

## news

Ngā Rongo Pānui a te Rōpū Tiaki  
Whakaōrite Whiwhinga Mahi

The Newsletter of the Equal  
Employment Opportunities Trust

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### EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES TRUST

Helping workplaces achieve  
success through diversity

#### MISSION STATEMENT

*'The purpose of the Equal Employment Opportunities Trust is to promote to New Zealand employers the implementation of EEO principles in the workplace as a means of improving their effectiveness, efficiency and competitiveness through the successful management of diversity'*

# Relationships and paid work

## Happy with friends and partners, productive at work

Earlier this year the EEO Trust undertook a comprehensive research project to find out more about the links between paid work and people's relationships with their partner or spouse and their friends.

The project included an on-line survey completed by 1,324 people, as well as an international literature review. Both aspects of the research project confirmed that healthy relationships and friendships positively affect performance at work.

Three-quarters of respondents to the on-line survey said they did not work as well if they were having problems in their personal relationships. When asked how good relationships help them perform better at work, 81% of respondents said they were more productive because they felt better, 71% said the emotional support from relationships helped them cope with work stress and 63% said they got along better with workmates/colleagues.

Most respondents (82%) said that paid work had a beneficial effect on personal relationships, although women were slightly more likely than men to hold this view. Sixty per cent of people said their workplace valued and supported their relationships, with men and women having similar attitudes on this.

One respondent wrote about the benefits of having a sympathetic manager, "I have recently had discussions with my manager and have taken steps to reduce my workload. To enable me to spend more time with my wife and daughter, we have agreed to flexible start and finish times...I've found that having a manager who has children of his own helps him understand the importance of spending time with family."

## Effects of work on time with partners

For two-thirds of respondents, paid work affected the **amount** of time they spent with their partner and for just over half it affected the **quality** of time they spent.

The perceived negative impact of paid work on relationships increased with the number of hours worked, particularly when people were working more than 50 hours a week.

One respondent wrote about their regret that they had not been able to put their relationships first in their 30 years of working life. "I have the 'work ethic' and have always felt that work demands have these negative consequences on my life and relationships."



## EEO Trust Work & Life Awards 2004

The EEO Trust Work & Life Awards champion and reward best practice in work and life. Now in their seventh year, the awards honour and celebrate New Zealand workplaces that have achieved real progress in helping employees balance their work and other life commitments. IBM supports the EEO Trust Work & Life Awards.

This year these prestigious awards will be held at the Hyatt Regency in Auckland on the evening of Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> September. Tickets are now on sale.

All entrants to the awards are profiled in *New Zealand's Best Employers in Work & Life 2004*, which describes their work-life practices and policies and is launched on the evening of the awards. A complimentary copy is available to all guests.

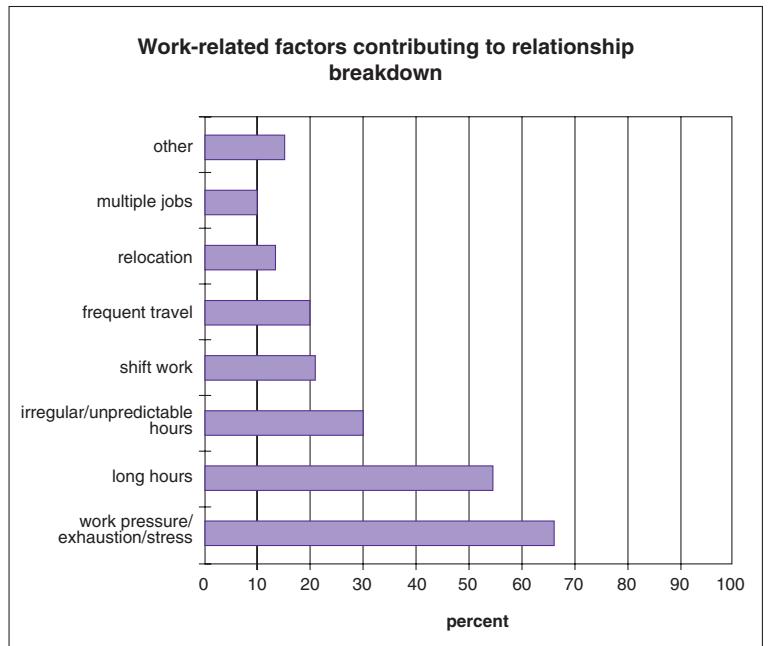
To order tickets, complete the enclosed invitation or contact the EEO Trust at [admin@eootrust.org.nz](mailto:admin@eootrust.org.nz) or 09 525 3023.

