

**Report on a Review of the
Equity and Diversity Centre (EDC)
Monash University**

**External Quality Review
27 - 28 July 2005**

CONTENTS

1	OVERVIEW	
1.1	Purpose of Review	3
1.2	Terms of Reference & Methodology	3
1.3	Review Panel	5
2	CONTEXT	5
3	DISCUSSION & KEY FINDINGS	8
3.1	Quality Assurance; Planning & Review	8
3.2	Management & Organisational Structure, Human & Physical Resources; Training	10
3.3	Core Services: Staff & Students; External Communication	12
3.4	Compliance & Reporting	14
3.5	Professional & Community Activities	15
4	CONCLUSION	16
4.1	Commendations	17
4.2	Recommendations	19
5	ATTACHMENTS	22
A	Presenters & Interviewees	
B	Interview Protocol / General Questions	
C	General Questions for each Step of the Quality Cycle	

1 OVERVIEW

1.1 Purpose of Review

At the time of the Review, the Equity and Diversity Centre (the EDC) was part of the Student and Staff Services Division. The EDC scheduled a Quality Review of the Centre in 2005 in accordance with university policy. The EDC undertook a comprehensive, systematic self review of its operations and services against the Centre for Higher Education Quality (CHEQ) system which was completed in June 2005. The external panel review was conducted on 28 and 29 July 2005. The review purpose was to identify key areas of current good practice and priority areas for improvement in the focus and operations of the EDC for the purposes of continuous improvement and development.

This report, supported by all members of the External Review Panel, records the conclusions reached by the External Review Panel based on the considerable documentation provided by the EDC as well as information gained through the presentation and interviews of a range of stakeholders, panel discussion and observation.

This Report relates to the situation current at the time of the External Panel Review and does not refer to any changes that may have been implemented subsequently. It is intended that this report will form the basis for planning for continuous improvement for the EDC. It is recommended that this report be read in conjunction with the EDC Self Review Report as this report makes reference only to matters important to the quality review process and does not duplicate much of the in-depth information provided in the Self Review Report.

1.2 Terms of Reference and Methodology

The EDC Self Review process followed the recommended guidelines outlined in the Support Services Guidelines, available on the CHEQ website. The EDC Self Review Report was provided to the External Review Panel along with other relevant documentation. Panel members were sent the self review documentation prior to the meeting, which was used as basis for reviewing the Centre. The review schedule consisted of meetings and interviews with a range of key stakeholders, discussion of the key issues arising and preliminary formulation of the report.

This External Review process was undertaken following the self review and included Monash University's standard terms of reference for support service reviews. After consideration of the

nature of the services provided and the wide range of client groups, the key areas of focus for this review were:

1. Quality Assurance, Planning and Review
2. Management and Organisational Structure; Human and Physical Resources; Training
3. Core Services - Staff and Students; External Communication
4. Compliance and Reporting
5. Professional and Community Activities

This review provided opportunity for the EDC to gain feedback, ideas and information from a wide range of stakeholders. The Review Panel read the EDC Self Review Report and a significant amount of documentation relevant to all areas of operation of the EDC prior to the Review Panel meeting.

The format for the two days that the Review Panel met included a series of interviews and consultations with a wide range of stakeholders. Those interviewed included EDC staff, academic members of the various EDC Committees, Faculty Representatives and student representatives from Inclusive Practices: Disability Committee and Inclusive Practices: Student Equity Committee and users of the services. The Vice Chancellor, Professor Richard Larkins and Professor Colin Bourke, Adjunct Professor, Centre for Australian Indigenous Studies and Chair of the Monash University Equal Opportunity Committee and a member of the Monash University Council; and Peter Marshall, now Vice President (Administration) also met with the panel. (Refer to Attachment A for all presenters and interviewees).

The panel was able to ask questions and follow up on any issues with each interviewee.

The panel attempted to understand the extent of the work of the EDC noting that the size and scale of Monash University, with six campuses in Victoria and two overseas campuses in Malaysia and South Africa, precluded meeting representatives from all areas.

The discussions were partly structured and partly free flowing to encourage maximum information being shared; a copy of the general questions, prompts and targeted questions used is attached. (Attachment B). The Review Panel was also provided with general questions for each step of the quality cycle to be used as a reference for discussion. (Refer to attachment C)

The Review Panel discussed the key issues they identified arising from the interviews and data review process. This Report provides a summary of the key findings and a list of

Commendations and Recommendations for consideration by the EDC in its quest for continuous improvement.

