

# **EMPLOYEE & UNION PARTICIPATION AND CARBON EMISSION REDUCTION IN AUSTRALIAN WORKPLACES**

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# REPORT FOR DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY

- [http://www.businessandconomics.mq.edu.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0014/336101/Climate\\_Change\\_and\\_The\\_Australian\\_Workplace\\_2014.pdf](http://www.businessandconomics.mq.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0014/336101/Climate_Change_and_The_Australian_Workplace_2014.pdf)



# GREEN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

- Climate change & adaption to it are/will have enormous impact on employment & work practices
- Should therefore expect major interest from unions
- Green HRM still an emerging area of literature
- Role of employee participation an area of interest
- Scholarly research on role of unions and collective bargaining in this regard relatively scarce
- Engagement with climate change and carbon emissions reduction has not been an area of focus



## OUR RESEARCH

- Role being played by employees & unions in motivating, developing and implementing climate mitigation solutions in Australian organisations
- Whether organisations in particular industries show greater evidence of participation than others
- Whether in turn particular industries are more prone to acting comprehensively on climate change than others
- Methodology:
  1. analysis of EBAs
  2. Survey of organisations



# CLASSIFYING EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION

- Participation can be delineated according to the degree of influence employees have over decisions, the level of the organisation at which it takes place (eg. at the task, departmental or corporate level), the range of subject matter to be considered, and the form which the participation takes
- Form of participation can be broadly distinguished between direct and indirect (representative)
- **Depth**: degree of employee say on continuum from receiving information through consultation to control
- **Scope**: range of decisions (Blyton & Turnbull 2004)
- Degree of influence can be broadly categorised into either **consultative** (shallow & narrow) or **substantive** (deeper & wider)

# PARTICIPATION AND GREEN HRM

- Role of participation in harnessing employee knowledge a consistent theme in literature
- Can also enhance motivation, but for employees and management, to engage with environmental matters at the workplace



# FORM AND INFLUENCE OF PARTICIPATION IN GREEN HRM

- Role of participation in harnessing employee knowledge a consistent theme in literature
- Can also enhance motivation for employees to engage with environmental matters at the workplace
- Teams with substantive powers emphasised in literature
- Employees may be empowered not only to implement but to initiate projects for environmental improvement
- Quality circles & dedicated joint consultative mechanisms also
- Cooperative & supportive relationships between management, employees & even unions seen as a success factor



# REPRESENTATIVE PARTICIPATION AND CLIMATE CHANGE: THE POLICY LEVEL

- Representative participation a key aspect of climate change mitigation in EU and elsewhere
- Includes through joint consultative committees, OHS committees, and dedicated ‘environmental delegates’ and ‘green representatives’
- Work councils in Germany
- Though still relatively uncommon, collective bargaining has also played a role in climate change mitigation: Germany, UK TUC’s 1300 ‘green representatives’ & agreements, Belgian Eco-vouchers
- US unions’ engagement with environmental groups





# METHOD 1: COLLECTIVE (ENTERPRISE) BARGAINING AGREEMENTS

- Australian enterprise bargaining agreements with registered environment-related clauses Jan 2009-Dec 2012, from database maintained by DoE
  - Separate periods: 2009-2010 (322 agreements) and 2011-2012 (1008 agreements), sourced from DoE database
  - DoE changed definitions between two periods, bargaining cycles need to be accounted for
  - 50 exclusions
  - Coded using framework developed from sample of agreements



# PARTICIPATION THROUGH COLLECTIVE BARGAINING: COVERAGE OF AGREEMENTS WITH ENVIRONMENTAL CLAUSES

## ○ 2009-10

- 1.7% of agreements, 8.7% (184,590) of employees covered by an agreement made in this period. Highest employee coverage in **Education** (mostly tertiary) (85,484 e'ees), and **Public Admin & Safety** (70,065 e'ees) . Between them, Education and Public Admin account for 84% of e'ees covered by agreements in the sample

## ○ 2011-12

- 6.7% of agreements covering 11.3% (219,150) of employees covered by an agreement for this period. **Public Admin** and **Safety** had highest employee coverage (141,718 e'ees), accounting for 64.7% of all e'ees covered by environmental clause containing agreements
- In both periods, **unions** were a party to agreements covering **over 98%** of all employees covered by agreements with environmental clauses
- Other industries had larger numbers of agreements, but with relatively low coverage..



# CONTENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CLAUSES

- The evidence that the agreements represent employee participation and genuine ‘bargaining’ over climate change mitigation and ecological sustainability is mixed.
- Over half of agreements contained references to policies, but most did not specify further and emphasised employee compliance.
- 25% of agreements made provisions for consultation, though a total of only 23 agreements made provisions for dedicated mechanisms (10 in universities)
- Only 67 agreements in total used language which clearly indicated climate change mitigation as a matter for consideration (18 from universities, 23 from Public Admin and Safety)
- Agreements from universities and public admin (especially federal) safety had both higher proportions of provisions for consultation and more substantial, specific agreements overall, including specifying behaviours
- Manufacturing and utilities both also notable for having greater rates of specific behaviours included



# METHOD 2: SURVEY

- 682 Australian organisations employing 20 or more
- 466 businesses, 216 government agencies
- Stratified & weighted for size, sector & state
- Some similar sectors combined for analysis due to small samples
- Participants asked about emissions reduction behaviours, motivations, & EP
- Analysis focused on organisations explicitly linking behaviours to carbon emissions reduction

ANZSIC Division: Businesses	Unweighted sample size n=	Profile	
		%	Population%
A Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	18	4	5
B Mining	5	1	1
C Manufacturing	55	12	11
D Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	4	1	1
E Construction	33	7	9
F Wholesale Trade	30	6	7
G Retail Trade	56	12	13
H Accommodation and Food Services	71	15	16
I Transport, Postal and Warehousing	21	5	4
J Information Media and Telecommunications	8	2	1
K Financial and Insurance Services	16	3	2
L Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	12	3	4
M Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	38	8	9
N Administrative and Support Services	38	8	7
P Education and Training	14	3	3
Q Health Care and Social Assistance	29	6	4
R Arts and Recreation Services	7	2	2
S Other Services	11	2	3
Total	466	100	100

# EMISSIONS REDUCTION BEHAVIOURS: OVERVIEW

<b>Behaviour</b>	<b>Total %</b>
Total taken steps to reduce energy consumption (to reduce emissions or for other reasons)	76
Total increased recycling (to reduce emissions or for other reasons)	78
Total reduced waste (to reduce emissions or for other reasons)	71
Changed the formulation of any of your products or services to cut emissions	15
Changed the physical packaging of any products to cut emissions	12
Introduced new equipment to cut emissions	40
Introduced new technology to cut emissions	28
Made changes to your supply chain to cut emissions	18
Introduced new work practices to cut emissions	39
Had staff training or skills development to cut emissions	24
Changed the mix of skills in your workforce to reduce emissions	9
Bought carbon credits to offset its carbon emissions	4
Others	12
<b>Explicitly taken steps to reduce carbon emissions</b>	<b>62</b>
Total	100
Column n	682



