targets etc. favouring women to be offensive.*
- *It is very important that job descriptions, selection criteria and duty statements are not left only to male managers; female staff of all levels should be involved in the development.*
- *Certainly home-based work or tele-commuting would provide greater freedom, improved productivity and commitment to females in the workforce. The challenge is to strike a balance between home responsibilities and work.*
- *The lack of women in the organisation as a whole results in a lack of women moving up in the organisation.*
- *The thrust should be to ensure that women in junior positions have the chance to be trained, and/or go to leadership programs so they can be promoted.*
- *With the increased number of women taking up tertiary education, it is only a matter of natural progression for them to be eventually promoted to senior management levels.*
- *The major challenge for me at the moment though, isn't juggling a baby and a job, it's juggling part-time work with a management role. I've chosen to work part-time to have more time at home with my child, but I find that I do quite a few hours work at home on my days off, and that the ratio of unpaid hours (at home) to paid hours (at work) is high. My co-manager and I both feel pressure to make our "job-sharing experiment" work and to prove that women can do it. Our branch is very supportive of working parents, but it does take time for senior managers to realise that part-time work should equal a part-time load.*
- *Many of the issues which impede the progress of women up the managerial ranks also affect men. In particular, there is a general dearth of opportunities for most middle managers (i.e. non-executive staff) to broaden and develop their skills through exchanges and placements in other organisations, or to participate in high-quality management education with the full support of their employer. Obviously, this sort of support cannot be given to everyone, but it could be extended where appropriate to outstanding junior managers, not just to a few very senior staff.*
- *There has to be an official acknowledgment of the dual role of women as a nurturing mother and as an individual/professional. (This is already evident to a degree in the public service through their awards and conditions.) The skills learnt being the former are given little weighting when applied to a "work" situation. Also, the work's organisation could, through the use of providing the appropriate technology, make it a little easier for working mothers to meet the demands of children and those of their job. What I envisage when I return to work is to use my home office, i.e. fax, mobile phone, modem and computer with compatible software, so that I will be accessible 24 hours to the department and be able to provide advice, be it written or oral, at any time and still be there to meet creche/school deadlines.*
- *I believe training targeted at women should focus on building their confidence and how to manage subordinates (males) that may be resentful of a female manager.*
- *Until society deems men are just as appropriate to assume primary care roles and women want to give up responsibility, "equal" representation will not be won.*

Women in non-management positions

- *I feel with the equal opportunity policies that have been implemented that jobs will be obtained on merit, i.e. "the right person for the right job", not jobs for the girls.*
- *If women are treated equally from birth, at home, at school and in society, I wouldn't be filling out this questionnaire.*
- *I suggest that middle management training be provided to junior staff to enable them to have a better chance at interviews, rather than training them when they have got the job, i.e. public speaking/assertiveness/leadership skills. Prepare them for the positions.*
- *It takes time for the infiltration of women through the ranks. That is why there are so few women. The men are already in position and it is only time until they leave and create more appointments for women.*

Females who have left their organisation

- *As the older generation of males leave the workforce, I think more females will have higher positions. The new generation sees more equality.*
- *I think women should be encouraged as much as possible within reason. Society is organised along full-time work which, of course, suits men more.*
- *A work environment needs to be provided that encourages women in the feeder groups and managerial positions to stay with the organisation. If they are not offered opportunities and salaries that match what they know they can be achieving outside the organisation, they are not going to stay.*

Men in management positions

- *There is a vast amount of untapped talent of women with young families who want to continue their careers.*
- *I believe in equal opportunity but not some being "more equal" than others. Each individual should gain employment and opportunities on merit and their own initiative. Expansion of horizons starts back at primary school.*
- *A woman should not be given preference because she is a female. However, she should not be treated unequally either. Males with heavy family commitments have similar problems to women.*
- *Affirmative action for women is counterproductive. Special needs for some may need to be considered on a needs basis. However, issues relevant to women may be just as applicable to men. True equality in both policy initiatives and practice needs to be enforced. Numbers in senior management will rise in time as the full effect of EEO is felt. Large numbers of women simply have not been in the organisation long enough.*

Men in management positions - continued

- *Men these days are assuming more and more family responsibilities. As these continue to increase (through a change in attitude of society), women's roles in the workplace will change even more dramatically. Someone needs to look after the kids - if it's not women, then it will be the men. In organisations/workplaces dominated by men, there would probably be a bias towards men's attitudes. The reverse also definitely applies. Some men's attitudes need to be changed - to do this we need to analyse what these attitudes are and why they exist or persist.*
- *If women are good enough they should be appointed, however, at present males are discriminated against whenever there is a woman applicant for a position. There should be a level playing field for all and the best person should be selected.*
- *In my 26 years employment with the organisation, I have not known of women in middle or senior managerial positions in my particular section. This should be a priority for this organisation.*
- *My organisation has a number of women in a variety of positions, but none particularly high in the management structure. This could be a reflection of the technical nature of the industry and the lower numbers of women in the science/engineering fields. Women should be treated no differently to men. As I see it, the problem is encouraging more women into trade jobs that lead to opportunity for advancement and not "dead end" jobs. It is pointless pushing more women into higher positions if they haven't the skills, just to get the numbers up.*
- *I believe all appointments should be based on merit and not on gender. A manager should be seen as a manager and not either male or female.*
- *I believe that ability to do the job is the only requirement, not whether they are male or female. Business will survive or fail on the quality of its staff/management, not on how many males/females it employs.*
- *Greater emphasis needs to be placed on skills/management/career development training for all staff (men and women). Women will benefit in the longer-term by having the skills and confidence to achieve management positions on their own merit and will benefit in the process by being supported/mentored/trained along the way by skilled, competent managers (male or female).*
- *Changes within an organisation can make it more user-friendly, but it must be accompanied by real cultural change - which goes beyond one department or the public service.*
- *The effectiveness of career management and planning strategies in promoting increased representation of women at middle and senior management levels is being severely hampered by ever-reducing public sector budgets which limit opportunities for career advancement. This is probably more significant in restricting the promotion of women than any cultural attitudes that discriminate against women.*

Men in non-management positions

- *My only comment is that if we promote women entirely on a gender basis, then we as the lucky country have done it again, i.e. shot ourselves in the foot. We need the best personnel we can obtain in all positions of leadership and supervisory responsibilities. In my mind, it does not matter if those persons are male or female, just the best we can get, to improve public and private organisations.*
- *A present, there are very few women who are electrical engineers in Australia. As an example, when I completed my degree at university, out of 72 students, 4 were female, and all of them were overseas students. To change the employment situation means encouraging women into maths, science and engineering at the secondary and tertiary levels.*
- *I totally support that women should be encouraged to apply for middle/senior management positions and that steps such as child care/family leave/job sharing should lead to ensuring that the organisation gets the best possible people in appropriate positions and that all people have full and equal opportunity to fulfil their potential and benefit the organisation.*
- *No position should be judged on gender alone. It should be a person's ability to do the job that is the deciding factor. I don't think there should be a Women's Employment Strategy at all. This is discrimination against males.*
- *I believe that all lower ranking officers should be encouraged to strive for higher levels. I do not think that women should be specifically promoted to rectify an imbalance. Appropriate training should allow the best applicant to get the job regardless of gender.*
- *I am not in favour of affirmative action for one group over another. I am, however, in favour of equal opportunity. The difficulty would seem to be the lack of a feeder group for women from which appointments can be made.*
- *I am in full support of increasing the percentage of women in middle/senior management positions, however, I believe all positions should be filled on merit first and foremost.*

Views expressed regarding alleged attitudes and behaviour that discriminate against women in managerial ranks

- *Many women get sick of having to play men's power games and leave. I am considering doing so.*
- *Women don't get the opportunity to show their skills whereas men often get called to do extra jobs not included in their job description. Women get asked to do classic stereotype jobs.*
- *Under the new government, there seems to be a swing back to some of the beliefs that hindered career advancement for women in the past. This includes an expanded "boys club"; senior male managers brought in (not necessarily in my department) who are conservative and old fashioned, referring to women as "girls" for example; and an expectation that people should work ridiculously long hours for advancement, making it impossible to balance another life including family responsibilities.*

Views expressed regarding alleged attitudes and behaviour that discriminate against women in managerial ranks - continued

- *The predominantly "female" occupations are top heavy with male middle or senior managerial personnel. This is not because of better qualifications or capabilities, but it is rather a reflection of societal/cultural values. Too many talented, capable women are therefore not having their skills utilised or recognised.*
- *I have read in various sources recently that women who move into senior management positions tend to find the culture so inhospitable that they leave again. My experience so far is pushing me in the same direction - it is impossible to "cut the mustard" with "the boys" unless you accept that a senior appointment disentitles you to a home life. I do a lot of work between 4 and 7 a.m. to try to minimise the time away from my family, but I'm too exhausted to be much good to them when I do see them.*
- *If the appointment of women to middle or senior managerial positions is seen as difficult, it is more so for women from non-English speaking countries!*
- *Promotions are too often based on personalities, mateship etc. and are decided well before the interviews take place.*
- *Discrimination is often not overt in the appointment of women to management positions. Rather, it is an unconscious assessment by men that women are not up to the "hard" tasks of management. This attitude is much harder to fight than overt discrimination.*
- *Getting a job in, or being promoted to, middle and senior management is still largely about networks and networks are usually run by men.*
- *It boils down to having confidence in doing a higher level job. Women are never encouraged to do so. Women have to work twice as hard for the same as men. Most women are honest about their abilities. If anything, they underestimate themselves.*
- *I think that one of the barriers for women is a lack of acceptance of "personality or character" differences. This approach is at times used as "the reason" for not moving a female from a supervisory role to a management one. Women still have to work harder and be more personable than their male counterparts when seeking promotion.*
- *Glass ceiling definitely operates. Due to the lack of upward promotional opportunities, middle level women often take successive sideways moves to develop and contribute without ever achieving promotion.*
- *The audit survey does not address the subtle (and not so subtle) hindrances to women: talking over women and non-acceptance of women's ideas. Nor does it address those high powered females who adopt these same "male" behavioural mannerisms.*

Part 4

Analysis of the representation of women in management

OVERVIEW

4.1 There is an elaborate regulatory environment in place to cover issues relating to the employment of women in the workforce.

4.2 In analysing the information that is available, there has not been any marked change in the representation of women in managerial positions between 1991 and 1994 in the public sector as a whole. Generally speaking, one in 4 managerial positions in the public sector are held by women, a situation which is significantly higher than in the private sector. Within the Victorian Public Service, the Department of the Premier and Cabinet is the largest employer of women in management as a proportion of total staff numbers. In relation to public authorities, the Finance and Superannuation industry has the highest concentration of women in managerial positions as a proportion of total staff.

INTRODUCTION

4.3 In the complex and rapidly changing environment in which governments operate, there is a growing need for organisations to make optimum use of available human resources. The skills and knowledge of women represent an essential resource available to the community and, in particular, the Government which is a major employer of women. As many of the services provided by the Government are in fact received by women, the significant involvement of women in decision-making may lead to improved resource allocation and service delivery.

4.4 In 1991 the previous Government released a strategy dealing with issues relating to the employment of women. One of the objectives of this strategy, the Women's Employment Strategy, was to maintain the rate of increase in representation (which had occurred over the 1988-90 period) of women in middle and senior management categories in the Victorian Public Service. A key performance indicator set by the previous Government required that the representation of women at the middle management level and equivalent professional categories and at senior management level increase by 5 per cent over the period 1991-1994 in aggregate terms. In regard to implementation strategies, the previous Government stipulated that agencies needed to continue to target women for middle and senior management positions and provide training and support for these women to help them progress through the career structure. In the formal evaluation of the Women's Employment Strategy for 1992-93, the Office of the Public Service Commissioner stated that the Strategy for 1991-1994 continued to outline government objectives for merit and equity performance in the Victorian Public Service.