1.3 Review Panel

Ms Janet Kemp Faculty Manager, Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences	Chair of Committee and senior Support Services representative
Professor John Sheridan, Head of Department, Mechanical Engineering, Faculty of Engineering, Monash University	Faculty Representative
Associate Professor Brett Inder Head of Department, Econometrics and Business Statistics, Faculty of Business and Economics, Monash University	Chair of Faculty Equity and Diversity Committee
Dr Kerry Ferguson Pro Vice Chancellor (Equity & Access) La Trobe University	External Member Member Professional Association – Equal Opportunity Practitioners in Higher education Australia
Ms Jude Stoddart Director, Equity and Diversity Unit University of NSW	External Member Member Professional Association – Equal Opportunity Practitioners in Higher Education Australasia
Dr Pat McLean Director, Equity and Learning Programs University of Melbourne	External Member Member Professional Association – Equal Opportunity Practitioners in Higher Education Australasia
Ms Mary Ingamells Director, Anchor Consulting PL	Secretary to the Review Panel

2 CONTEXT

Monash University is a complex organisation with urban and regional campuses in Victoria and overseas campuses in Malaysia and South Africa. Monash has around 52,000 students (56% full time and 27.6% part time and 16.3% external mode) and more than 5,500 staff. Nearly 8,500 students study off campus.

Monash has a richly diverse community with a student population which includes indigenous Australians, recent arrivals to Australia and students from over a hundred countries. The majority

of overseas students (29% enrolments) come from Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong and Indonesia. Of these nearly 5,000 students are enrolled in overseas programs outside Australia, mainly in the Asia Pacific region.

The work of the EDC supports the University's aim stated in Monash Directions 2025:

“Monash University seeks to improve the human condition by advancing knowledge and fostering creativity. It does so through research and education and a commitment to social justice, human rights and a sustainable environment”

Monash is committed to¹:

- The participation of people from indigenous backgrounds and people with disabilities
- Having practices inclusive of cultural and linguistic diversity
- Valuing a wide range of perspectives shaped by students' gender, age, parental status and religion
- Providing a high quality of education to a diverse range of students drawn from many different countries and backgrounds
- Providing a learning and working environment conducive to the success of all its students and staff

The EDC was until recently, a Centre within the International & Equity Group, a part of the Student & Staff Services Division, and has now been positioned to operate within the recently created Student, Community and Shared Services Division which reports to the Vice President (Administration). The EDC was formed in 2002 after the amalgamation of the Student Equity and Access Branch and the Equal Opportunity and Employment Equity Branch. The EDC is positioned to support the University in developing practices which enable all members of the Monash community to be included as participants in accordance with Monash values.

For a central support service unit such as the EDC, the increased organisational complexity brought about by continuous growth and development poses on-going challenges for providing best practice services for staff and students at all campuses.

The EDC's purpose is to support the University's goals by operating as an agent of change embedding practices which are inclusive of the diversity of Monash's population.

¹ EDC Self Review Report June 2005

The EDC has an ambitious and wide ranging charter to provide expert consultancy to all members of the Monash community which includes Monash South Africa and Monash Malaysia. The EDC also holds University wide anti-discrimination legislative/compliance responsibilities. The EDC approaches this by:

- Developing and disseminating policies regarding fairness and equity across all University activities
- Establishing training opportunities for management, staff and students on their rights and responsibilities
- Providing a confidential, timely and accessible grievance process for appropriate management of equal opportunity related issues
- Operationalising the Global Equal Opportunity Policy
- Acting as an agent in support of long term systemic change to remove barriers to effective inclusive practice, through awareness raising activities, and promotion of structural and attitudinal change where appropriate
- Providing assistance on request to Monash overseas campuses which have different legislative requirements

The EDC also provides direct services for students and staff in areas such as provision of extra support and reasonable accommodations for students and staff with disabilities; discrimination and harassment grievance counseling and advice; and consultancy support for workplace flexibility.

The EDC supports Monash in its aim to achieve:

- A work and study environment free from unlawful discrimination and harassment
- Increased attraction and retention of talented employees
- A more flexible working environment
- An organisation which enables and supports full participation of the University's diverse community

Responsibility for implementation of equity and diversity practices that reflect Monash Directions 2025 and Monash values rests with University management across the university, including faculties, divisions and centres and appears to be embedded more clearly and successfully in some areas than others.

The EDC endeavors to drive and facilitate the development of policies and practices across the university through the Equity and Diversity Committee structure. The EDC also works through a range of other initiatives and activities and through strategic use of the formal advisory networks (for example, the Discrimination and Harassment Grievance Advisor Network and Conciliation Service; the Student Equity Officer Network and the Disability Contact Officer Network) as well as informal networks to leverage and influence culture change.

3 DISCUSSION and KEY FINDINGS

This section discusses the main findings in light of the Quality Cycle, and provides background to the Commendations and Recommendations identified by the External Review Panel through the Review Process.

3.1 Quality Assurance; Planning and Review

In general, the EDC develops comprehensive plans in organising its business, key performance indicators are identified and progress against plans is monitored through reports and opportunities for improvement are sought.

The EDC supports the University to consider equal opportunity principles and practices in its planning processes. The EDC participates in relevant University Planning and has formulated plans including the Inclusive Practices: Disability Plan 2004-2008, Inclusive Practices: Student Equity Plan 2005-2008 and the Inclusive Practices: Equal Employment Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Plan 2005-2010.

