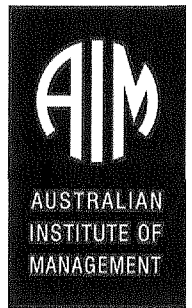


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House of Representatives, Standing Committee on Employment and Workplace Relations

Submission From:

Susan Heron, CEO
Australian Institute of Management, Victoria & Tasmania

Submission Subject

Inquiry into Pay Equity and Increasing Female Participation in the Workforce.

Purpose

This document was compiled following the appearance of Susan Heron, CEO, Australian Institute of Management, Vic/Tas before the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment and Workplace Relations – pay equity and increasing female participation in the workforce on Dec 4, Parliament House, Canberra

Background

The document is intended to provide further insights into AIM VT's proposal for a new body to be established to 'connect' with the private sector to develop solutions to boosting female participation rates for women.

Situation

Ageing workforce and long term skills shortage make it a business imperative to boost female participation rates

Challenge

- Opportunity for the Australian Government to play a vital leadership role in accelerating moves to higher levels of participation for women in the workforce (in effect, hasten the marketplace adjustment in Australia).
- Evidence tells us the Government's currently funded 'model' (based on EOWA) to develop solutions to overcome the barriers to boosting the participation rates for women is not working. Therefore, it does not make sense to pour more resources into that public service based model or a related model in an attempt to generate solutions to the low participation rates for women.
- There is a need to develop a new model – one that effectively engages with industry to develop and promote initiatives that make a positive contribution to overcoming the barriers to boosting participation for women.

AIM VT Proposed Solution

It is proposed that the structure and objectives of such a model would be:

Structure

- Government owned company operating in accordance with the provisions of the Corporations Act 2001
- small in scale, independent, at arms length from day to day operations of Government
- have up to 12 Board members appointed by Government on a non partisan basis
- at least half the members of the Board to be business leaders from the private sector whose companies are pacesetters in boosting participation (SME to large companies)
- chair of the Board to be a prominent business person appointed by Government with the high profile endorsement of his/her capabilities by the Prime Minister whose department would take an active, ongoing interest in the activities of the company
- CEO of company to be a well regarded member of the business community with strong leadership and communication capabilities. It would be important that this person has experience of working with government.
- annual operating budget of between \$1.5m to \$2m. (Govt responsible for total funding in the establishment years of the company but thereafter private sector funding to be increasing source of capital)
- headquartered in a major Australian capital city

Objectives

- to leverage off its status as a company operating in accordance with the Corporations Act to play a leadership role in providing independent advice to government on the best pathways to boost participation rates for women in the private sector
- to engage with industry to achieve nominated higher levels of participation rates for women. (Board and CEO held to account by Government for performance outcomes)
- to establish communication platforms such as seminars, lectures and news events for promotion/public discussion of achievements by pacesetter companies to lift participation rates
- to develop targeted research programs that complement the work of EOWA and flow from the dialogue between the company and the business sector on solutions to the participation barriers.