4.5 The current Government's policies for women in the workforce include objectives to:

- increase the ability of women to attain economic security and enable them to contribute their skills to the growth of the economy;
- ensure that anti-discrimination legislation is effective to protect the rights of women;
- examine training programs and promotion procedures to identify any direct or indirect discrimination;
- increase education, training, retraining and employment opportunities;
- make provision for the use of leave as a result of family illness or emergency;

- provide flexible working hours and work practices;
- encourage the provision by employers of additional work-based childcare places;
- provide access to part-time work and job sharing; and
- monitor and evaluate the impact of policies and legislation on women.

ROLE OF CENTRAL ORGANISATIONS

Office of the Public Service Commissioner

4.6 The position of the Public Service Commissioner, which was established under the *Public Sector Management Act 1992*, has responsibility for:

- promoting consistent personnel policy and practice;
- specifying principles of merit and equity; and
- ensuring that guidelines established on merit and equity are applied throughout the public sector.

4.7 According to the provisions of the Act, Department Heads are accountable for the application of merit and equity in their own organisation. This accountability extends to matters relating to appointment, promotion, assignment, demotion, discipline, transfer, retrenchment or termination of employment of staff. The promotion and monitoring of merit and equity in employment practices in government organisations covered by the Act has been assigned to the Office of the Public Service Commissioner.

4.8 In relation to the objective of achieving equal employment opportunity for women across all departments in the Victorian Public Service, the Office has:

- evaluated the 1991-1994 Women's Employment Strategy for the first 2 years ended 30 June 1993;
- issued a discussion paper in November 1993 in relation to training and development for female managers;
- released in July 1994 a discussion paper on best practice performance indicators on employment equity for women; and
- recently completed a summary evaluation of the Strategy for the year ended 30 June 1994.

Department of Business and Employment

4.9 The *Public Authorities (Equal Employment Opportunity) Act 1990* formally introduced equal employment opportunity (EEO) requirements to public authorities not already covered by other EEO legislation. This Act, which encompasses all State Government-funded agencies apart from those covered by the *Public Sector Management Act 1992*, *Local Government Act 1989* or the *Municipal Association Act 1993*, covers 82 per cent of public sector employees and requires public authorities with 40 or more employees to introduce EEO programs and to provide, to the Minister, gender profiles at 30 June annually according to job classification and type.

4.10 The Public Authorities EEO Unit, on behalf of the Minister for Industry and Employment, administers the *Public Authorities (Equal Employment Opportunity) Act 1990*. The role of the Unit is to collect and interpret data from public authorities regarding the development of EEO programs within their organisations and prepare a report annually to Parliament summarising the outcomes of this information. The 1992-93 report was tabled in the 1994 Spring Session of Parliament.

4.11 The Unit does not have the power to enforce compliance with the legislation, but acts to encourage public authorities to develop EEO programs and subsequently provide data to the Unit for inclusion in the annual parliamentary report. Over the years, the Unit has also taken on an advisory role in relation to the content and implementation of EEO programs in public authorities.

□ **RESPONSE** provided by Acting Secretary, Department of Business and Employment

The Department of Business and Employment has enhanced its planned EEO public authorities program activities for the period commencing 1995-96. A comprehensive work plan has been approved by the Department and provides the detail of the projected initiatives.

The Department will be providing a number of training and development activities for those individuals responsible within public authorities for EEO programs. Such issues as managing diversity; the impact of changes to EEO and employee relations legislation; general EEO program development; and EEO "Best Practice" are proposed at this stage.

Additionally, a dedicated inquiries telephone service has been established to provide discrete and timely assistance to authorities with their EEO programs as issues arise.

Office of Women's Affairs

4.12 The Office of Women's Affairs aims to advance the status of women by:

- delivering policy advice on women's interests to the Government through the Minister for Women's Affairs;
- monitoring the implementation of government policy for women and assisting all government agencies to carry out aspects of policy for which they are responsible; and
- developing and maintaining contact with groups and organisations and establishing information systems and processes to develop women's policy with other agencies within Victoria, other States and Territories, and the Commonwealth.

4.13 The 2 main mechanisms used by the Office to carry out its responsibilities to monitor and report are the Women's Budget and the Victorian Women's Register.

4.14 The Women's Budget, which is prepared annually, requires all government departments to report on their performance in:

- acknowledging women as their clients; and
- developing policies and programs that are responsive to women's concerns.

4.15 This comprehensive document is useful as a source of information on the policies and budget commitments of government which affect women and as an annual report to the community on outcomes for women arising from government agency plans. This publication, which serves as a government accountability mechanism, requires agencies to report to their women customers on achievements and plans consistent with the Government's policy statement for women. Of particular relevance to the Government's merit and equity objectives is the gender ratio in the Women's Budget which provides departmental profiles of men and women appointed to statutory boards and committees and management and non-management positions.

4.16 The Victorian Women's Register is a database of approximately 500 women who are senior in their field and interested in serving on government boards and committees. The Register is designed and maintained to provide a mechanism to assist Ministers and the Government to achieve gender equity in appointments, while ensuring that in every case the best person is recommended for appointment.

Victoria Women's Council

4.17 The role of the Victoria Women's Council is to provide comprehensive and representative advice to the Government, through the Minister for Women's Affairs, on issues affecting women's interests by:

- establishing and maintaining effective communications with women and women's organisations throughout Victoria;
- consulting with women, the community and women's organisations on issues referred to the Council by the Minister for Women's Affairs;
- consulting with women, the community and women's organisations on issues initiated by the Council and approved by the Minister for Women's Affairs; and
- providing forums for discussion on issues of interest to women.

4.18 In December 1994, the Council issued a discussion paper in relation to women in management.

Equal Opportunity Commission

4.19 The primary functions of the Equal Opportunity Commission under the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984* are to provide a complaints resolution service and to educate and inform people of their rights and responsibilities. The Act protects all Victorians from unfair treatment because of their sex, race, disability, politics, religion, marital and parental status if the unfair treatment occurs in employment, education, the provision of goods and services, accommodation or clubs and associations. Sexual harassment and victimisation are also unlawful.

4.20 The Commission also has delegations to process complaints under the Commonwealth Sex Discrimination and Race Discrimination Acts, and operates as a point of referral for the Disability Discrimination Act.

Affirmative Action Agency

4.21 The Affirmative Action Agency is a Commonwealth statutory authority established to administer the *Affirmative Action (Equal Employment Opportunity for Women) Act 1986*. The main functions of the Agency are to:

- advise and assist employers to develop and implement affirmative action programs;
- monitor the lodging of reports by employers and to review those reports; and
- promote an understanding of affirmative action through community awareness and educational programs.

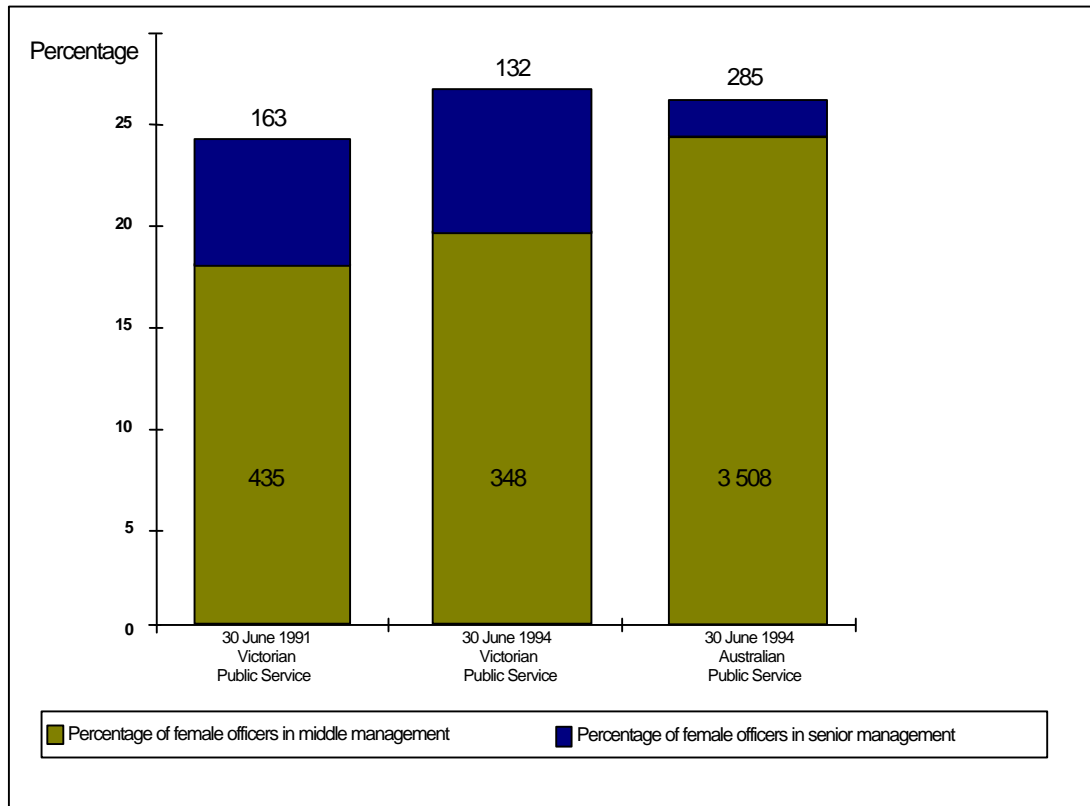
4.22 The *Affirmative Action Act 1986* aims to provide equal employment opportunities by identifying and removing barriers to employment and to promotional opportunities for women in the workplace. The Act covers all private sector employers, community organisations, non-government schools, unions and group training schemes with 100 or more employees and all institutions of higher education Australia-wide. As such, in terms of the Victorian public sector, the Act has relevance to agencies such as universities and TAFE colleges.

COMPOSITION OF WOMEN IN THE WORKFORCE

Victorian Public Service

4.23 At 30 June 1994 there were approximately 26 400 employees in the Victorian Public Service (14 400 men and 12 000 women) of which 1 177 were employed in the middle management administrative stream and 657 in senior management positions. A comparison of the representation of women in middle management (administrative positions) and senior management positions in the Victorian Public Service in aggregate terms at 30 June 1991 and 1994 is shown in Chart 4A. Information was not available in relation to specialist and technical positions at the middle management level.

**CHART 4A
PROPORTION OF MANAGEMENT POSITIONS
IN THE VICTORIAN PUBLIC SERVICE OCCUPIED BY WOMEN**



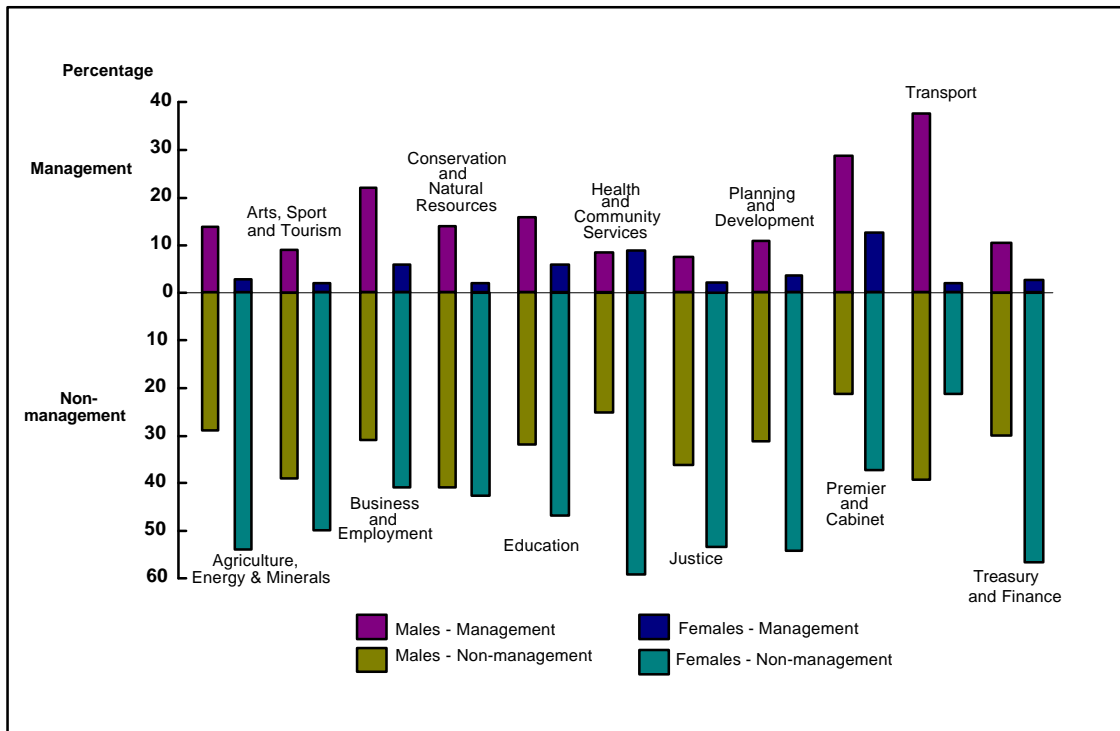
Sources: Public Service Board *Annual Report 1990-91*;
Office of the Public Service Commissioner - *Annual Report 1993-94*; and
Department of Finance - *Australian Public Service Statistical Bulletin 1993-94*.