The EDC plans are aligned to the Student and Staff Services Divisional Plan which is aligned to the University's strategic plan, Monash Directions 2025.

The Student and Staff Services Divisional Plan focuses on "supporting the University's goals by leadership, management and innovation in the provision of quality student and staff services".

The EDC Operational Plan was specifically aligned to the following key result areas of the Student and Staff Services Divisional Plan:

- Strengthening Community
- Facilitating an Information Culture

- Enhancing Service Culture
- Optimising People Potential

In the Panel's view, the EDC demonstrated that significant strategic and operational planning was undertaken - and from these operational plans, staff Work Plans were established and, in general, followed. A large numbers of plans and comprehensive planning documentation was provided and comparatively little evidence of monitoring, analysis and review. A concern of the Review Panel was that there may be a disproportionate amount of time spent planning compared to the actual implementation and review and evaluation of outcomes.

At the operational level, the EDC Staff Work Plans are monitored through provision of monthly reports to the Director EDC in relation to progress on Work Plans. The Director EDC reports on progress to the Divisional Director Student and Staff Services and the Director International and Equity (Note: this reporting structure has changed since the Review was undertaken). The Director EDC also provides operational information to the Equal Opportunity Committee of University Council.

The Review Panel noted that key statistics which are required for legislative reporting requirements are routinely collected, monitored and analysed. The EDC is most effective in this area and all relevant Reports are compiled on the University's behalf.

As noted above, the EDC provided less evidence of comprehensive monitoring and evaluation. The Review Panel concluded that there was the potential to improve service delivery if more formal evaluation of the long term benefits of some initiatives and training programs was conducted to identify whether there are ways to improve delivery or whether a different strategy may be needed, for example, to increase reach to target audiences. The Review Panel was of the view that the EDC could benefit from routinely embedding seeking of stakeholder feedback on services and policies to evaluate the effectiveness of initiatives.

The Review Panel also considered that potentially, improved effectiveness of initiatives could be achieved by more consultation and analysis of needs, prior to introducing programs in some areas. This would also ensure greater acceptance of initiatives which would then be more easily able to be implemented across the University. The need for more consultation (on some occasions) prior to introducing initiatives was highlighted by an example where a newly endorsed policy for improving success in indigenous employment rates required some further working out in practice within faculties so that this new policy whilst benefiting one group did not inadvertently disadvantage another, in this case, current long term casual administrative staff. Clearly the

EDC's work is frequently in sensitive areas and requires considerable flexibility and adherence to sound values, in implementation.

3.2 Management; Organisational Structure; Human and Physical Resources; Training

The EDC current structure includes six units or program areas:

- Advancing Indigenous Employment
- Disability Liaison Unit
- Equal Opportunity – Information and Resolution Services
- Student Equity Unit
- Women in Leadership and Advancement Scheme
- Work Life

Currently there is a Director, EDC and a total team of 14 staff. Each program area has a Coordinator reporting to the Director. The Work Life Consultant reports to the Coordinator Equal Opportunity. The Coordinator Student Equity provides daily supervision of the Disability Liaison Unit. The Disability Liaison Officer Gippsland reports to the local Community Services Manager on a day to day basis as well as to the Coordinator Student Equity.

The EDC staff believed that the Centre had the appropriate level of staffing and funding to enable them to deliver the required outcomes at this stage. The EDC as a group have a broad range of formal qualifications and are linked to a range of relevant professional organisations and associations. A significant amount of research is undertaken by the Student Equity Coordinator. Presentations of research include papers on student equity issues to the DEST National Student Equity forum in 2003 and 2005 and to the International Student Retention Colloquium in the UK in 2004. Resources developed through these activities include income and DEST points for the research quantum from National Survey of Student Attrition conducted for DEST and awarded via national tender process in 2005. The Work Life Consultant and the Women's Leadership Advancement Scheme Coordinator have also undertaken research activities. The EDC staff are up to date with current trends through journals, on-line, seminars, conferences and active membership of Professional Associations.

Within the EDC there is considerable effort made to ensure good cross unit communication. There is formal internal communication through scheduled start of month group meetings where

staff discuss their monthly reports and share knowledge and information and mid month meetings which are less formal to promote a team environment. The Director meets regularly with the Coordinators and has an open door policy for all staff. The DLU also meets weekly with the Coordinator Student Equity and the coordinator Equal Opportunity on a monthly basis for debriefing purposes.

The Review Panel considered that the Director with her highly professional and engaged approach provides excellent leadership to her team and her energy and direct engagement with a large range of stakeholders was noted. However, the panel expressed concern that there appears to be too much reliance on her for guidance of all staff as well as for direct involvement in so many aspects of the EDC's work. This was viewed to carry some risk and the Panel has made a number of recommendations to mitigate this.

