

SOCIAL REVIEW

BACK

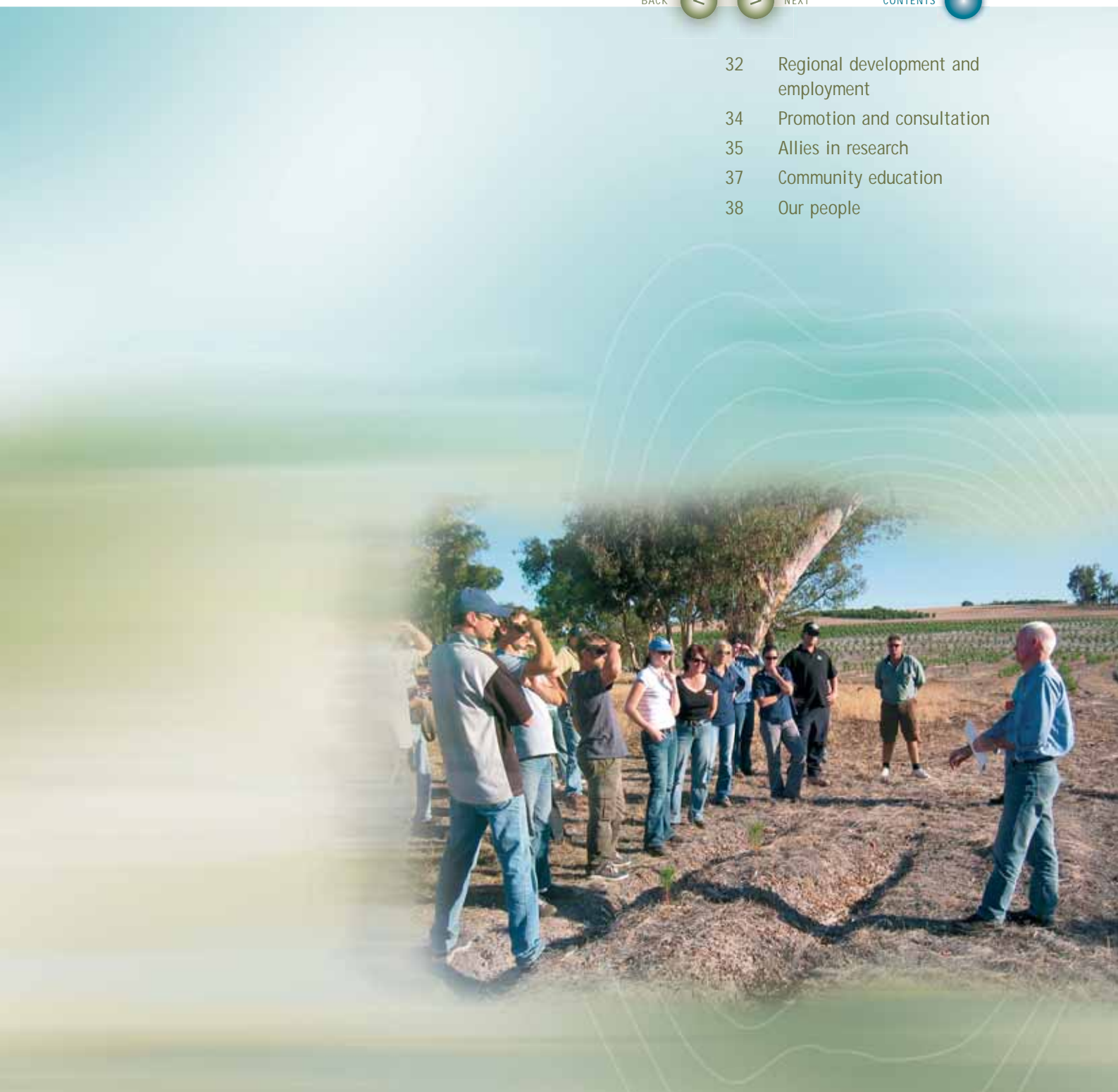


NEXT

CONTENTS



- 32 Regional development and employment
- 34 Promotion and consultation
- 35 Allies in research
- 37 Community education
- 38 Our people