4.24 The above chart shows that in aggregate terms, the representation of women in managerial positions has increased by 1.7 per cent over the 3 years ended 30 June 1994. While the proportion of management positions held by women compared favourably with the Australian Public Service at 30 June 1994, the Government has not achieved the 5 per cent increase which was specified as a performance indicator in its Women's Employment Strategy for 1991-1994.

Staff in management and non-management positions in the Victorian Public Service

4.25 Chart 4B illustrates the gender breakdown in each department of males and females in management and non-management positions in the Victorian Public Service.

CHART 4B
STAFF OCCUPYING MANAGEMENT AND NON-MANAGEMENT
POSITIONS BY GENDER IN THE VICTORIAN PUBLIC SERVICE, AT 30 JUNE 1994



Source: Office of the Public Service Commissioner (Merit & Equity Returns and Annual Report), 1993-94.

4.26 The above chart clearly shows that there remains a dearth of women in management positions. In 7 departments (Agriculture, Energy and Minerals; Arts, Sport and Tourism; Conservation and Natural Resources; Justice; Planning and Development; Transport; and Treasury and Finance) women employed in managerial roles represent less than 5 per cent of total staff numbers. The highest proportion of female managers compared with total staff numbers occurs in the Department of Health and Community Services and Department of the Premier and Cabinet, where women make up 8 and 13 per cent of the total staff numbers, respectively. However, the Department of Health and Community Services is the only agency where there is a similar number of women and men within management ranks, although this achievement is moderated by the fact that there are significantly less men than women employed in this Department.

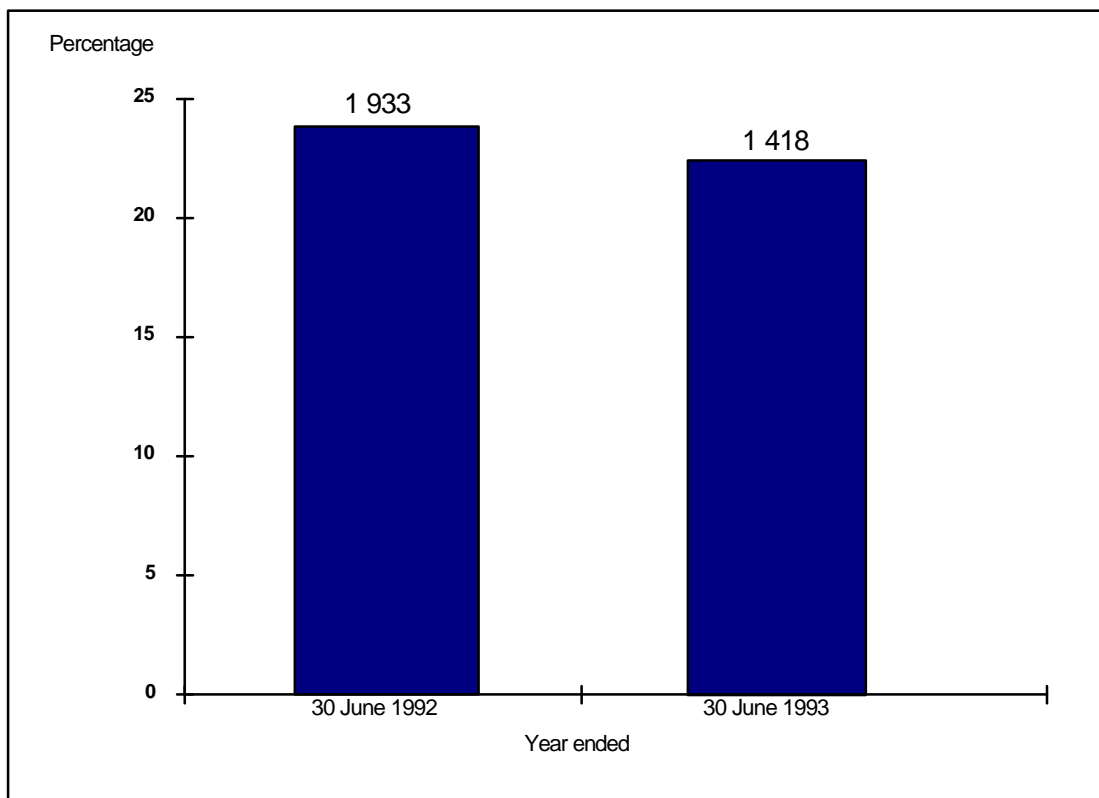
4.27 It is interesting that in all agencies except the Department of Transport, there is a greater or equal number of women compared with men in the non-management levels. The proportion of these women that could be regarded as a feeder group for future management positions will depend on their current positions and their ability and skills.

4.28 The Departments of Agriculture, Energy and Minerals, Conservation and Natural Resources and Transport are agencies in which it could be expected that there would be fewer females in management positions. This is because they include a large number of "traditionally male" jobs such as engineering and scientific positions, which previously have lacked females qualified to undertake them. As such, the progression of women into these positions may not be as evident in the immediate term as in other agencies, until women obtain the necessary skills, qualifications and experience to fulfil management roles in these technical areas.

Public authorities

4.29 At 30 June 1993, approximately 178 800 staff were employed in public authorities (86 300 males and 92 500 females). Chart 4C indicates that, unlike the position in the Victorian Public Service, the representation of women in managerial roles in aggregate terms in public authorities decreased by 1.5 per cent during 1992-93. No figures are available for 1994.

**CHART 4C
PROPORTION OF MANAGEMENT POSITIONS
IN PUBLIC AUTHORITIES FILLED BY WOMEN**

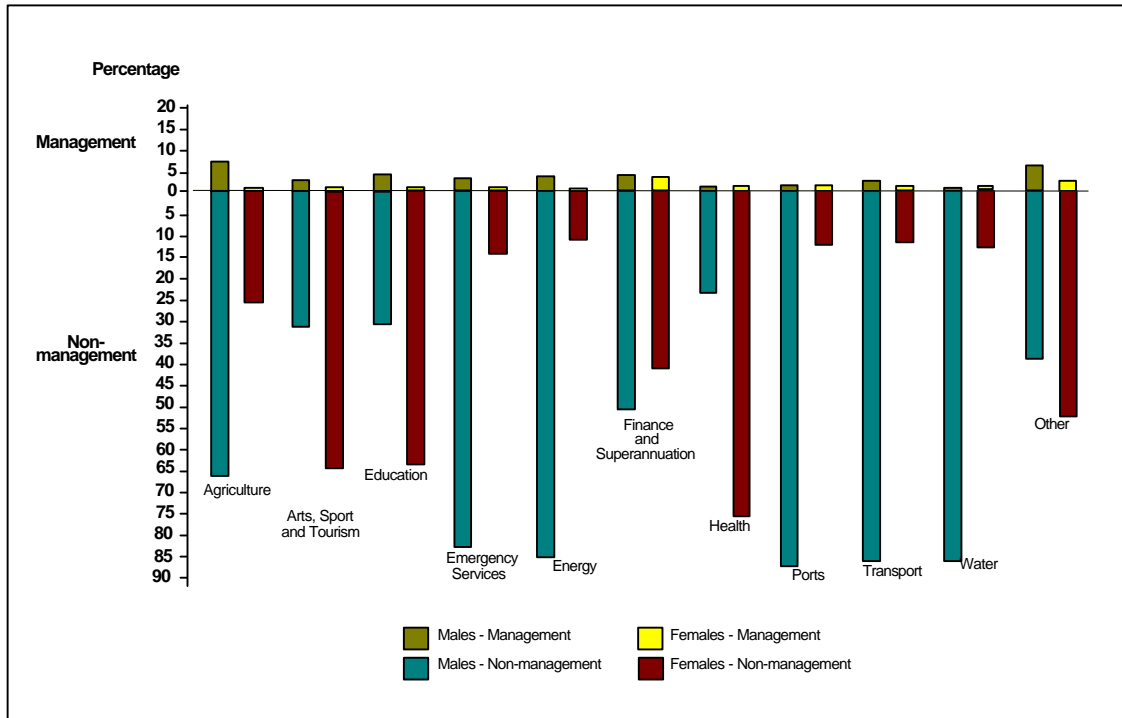


Source: Public Authorities (EEO) Annual Reports, 1991-92 and 1992-93.

Staff in management and non-management positions in public authorities

4.30 Chart 4D illustrates the gender breakdown in each industry group of public authorities of males and females in management and non-management positions.

CHART 4D
STAFF OCCUPYING MANAGEMENT AND NON-MANAGEMENT POSITIONS BY GENDER
IN PUBLIC AUTHORITIES (ACCORDING TO INDUSTRY), AT 30 JUNE 1993



Source: Information drawn from data compiled by the Department of Business and Employment Public Authorities EEO Unit.

4.31 The Finance and Superannuation industry employs the greatest concentration of female managers as a proportion of total staff numbers. In fact, there is reasonable parity in terms of gender balance in both management and non-management positions within this industry.

4.32 As is the case in the Victorian Public Service, the Health industry employs the greatest number of women as a proportion of its total workforce, however, only 0.6 per cent of total staff is represented by women employed in managerial positions. Although there are significantly less men employed in this industry group, they slightly outnumber women in terms of managerial appointments.

4.33 The Agriculture, Emergency Services, Energy, Ports, Transport and Water industries employ considerably more males than females and all have very low representation of women in management positions as a percentage of total staff. Females are clearly predominant in the non-management ranks of the Arts, Sport and Tourism and Education industries, however, like the departments mentioned previously, their numbers fall significantly below those of men in the management levels.

4.34 In addition, the above chart reveals that there is clearly greater inequity in employment in public authorities than in the Victorian Public Service at the non-management levels. In many industries, there is a larger proportion of non-management positions held by men relative to women. Nevertheless, in both sectors, substantial inequality remains at management levels, where women are indisputably in the minority.

□ **RESPONSE** provided by Acting Secretary, Department of Business and Employment

The Report comments that there is "... clearly greater inequity in employment in public authorities than in the Victorian Public Service at the non-management levels". Such a comparison overlooks the considerable differences in the nature of work performed by, and patterns of skills required of the authorities as opposed to that of the Victorian Public Service.

For example, public authorities include a number of agencies with traditional blue collar jobs characterised, at least historically, by more unskilled "heavier" jobs which have traditionally been filled by males. Employment in Water, Energy, Ports and Transport can all be categorised in this way. Other agencies such as Police, Prisons and Emergency Services also need to be considered in terms of the historical gender segregation of employment in these areas based on past perceptions of the physical requirements for these positions.

These employment areas represent roughly one-third of the total employment in public authorities and, on average, have 80 per cent of their workforce made up of males. This must be clearly understood when commenting on the disparity between public service and public authorities performance and employment patterns.