It was clear that pressure on the Director's time was exacerbated by the fact that the group was based in two different sites. However the Blackburn Rd based EDC staff themselves noted that there was logic in them being co-located with Staff Services whilst the Clayton Gallery Building based groups, on the main campus, believed that they were in the best place for students to be able to directly access them. The Coordinator for Advancing Indigenous Employment was also close to the Centre for Indigenous Studies in the Clayton Gallery Building , which was helpful for her work relationships. Whilst maintenance of the two sites was not viewed as detrimental to the operations of the EDC, the majority of the EDC client base (senior staff, supervisors, staff and students) is on Clayton campus and it would be preferable for all services to be located together on campus.

EDC staff noted that it is important that the EDC aligns closely with other parts of Staff Services, for example, Staff Development and Policy areas, to increase opportunities for synergy. For example, the EDC works to ensure compliance under the Anti-Discrimination Acts both State and Federal. The OH&S Act addresses workplace bullying and within this there may be elements of unlawful discrimination, at which point the case moves from OHS&E to the EDC to develop training in the various Grievance procedures linked to a range of legislation.

Irrespective of their geographic location, the EDC must retain strong links with a large range of colleagues and other stakeholders and be easily accessible to students and staff who wish to access their services. Clayton campus, having the largest student body is the logical place for the student oriented services to primarily be located.

A single campus location does mean that the EDC needs to develop and maintain mechanisms to service all campuses. The DLU has 5.6 FTE with one half time staff member based at Gippsland campus. Three of the Clayton based Disability Liaison Officers (DLOs) visit the other metropolitan campuses on a regular schedule, as do other EDC staff. Although some reference was made to giving consultancy support by distance to the South African and Malaysian campuses on occasion, the EDC does not appear to be resourced to deliver a comprehensive service overseas.

3.3 Core Services - Staff and Students; External Communication

Clearly communication and education of stakeholders, promotions of policies, ideas and service availability in such a large and complex organisation is critical to successful outcomes for Monash. The Equity Committee structure is a major driving force in the University 'taking all reasonable steps to eliminate discrimination and harassment' and provides a powerful mechanism for monitoring activities, as advisory bodies and for disseminating information. Every opportunity to optimise the way people work in line with Monash values and within legislative guidelines, by introducing ways to share knowledge and leverage relationships across departments, faculties, institutes and centres must be taken.

University Advisory Networks are structured to provide support to students and staff across the Victorian campuses. The EDC staff are involved in the training and mentoring of the advisors in these networks. These networks are the:

- Discrimination and Harassment Grievance Advisor Network and Conciliation Service (EOS: Service Provision), facilitated by the Coordinator Equal Opportunity
- Student Equity Officer Network (SEU), facilitated by the Coordinator Student Equity
- Disability Contact Officer Network which is currently being established and supported by the EDC's Disability Liaison Officers.

Applications for the role of Discrimination and Harassment Grievance Advisor are available to Monash staff who have completed the EOS Advisor training and successful applicants are recommended to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor responsible for equal opportunity.

A network of conciliators, who have taken alternate dispute resolution training, has also been appointed by the University. The Equal Opportunity Service selects the most appropriate

conciliator for specific cases. The EOS administers and coordinates the formal Grievance and Sexual Harassment Procedures for investigation of complaints working with the Deputy Vice Chancellor to resolve matters. The EOS also works directly with staff and students, providing advice, consultancy services and training, both scheduled and specifically customised for faculties or departments and student groups. The data and evaluations necessitating either an intervention or an education program were not clear and would assist the EOS to target services and act proactively rather than reactively. The EOS also provides guidance and support to the DLU through monthly debriefs.

The Student Equity Officer Network provides a direct two way communication channel between the EDC's Student Equity Unit (SEU) and faculties and units, including the Faculty Equity and Diversity Committees. The role of the Student Equity Officer Network is to be a contact and referral point for staff and students seeking assistance with student equity issues and to attend equity briefings facilitated by the Student Equity Unit with the support of the line manager.

It was noted that the number of students who identified as having a disability on enrolment was far greater than the number who sought services. There are likely to be many different reasons for this and many may not require accommodations from the University, hence will not need to register with the DLU. However, there may be ways to improve dissemination of information to particular student (or staff) groups who may benefit from the services provided by the EDC. Information given by the Student Representatives from Inclusive Practices: Disability Committee (IDPC) indicates that the disability support network is working well and provides a good service to those students who access it.

The Disability Contact Officer Network is currently being established with representatives from each faculty or division being selected as Disability Contact Officers to assist staff in negotiation of work practices under the Staff Disability Policy or, if required, to be referred to appropriate University services including the Disability Liaison Unit (DLU). The Review Panel expressed some concern that the EDC does not seem to be resourced to effectively manage the issue of staff with disabilities. They also expressed some concerns about staff approaching a colleague who is a DCO and who may be relatively untrained in the area of disability, with what may be highly sensitive and private matters.