The Commission is working to ensure that Western Australians benefit from a range of positive social outcomes as well as the financial returns of forest products. As we establish further plantations, regional WA will see enhanced employment opportunities, industry development and improved infrastructure.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT

The Commission was successful in obtaining \$32 million from the State and \$32 million from the Federal Governments for strategic tree planting over the 2005/06 and following three financial years. Approximately 18,000 hectares of new plantations will be established under the Strategic Tree Farming project which is a collaboration between Natural Resource Management groups, the Commission and individual landowners.

These plantations will be largely planted within the framework of the regional NRM strategies and the Commission's Tree Farming and Industry Development Plans. These plans are about creating new plantation industries while at the same time delivering environmental and employment benefits to regional WA.

The Commission's propagation nursery in Manjimup is installing a new seeding line that has the capacity to increase daily seeding up to five to 10 times current rates. This enables all seedlings to be sown at, or very near, the optimum time for best growth. To handle this increase capacity, two mini-plug tunnel houses were completed, each with the potential to hold 4.4 million seedlings.

The nursery is working to increase the number of seedlings produced. In the 2005/06 season more than 10 million seedlings were dispatched, a 10 per cent increase on the previous season.

A road was built linking the hardwood nursery with Windy Hill nursery, enabling work vehicles to stay within the 'dieback free' envelope under the nursery's Nursery and Garden Industry WA (NGIWA) accreditation scheme.

One of the major issues facing all aspects of the industry is the availability of both skilled and unskilled labour. Whether harvesting, milling, processing or manufacturing, there is currently an acute labour shortage due to the boom in the resource industries and their ability to offer much higher pay rates.

However, employment opportunities have been invigorated by further developments at regional sawmilling companies. These included: the official opening of Whittakers new jarrah small log line and associated kiln drying capacity at Greenbushes; continued expansion of Wesbeam's Neerabup Laminated Veneer Lumber plant; and the completion of Pinetec's relocation of its sawmilling operations from Bassendean to Muja near Collie.



AREA OF PLANTATION ESTABLISHED AGAINST TARGET

Plantation establishment straddles the financial year, therefore areas of establishment reported in this Annual Report are those established during the winter of 2005.

Areas established achieve a range of environmental, social and economic benefits. This will be to supply the existing industry, to develop resources in new areas for future regional economic benefits and for multiple landcare protection purposes such as salinity amelioration, carbon sequestration and other multiple biodiversity benefits.

	Second Rotation pine species (ha)	First Rotation pine species (ha)	Eucalypt species (ha)	Sandalwood (ha)
Target	1,500	1,000	550	400
Total Area established	1,425	797	309	214
Note:	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Purpose	Sustain existing industry*	1,425	404	-
	Regional development*	-	393	309

Note: The total target area for first rotation pine, eucalypt species and sandalwood was 1,950 hectares. The requirement for Strategic Tree Farming as part of NAP was 1,700 hectares, the remaining 250 hectares is managed under fee-for-service arrangements.

* Salinity, water quality and landcare purposes are delivered concurrently with timber production.

Areas established against targets:

Notes:

(1) Second rotation pines

Target: 1,500 hectares

- Re-established 1,425 hectares that were clearfelled and ready for replanting. Logistical issues led to a five per cent shortfall on the target planting area.

(2) First rotation pines

Target: 1,000 hectares

- In order to sustain softwood resource in the Perth and Mid-West region, plantations are being established on farmland to replace areas to be clearfelled at Gnangara (approx. 23,000 hectares). Since 1995 a total of approximately 10,622 hectares have been established.
- Regional development includes establishing 239 hectares of *P.pinaster* plantations for BP Australia.
- Final goal for various regional cells (Katanning, Esperance, Albany) are yet to be determined as part of detailed planning for a coordinated approach to tree farming in Western Australia. Gaining access to land through sharefarming has proven to be difficult. Alternative measures have been pursued by the Commission and are proving fruitful.
- Target shortfalls were due to reduced seedling supplies³.

