

# HOW TO CHOOSE AN ETHICAL EMPLOYER

**Will the level of care an organisation exercises with regard to its impact on the environment, its employees, the community, and the future influence your decision to work with it?  
How can you judge employers on these issues?**

## Terms you need to know

### CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR)

A movement not a fad! CSR applies to all aspects of corporate responsibility; community, social, environmental, workplace, governance. CSR practitioners talk about corporate 'opportunity' - highlighting the opportunity/risk dimension of responsible business practice.

### TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE REPORTING (TBL)

A framework for measuring corporate performance against not only economic, but also social and environmental parameters.

### SUSTAINABILITY

An organisation's practices "... that meet the needs of the present without compromising ... the environmental, social and human needs of our descendants." [www.wbcsd.org](http://www.wbcsd.org)

### GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

Implies an organisation's commitment to and awareness of good CSR practices across its operations at all levels, from local to global.

### STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Moving beyond overemphasis on short-term benefits for shareholders to consideration of long-term organisational implications for all stakeholders: shareholders, communities, customers, employees, the environment, the supply chain etc.

### ENLIGHTENED SELF-INTEREST

An organisation's recognition that it is in its own long-term business interest to engage in CSR strategies and sustainable business practices.

## Your turn

There are many things you can do from where you are. Consider your own position. What do you value, and what kind of impact would you like to make through your career? Which areas of CSR do you feel strongly about?

- Environmental** - the environmental impact, direct or indirect, of an organisation's operations, products or services including those of its suppliers.
- Community/Social** - the impact of an organisation's projects, products, services or investments on the community at a local or global level.
- Workplace Practices** - including respectful treatment of employees in: recruitment and selection; diversity and equal opportunity; work/life balance; professional development and progression; managing redundancies; full entitlement to employment rights.
- Marketplace & Business Conduct** - responsible behaviour in developing, purchasing, selling and marketing products and services.
- Ethical Governance** - from board level and throughout an organisation: transparency; risk reporting; effective codes of conduct, codes of ethics and compliance measures.

## Things you can do

1. **Read** the business pages in newspapers. Learn about what is happening in the business world, e.g. corporate strategies and performance, governmental regulations, etc. What kind of **media coverage** does the company get? Are its CSR/ethical initiatives visible? Investigate the same for the public sector if this is your career interest.
2. **Reflect** on the organisation to which you are considering applying. What is its core business or purpose? How does this impact on the environment and the community? Do its products, processes, and services align with your own values?
3. **Research** the organisation through its website and consider its genuine commitment to ethical business practices and CSR strategies using the terms listed above. Look for **Values/Mission Statements, Annual Reports, and Sustainability Reports**. Are its CSR initiatives strategic and integrated rather than just 'bolt on'?
4. **Investigate** whether the company is benchmarking itself against other organisations using robust frameworks such as the Corporate Responsibility Index, the Global Reporting Initiative's (GRI and G3) Sustainability Reporting Guidelines ([www.globalreporting.org](http://www.globalreporting.org)) and the AA1000 Assurance Standards or whether it is using non-standardised reporting. Check out [CorporateRegister.com](http://CorporateRegister.com) ([www.corporateregister.com](http://www.corporateregister.com)) - the world's most comprehensive directory of corporate non-financial environment/social/sustainability/CSR downloadable reports.
5. Look closely at **workplace practices**, e.g. gender mix, diversity policies, staff retention rates, opportunity for staff community volunteering and professional development.
6. **Talk to employers at careers fairs, employer events and even job interviews. Ask them questions. Get the conversations going on these issues. If you ask questions about CSR, an organisation learns that this is an important driver in attracting new staff. It is also an opportunity for them to showcase their initiatives and receive some positive reinforcement.**
7. **Finally**, check out the ratings of organisations to which you might apply (next section).

### CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY INDEX (CRI)

Using the index Australia's top 250 companies are invited to voluntarily self-assess the extent to which corporate strategy is integrated into responsible business practice in four areas:

**community, environment, marketplace, and workplace**, and performance in social and environmental performance and impact areas. An independent validation conducted by Ernst & Young follows that encourages a genuine commitment to authentic CR practices. View full results of the latest Index at: [www.corporate-responsibility.com.au](http://www.corporate-responsibility.com.au)



Gold (full index)	Silver (full index)	Bronze (full index)	Participated (full index)	Environment and Community Modules
ANZ, Anglo American, AstraZeneca, BHP Billiton, Boral, Energy Australia, Cadbury Schweppes, IBM, Rio Tinto, Toyota, Unilever, Westpac.	AMP, Ford, Fosters, Holden, IAG, Newmont Aust., Minter Ellison Lawyers, Savings and Loans Credit Union, Telstra.	Caltex Aust.	Amcor, Coles Grp Ltd, Country Energy, Suncorp Group.	Kimberley-Clark Aust., Visy.