The Advancing Indigenous Employment Program (AIEP) is supported by the Coordinator Indigenous Employment who is involved in a number of initiatives to progress the attraction, selection and retention of Indigenous staff. The Coordinator is involved directly in Indigenous

networks in the community. A recent recruitment initiative is designed to increase the opportunities for Indigenous staff to be employed at Monash.

The Women's Leadership and Advancement Scheme provides a range of consultancy, support and advice services to the University to develop an inclusive workplace where all staff are valued as equal partners. There are career development programs and mentoring programs specifically targeting women, as well as a flexible, paid maternity leave scheme. A network exists within the University through which women can support each other. The WLAS Coordinator monitors University policies and procedures and conducts on-going research into the employment status of women at Monash and also provides benchmarking information to the Vice Chancellor's Taskforce for the Advancement of Women.

A number of key challenges and dilemmas emerged during the review processes, which in the panel's view, need to be addressed if the impact of the EDC is to be optimised. The success of the EDC in achieving its outcomes is in many cases still dependent on the "personality, courage and energy" of proponents within and outside the EDC in ensuring philosophy and policies are put into practice and although progress is being made, many aspects are not yet embedded in the system. This also reflects the larger Australian society where often there is only lip service for good practice in areas of equity and diversity.

3.4 Compliance and Reporting

Monash has a range of compliance responsibilities related to Equity and Diversity and through the EDC, reports to Federal and State government bodies and Parliament on a regular basis.

The Advancing Indigenous Employment Coordinator provides a quarterly report on the progress of Monash's Indigenous Employment Strategy to the Victorian Office of Public Employment, to support the Wur cum Barra State Strategy for evaluation of Indigenous employment strategies.

The DLU assists the University to achieve its compliance obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992, and provides the DEST reports supporting Monash's application of funding under the Additional Support for Students with Disabilities Program.

The Coordinator Student Equity drafts the University's Equity Plan a part of the Annual Institutional Assessment Framework Report for DEST and also responds to DEST projects such as Analysis of Equity Groups in Higher Education (2004) and also responds to proposed shifts in

policy on behalf of the University, such as changes to the Higher Education Equity Support Program conducted in 2004.

The EOS maintains statistics for a range of reporting requirements including the statistics for the Federal Government Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency and also provides statistics for the Monash Audit Committee as part of the Equal Opportunity Compliance file.

The Women in Leadership Advancement Scheme (WLAS) Coordinator prepares the annual Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Plan required under the EOWA Act 1999. Monash, having successfully demonstrated that all reasonable measures to achieve equal opportunity for women at Monash were in place, achieved 'waiving status' in 2004, granting Monash exemption from the requirement to submit the EOWA Report.

The Work Life Unit also submits annual reports and Monash has been ranked in the top 25 large companies for its Work Life Program. Clearly Monash is achieving well in this area compared to other organisations in Australia.

The EDC manages the compliance and reporting aspects of its role diligently and conscientiously and is mindful of the EDC's responsibility to keep abreast of any policy or legislative changes. The support of the Vice Chancellor and senior management of the University is critical to enable the policies and practices to become embedded in the way all parts of the University operate. Within the University, the EDC has no formal authority and works through education and influence of stakeholders to embed good practice into all aspects of University activities. Their success has largely come from their dedication, expertise and ability to engage stakeholders. Positioning the EDC is also important and recent changes have elevated the level of management role to Director level which is appropriate in the Panel's view.

The main vehicle for getting the Equity and Diversity agenda embedded in the University culture is through the University Equity Committees at various levels in the University. This approach has had significant but not universal success as it requires considerable resources in terms of people and time commitment. At this stage it is not a requirement for the equity strategies to be reported to Deans and Council and included in Faculty Plans. It was also noted that at present, there was no parallel committee structure or vehicle linked to Divisional Units (non-Faculty) in the organisation to plan and report on equity objectives.

The Panel recommended a rationalisation of this Committee structure by combining the Inclusive Practices Workplace Equity Committee and the Inclusive Practices Disability Committee. The

panel believed this would significantly reduce the amount of administration and staff time required. The Review Panel discussed that there was possibly some opportunity to improve the structure within the EDC and design the work so that the impact of the EDC could be further optimised.

3.5 Professional and Community Activities

As evident from the above discussion, the EDC engages with the broader external Equity and Diversity network through professional associations and a wide range of different forums. Various EDC staff have presented at both local, national and international conferences over the last few years and several staff members are active on key national Equity and Diversity linked Committees in the greater community.

Through the Committee structure and through the EDC service structure, and service provision the EDC is very much part of the internal Monash community.

4 CONCLUSIONS

The EDC's purpose is to support the University's goals by operating as an agent of change embedding practices which are inclusive of the diversity of Monash's population.