³ See Environmental incidents - Plant Propagation page 23



(3) Eucalypt species

Target: 550 hectares

- Eucalypt sawlogs (309 hectares planted). This program is developing well. Agricultural product values are still competing strongly with tree planting options and therefore land availability for tree planting is at a premium.
- Target shortfalls were due to a very wet season (i.e. the 2005 winter) in the eucalypt species areas preventing access to some sites.

(4) Sandalwood

Target: 400 hectares.

- The area planted was 214 hectares. This is a newly developing project with good prospects.
- Target shortfalls were due to sandalwood host seedling difficulties⁴.

PROMOTION AND CONSULTATION

The Commission is an active participant in the promotion of finished timber products. It proudly supports numerous industry events and activities and is committed to educating the public about the uniqueness and value adding opportunities available with Western Australia's native forest and plantation timbers and finished products.

Furniture Industry

The Commission was again the Platinum Sponsor for the 2005 "Australian Furniture of the Year Awards". This was to support the Furnishing Industry Association of Australia (WA) Branch in holding the national awards in Perth. With more than 200 State and national entries, this was again a resounding success for Western Australian manufacturers.

Among the winners were local furniture manufacturers Jah Roc, Fremantle Furniture Factory, Antry, Inglewood Products Group, Quedos Billiard Tables, Just Jarrah, International Cabinets and B and G Furniture (excellence in using plantation timber WA award). Gunns Ltd won WA Supplier of the Year award.

Students from the Australian School of Fine Wood at Dwellingup also took out awards.

Forest Heritage Centre

During the year the Commission worked with the Forest Heritage Centre (FHC) Board, Government agencies and other stakeholders to develop a whole-of-Government solution to funding the ongoing operations of the Forest Heritage Centre and its Australian School of Fine Wood. This has resulted in a \$4.661 million Government funding package over the period 2005/06 to 2009/10.

The funding will be used for a new capital works program to cater for increased tertiary training and revitalisation of the centre, and to support its recurrent funding. This was a very pleasing result as the Commission has been a major contributor to funding the FHC since the project's inception through the Finewood Industry project in 1988.

The Commission again worked with the final year students for their 'Surfaces' exhibition held in Fremantle.

⁴ See environmental incidents Plant Propagation page 23



FIFWA Timber Industry Awards 2005

The Commission sponsors these annual timber industry awards. Final year students from the Australian School of Fine Wood took out the major prize in the Excellence In Innovative Use of Native Hardwood and Plantation Timber and Outstanding Contemporary Fine Wood Piece categories.

Jamel Industries was awarded the Excellence in Marketing Initiative through expanding from its current international markets in Hong Kong and New Zealand to the larger markets of the Middle East and Europe.

The Commission's former Assistant General Manager, Mr Jon Murch, was recognised for his Outstanding Contribution to Industry. Last year he retired after 32 years in WA government departments with responsibility for the forest industry and the award acknowledged the significant role he played in ensuring an ongoing and sustainable industry.

The Premiers Award 2005 was won by Jamel Industries.

International Western Australian Sandalwood Buyers' Symposium

The four-day symposium held in Perth and Kalgoorlie in May 2006 attracted 17 international delegates from Taiwan, China, Hong Kong and Malaysia.

In hosting the event, the Commission was able to raise the buyers' awareness of the sandalwood supply chain in WA and the vast distances involved between growing the product and getting it to market. The buyers also saw the improvements in growing, harvesting and regenerating WA's native sandalwood and the progress in growing Indian sandalwood plantations.

Timber Advisory Centre

The Timber Advisory Centre (TAC) at Home Base, Wembley, closed in November 2005. The timber framed house that was at the Centre will be relocated to form part of the joint research and marketing venture being undertaken with UWA.