## Work can contribute to relationship break-up

Paid work was a contributing factor in spouse/partner break-up for 39% of respondents. Work pressure/exhaustion/stress was the main reason given for a work-related relationship break-up, followed by long hours. (See graph).

A large number of respondents commented on how overwork affected their relationships. For example, “My husband works a 40-hour week, but sometimes has to work overtime for a few weeks which puts a lot of stress on the relationship, but it gets back to normal afterwards.”

Shiftworkers particularly feel the affects of work on their relationships. One respondent wrote, “I work as a nurse for a large public hospital. Shiftwork and lack of understanding from management were large contributing factors to my marriage ending.”



## Putting relationships before work

The survey also showed that some people, both men and women, place a higher priority on their relationships than on their paid work, with nearly two out of five having turned down a job, promotion or transfer because it would impact badly on their relationship. This was more likely among those aged 30-49 than older respondents, suggesting that this could be an increasing trend.

For one respondent it was a particularly pertinent issue. “I just resigned today in order to strengthen my relationship, and I do not have another job to go to. I will become self-employed because in my experience no employer will let you put your life and relationship first.”

## So what can workplaces do?

A starting place for workplaces is to find out what the issues are for their workers. The EEO Trust website ([www.eeotrust.org.nz](http://www.eeotrust.org.nz)) has survey tools which can be tailored to workplaces.

The EEO Trust survey asked respondents to select ways their workplace could support their personal relationships. Flexible hours was by far the most popular option with 55% of respondents selecting it. Other choices were as follows:

- training managers in awareness of work practices that impact on relationships (41%),
- providing a secure permanent job (37%),
- consulting staff to determine what these practices should be for their particular workplace (33%), and
- enabling staff to work fewer hours as a full-time worker (30%).

Many respondents commented on the difficulties of working for a manager who did not understand the importance of personal relationships. For example, “Greater manager awareness and compassion for staff (particularly while making big changes) would be a big advantage.”

Relationships **at** work were also important for many respondents, with a large number commenting on the lack of encouragement for good workplace relationships. For example, “My workplace did nothing to promote good working relationships with other staff/management. That is why I’ve now resigned. Any social events were always staff organised and managed. Management didn’t even like helping to pay for anything.”

Another said that if they left their job, lack of support for good working relationships would be the main reason.

When asked how their workplace helped them form good relationships with workmates/colleagues, 49% ticked “tasks that require interaction with other staff members”, 46% chose “social club” and 36% “events that encourage informal interaction between management and staff”.

For the EEO Trust’s research report on personal relationships and paid work go to [www.eeotrust.org.nz/information/paidwork/research.shtml](http://www.eeotrust.org.nz/information/paidwork/research.shtml).

# Finding and keeping a modern workforce - sharing the good ideas

The EEO Trust and the Department of Labour are working together on a project to share good ideas among employers about making the most of an increasingly diverse workforce.

The project involves talking with employers who have embraced diversity to find out about the challenges and benefits of employing people from a wide range of backgrounds. Many are tapping our new migrant talent pool, others the skills of people with disabilities, and others the experience of older workers. Some, like Sealord Group Ltd, are taking a proactive approach to training existing staff and youngsters who may want to be part of their industry, while others like Auckland University of Technology are ensuring that staff from all backgrounds have the support to be productive and creative at work.

The project shows that all sectors, all types of business and all sizes of workforce can benefit from diversity. Employers talk frankly about the challenges they face and enthusiastically about the benefits.

Below, case studies from Wanganui and Christchurch show how two employers are reaching beyond traditional skills sources to find committed workers who add value to their business. Order the full set of case studies and background information from the Department of Labour ([mailbox@lmpg.dol.govt.nz](mailto:mailbox@lmpg.dol.govt.nz)) or go to [www.eeotrust.org.nz](http://www.eeotrust.org.nz) from late July.

## Workers with a disability are an asset to Wanganui landscaping company



After losing his management job in the motor industry and being unemployed for a time Graeme Musson, owner of Horticultural Services, Wanganui, knows the feeling of “getting up in the morning with no purpose to life”.

It took a great deal of motivation to move from his downcast state on the unemployment benefit to his current situation as owner of a thriving landscaping and garden maintenance business. His experience gave him a strong empathy for people who want work but can't find it. Consequently, about 70 per cent of his staff have

been employed through Work and Income and he currently employs two deaf workers, one of whom has only one arm. He is trialing another worker with only one arm.