The EDC is a professional and dedicated Centre providing expertise in the areas of equity and diversity and driving a range of initiatives which are having significant impact, with considerable success in some areas. The EDC drives and facilitates the development of policies and practices and culture change across the University through the Equity and Diversity Committee structure, the advisory networks, education and training and significant informal influence based on the individual staff members. The EDC also monitors the University's response to relevant legislative requirements and ensures that these are met through the appropriate mechanisms and reporting structures.

Ultimately, it is important for the management within faculties, divisions and centres to be aware of the importance of equity issues, Monash values, legislative responsibilities and relevant Plans and to ensure equity plans are incorporated into routine planning processes and practices. Operationalising sound practices in line with equity and diversity principles is a responsibility of the whole University community.

Whilst the University cannot yet claim that it has resolved all equity issues, it can claim that its equity initiatives, including plans and policies, are moving the culture in the right direction, at least in the Victorian campuses. Very little evidence was available to the Review Panel demonstrating support for the South African and Malaysian campuses, and it appears that the EDC is not well resourced to support these campuses except in providing guidance with policy, noting that there are also different legislative environments.

The following section summarises the main findings and lists commendations and recommendations. The recommendations indicate areas where there is potential to improve, with some suggestions for action. The recommendations have been made in the context of identifying opportunities for improvement and are not intended to diminish in any way the fact that the EDC is a highly effective unit which is making a considerable contribution to the University's equity and diversity strategies, policies, practices and culture. It is acknowledged that a number of the recommendations in the Report have resource implications. Accordingly, the Report does not prioritise these recommendations and recognises that it is the EDC's and the University's challenge to respond in the best way possible.

The Equity and Diversity Centre is to be commended for the significant effort put into the Self-Review process and its support of the External Panel and also for its contribution to the Panel Review process. It was clear that the Centre had already gained significantly and responded proactively as a consequence of the Self Review and was committed to continuous improvement.

4.1 Commendations

Areas where the External Review Panel commends the practices of the EDC:

1. The strong positive response to the EDC from all stakeholders who met with the Panel indicated that the EDC has established sound professional and collaborative relationships with a wide range of stakeholders.
2. The high profile achieved by the Director of the EDC across the University which has contributed significantly to raising awareness and assisting the University to embed the equity and diversity philosophy and practice into its policies and practices

3. The effectiveness of the EDC staff members' informal networks to senior levels within the University structure has enabled them to become well established in many parts of the University.
4. The EDC has achieved support at the executive level as indicated by the establishment of the Equal Opportunity Committee which reports to the University Council ensuring that Equity and Diversity is consistently on the Council agenda.
5. The establishment of the four Committees which report into the EOC supports the engagement of a range of senior academic and general staff in the work of the EDC and these Committees are important vehicles for communication and discussion.
6. The EDC has developed comprehensive planning documentation for its key services and has collaborated in the development of University Plans such as the Inclusive Practices Disability Plan 2004 -2008 which has been endorsed; the Inclusive Practices Student Equity Plan 2005-2008 and the Inclusive Practices: Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Plan 2005 – 2010.
7. The EDC supports the University's goals by operating as an agent of change embedding inclusive practices throughout the University and works effectively to embed key activities in the mainstream activity of the University.
8. Each Faculty has established a Faculty Equity and Diversity Committee (or Faculty Equity and Access Committee)
9. The EDC is involved directly in research and also in collaborative research with relevant organisations.
10. The Panel recognises the professional expertise of the EDC and commends the EDC on its professionalism
11. The EDC aims to work constructively with the University through influence and education rather than by adopting a "policing role" in areas of regulatory compliance
12. The Panel commends the Director, EDC for support and encouragement of the continuing professional development of staff

13. The EDC staff demonstrated a high level of dedication and commitment and mutual support of all team members. This is also supported by the high retention rate for EDC staff.
14. The recent re-structure in Monash Support Services has resulted in the EDC moving to a more appropriate level in the organisational structure
15. The Panel strongly endorses the message from the Vice Chancellor that Deans will be responsible and accountable for achieving equity outcomes specified through clear objectives in the Performance Management system
16. The EDC staff has begun to utilise the Self-Review process for self-reflection and for identifying areas for improvement.

4.2 Recommendations

1. In support of the clear message from the Vice Chancellor that equity is a responsibility of all of the University, the Panel recommends that:
 - a) Clear accountability processes for equity performance are further developed within the performance management processes for deans, senior managers and heads of departments and schools
 - b) Equity performance objectives identified in Faculty Equity Plans are fully reflected in the main Faculty and Divisional Plans
 - c) Mainstream institutional data is analysed by gender, and other equity groups wherever feasible, to ensure that the equity impact of initiatives or policies is fully considered, eg in relation to research productivity, grants, awards etc
 - d) Equity perspectives are integral to other mainstream processes, eg EDC is offered the option of equity representation on relevant mainstream committees, such as the Admissions Committee
2. That Faculties appoint a member of the Faculty Executive, either a senior administrator or senior academic, as the Chair of Faculty Equity Committees, to ensure a higher profile for the work of the Committee in Faculties
3. That the division of responsibilities between the EDC and Faculties and Divisions is further clarified in relation to the development and implementation of Faculty Plans, and that faculties are held accountable for equity performance