Lack of 1994 information for public authorities

4.35 The *Public Authorities (Equal Employment Opportunity) Act 1990* requires public authorities with 40 or more employees to prepare an annual report outlining the development, implementation and progress of the equal employment opportunity program in their organisation, within 3 months after the end of their financial year. A public authority with less than 40 employees must, within the same timespan, prepare an annual return stating the number, classification and types of jobs for each gender and for employees in designated groups. This information is collated by the Department of Business and Employment centrally and presented in an annual equal employment opportunity report to the Parliament.

4.36 Information relating to women in management positions across public authority industry groups at 30 June 1994 could not be provided by the Department in a finalised form to audit as:

- a large number of public authorities had not submitted the required reports to the Department; and
- preparation of information from data already submitted was only at an early stage of development due to the labour intensiveness of this conversion process.

4.37 **Public authorities need to comply with the legislative reporting requirements of the Act within the designated timeframe in order to facilitate central examination and reporting to the Parliament of the annual outcomes of equal employment opportunity programs.**

□ **RESPONSE** provided by Acting Secretary, Department of Business and Employment

The Report notes that information relating to women in management positions across public authorities could not be provided to the audit team. This difficulty arose, in part, because data provided by authorities to the Department of Business and Employment was at the time only at an early stage of preparation.

It was not noted, however, that the Department, in correspondence to the Auditor-General's Office dated 20 April 1995, extended an invitation for staff of the Auditor-General's Office to peruse the raw data available for the purposes of their report. For reason of time constraints, the audit team was not able to avail itself of this opportunity to access the available information.

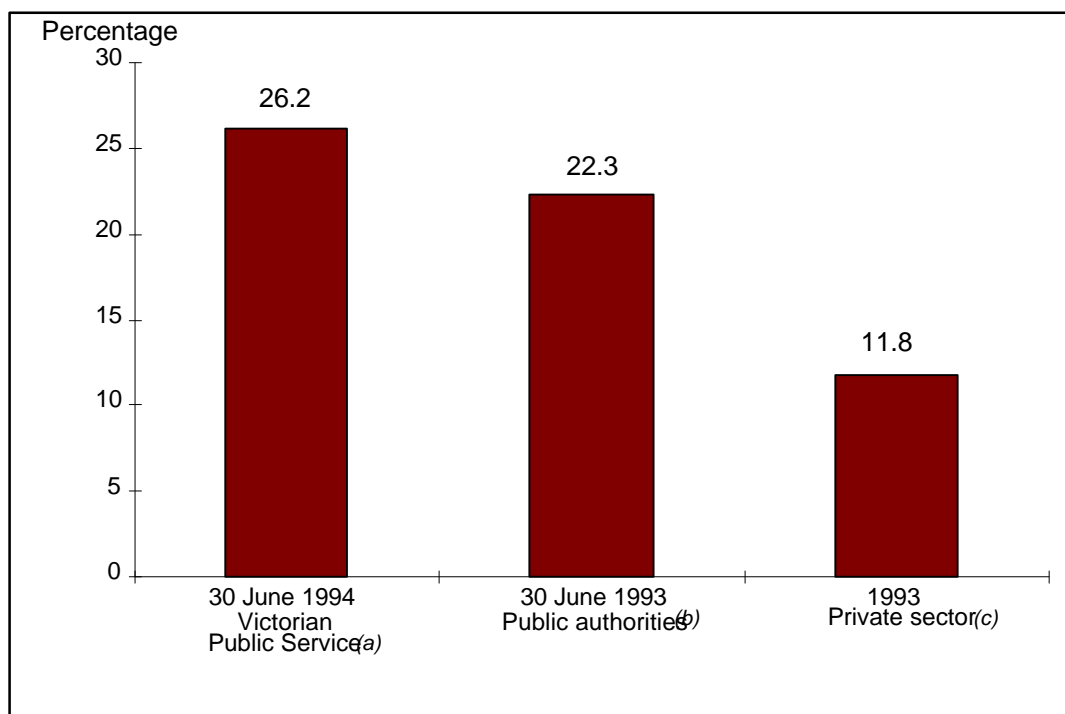
The Department of Business and Employment remains committed to ensuring the EEO reporting compliance of public authorities.

Regular and substantive efforts, comprising both direct correspondence and telephone contact, have been made to follow-up outstanding agency reports and to remind authorities of their obligations under the Public Authorities (EEO) Act 1990 and to offer assistance for the purposes of the completion of information requirements.

Comparison with the private sector

4.38 Chart 4E compares the percentages of management positions held by women in the Victorian Public Service, public authorities in Victoria and the private sector (Australia-wide) according to the most recent information available.

**CHART 4E
COMPARISON OF THE PROPORTION OF MANAGEMENT POSITIONS
HELD BY WOMEN IN THE VICTORIAN PUBLIC SERVICE AND
PUBLIC AUTHORITIES TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR**



(a) Source: Victorian Public Service - Office of the Public Service Commissioner, *Annual Report, 1993-94*.

(b) Source: Public authorities - Information supplied by the Public Authorities EEO Unit of the Department of Business and Employment.

(c) Source: Private Sector - Data compiled from survey conducted in 1992. Reference: Still, Leonie V. 1993, *Where To From Here? The Managerial Woman in Transition*, Business and Professional Publishing, Sydney.

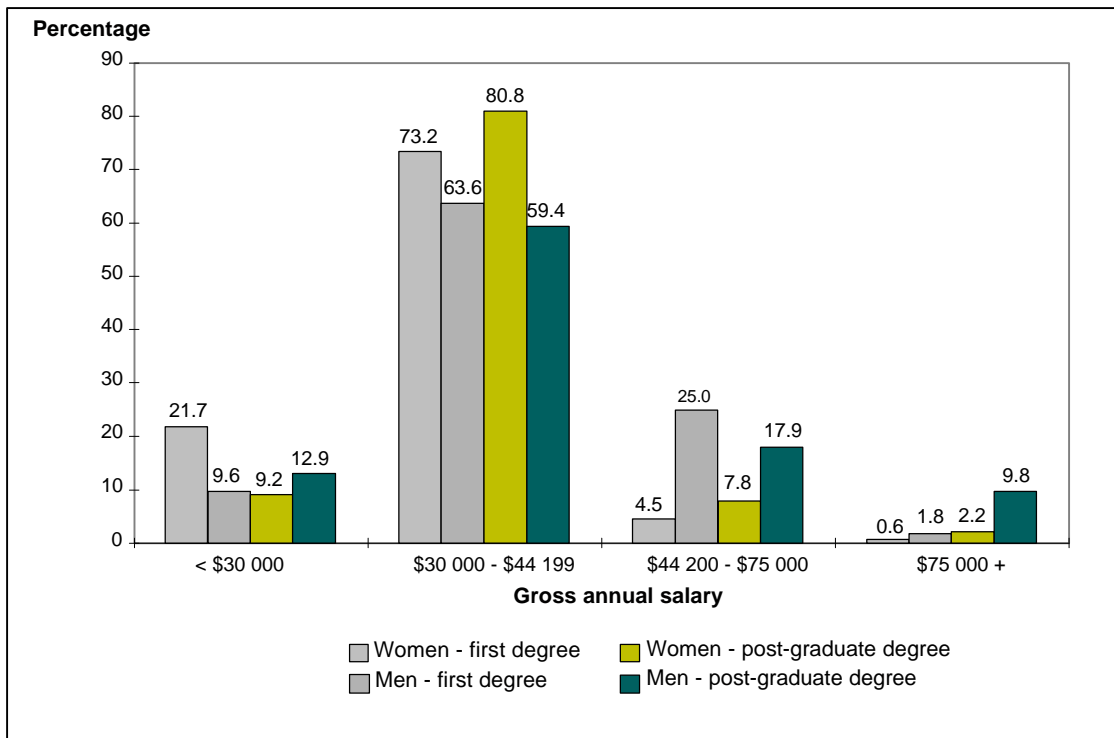
4.39 There are significantly more women employed as managers (as a proportion of total management positions) in both the Victorian Public Service and public authorities than in the private sector.

QUALIFICATIONS OF WOMEN

4.40 Women in managerial positions were found to be highly qualified, as were their male counterparts. Of the women in management, 96 per cent had a tertiary qualification (predominantly in arts, education or finance) of which 82 per cent had either completed, or were in the process of completing, post-graduate studies.

4.41 Audit compared the qualifications of men and women throughout the public sector in 1995 according to salary ranges. Chart 4F shows the distribution of women with first degrees or post-graduate degrees spread over salary ranges compared with men.

**CHART 4F
COMPARISON OF THE QUALIFICATIONS OF
MEN AND WOMEN IN 1995 ACCORDING TO SALARY RANGES**



Note: Salary brackets represent the following levels of responsibility:

- Under \$30 000 - entry level into the public sector;
- \$30 000 to \$44 199 - supervisory level;
- \$44 200 to \$75 000 - middle management level; and
- Over \$75 000 - senior management level.

4.42 The above chart shows that:

- of the women with first degrees, there is a higher proportion than men within the entry and supervisory levels, whereas this situation is reversed at the management levels; and
- with regard to those employees with post-graduate qualifications, a higher proportion of men have such qualifications than women at all levels, except for those occupying positions at supervisory level.

CHARACTERISTICS OF PUBLIC SECTOR MANAGERS

4.43 The personal characteristics of women and men in managerial positions were very similar. Common features are portrayed in Table 4G.

**TABLE 4G
MOST COMMON CHARACTERISTICS OF
WOMEN AND MEN IN MANAGERIAL POSITIONS**

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Spends between 41 and 50 hours in the office and between 5 and 10 hours outside the workplace on work-related activities per week ■ Between 36 and 50 years of age ■ Aspires to seek a promotion in either their current or a different organisation in the next 5 years ■ Highly qualified |
|--|

WOMEN LEAVING THEIR LAST POSITION

4.44 One or more reasons given by former female employees for leaving their last position in the agencies surveyed were as follows:

- accepted a voluntary departure package offered by the Government (33 per cent);
- dissatisfied with work (18 per cent);
- dissatisfied with the bureaucratic process (17 per cent);
- position became redundant (16 per cent);
- career advancement (14 per cent); and
- dissatisfied with advancement opportunities (12 per cent).

4.45 Since leaving their last position in the public sector, the **main** activities pursued have been to:

- accept a job in the private sector (27 per cent);
- take another job in the public sector (26 per cent);
- start a family (12 per cent); and
- commence a business (10 per cent).

Part 5

Factors impacting on the appointment of women to managerial positions

OVERVIEW

5.1 In attempting to isolate factors which may have adversely impacted on the appointment of women to middle and senior management positions in the public sector, a multitude of issues combine to make this a complex area to reach a conclusion that is totally free from subjectivity.

5.2 Nevertheless, the wide-ranging attitudinal survey conducted by audit of men and women (including former female employees), located in public sector agencies and employed in both management and non-management positions, represents the views of public sector employees regarding the issue of women in management.

5.3 In an ideal workplace, decisions regarding human resource management and professional behaviour should not only be free from gender bias, but also importantly be seen by staff as based on the principles of merit and equity.

5.4 It is acknowledged by audit that the strong legislative base for equity and a range of policies have substantially removed formal barriers to the recruitment and advancement of women into managerial positions. For example, the equity principle, under which job appointments are based on merit regardless of gender, is designed to eliminate discrimination, patronage or favouritism when selecting candidates for positions. In addition, policies regarding part-time work, maternity leave and re-entry entitlements provide a people-focused framework which encourages women to enter and remain in the workforce.

5.5 However, the effective introduction of cultural change is dependent, not only on formal mechanisms, but also on behavioural attitudes in the workplace and the consistent application of principles required by legislation and policies. The identification of organisational behaviour that may present barriers within a corporate culture to the overall advancement of women into management was a main focus of the audit.

