

**First In,
First Out.**

Telstra In Confidence

Introducing EOA (Employee Opinion Action)

Amanda Jenkins tells us about her new role as the Employee Opinion Action Co-ordinator.

This EOA job is really on about what we can do together. This job's title is 'co-ordinator', not 'the repository of staff concerns', and not 'the lone change agent'. This job provides a focal point for sharing concerns and a dedicated resource to work with staff to assist in the planning and implementation of change. The job has two prongs:

1. In talking to staff I can pick up on an issue, and get relevant people together to discuss the issue with a view to change.

Or

2. I can respond to direct requests to become involved in progressing an issue.

I've visited 10 sections so far, talking to staff about the EOA position and current issues. Please don't wait for me to get round to your section - if you would like to discuss something e-mail me, ring me on 253 6741 or come and see me in room 148B in M8. You can check my availability on MS Schedule.

I hope this column can be an open forum for discussion on the role of the EOA Co-ordinator position and EO related action. So,

... I take confidentiality and ethics very seriously ...

in this first column, let me tackle a few of the comments I have heard this

week.

I take confidentiality and ethics very seriously. They are the principles by which I work as a social researcher. I'm not going to do anything to identify people who speak to me unless they give me permission to do so.

I'm not a representative of management, I'm a member of staff who will be working with all parties on change. I'd expect to get paid more if I was a management stooge.

There are obvious limits to the scope of this position. It is focused on improving local issues. But we have something to say on senior management plans. Let's work out how we can have input, when and where.

What can I say in response to cynicism? The proof of the pudding is in the eating (it's become my favourite saying). How about suspending your disbelief that anything can change, say for three months, and we'll see what we can achieve.



Amanda Jenkins, the new Employee Opinion Action Co-ordinator

Welcome to FIFO

A common complaint is that there is not enough communication between branches and across the Labs as a whole. This newsletter will be a vehicle for discussing employee opinion related issues and the Employee Opinion Survey, but also serve a broader purpose of promoting Labs activities.

FIFO is produced by TRL Promotion and Communication. The editorial team consists of Amanda Jenkins, EOA Co-ordinator and Tanya Waterson-Clark, Science Writer in the Promotion & Communication Section. We welcome your feedback on FIFO and suggestions on material you want to see in the newsletter. Contact either Amanda or Tanya.

'FIFO' was Allan Mitchell's brainwave. 'First in, first out' is used to describe the transfer of information through a computer and we thought it was an appropriate analogy.

The newsletter will come out once a fortnight, on Wednesday of a pay week.

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Telstra

R&D Company to Focus Spending

A meeting held on 9 March 1995 about the proposed R&D company was well attended by about 200 TRL staff.

NTG top management have proposed an R&D Company as a way for Telstra to focus its R&D spending, and optimise the financial return.

This new arrangement, as explained to TRL staff by John Baits, Managing Director R&IT, and John Stanhope, Executive GM Business Support Services for NTG, is principally targetting 'financial and efficiency' aspects of Telstra's R&D spending. The aim of the proposed R&D company is to facilitate matching the R&D activity with Telstra's specific business needs, better co-ordinate R&D activity across the Telstra, reduce duplication and deliver a more tax effective result.

While the R&D company will govern funding for R&D, it will not attempt to meet all of the functions of the 'Telstra R&D Council' proposed by the TRL Working Party.

In response to audience questions, John Baits explained that the roles and responsibilities for TRL will remain undiminished, including the key task of providing leadership for

Telstra in terms of the content of the R&D program, and input to key decision making forums in Telstra such as the Network Design Council.

John Baits also made it clear that senior management supports R&D effort, and he backed this up by pointing out that TRL has been sheltered from recent budget cuts.

He went on to say that TRL is being given every opportunity to evolve into an ever more useful and relevant part of Telstra.

The R&D company is expected to deliver around \$10m more to Telstra's bottom line through more effective internal financing. It will also help to provide clear signals back to TRL about the effectiveness of our R&D program in advancing Telstra's business performance.

For further information on the proposed R&D company, contact Noel Teede on 253-6500.

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International Symposium on Human Factors

The 15th International Symposium on Human Factors in Telecommunications was held in Melbourne from 6-10 March 1995.

For the first in 30 years the IHFT which is normally held in Europe or USA came to Australia after several years of lobbying by the TRL Human Factors team. A group of TRL staff worked on the HFT organising committee for about 18 months to make it a special event.

There were four days of technical stuff - papers, a poster session, small group discussions, a panel session and a number of invited speakers.

The technical papers addressed a wide range of topics and covered areas like broadband services, ISDN, interactive voice services, video and videoconferencing, user interface design, measurement and evaluation. The challenge of designing for users with special needs, including reports of teleworking centres for the disabled, video telephony for visually handicapped people, and many more issues, was taken up by quite a number of researchers. The technical papers were of a very high quality, the proceedings are available from the NIRC.

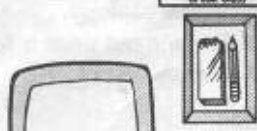
A member of the European Union who could not make it at the eleventh hour forwarded his slides on e-mail during the week, and presto - someone from Britain stood in and presented his talk which outlined the next run of European RACE projects

It was a full week. On the Wednesday, the delegates were bussed to TRL. Delegates commented on the warmth of the hospitality as well as on the TRL presentations - which they thought were very interesting, inspiring and highly professional.