4. That a process to ensure closer links between Faculty Operational Plans and EDC Plans is established and that equity objectives are reflected in the mainstream faculty operational plans
5. That the EDC works with Faculties and has input as they develop their Faculty Equity Plan before the Plan is presented to the Faculty Executive and included in the Faculty Operational Plan
6. That the EDC works with Faculties to ensure designated Officers in Faculties have Equity and Access responsibilities specified in their workplans
7. That the sources and opportunities for communications with Faculties are expanded, for example, through Faculty Managers or Faculty HR staff, thereby reducing reliance on Faculty Equity and Access Committees
8. That a broader base of EDC staff represent the EDC and gain experience by increasing their direct involvement in communications across the University, for example through their participation on important committees
9. That the relationships with Faculty Equity and Access Committees are increased by introducing direct representation of a number of EDC staff members as ex officio representatives on each of these Committees
10. That the EDC expands its influence to Divisions as well as Faculties and that Divisions as well as faculties are required to produce equity plans
11. That the EDC further develops a comprehensive communication strategy which includes more formal communication processes across the University beyond the Committee structure
12. There is a need to close the quality cycle from policy development to monitoring/reporting to revision of policy.
13. That the EDC increases the involvement of the wider University, through different levels in Faculties and Divisions, to analyse needs and views prior to the development of policies

14. That the EDC develops a comprehensive database of information and statistics which can be used to monitor progress and inform action for continuous improvement for all EDC programs and initiatives
15. That the EDC develops methods for evaluation of training provided, particularly the long term effectiveness of training and the success of skills transfer into practice in the workplace
16. That a more formal planned and consultative approach to needs analysis be undertaken for programs such as Women in Leadership
17. That there is more focus on setting targets for training that addresses 'hot spots' identified through the grievance monitoring, to complement the compliance training in areas such as Grievance Procedures
18. That the EDC Committee structure is rationalised to reduce staff time and administration required, by combining the Inclusive Practices Workplace Equity Committee and the Inclusive Practices Disability Committee
19. That the EDC is supported by Staff Services to ensure sufficient resources are available to enable the initiative to support staff with disabilities to be effective for all campuses and guidelines and criteria are developed
20. That the EDC in conjunction with the International operations area more clearly determines what is already offered and what is feasible to support off-shore campuses and the capability required to ensure this support is in place
21. That the organisational structure of the EDC is modified to reduce the day to day reliance on the EDC Director by all staff members which is not considered to be sustainable in the long term
22. That greater opportunity for the members of the Disability Liaison Unit for career development and coaching is introduced. This could be achieved by introducing a position for a Manager for the Disability Liaison Unit who has expertise in the area and could be part of the role of existing staff if appropriate.

23. That there is a more structured approach to performance management and development of staff is implemented within the EDC as was also noted in the EDC Self Review Report
24. That the EDC improve collection of data and feedback to enable assessment of progress against objectives and to identify areas for improvement
25. That the EDC looks for ways to align more closely with other parts of Staff Services, for example, Staff Development and Policy areas, to increase opportunities for synergy.

Attachment A Names of Presenters and Interviewees

Professor Richard Larkins, Vice Chancellor

Professor Colin Bourke, Adjunct Professor, Centre for Australian Indigenous Studies (Chair of Monash University Equal Opportunity Committee and member of Monash University Council)

Mr Peter Marshall, Vice President, Administration

Professor Merran Evans, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Planning

Professor Graham Webb, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Centre for Higher Education Quality, Administration (Chair of Inclusive Practices: Disability Committee)

Professor Margaret Clayton, Associate Dean, Research, School of Biological Sciences, Faculty of Science (Member of Vice-Chancellor's Taskforce for the Advancement of Women at Monash)

Associate Professor Margot Story, Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences (Chair of Inclusive Practices: Student Equity Committee and Chair of the Faculty of Medicine Equity and Diversity Committee)

Mr Paul Barton Manager, HR Services and Occupational Health, Safety and Environment, Student and Staff Services Division. (Chair of Inclusive Practice Disability Clayton sub-committee and member of the Inclusive Practices: Disability Committee)

Ms Jane Holt, Director, Planning and Support, Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research), Administration

Faculty Representatives

Ms Bronwyn Shields, Manager, Faculty of Arts

Ms Brenda Forthington, Business Manager, Faculty of Engineering, (Chair of Faculty of Engineering Equity and Diversity Committee)

Comments were also invited from all Faculty Managers and Chairs of Faculty and Equity Committees

Student Representatives from Inclusive Practices: Disability Committee (IPDC)