WHAT WERE THE MAJOR OUTCOMES FROM THE SURVEY?

5.6 The survey shows there is a greater proportion of women compared with men who are of the opinion that a wide range of factors, which adversely impact on the appointment of women to managerial positions, exist. In general, these factors centre on the following issues:

- equal opportunity for women not adequately administered with regard to employment;
- the existence of attitudinal or behavioural impediments to the appointment of women to managerial positions; and
- the inflexibility of work arrangements which do not enable staff to successfully combine work and family responsibilities.

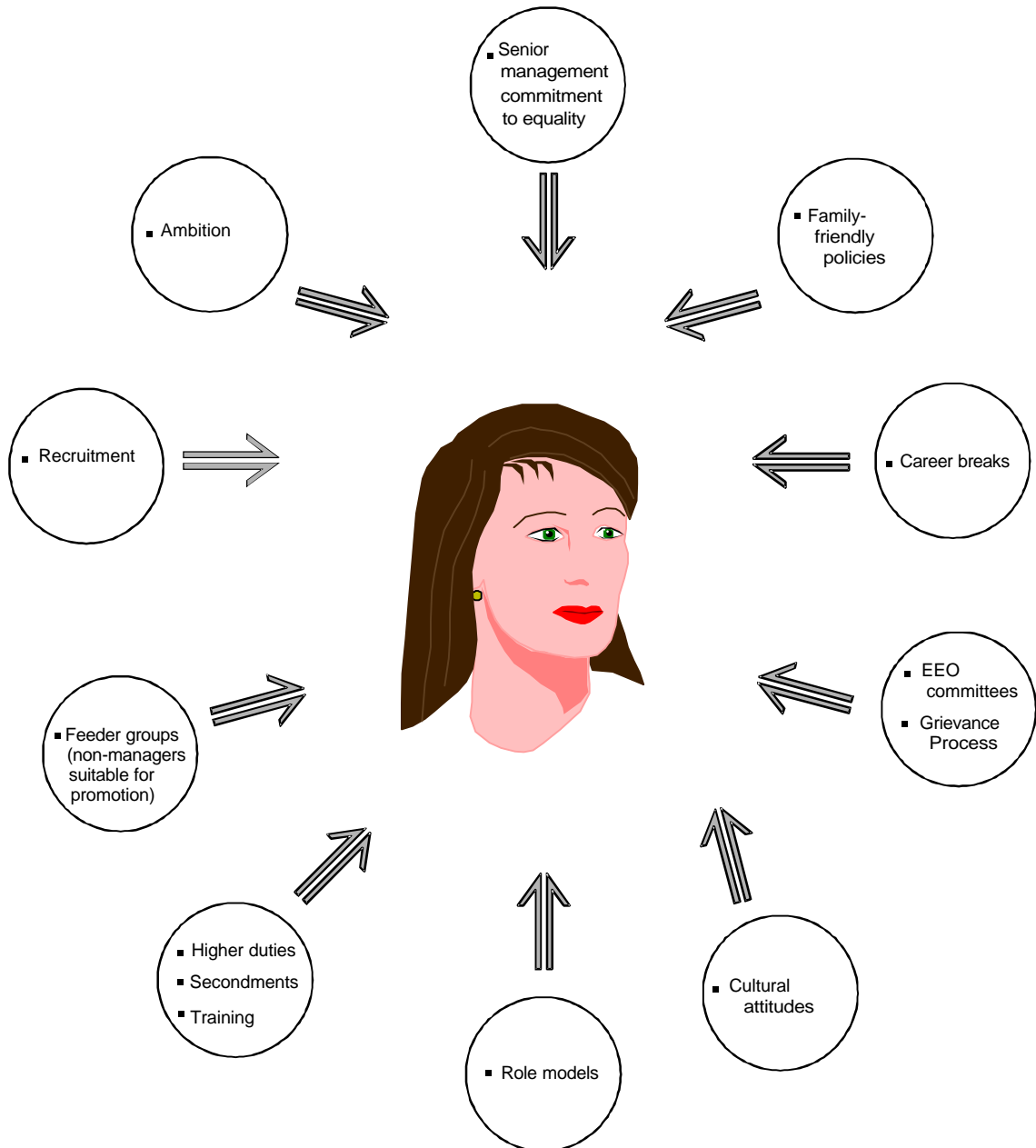
5.7 Based on the views of the respondents to the public sector-wide survey, a broad summary of the findings is disclosed below:

- Access to family-friendly policies is lacking in some agencies;
- Various staff returning from a career break claim that they have been disadvantaged in the context of promotion, job changes, training and having to again prove their capability;
- Most agencies have established an equal employment opportunity committee and a grievance review committee or process;
- Various cultural attitudes in the workplace are not conducive to the progression of women;
- Certain principles regarded by staff as important for women working in a managerial role are only seldom or never pursued by agencies in the opinion of some staff. However, it was pleasing to find that a much higher proportion of public sector employees consider that their organisations either always or often pursue the following principles in the employment of women:
 - regard women as having a high degree of responsibility within the organisation;
 - provide an atmosphere of equality;
 - regard women as bringing a professional approach to the position;
 - recognise their skills;
 - provide a sense of recognition as a manager; and
 - create a feeling of belonging.
- An absence of female role models, the impact of family responsibilities, insufficient career opportunities and training, and lack of women suitable for promotion are also regarded to varying degrees as factors that limit the representation of women in management.

WHAT FACTORS IMPACT ON THE APPOINTMENT OF WOMEN TO MANAGERIAL POSITIONS?

5.8 There are many factors which impact on the appointment of women to managerial positions. Some of these factors are shown in Chart 5A.

CHART 5A
FACTORS IMPACTING ON
THE APPOINTMENT OF WOMEN TO MANAGERIAL POSITIONS



5.9 Those factors that are considered critical in addressing the under-representation of women in managerial positions include:

- family-friendly policies;
- family responsibilities;
- career breaks;
- equal employment opportunity and grievance processes;
- cultural attitudes towards promotion and women in the workforce;
- role models;
- career opportunities and training;
- suitability of women for promotion; and
- situations which have adversely affected career advancement as a result of gender bias.

Comments on these factors are included in the following paragraphs.

Family-friendly policies

5.10 The survey shows that 45 per cent of female employees and 34 per cent of males have primary care responsibilities for a dependant. The most common categories of dependants are children aged 6-12 (27 per cent) and children aged 13-18 (24 per cent).

5.11 Public sector employees were asked to indicate whether any of the following arrangements were available in their organisations:

- part-time work;
- job sharing;
- child-care facilities;
- family-care leave;
- a mentor scheme; and
- working from home arrangements.

5.12 The survey used as part of the audit process discloses a general view that there is a lack of access to working arrangements designed to meet the needs of staff with family commitments. Table 5B summarises these views.

TABLE 5B
PROPORTION OF EMPLOYEES WHO HOLD THE VIEW THAT
FAMILY-FRIENDLY ARRANGEMENTS ARE NOT ACCESSIBLE TO STAFF
(per cent)

<i>Arrangement</i>	<i>Victorian Public Service</i>	<i>Public authorities</i>
Part-time work	23	32
Job sharing	83	80
Child-care facilities	96	80
Family-care leave	65	67
Mentor scheme (a)	96	94
Working from home	89	95

(a) Mentor schemes also have wider application than only applying to those employees who have family responsibilities. For example, mentors can be used as role models, counsellors and in guiding new employees and assisting in career development.

5.13 Although part-time work is by far the most prevalent arrangement in place, 12 per cent of Victorian Public Service employees, 20 per cent of staff in public authorities and 23 per cent of former female employees claim that **none** of the above family-friendly arrangements are accessible in their organisations.

5.14 The survey reveals that around 4 in every 10 public sector employees who have family commitments consider that they are disadvantaged, either in a total sense or to some extent, as a result of meetings scheduled before and after work hours or training courses conducted after work hours or away from the workplace (this situation generally applies equally to men and women).

5.15 In addition, 31 per cent of current employees (47 per cent of former female employees) hold the view that occupying a middle or senior management position and raising a family are generally not compatible in their organisations. Of this public sector wide figure, a higher proportion of women than men are of this view. One of the more common reasons expressed for this situation is that time constraints and commitments hinder a compatible arrangement.

5.16 It was disturbing to find that 55 per cent of employees (66 per cent of former female employees) believe that taking advantage of flexible and family-friendly working arrangements, where they are in place, will affect the way in which job performance and commitment are judged as well as ultimate promotional opportunities. This view is particularly pronounced in women in management.

5.17 There is considerable scope for expanding the introduction of family-friendly policies such as the provision of child-care facilities, working from home arrangements and job sharing by public sector employees, especially as the introduction of employment agreements make the application of these policies more flexible. If such policies are to attract women to further their careers in managerial positions, it is important that senior management be fully supportive of the application of these policies, especially as over the next 5 years the survey estimates that 22 per cent of females plan to take maternity leave and 42 per cent intend to seek promotion in their current organisation. These measures would also attract more men to pursuing careers in managerial positions.

□ **RESPONSE** provided by Acting Secretary, Department of Business and Employment

It is noted that the Report's findings are based on a survey of perceived access to family-friendly policies by current and past officers of the Victorian public sector.

In June 1994, the Department of Business and Employment surveyed all Victorian Public Service departments to gauge the availability of flexible working arrangements (for purposes of meeting family responsibilities) in model employment agreements entered into under the Public Sector Management Act 1992.

A summary of the survey was tendered as an exhibit in the Family Leave Test Case proceedings in the Australian Industrial Relations Commission in August 1994. The survey found that a wide variety of flexible leave arrangements had been available across the Victorian Public Service. Such arrangements included leave on account of pressing necessity; leave without pay; the 48/52 employment mode; permanent part-time work; flexi-time arrangements; and maternity, paternity and adoption leave.

The Department is aware that there has been a considerable further expansion in flexible leave arrangements across the Victorian Public Service in the year 1994-95 and will conduct a further survey in June 1995 in order to up-date the finding of the previous year.

- **RESPONSE** provided by Acting Secretary, Department of Business and Employment - continued

It should be further noted the Department is currently conducting a "Working and Family Project", the result of which will be the conduct of an information campaign targeting departments of the Victorian Public Service and relevant private sector businesses as to the full range of opportunities available under the Public Sector Management Act 1992 and the Employee Relations Act 1992 for purposes of meeting family needs.

Finally, the Department also conducts a Leadership Development program targeting VPS 4 level officers. A key element of the program is a leadership mentoring system. Access to the program is on an open basis and currently 50 per cent of participants are female. The program runs for a 10 month period.

Family responsibilities

5.18 The audit sought the opinion of staff on whether various issues connected with family related matters adversely impact on the appointment of women to managerial positions. The proportion of staff, who regard such matters as an influential factor in limiting the representation of women in middle or senior management positions in their organisations, is disclosed in Table 5C.

TABLE 5C
PROPORTION OF EMPLOYEES WHO REGARD
FAMILY RELATED MATTERS AS HAVING AN ADVERSE
IMPACT ON THE PROGRESSION OF WOMEN INTO MANAGERIAL
POSITIONS
 (per cent)

<i>Family-related matter</i>	<i>Percentage of staff that agree</i>		
	<i>Females</i>	<i>Former female employees</i>	<i>Males</i>
Family responsibilities	60	56	40
Child bearing and/or child-care responsibilities, dependant/parent-care involvement	48	43	37
Lack of support from the family in furthering career	39	34	24
Spouse's career takes precedence	31	39	28

5.19 The above information suggests that family responsibilities, child bearing, child-care responsibilities and dependant or parent-care involvement are regarded as the major influencing factors. The view that lack of family support for career advancement and spouse's career taking precedence, while important, are beyond the control of government agencies.