ALLIES IN RESEARCH

The Commission is a partner in the Cooperative Research Centre for Wood Innovations (CRCWI), which is carrying out research in microwave technology and high value-adding of timber. Research into timber bending for potential use as furniture components continued. Other CRCWI partners are currently assessing WA-grown Tasmanian blue gum for possible use as power poles by microwave treatment to improve retention of timber preservatives. Microwave pre-treatment to reduce drying times of sawn timber of jarrah and Sydney blue gum is also being assessed.

In association with Ensis (which includes the former CSIRO Forestry and Forest products), Commission staff have organised sawmilling trials of regrowth karri and are organising trials of WA-grown plantation eucalypts.



13th International Union of Forest Research Organisations (IUFRO) World Congress

Five Commission staff attended the 13th International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO) World Congress, "Forests in the Balance: Linking Tradition and Technology" in Brisbane in August 2005. The Commission was a conference sponsor and was represented on the organising committee by Mr Keith Low. Commission Principal Research Scientist Dr Richard Harper was awarded a Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation Travel Award. He made a presentation on results of research on an innovative forestry system, phase farming with trees, that has shown considerable promise as a method of reducing salinity risk in agricultural areas while producing biomass for bioenergy. Colleague Dr Peter Ritson presented two poster papers on his research on *Pinus pinaster*. Paper abstracts were published in the International Forestry Review.

International Energy Agency Bioenergy Conference

The Commission hosted an international workshop on bioenergy in August 2005, attracting 45 national and international experts to Perth. The workshop was organized jointly by the International Energy Agency Bioenergy Tasks 30 and 31, with contributions from CALM, the Office of Energy and Bioenergy Australia. Commission staff provided an overview of the bioenergy opportunities in Western Australia.

Potential sources of biomass include residues from existing pine and eucalypt plantations, and residues from native forest management (harvest residues, thinnings and from land cleared for mining). In lower rainfall areas there is potential for purpose-grown bioenergy crops in the form of: strips of eucalypts, which will also produce logs; mallee strips; and short three year phases of trees, followed by a return to cropping.

Desert Technology 8 Conference, Nasu, Japan.

Dr Richard Harper was invited to attend this Conference as part of a research project by a consortium of Japanese Universities funded by the Research Institute of Innovative Technology for the Earth (RITE Institute). He presented a paper on the use of soil and climate data to predict wood yields, carbon sequestration and recharge reduction in catchments threatened by salinity.

Forestry Cooperative Research Centre

The Commission joined the Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) in Forestry and has a major role in the Hydrology Project of the CRC, with a project focussing on the hydrologic impact of plantations and tree crops in the medium rainfall zone forming the basis of our involvement. Additionally, the Commission will contribute to programs investigating the impact of plantation silviculture on productivity, wood quality and harvesting dynamics of hardwood plantations.

UWA and Commission Joint Venture Agreement

Under this research agreement between the University of Western Australia and the Commission, the initial focus will be on developing value-adding opportunities within the furniture industry.

The Timber Technology Centre at Harvey will be closed as a research centre but continue to operate for the purposes of log auctions which are held every three months.



COMMUNITY EDUCATION

The Commission has participated in the following events in an effort to further educate the broader community about its objectives, the State's timbers and the many value adding uses of our timber products:

- Mt Barker Machinery Field Day
- Wagin Woolarama
- Gingin Expo
- Sustainable Bioenergy Systems conference
- Perth Wood Show
- Dowerin Field Days
- Royal Show
- Moora Agricultural Show
- Esperance Agricultural Show
- Albany Agricultural Show
- Chatfield Plantation dedication ceremony
- Field days
- Sandalwood buyers' symposium
- Educational – student/industry tours.

General public enquiries

Over 600 enquiries on wood properties, timber utilisation and markets from other Government departments, the timber industry and the general public were answered.