Mr Lev Ari Bachar, Caulfield Sub-Committee

Ms Amy Ni, Clayton Main Committee

Student Representative from Inclusive Practices: Student Equity Committee (SEC):

Ms Marianna Linnik, Student Association Representative

Ms Suse Tassie, Mature Age and Part-Time Association

Ms Jordana Edwards, Monash Post-Graduate Association

Attachment A Names of Presenters and Interviewees (continued)

Equity & Diversity Centre Staff

Ms Kay Gardner, Director, Equity and Diversity Centre

Ms Leah Zaks, Coordinator, Equal Opportunity-Information and Resolution Services, Equity and Diversity Centre

Ms Barbara Dalton, Coordinator, Women's Leadership and Advancement Scheme, Equity and Diversity Centre

Ms Kelly Bramston , Senior Disability Liaison Officer

Ms Amber Collings, Senior Disability Liaison Officer

Ms Shae McGregor, Disability Liaison Officer

Mr Daniel Maruff, Disability Liaison Officer

Ms Mary Tidey, Disability Resources Administration Officer, Equity and Diversity Centre

Ms Judith Cooke, Work Life Consultant, Equity and Diversity Centre

Ms Lynda Nicholson, Coordinator, Advancing Indigenous Employment, Equity and Diversity Centre

Ms Margaret Heagney Coordinator, Student Equity, Equity and Diversity Centre

Attachment B Interview Protocol and General Questions

Interviews with External Stakeholders

The external stakeholder interviewees (staff external to EDC) were invited to discuss:

- Extent to which the EDC is meeting its purpose – *To support the University's goals by operating as an agent of change embedding practices which are inclusive of the diversity of Monash's population*
- Their view of the planning the EDC undertakes within the University – as far as they are aware
- Comments on the services provided by the EDC and the support it provides to the University in achieving its goals
- Suggestions for improvement of the quality cycle in EDC operations

Interviews with Student Stakeholders

The student stakeholders were invited to discuss the committee which they were representing and its role within the University.

Interviews with Equity and Diversity Centre Staff

Staff of the EDC were asked to focus on their role and the planning and work of the EDC.

Questions for Equity and Diversity Staff

1. What is your particular role and responsibilities within the EDC?
2. From where you 'sit' within the EDC, how well do you think the current structure and individuals' roles and responsibilities work, in terms of achieving the goals/directions of the EDC?
3. Do you have any involvement in the development and review of the EDC operational plan? In what way are you involved?
4. In your view, are the directions the EDC has set for itself appropriate? Are there other directions that should be considered?
5. How well do staff know the goals/directions of the EDC?
6. Do you know how well EDC is doing in its progress towards those goals? How? How well do you think it is performing in respect of those goals?
7. How does the EDC decide where improvements are needed? How does it address the improvements identified? Can you provide examples?
8. What opportunities are made available for you to learn and develop?
9. What opportunities do you have to become involved in or contribute to the decision-making of the EDC?
10. In your view, what does the EDC do particularly well?
11. What could the EDC do better?

Attachment B Interview Protocol and General Questions (continued)

Questions for External Stakeholders

1. What is your role on the committee for which the EDC is responsible?
2. How could the role of the committee as a change agent within the University be further developed?
3. How does the EDC assist you as a key stakeholder?
4. How effective is the on-going communication between you and the EDC?
5. In your view, what does the Centre do particularly well?
6. What could the EDC do better?
7. What contact do you have with the Equity and Diversity Centre and the committees for which it is responsible?
8. To what extent and how does EDC assist you as a key stakeholder?
9. In general does the EDC support the University to meet its compliance obligations and how could this be further developed?
10. To what extent, and how, do you contribute to the development of the planning and direction-setting of the EDC within the University?
11. How effective is the ongoing communication between you and the EDC?
12. If you have a problem that you need to take to EDC, how do you do this, and how well does the process work? In your view, what does the Centre do particularly well?
13. What could the EDC do better?

Attachment C General Questions for each Step of the Quality Cycle

Information for Review Panel members as a guide

Some questions that seek information about the Quality Cycle include the following:

Plan

1. What is the branch trying to achieve in this area?
2. What goals have been established?
3. What strategies, structures and processes have been developed to achieve these goals?
4. What performance Indicators or quality indicators have been developed to measure progress towards goals?
5. How does the approach incorporate Monash quality values and principles?

Act

6. How have the strategies, structures and processes of the branch been put into practice?
7. How consistently have they been deployed throughout the branch?
8. How well have they been accepted as 'the way we do things around here'?

Evaluate

9. What trends are evident from Performance Indicators Is or quality indicators?
10. What do the EDC activities indicate about the extent to which it is achieving its objectives?
11. How do these results compare with best practice?
12. How does the branch interpret, communicate and use the results?

Improve

13. How does EDC use findings from its monitoring activities to improve?
14. How does it learn from its evaluation processes, and how does it share this learning and use it to improve?