Overall it was a great opportunity to compare notes with colleagues from all parts of the world, and to renew existing or establish new telco links and friendships.

For further information contact Gitte

In Case Of Emergency
Break Glass



Implementing the Restructure

Doug Kuhn is the new Transition Manager in the newly formed Transition Implementation Team.

After short experiences as a Cadet Engineer in the early 70's in a step-by-step exchange and with a field team ploughing in cable and then vacation work at TRL, I realised that I wanted a career in research within Telecom.

All about Barbara Armstrong

Barbara Armstrong is the Process Manager in the Transition Implementation Team.

I joined Telecom nearly five years ago, as Quality Manager for the National Information Resource Centre (NIRC). Although I know some of you from my work as a facilitator for the TRL Working Party and for the Continuous Improvement teams, most of you probably don't know anything about me.

I have qualifications in medical record administration, computing and library and information science. These three qualifications have enabled me to have three separate careers, each career linked by the themes of information management and systems analysis, design and implementation.

Most of my working life has been in the health field, working in city and country hospitals for several years, and running my own medical record consultancy business. I was also Manager of the Information Management Advisory Section of the Health Department of Victoria, responsible for the provision of policy and technical advice on medical/health information management to all divisions of the Health Department and all health care institutions registered with the Health Department. I've even worked for the prison medical service and have been to Pentridge and Fairlea many times - a fascinating experience. After gaining my computing qualification, I worked as Senior Systems Co-ordinator for a computing company which designed and implemented systems for the health field.

As you can see, I have actively sought change in my working life, and have enjoyed the opportunities that these changes have provided (well most of them, anyway!)

As Process Manager, I will be responsible for reviewing and helping to implement the processes which will need to be in place to support the new structure and mode of working. I see this as being very much a team effort, requiring consultation and input from as many of those who will be affected as is feasible, given the short time frames involved. I look forward to working with you on this.

In the past 20 years my career has almost gone a complete circle - I began working on telephones in Transmission Branch and am now again involved with CPE design and reliability. In between I have worked in Switching and Signalling, Telecom Technology and Telecom Science and Technology Branches on a variety of projects that include data compression coding, early microprocessor applications, satellite system studies, EMC investigations, energy technologies and power systems. Prior to becoming Transition Manager I was responsible for the Energy and Device Technology Section in TST. Projects in E&DT included high-voltage protection; power systems; renewable energy sources; system, product and component reliability; connectors and metallurgy.

In taking on the challenging task of Transition Manager I will be building on the solid foundation and direction established by the Working Party. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Working Party for a difficult job well done. I will not be imposing change but rather creating an environment in which change can and will occur. I see the transition involving everyone at TRL - I can't do it alone - and I am aiming to get the commitment of all TRL staff to the new mode of working.

Over the next few months I am looking forward to working closely with Barbara Armstrong who has been appointed Process Manager.

I will be reporting to the Director of Research and a Joint Implementation Team, the members of which represent the two unions and management. I must admit to not yet knowing everybody by name however, I will endeavour to remedy this while moving around the site talking with various groups and individuals on local issues.



Doug Kuhn is the new Transition Manager for TRL. We were going to have a picture of Barbara Armstrong as well, but she tore some ligaments in her ankle and missed the photo session!

Employee Opinion Survey 1995

In the week of 3 April 1995, you will be asked to complete another Employee Opinion Survey (EOS).

What's happened since the last Employee Opinion Survey?

Have your say on changes that have occurred. If you believe nothing's happened to address the concerns you expressed in the last EOS, fill out this survey and say that.

Don't waste opportunities to speak out.

Express yourself.

Fill out the '95 EOS.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of the EOS, including the use of the results, please contact Amanda Jenkins on 253 6741.

EOS '95



If you think you're too small to make a difference... then you've never been in bed with a mosquito.



Have Your Say

If you have a question or an issue you'd like to raise, send it in to FIFO.

Ric Witham has sent us this piece.

Using Microsoft's Schedule

We have some moderately powerful software attached to the MS Mail system called MS Schedule. MS Schedule allows you to use it as a daily planner, set tasks and schedule appointments. One very useful feature of Schedule is that the Planner can be used to check the available time slots for a number of people and thus enable a rapid and efficient mechanism to book a meeting with those people. Planner reads your appointments in Schedule and blocks them into the Planner. It is this information which is viewed by others. The level of access which can be authorised varies. The default level is "View Free/Busy Times" which allows others to see if you are available but not what you are doing during those times.

This facility is very useful for planning meetings as the free and busy times for those involved can be viewed and a meeting time scheduled. This saves the hassle of running around and negotiating meeting times. If you don't want others to know what you're doing, that isn't a problem, all they see is a block of time where you're not available. Of course if you don't want to be disturbed then set the whole day as an appointment with yourself in Schedule.

To set the level of access choose Options and then Set Access Privileges the default sets everyone's level of access to your time. If you have people who you would like to grant higher level access then these can be set separately.

The only problem is that most of us have to be SOE compatible and also use Schedule for it