Community consultation

The Commission consulted a range of stakeholders in regard to its native and plantation harvesting plans. Stakeholder groups included the public, property owners, indigenous representatives, shires, parliamentary members, corporations, environmental groups, students and government agencies.

The Commission ensured that prior notification was provided via media notices and direct mail when required. Detailed coupe maps, educational tours and follow-up contact were also provided by Commission staff on request.

In developing the Tree Farming and Industry Development plans, which underpin the Commission's tree planting activities, input was taken from a range of stakeholders including industry, Private Forestry Development Committees, Regional Development Commissions, NRM catchment groups (Northern Agricultural Catchments Council, Avon Catchments Council, South West Catchments Council and the South Coast Regional Initiative Planning Team), local authorities and local politicians.

Close liaison continued with the Regional NRM groups to ensure that the Strategic Tree Farming plantings help to achieve the targets set in their Regional NRM Strategies.



Committee communication

To manage the Strategic Tree Farming Project, a Project Steering Committee comprising representatives of the Australian Government, four Regional NRM Groups and the Commission was established. They met three times in this financial year.

At a State and national level the Commission participated in a range of NRM committees, ranging from the peak State Natural Resource Management Council, the State and Commonwealth Joint Steering Committee, Senior Officers NRM Group, State Investment Committee and the Fast and Efficient Review Panel.

The Commission joined representatives from industry, government and community on both the Native Forest Products Ministerial Advisory Committee (NFPMC) and the Plantation Industry Ministerial Advisory Committee (PIMAC), which provide important forums for communication on the development of the industry. In the native forest industry the transition to smaller and lower quality sawlogs and the challenge of processing them into high-value products has been a consistent issue for the NFPMC. PIMAC has dealt with a number of issues facing the plantation industry, such as infrastructure development, land-use planning, industry strategies and water use.

Commission staff also participated with the Private Forestry Development Committees (Trees South West, Timber 2020, South East Forest Foundation, Avongro and Trees Midwest) on matters of mutual interest, gave presentations at various strategic planning forums and regularly contributed to the local branch of Australian Forest Growers (the national private forestry body) and the WA Agroforestry Working Group.

OUR PEOPLE

The Commission has 228 employees with 160 in 14 regional offices around the State and 68 employees working from the corporate headquarters in metropolitan Rivervale. This represents an increase of 17 staff on the previous year and is mainly due to the recruitment drive for entry level field staff.

The Commission's employees are committed to working closely with industry in a dynamic environment that holds enormous potential for the entire Western Australian community.

As at 30 June 2006, staff numbers and their locations were:

	Full-time salaried staff	Part-time salaried staff	Wages employees	Total	Men	Women
Albany	16	1	-	17	13	4
Bunbury	24	4	-	28	16	12
Collie	9	2	1	12	7	5
Esperance	4	-	-	4	4	-
Gnangara	13	2	1	16	11	5
Harvey	23	2	-	25	19	6
Kalgoorlie	2	-	-	2	2	-
Katanning	3	-	-	3	3	-
Kununurra	1	-	-	1	1	-
Mandurah	1	-	-	1	1	-
Manjimup	15	-	-	15	12	3
West Manjimup Nursery	16	2	2	20	10	10
Nannup	14	-	-	14	11	3
Rivervale	63	5	-	68	35	33
Wanneroo	2	-	-	2	1	1
Total	206	18	4	228	146	82



All employees are committed to the Commission's values and act with integrity, professionalism and understanding. The Commission management seeks to develop the skills of its employees and build on the personal commitment of each member of the team with a targeted program of professional development.

The Commission also engages casual staff to supplement its usual workforce to meet seasonal and operational demands. This is particularly the case at the West Manjimup Nursery.

The Commission has outsourced its human resource transactional functions to the People Services Branch of CALM under a Service Level Agreement. These arrangements are reviewed annually.

Recruitment

In 2005/06 the Commission continued to recruit entry level field staff from a pool of readily available forest officers for immediate deployment as a result of successful investment strategies or other strategic outcomes.