Career breaks

5.20 The survey reveals that 29 per cent of current employees in the public sector have experienced a break of more than 3 months in their careers of which 70 per cent are women. Of those who took family leave during their career breaks, the survey discloses that, while 34 per cent claim that the break had no effect on their career, 42 per cent are of the view that promotional opportunities have been forgone. In addition, 55 per cent indicated that they had to cope with job changes and 38 per cent had to again prove that they were capable of doing the job. It was disappointing to find that half of the women in the non-management category in the Victorian Public Service consider that, although training was required to effectively resume their duties, none was provided by their organisation. With regard to those who were seconded to other organisations, a third consider that promotional chances have been enhanced. In comparison, 55 per cent are of the view that promotional opportunities have been lost, a quarter had to cope with job changes upon return and 43 per cent had to again prove their capability.

5.21 In audit opinion, it is inappropriate for career breaks to actually work against an individual in terms of equity, especially in relation to promotion. Organisations need to ensure that staff are not disadvantaged in the context of career prospects if they elect to have a break in their employment with that organisation by:

- implementing standard training procedures designed to re-familiarise employees returning from career breaks with skills and procedures relevant to their positions;
- establishing official grievance strategies with sufficient infrastructure to process and resolve complaints;
- instituting a procedure requiring management to inform employees, currently undertaking a career break, of any relevant promotional opportunities that become available during their absence;
- ensuring that employees on career breaks are kept informed of any relevant organisational changes that may affect their future work tasks or position, upon their return to the organisation; and
- evaluating the cost-effectiveness of installing adequate child-care facilities in or near the workplace or home, and/or instituting a program involving a system of child-care fee subsidies, which serve to enable employees to reduce the length of their career breaks if desired, thereby decreasing the possibility of skill loss and job redundancy.

Equal employment opportunity and grievance processes

5.22 The *Public Sector Management Act* 1992 delegates decisions regarding human resource management to the respective department heads. As such, decisions regarding the establishment of EEO committees rest with Department Heads. On the other hand, public authorities are required by the *Public Authorities (Equal Employment Opportunity) Act* 1990 to establish such committees. The latter Act outlines a number of guidelines concerning the role of EEO committees, making them responsible for:

- issuing advice on matters concerning the development and implementation of the EEO program;
- consulting with trade union members affected by any consequences arising from the implementation of such a program;
- communicating with employees of the organisation on the development and implementation of the program, in particular with women and designated minority groups;
- examining policies and practices within the organisation that may be discriminatory in nature or inconsistent with the major tenets of EEO;

- establishing the objectives to be achieved by the program;
- collecting and recording statistics in regard to the employment composition of the organisation; and
- monitoring and evaluating the outcomes of the program.

5.23 In addition, the Public Sector Management Regulations 1993 require that every public sector organisation establish a formal process for deliberating on grievances. A grievance review committee may be a mechanism for:

- dealing with sexual harassment issues and complaints within the workplace (an alternative mechanism is for such issues to be handled by the Equal Opportunity Commission);
- processing and resolving complaints of discrimination in regard to recruitment, promotion and dismissal; and
- ensuring that management abides by the principles of merit and equity when carrying out the administration and operation of their organisation.

5.24 This process is available to all staff other than executive officers in the Victorian Public Service. The process for executive officers is to discuss any grievances with their immediate supervisor and if necessary, with the Department Head.

5.25 The audit sought to examine, through the survey, whether these processes are operating effectively and the likelihood of women making use of such processes if a need arises. The non-establishment of such mechanisms and any reluctance of women to refer matters to these committees could act as a barrier to the advancement of women to managerial positions in an organisation.

5.26 The survey discloses that according to the respondents who recorded an answer, most agencies have established an equal employment opportunity committee and grievance review committee or process (over a third either did not know or did not respond to the question). As more than half of the respondents have not expressed a view as to whether such committees or processes operate effectively in their organisations, it is not possible for audit to reach any meaningful conclusion on this issue.

5.27 The survey also indicates that women are as equally prepared as men to pursue grievances through official channels in relation to issues involving selection and advancement or instances of discrimination or sexual harassment.

Cultural attitudes towards promotion and women in the workforce

5.28 The survey requested respondents to describe the culture in their organisation in relation to promotion and women. The extent of agreement as to the applicability of the following statements, on a total public sector-wide basis, is presented in Table 5D.

TABLE 5D
CULTURAL ATTITUDES TOWARDS PROMOTION
AND WOMEN IN THE WORKFORCE
(per cent)

<i>Cultural attitudes within organisations</i>	<i>Percentage of employees that agree</i>		
	<i>Females</i>	<i>Former female employees</i>	<i>Males</i>
Promotion is in all cases based on merit regardless of gender	44	29	45
Success in the workplace is due mainly to an ability to work hard	40	37	39
Success in the workplace is due mainly to possessing sound people management skills	40	34	32
The culture involving excessive working hours is equated with commitment and productivity which disadvantages those women who find it difficult to work beyond normal hours	39	41	17
Success in the workplace is due mainly to professional contacts	24	30	21
Women come up against an invisible barrier when they want to move into a management position	16	19	6
Sexual discrimination occurs at senior management levels	10	19	5
Sexual discrimination occurs at pre-management levels	9	15	6
Sexual discrimination occurs at middle management levels	8	13	4

5.29 As illustrated in the above table, it was disturbing to find that over half of public sector employees hold the view that promotion is in some cases based on gender or other considerations such as seniority rather than merit.

5.30 In addition, a substantially higher proportion of women in management compared with those in non-management positions consider that cultural attitudes relating to invisible barriers and sexual discrimination are present in their organisations. For example, 27 per cent of women in management consider that an invisible barrier exists, while 22 per cent claim that sexual discrimination occurs at the senior management level. The survey did not require the nature and type of any forms of discriminatory attitudes or practices to be specified by respondents.

5.31 On the assumption that one would expect very high percentages of men and women to respond in the affirmative to statements such as promotion being based, in all cases, on merit regardless of gender, or extremely low percentages in the negative in relation to the existence of sexual discrimination, the above findings should be of concern.

5.32 In addition, staff surveyed were asked, firstly, to what extent they considered various principles to be important for women working in a middle or senior management position and, secondly, the extent to which these principles were actively pursued in their current place of employment.

5.33 The survey clearly shows that both women and men consider the following principles (in order of priority) to be important for women working in middle or senior management positions:

- regarded as a responsible member of the organisation;
- an atmosphere of equality;
- regarded as bringing a professional approach to the position;
- recognition of skills generally;
- a sense of recognition as a manager;
- a feeling of belonging; and
- an environment which enables achievement of personal family goals as well as professional goals.

5.34 The extent of employee views on whether the above principles are seldom or never pursued in their organisation's employment of women is contained in Table 5E.

TABLE 5E
EXTENT TO WHICH PRINCIPLES
ARE RARELY PURSUED IN THE EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN
(per cent)

<i>Principles</i>	<i>Percentage of public sector staff that regard these principles as only seldom or never pursued by their agencies</i>		
	<i>Females</i>	<i>Former female employees</i>	<i>Males</i>
Being regarded as a responsible member of the organisation	13	17	7
An atmosphere of equality	9	17	8
Being regarded as bringing a professional approach to the position	7	13	7
Recognition of skills generally	15	20	7
A sense of recognition as a manager	20	28	14
A feeling of belonging	13	22	11
An environment which enables achievement of personal family goals as well as professional goals	37	38	28

5.35 The above table shows that a much higher percentage of women claim that the above principles are either seldom or never pursued by their organisations.

5.36 To ascertain possible reasons as to why males outnumber females in managerial positions at a rate of 4 to one, the audit sought to obtain the views of males and females regarding the appointment of women to managerial ranks in their organisations and their opinions on any factors which may have limited the increase of women in such positions. **In audit opinion, the views set out below characterise a strong sentiment across public sector agencies of male dominance in the workplace.**

5.37 Opinions of public sector employees in relation to a series of views that have been expressed at times in the community in the past are discussed below.

**Being one of the boys is important
in getting a job at a middle or senior managerial level**

5.38 Thirty-five per cent of females claim that in their organisations being *one of the boys* is important in getting a job at a middle or senior managerial level. Interestingly, 30 per cent of males also agree that this attitude is prevalent in their organisations. In relation to those women who have left their organisations, 40 per cent are also in agreement with this sentiment.

5.39 This pronounced "boys' club mentality" needs to be changed if women are to experience total equality in the workplace.

Promotion processes favour men

5.40 In a third of cases, males and females are of the view that promotion processes either always or often favour men in their organisations. Of those with this view, the percentage of women is significantly higher than their male counterparts. Half of the former female employees also hold this view.

5.41 In the absence of ever being in a position to prove that such favouritism has in fact occurred, it is important that agencies be seen as basing promotional decisions on merit without any gender bias. The magnitude of the alleged bias conveyed to audit should be of concern to all public sector agencies.

**Male executives hold certain stereotypes
of jobs in the organisation that exclude women**

5.42 When questioned about the assertion that male executives hold certain stereotypes or have set ideas as to jobs in the organisation that exclude women, 29 per cent of current employees and 40 per cent of former female employees agree that this statement either always or often applies in their organisations. Of particular interest is the finding that 19 per cent of current female managers in public authorities indicate that this stereotype always applies in their organisations while 42 per cent consider that this view often applies. Overall, women predominantly hold this view of male executives.

5.43 While it is difficult for audit to state with any degree of certainty the stereotypes perceived to be held by male executives, the views expressed indicate that attitudinal behaviour by men in the workplace needs to promote a feeling among women that they are not excluded from the typical image of a manager.

Informal networks exist between men which exclude women

5.44 In response to expressing an opinion on whether informal networks exist between men which exclude women, 25 per cent of current employees and 38 per cent of former female employees consider that the existence of such networks always or often applies in their organisations. A significantly higher proportion of women than men hold this view, with an abnormally high proportion of 60 per cent of female managers agreeing with this sentiment. This suggests that female managers become more aware of this situation when working with male counterparts.

5.45 It is essential that constructive communication channels operate in agencies so that all employees can work together as a cohesive group, without the exclusion of any particular segments from formal or informal communication processes.

The male way of doing things is the accepted norm

5.46 It was the opinion of 31 per cent of current employees (41 per cent of former female employees) that the male way of doing things as the accepted norm always or often applies in their respective workplaces. In particular, 65 per cent of female managers agree with this view.

5.47 While the current situation prevails, female views are less likely to be taken into account in policy formulation and decision-making. If a greater proportion of middle and senior management positions are to be filled by women in the future, there will be a need to change attitudes within organisations that the male way of doing things is the accepted norm.

Women are not given adequate opportunity to broaden their experience

5.48 The survey reveals that women generally feel that they are not given adequate opportunity to broaden their experience, while men to a large extent disagree with this view.

5.49 Given the diversity in views between men and women, agencies need to examine the extent to which equal opportunities have been provided to women by investigating the views expressed by women. Such a situation could equally apply to men.

The skills of women are not sufficiently recognised

5.50 Although not as pronounced as many of the above comments, the survey results show that 28 per cent of current employees (39 per cent of former female employees) consider that in all or most cases the skills of women are not sufficiently recognised within their organisations.

5.51 In order for organisations to obtain the maximum benefit from their human resources, the skills that women can bring to an organisation need to be more widely recognised across public sector agencies.

5.52 As distinct from the issue of recognising the skills of women, the audit also sought information from both males and females as to whether they consider that they had been prevented from adequately using their skills in their current position. In the Victorian Public Service, 27 per cent of females and 22 per cent of males believe this to be the case, compared with 21 per cent of women and 25 per cent of men in public authorities. With regard to former female employees, 33 per cent who were employed in the Victorian Public Service and 31 per cent formerly employed in public authorities are in this category.

5.53 Some of the more common reasons given were as follows:

- disregard of experience or background;
- not given equal opportunity to advance; and
- ignorance of skills.

5.54 Situations which give rise to employees not being able to adequately use their skills could be a factor limiting the potential of women, as well as men, from advancing into and within management ranks. Such a situation could also have an adverse impact on the productivity of an organisation.