Graeme's initial experiences of employing a worker with a disability were positive. He found that the man could easily manage the mower and did not need to hear it as he could feel the vibration of the motor. Graeme developed his own pidgin sign language and installed a whiteboard in his office so he could give written instructions. A fax was bought for the man's home so that he could be contacted there. After Graeme's experiences with this man he had no hesitation in employing a second worker with a disability. Graeme says he is thoroughly impressed with the work of his two disabled employees. “They quite often do much more work than someone else would because they feel such loyalty to the business. They tend to be more motivated as they've always been at the bottom of the heap.”

## Mix of nationalities boosts performance for Christchurch company

TL Jones describes itself as a small company, despite the fact it has a NZ\$18 million turnover. The company designs, develops and manufactures state-of-the-art infra-red elevator door protection systems which it exports to 45 countries. Ninety-nine per cent of its business is export-focused and all export sales are managed out of the Christchurch office by a staff of 25.

Manager Chris Stoelhorst says that employing a mix of nationalities has given the company an undeniable competitive edge. The current team includes two Chinese, one Hong Kong Chinese, one Singaporean Malaysian, one South African, two British, one French, one Samoan, one Egyptian and one Indian, most of whom were recruited locally. The company has a policy of recruiting the best person for the job and does not exclude New Zealanders. In several cases, employing people from other countries has brought to the company valuable knowledge and experience of such things as local compliances, local business customs and local freight solutions in export destination countries. In total the company has 15 languages covered in addition to English.

Chris says, “One of our advantages is that we're not fazed by going into any market. We have enough knowledge between us to feel confident about entering any country. Some people might find a business development mission to the Czech Republic, to Norway, or to India daunting – not us.”



**T R U S T**  
**EQUAL EMPLOYMENT  
 OPPORTUNITIES TRUST**



## Three new members of EEO Trust Board of Trustees

Since the last issue of *EEO Trust News*, two new private sector trustees, Andra Glyn-Jones and Linda Sewell, have been elected to the board of trustees, and one new public sector trustee, Peter Hughes, has been appointed.

Deloitte partner Andra Glyn-Jones, and Carter Holt Harvey Futurebuild chief executive Linda Sewell, were elected to the board late last year. They joined existing private sector trustees Michael Barnett, chief executive of Auckland Chamber of Commerce; Alison Quesnel, director of Defino Ltd; and Dave Stewart, general manager of Stratum Consulting Group.

Andra Glyn-Jones has been a tax partner at Deloitte since 1996 and has nearly 17 years experience in New Zealand tax. For the past three years, in her role as “people partner” on the Deloitte management group, she has helped ensure a strategic focus on the people who work for Deloitte.

Deloitte was an entrant in the EEO Trust Work & Life Awards 2003.

Linda Sewell has held a number of management roles in Carter Holt Harvey since she joined the organisation in 1995. She was runner up in the Walk the Talk category in the EEO Trust Work & Life Awards 2003 and is the inspiration behind Carter Holt Harvey’s annual Australasian half-marathon.

Chief executive of the Ministry of Social Development, Peter Hughes, was appointed as a public sector trustee in December, joining privacy commissioner, Marie Shroff, secretary of justice, Belinda Clark and chief executive officer, Auckland Regional Council, Jo Brosnahan.



*Andra Glyn-Jones*



*Peter Hughes*



*Linda Sewell*

## New chief executive for the EEO Trust

Dr Philippa Reed has recently been appointed chief executive of the EEO Trust. Chairman of the EEO Trust Board of Trustees, Michael Barnett, says he is pleased that someone of Dr Reed’s calibre has been found to head the EEO Trust. “Philippa’s background in the business community combined with her understanding of employment issues make her ideally suited for the role,” he says. “She is well aware of the drivers of success for New Zealand workplaces and has experience in client relationship management, both of which are critical to heading the EEO Trust which works with businesses to help them take advantage of the benefits of equal employment opportunities.”

Philippa originally joined the EEO Trust in early 2003 in the role of executive advisor and before that was executive director with Executive Programmes at the University of Auckland Business School, having previously worked with KPMG for a number of years.



## Other staff changes

Renee Schick is joining the EEO Trust in the role of information assistant. She will be responsible for answering information requests and maintaining the EEO information database.

Renee has a Graduate Diploma in Marketing and International Management and a Bachelor of Arts with Honours, majoring in English and history both from Waikato University, and is currently studying towards a Masters in Library and Information Studies at Victoria University.

Renee has been working at Unitec library for the past three years. During that time she was the liaison person for students with a disability and gained experience of working with new migrants with English as a second language. She is also studying sign language and te reo Māori.



**If you would like information about the Equal Employment Opportunities Trust services or resources, please contact:**

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