Training

The Commission has continued the development of a training program for entry level field staff. In 2005/06 20 new field recruits (recruited in 04/05 and 05/06) completed an extensive and targeted training program that will equip them with the necessary competencies to carry out activities within the Operations Division. The training program was coordinated and delivered within the Commission through structured formal courses and "on the job" training and work experience. The training program was delivered under the auspices of Great Southern TAFE as the Registered Training Organisation (RTO) under a Memorandum of Understanding. The training program provided is aligned to the National Training Package and the new recruits were awarded a Certificate III in Forest Growing and Management. In a first for the Commission, the 20 recruits were awarded their certificates at a special graduation ceremony at the Commission's Annual Conference in November 2005 by the Minister for Forestry, Kim Chance. Twelve more new field recruits were appointed in April and they will complete a similar program in their first 12 months with the Commission.

The main focus of training for 2005/06 has been with the field recruit program and requirements identified through the Commission's Environment Management System.

Growth and Development Leadership Program

The Commission continued with the third Growth Development Leadership program, designed to provide staff and the organisation with an opportunity to further develop leadership skills. The program commenced in May 2006, with an initial group of 19 participants.

Participants nominated from across the Commission have the opportunity to work in cross-functional teams on a number of projects selected by the Executive for their input to the Commission's strategic objectives. These projects are due for completion in the latter half of 2006.

Occupational Safety and Health (OSH)

All the Commission's work centres are now represented by nominated Safety and Health representatives (SHREPS) and OSH Committees. During 2005/06 10 of the Commission's 15 work centres were recognised for achieving 12 months Lost Time Incident (LTI) free.



There were five Lost Time Incidents (LTI), which resulted in a total of 29 days lost, and 13 Minor Treatment Incidents (MTI) in 2005/06.

Major initiatives undertaken in the year included the implementation of the Commission's Peer Support Network. Eighteen selected staff have now been trained and are located strategically throughout the Commission's work centres. Six staff have been selected to be the Commission's Contact/Grievance Officers and training is scheduled for August 2006.

Access to Commission Services for People with Disabilities

The Commission commenced the development of its Disability Access and Inclusion Plan, and will continue to develop this in 2006/07. Initiatives to be further developed in this plan include:

- Developing processes for the planning of events or public consultations organised by the Commission to ensure appropriate access for people with disabilities;
- Engaging appropriate personnel to provide advice on accessibility for people with disabilities to existing and planned future Commission buildings and facilities;
- Further investigating technology and other initiatives to ensure people with disabilities can receive information in an appropriate format, and have access to the same level and quality of service; and
- Ensuring that processes for handling of complaints are available and accessible to people with disabilities.

Equal Employment Opportunities

The Commission's workforce demographics for the year ended 30 June 2006 reflected the following:

- Number of women within the workforce is 82, representing 36 per cent of the workforce, which is a decrease from 2004/05 of 2.6 per cent;
- Number of employees who have disabilities is 6, representing 2.6 per cent of the workforce, which is a decrease from 2004/05 of 0.3 per cent;
- Number of employees from culturally diverse backgrounds is 27, representing 12 per cent of the workforce, which is a decrease from 2004/05 of 4 per cent; and
- Number of employees who are from indigenous backgrounds is nil.

The Commission has continued to seek to create part-time employment opportunities for those staff with family responsibilities, and regionally based employment opportunities wherever possible.

Code of Conduct

The Commission complies with the Public Sector Code of Ethics and has its own Code of Conduct for employees, which has been in place since July 2001.

The Code of Conduct addresses issues including conflicts of interest, corruption, discipline, confidentiality, freedom of information, security of records, equal employment opportunities and diversity, disability services and grievance resolution.

Feedback opportunities are available through internal and external mechanisms and staff are regularly surveyed.

There was one complaint received under the Commission Code of Conduct and disciplinary action was taken.

There were no reported breaches of the Public Sector Standards lodged against the Commission during 2005/06.