**More women will move up the
career ladder as the recruitment pool in the organisation matures**

5.55 Although the application of this sentiment is variable, men are more inclined than women to acknowledge that more women will move up the career ladder as the recruitment pool in the organisation matures.

5.56 In audit opinion, it is reasonable to assume that, taking into account the growing proportion of women graduates compared with prior years, more women will be recruited into the public sector thereby increasing the number of women that may be available to apply for management positions. This scenario of events will depend on many factors such as the level of recruitment, the application of equal employment opportunity principles and the ambition of women to move into managerial positions.

**Females receive preference for promotion
where female and male applicants are of equal ability**

5.57 Fifty-four per cent of current employees (62 per cent of former female employees) indicate that a situation of females receiving preference for promotion where female and male applicants are of equal ability either seldom or never applies in their organisations.

5.58 In the rare cases where applicants for a position are judged of equal ability, the more extensive use of such a policy by agencies would work towards redressing the historical imbalance and recognise the contribution women can make in terms of management decision-making and enhancing productivity in the workforce.

5.59 In relation to the above discussion, staff were asked to what extent, if at all, they considered cultural attitudes that discriminate against women to be an influential factor in limiting the increase in the representation of women in middle or senior management positions in their organisations.

5.60 Twenty per cent of current employees (36 per cent of former female employees) claim that cultural attitudes that discriminate against women are an influential factor in limiting the representation of women in managerial ranks. Women's views on this issue are far more pronounced than those of men.

5.61 Based largely on the views held by women, a more favourable attitude towards women needs to be cultivated throughout the public sector.

Role models

5.62 In relation to inquiring whether there was a lack of female role models to inspire women, 34 per cent of current employees and 41 per cent of former female employees agree that this situation always or often applies in their organisations. Given that, historically, women have been under-represented in senior positions, it was not surprising to find that a relatively high proportion of women hold this view compared with men.

5.63 Generally speaking, the lack of role models in an organisation could act as a demotivational factor for women to strive to be appointed to a managerial position.

Career opportunities and training

5.64 Commentary in relation to alternative issues surrounding any lack of career opportunities and training is detailed below.

Women on interview panels

5.65 To some extent, the lack of women on interview panels is considered by current employees to be an influential factor in limiting an increase in the representation of women in managerial positions in their organisations. Twenty-one per cent regard this factor to be very or quite influential. In comparison, 25 per cent of former female employees rate this factor as either very influential (4 per cent) or quite influential (21 per cent).

5.66 From this analysis, it would appear that the lack of female representation on interview panels could have been one of a range of undesirable factors that some women leaving their organisation could have experienced.

□ **RESPONSE** provided by Acting Public Service Commissioner

The presence of women on interview panels is seen to reduce bias. A key issue is to identify the most effective means to improve selection decisions made without bias. Research evidence shows that competency based selection predicts increased job performance and retention without race, age, gender or demographic. Training managers who make selection decisions may be more effective than (just) having a woman present on the selection panel.

Managerial skills

5.67 A relatively high percentage of current employees (36 per cent) and former female employees (39 per cent) regard a lack of managerial skills among women as an influential cause limiting an increase of women in management. It was interesting that of both genders, women acknowledge this lack of skill to a greater degree than men.

5.68 Although detailed analysis of these figures did not form part of the audit, it could be argued that in the past women entering the public sector have been technically trained and as such, they progress to a certain level in the line positions available in their field of expertise. However, they may not have been given the opportunity to be trained or developed in management to the same degree. This situation, if applicable, would act as a barrier to women moving from an area of specialisation to that of a management position. Recruitment of staff with managerial competencies as well as technical skills and the availability of management training should alleviate this problem in the future.

Promotional opportunities

5.69 The contention that there has been a lack of promotional opportunities for women to progress into management ranks is widely held (15 per cent of current employees consider it to be very influential and 31 per cent indicate it to be quite influential). A slightly higher outcome is evident from those females who have left their organisations. In both the Victorian Public Service and public authorities, women's views are more critical of this factor than those of men.

5.70 Without detailed investigation of this matter, it is not possible to express any overall view as the circumstances in each agency may vary due to a multitude of reasons. In addition, the Government's reform agenda of downsizing, amalgamations, privatisation and contracting-out of non-core activities has reduced the number of management positions available in the public sector.

5.71 In relation to the influence that workforce restructuring has had on women's progress, the Victorian Women's Council, in its *Women in Management: Discussion Paper December 1994*, revealed that "... at a senior level, it is mainly within middle management ranks where a significant proportion of positions have been made redundant. As most female managers are in middle level positions, women have, as a proportion, been severely affected by organisational downsizing. As a consequence, the possibility of women reaching the top has been substantially curbed". However, as a compensating factor, the Council suggests that the overriding business need of the 1990s to add value through services offers potential opportunities for women as they are proportionally better represented in service-focused organisations.

Opportunity to act in a higher duty assignment

5.72 Forty-one per cent of current employees regard this factor to be either very influential or quite influential. Women's views in both government sectors are far more pronounced than men as to the impact of this factor on the advancement of women to a managerial position.

5.73 It is important that public sector agencies recognise the staff development benefits that can arise by giving women the opportunity to act in higher positions to gain experience in managerial roles. Audit recognises that with the Government's newly introduced broad banding structure (i.e. a reduction in the number of non-executive job classifications into 5 broad categories, allowing for the achievement of greater remuneration levels that are linked closely to performance), there will be less opportunities for the granting of higher duty assignments to staff. The broad-banded structure highlights the importance of career counselling and multi-skilling, as lateral career movements become more common than promotions.

Suitability of women for promotion

5.74 In response to various options connected with a lack of women suitable for promotion to managerial ranks as a factor adversely affecting any significant increase in their representation at middle or senior levels, commentary on the views held throughout the public sector is outlined below.

Women in feeder groups (i.e. pool of qualified women available to fill future management ranks)

5.75 According to 30 per cent of current employees and 32 per cent of former female employees, a lack of women in feeder groups is an influential factor in limiting the increase in the representation of women in middle or senior management positions in their organisations.

5.76 Other than recruiting women directly into management positions from the private sector, another option is to ensure that there is an adequate proportion of women in non-management roles that occupy positions which provide potential for future promotion into management ranks. With appropriate training and experience, it would be reasonable to expect that a larger pool of women at this level would improve the recruitment base within the public sector from which to fill managerial positions if, on merit, they are the most suitable person for the position.

Numbers of women ready for promotion

5.77 Thirty per cent of current employees and 22 per cent of former female employees indicate that insufficient numbers of women ready for promotion is either a very or quite influential factor in their organisations.

5.78 Without detailed investigations as to the competencies of women at pre-management levels, it is not possible for audit to evaluate the time-span that will be needed for such staff to be considered suitable for promotion. The survey did, however, show that **the age factor (either too young or too old) of women does limit their progression into managerial ranks.** A greater proportion of women than men share this view.

Desire to occupy a managerial position

5.79 The results of the survey show that it would be unwise to assume that all women have a desire to occupy a managerial position. With regard to current employees, while only 7 per cent claim lack of ambition to be a very influential factor, 30 per cent consider it to be quite influential as a limiting factor. This view is spread evenly among men and women in management and non-management positions in both sectors. Comparative figures in relation to former female employees are 10 and 29 per cent, respectively.

Effect on career advancement of gender bias

5.80 The composition of current employees (9 per cent women and 5 per cent of men) and former female employees who claim to have personally experienced situations that have, in their opinion, adversely affected their career advancement to a middle or higher senior management position as a result of their gender is detailed in Table 5F.

TABLE 5F
PROPORTION OF STAFF THAT
HAVE EXPERIENCED SITUATIONS
(ON THE BASIS OF THEIR GENDER)
THAT ADVERSELY AFFECTED CAREER
PROGRESSION TO A MANAGERIAL POSITION
(per cent)

<i>Category</i>	<i>Percentage of total staff employed in the public sector</i>
Victorian Public Service -	
Women: non-management	11
Women: management	32
Men: non-management	10
Men: management	9
Former female employees	19
Public authorities -	
Women: non-management	8
Women: management	30
Men: non-management	3
Men: management	14
Former female employees	19

5.81 As indicated in the above table, a greater proportion of women in each category than men are of the view that they have experienced situations connected with their gender which have adversely affected their career progression. Some of the more common situations identified were:

- lack of promotional opportunities;
- the culture of the agency disadvantages women and especially women with children;
- only full-time positions are available; and
- gender-based harassment by management.

5.82 These views illustrate the need for public sector agencies to critically evaluate their compliance with equal employment opportunity policies and other government guidelines dealing with discrimination in the workplace.

Part 6

The future

OVERVIEW

6.1 The relatively low proportion of management positions in the public sector occupied by women across most departments and industry groups of public authorities indicates that any dramatic improvement in this situation will not occur in the short-term.

6.2 Forty-two per cent of current employees are of the view that there should be more women in managerial ranks in their organisation. Some of the main initiatives which employees consider need to be introduced in their place of work to increase female representation in managerial positions according to the degree of urgency are as follows:

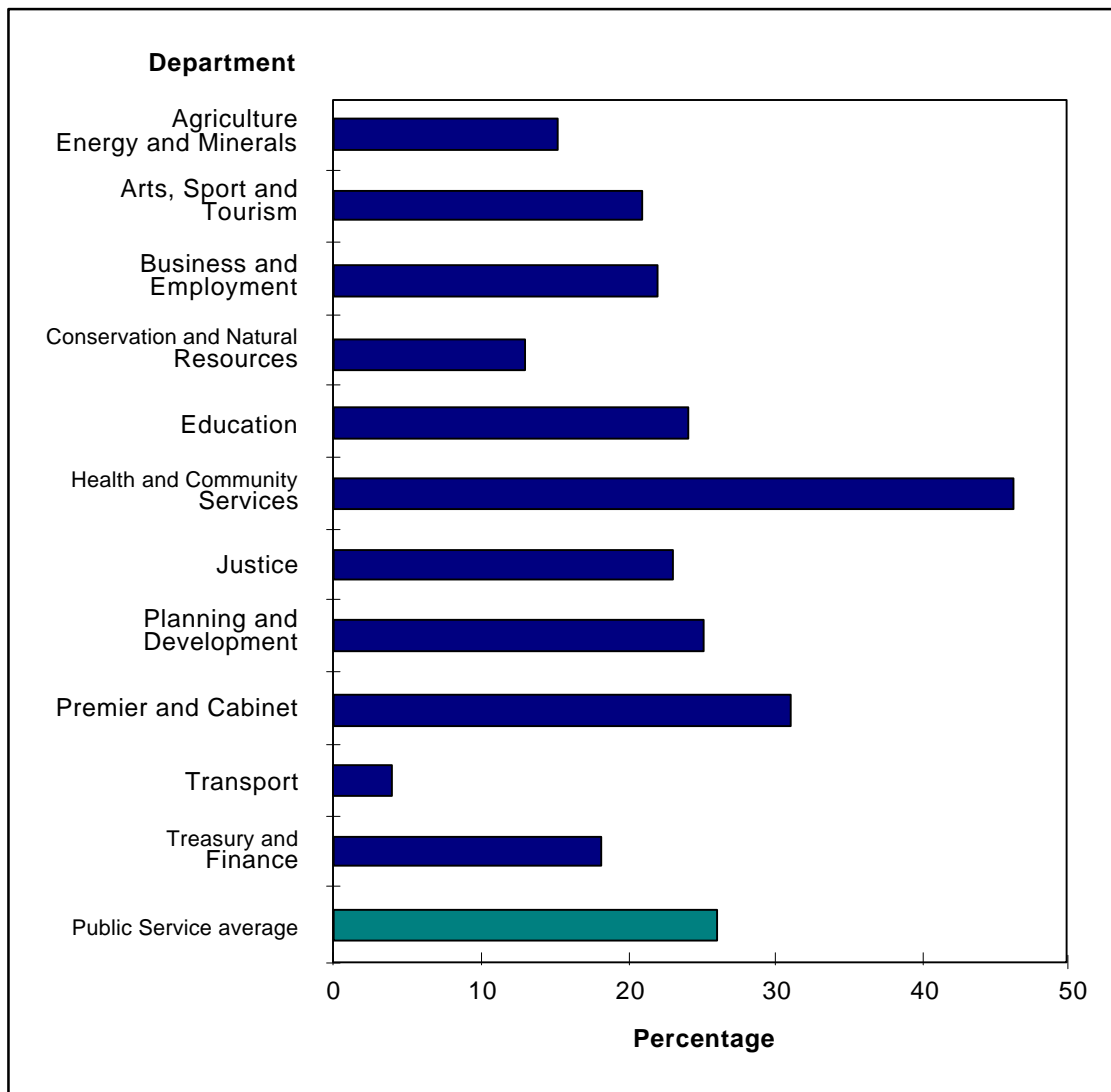
- women to be encouraged to participate in leadership programs;
- leave to be provided as a result of family illness;
- implementation of succession planning as the means of targeting women to managerial positions;
- expansion of part-time work opportunities;
- introduction of workshops on career development;
- job sharing to be encouraged; and
- additional child-care places to be provided at or near the workplace.