### THE AUSTRALIAN EMPLOYERS NETWORK ON DISABILITY

A not for profit organisation taking a leadership role in advancing employment for people with disability, assisting organisations to build skills and confidence in relation to people with disability as employees and customers (one in five Australians experience some type of disability). Foundation Charter Membership is open to the nine organisations that committed to the Employment Charter for People with Disability in July 2003 whilst all other members are encouraged to work towards achieving Charter implementation. [www.employersnetworkondisability.com.au/](http://www.employersnetworkondisability.com.au/)



Level of membership	Organisation Membership List, May 2007
Foundation Charter	Aust. National University, Benbro Electronics, Children's Hospital Westmead, IBM, McDonald's, Sparke Helmore Lawyers, Westpac.
Charter	Attorney General NSW, Dept of Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry (DAFF), Dept of Defence, Dept of Employment & Workplace Relations, Dept of Family & Community Services & Indigenous Affairs, Dept of Health and Ageing, Ingeus Group, Merrill Lynch, KPMG, Qantas, UBS AG, Woolworths.
Pathway to Charter	AGL, ANZ, AMEX, Aust. Sports Commission, ATO, Baker & McKenzie, Coca-Cola Amatil, City of Sydney Council, Freehills, Henry Davis York, IAG, ING, Manpower, Medicare, Queensland Rail, University of Southern Qld.
General Members	AMP, Airservices Aust., ASX Ltd., Aust Ethical Investments, Australia Post, CBA, Dept Foreign Affairs & Trade, Diversity Council of Australia, Lane Cove Municipal Council, Macquarie Bank, NAB, Paxus Australia, Penrith City Council, Questacon, Railcorp, Reserve Bank, Royal Australian Mint, SMF Recruitment, Sydney West Area Health, Sydney Water, Telstra, Tortech, Uni of Western Australia.

### THE AUSTRALIAN SUSTAINABILITY INDEX (AUSSI)

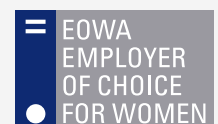
Tracks the performance of Australian companies from 21 industry clusters that lead their industry in terms of corporate sustainability. Based on an assessment of economic, social and environmental criteria relevant to industry specific criteria for managing sustainability portfolios (using the SAM Group Questionnaire like the Dow Jones Sustainability Indexes). Read more at [www.aussi.net.au](http://www.aussi.net.au)



2007 AuSSI Cluster Leaders
Westpac, Wesfarmers, Brambles Industries, Perpetual Trustees Aust., Woodside Petroleum, Lend Lease Corp., Coles Myer, Coca-Cola Amatil, Lihir Gold Ltd., Symbion Health, TABCorp Holdings, Telstra, Insurance Australia Group Ltd., Orica, West Australian Newspapers Holdings Ltd, BHP Billiton, CSL Ltd., Investa Property Group, Colorado Group, Transurban Group, AGL.

### EMPLOYER OF CHOICE FOR WOMEN (EOWA)

An annual list of Australian employers released by the Federal Government's Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency (EOWA). These organisations have demonstrated that they have policies and practices that support women. Check out the full 2007 list of employers at [www.eowa.gov.au](http://www.eowa.gov.au) including the community services and education sectors.



Abbreviated list of EOWA Employers
Deloitte, Ernst & Young, KPMG, ANZ, CBA, NAB, Westpac, RioTinto, Bain & Co, IBM, McDonald's, Stockland, Cisco Systems, Arup P/L, HLA-Envirosciences P/L, Credit Union Aust., Savings & Loans Credit Union (S.A.), Origin Energy, TRUenergy Services, SP Ausnet, Hays, Westaff (Aust.), Citigroup, Goldman Sachs JBWere, JP Morgan, UBS AG, IAG, Allens Arthur Robinson, Blake Dawson Waldron, Clayton Utz, Corrs Chambers Westgarth, Deacons, Freehills, Maddocks, Malleons Stephen Jaques, Sparke Helmore, TressCox Lawyers, Autoliv, Cummins Engine Co., Ford, Holden, MasterFoods, Alcoa, Energy Resources of Aust., Chevron, ExxonMobil, Beiersdorf, Shell, EMI, Lend Lease, Meat & Livestock Aust., TABCORP Hldgs, VicSuper, Agilent Technologies, Motorola, AMEX