6.3 Clearly, employees' views need to be taken into account in the formulation of future policy on this subject. In audit opinion, agencies also need to encourage cultural attitudes which remove, as far as possible, any informal barriers which may disadvantage women in the workplace. In addition, training and development programs should recognise the needs of women to assist in their progression into managerial roles throughout the public sector. With the large number of women employed in the education portfolio, it is important to acknowledge the establishment in 1994 of *The Ministerial Review of Employment Equity for Women in Education*. It is hoped that the findings in this Report will provide valuable input into the Review, which is designed to provide advice on ways of ensuring that all female employees in education are able to take full advantage of the employment opportunities available to them.

INTRODUCTION

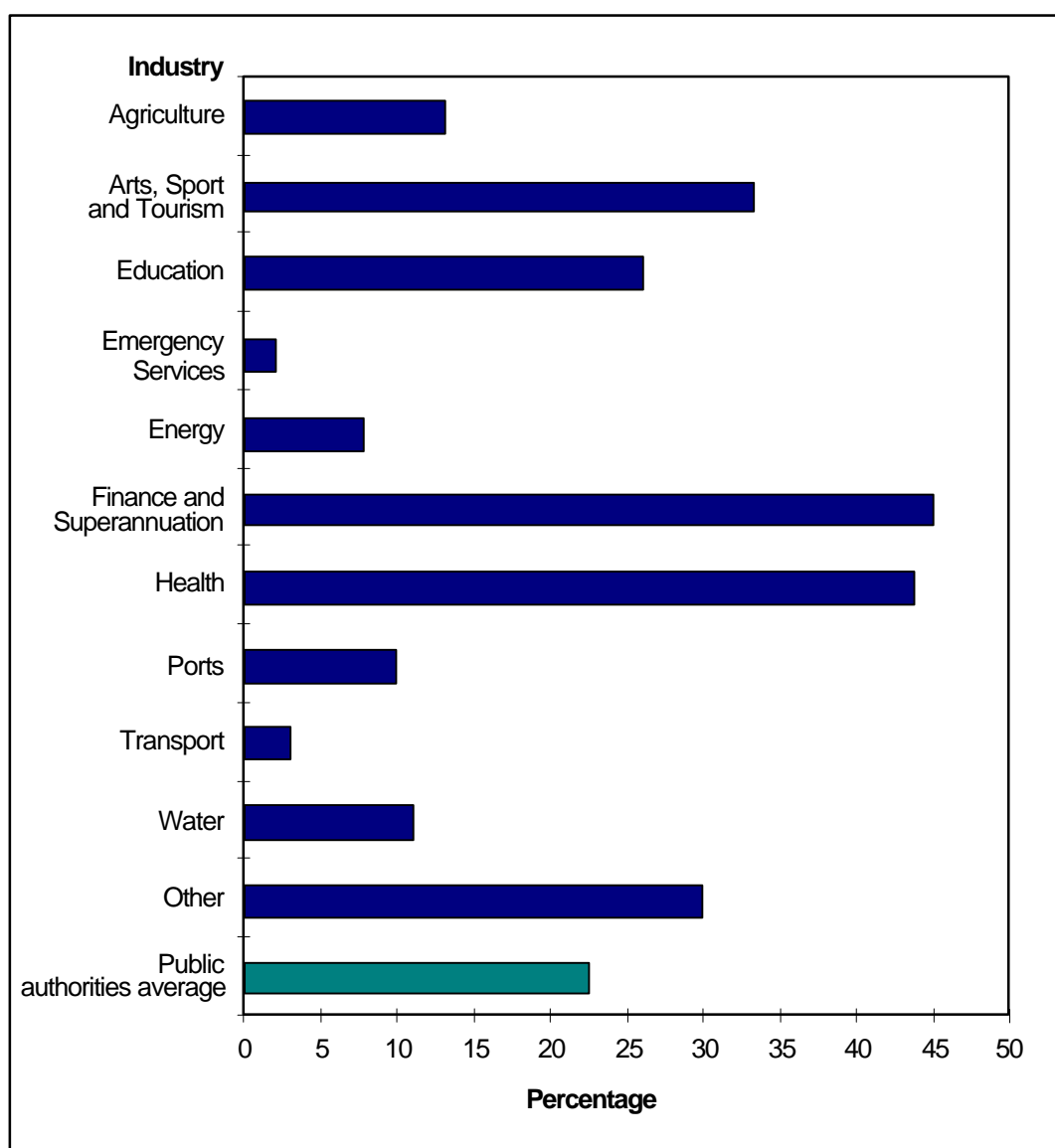
6.4 Charts 6A and 6B show the proportion of managerial positions held by women in the Victorian Public Service and public authorities. If a greater representation of women is to be appointed to managerial positions, Charts 6A and 6B show those departments and industries where the greatest scope exists for the advancement of women.

CHART 6A
PERCENTAGE OF MANAGERIAL POSITIONS
IN THE VICTORIAN PUBLIC SERVICE HELD BY WOMEN, AT 30 JUNE 1994



Source: Office of the Public Service Commissioner (Departmental Merit and Equity Returns for 1993-94)

CHART 6B
PERCENTAGE OF MANAGERIAL POSITIONS
IN PUBLIC AUTHORITIES HELD BY WOMEN, AT 30 JUNE 1993



Source: Information prepared by audit from data compiled by the Department of Business and Employment Public Authorities (EEO Unit).

6.5 As can be seen from the above charts, women are under-represented relative to men to varying degrees in all departments and industries. As such, it is not surprising that the University of Southern Queensland found in 1994 that, based on the current rate of progress of women moving into management positions on an Australia-wide basis, it will take well over 70 years before the numbers of female managers and administrators reach parity with men, but even then they are likely to be seriously under-represented at senior management levels. The University concluded that "... *unless there are dramatic changes in employment attitudes and practices, full managerial equity for women may not be achieved until the end of the next century*".

IS THERE SCOPE FOR MORE WOMEN IN MIDDLE AND SENIOR MANAGERIAL RANKS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR?

6.6 According to a survey conducted by Washington State University comparing the American and Australian data on the integration of women into public administration, 42 per cent agreed that employees in State Government should reflect the gender make-up of the population. **If this principle is applied to the mix of males and females in management positions in the Victorian public sector, the proportion of women in these ranks of around 25 per cent in aggregate terms would need to double. Similarly, in the event of using labour market participation of women as the benchmark (i.e. 42 per cent of the total Australian labour force), female representation in management would still need to increase dramatically.**

6.7 Almost half of those employed throughout the public sector claim that the concept of agencies reflecting the gender make up of the population either never or seldom applies in their organisations.

6.8 In addition, staff were asked their opinion on whether there should be more, the same or less women in middle and senior managerial ranks in their organisations. The survey reveals that:

- 42 per cent indicate that there should be more women;
- 47 per cent are of the view that the current proportion should remain;
- 9 per cent do not know; and
- 2 per cent said there should be less women in management.

6.9 With regard to the view that there should be more women in management positions, three-quarters of women in management positions support this concept.

6.10 In relation to assessing whether women bring any different managerial qualities to the operation of organisations, the survey reveals that around two-thirds of current employees support this contention (about half of male employees share this view). Various qualities identified to audit are as follows:

- more caring of individuals, more humane approach and greater people skills;
- willingness to listen, discuss matters, negotiate and adopt a flexible approach;
- more logical, broader thinking and practical;
- more approachable and understanding; and
- more efficient and organised.

INITIATIVES REQUIRED IN AGENCIES

6.11 Officers were asked to indicate whether any initiatives should be introduced into their organisations to increase the representation of women in managerial ranks. A summary of the views held throughout the public sector, according to whether the introduction of various initiatives is regarded to be very urgent or quite urgent, is outlined in Table 6C.

TABLE 6C
IMPORTANCE OF INTRODUCING INITIATIVES
ACCORDING TO THE VIEWS OF CURRENT AND FORMER EMPLOYEES

<i>Initiative suggested</i>	<i>Percentage of employees that regard introduction to be urgent</i>		
	<i>Females</i>	<i>Former female employees</i>	<i>Males</i>
Women to be encouraged to apply for middle to senior managerial positions through participation in leadership programs	86	78	79
Leave to be provided as a result of family illness	75	71	75
Implementation of succession planning targeting women	73	66	50
Further part-time work opportunities to be provided	68	71	56
Introduction of workshops on career development	62	58	65
Job sharing to be encouraged	61	68	56
Employer to provide additional child-care places either -			
Near the workplace	51	61	47
At the workplace	45	55	52
Near home	37	39	32
Development of a mentor scheme	38	42	43
Employment provisions which enable working from home	32	34	32

6.12 In audit opinion, agencies need to focus on the above views when formulating organisational policies for the employment of women in managerial positions, with a view to creating an environment which provides an effective nexus between individuals and the workplace so that the goals of both parties can be achieved. Many of these initiatives are equally applicable to the employment of men. Additionally, agencies need to be conscious of the need to promote cultural attitudes which eliminate, as far as possible, any informal barriers that may disadvantage women in the workplace.

BEST PRACTICE GUIDE

6.13 Current employees and former employees were given the opportunity to highlight any measures that had been introduced in their organisations to encourage women to be appointed to middle and senior management positions. It was disappointing to find that 63 per cent of current employees and 74 per cent of former female employees either stated that no measures have been introduced, they do not know of any or they did not respond. Of the suggestions made, the more prevalent were as follows:

- various schemes designed to train women specifically;
- the organisation promotes a general climate of equality;
- appointments are open to males and females; and
- women are represented on interview panels where there are female applicants.

6.14 In audit opinion, according to government policy and/or authoritative literature on this subject, employment practices that could be applied by agencies which would assist in attracting and retaining both men and women in managerial positions are listed below.

Management Recruitment

- Management commitment to Equal Employment Opportunity policies whereby recruitment and selection processes are based solely on merit.
- Emphasis placed on abilities and skills, rather than specific qualifications and experience.
- Formal review of executive resources to determine demographic profiles, e.g. qualifications, length of service and gender mix.

Work Practices

- Permanent part-time work.
- Time or income trade-offs - reduced work hours for a specified period with a corresponding reduction in pay.
- Job sharing.
- Working from home.
- Higher duty assignments, secondments or workplacements to accelerate competency development and address gaps in experience.
- Compressed 5 day work weeks.

Family-friendly Policies

- Child-care programs.
- Flexible leave options - maternity, parental or family.
- Dependant care leave.
- Leave without pay for career breaks.

Training

- Training needs analyses conducted to develop training for women, segregated into occupational groups and organisational levels.
- Personal development courses for women to improve confidence.
- Encouragement of women to take up financially supported external study leave.
- Educate staff about issues relating to equal employment opportunity through articles in internal newsletters.
- Career development workshops.
- Seminars on sexual harassment.

Programs

- Employee morale surveys.
- Mentor programs.