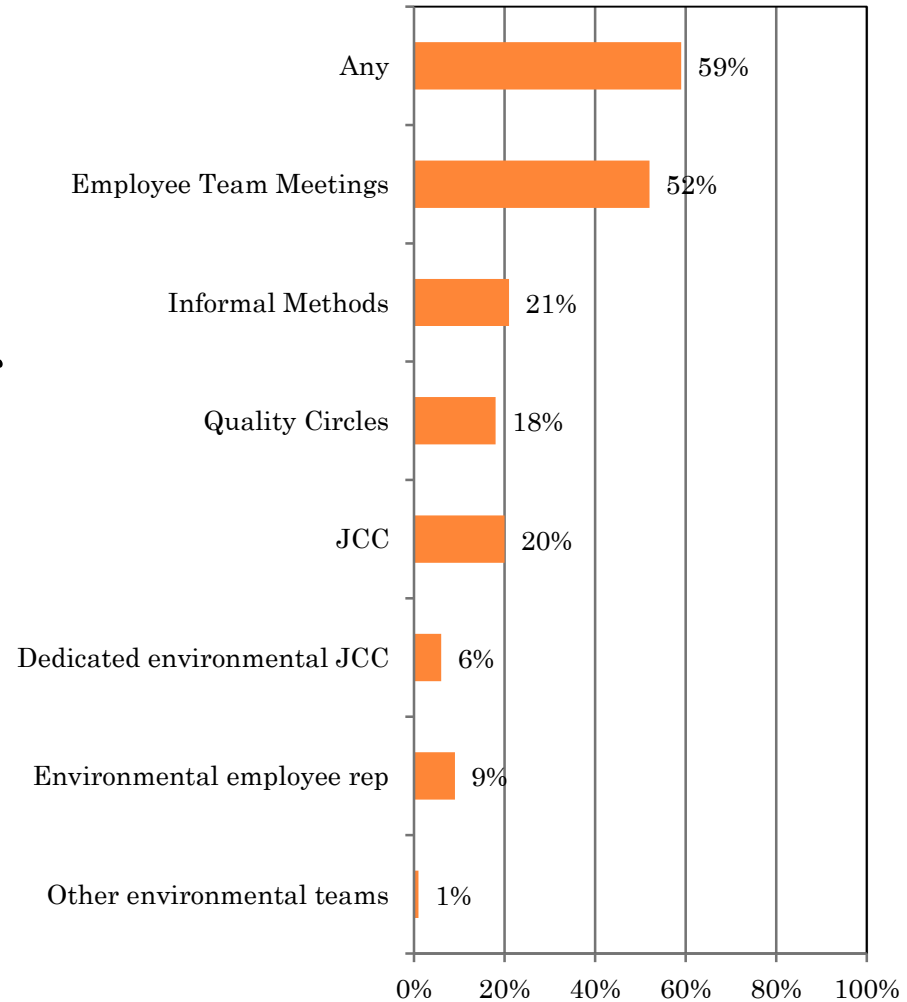
# EMISSIONS REDUCTION BEHAVIOURS

- A majority of organisations have engaged in a number of behaviours likely to mitigate climate change, but few appear to be using a full range of behaviours necessary for carbon emissions reduction.
- One sector stands out for having engaged most prominently in climate change mitigation: education and training.
- Manufacturing and utilities; accommodation and food services; IT, communications, financial and real estate services; and government were other sectors with above average overall engagement with climate change mitigation, though not to the same extent as in education and training



# FORMS AND RATES OF EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION IN CLIMATE MITIGATION AT THE WORKPLACE

- 63% of all organisations surveyed had explicitly taken steps to reduce emissions, 59% indicated some means of employee participation in emissions reduction
- Dedicated environmental mechanisms, teams or employees were particularly rare



# ROLE PLAYED BY EMPLOYEES AND UNIONS IN MOTIVATION

Sector	Motivated by Employee Requests	Motivated by Union Requests
<b>Total</b>	12	1
<b>Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing + Mining</b>	6	0
<b>Manufacturing + Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services</b>	17	0
<b>Construction</b>	9	0
<b>Wholesale Trade</b>	0	0
<b>Retail Trade</b>	21	0
<b>Accommodation and Food Services</b>	5	0
<b>Transport, Postal and Warehousing</b>	3	0
<b>Info. Media &amp; Telecomms + Financial/ Insurance Services + Rental/Hiring/ Real Estate Services</b>	22	2
<b>Professional, Scientific and Technical Services</b>	11	0
<b>Administrative and Support Services</b>	18	0
<b>Education and Training</b>	43	18
<b>Health Care and Social Assistance</b>	15	1
<b>Arts and Recreation Services + Other Services</b>	2	0
<b>Government</b>	30	3






## PARTICIPATION IN CLIMATE MITIGATION AT THE WORKPLACE: SECTORAL DIFFERENCES

- Education and training sector high in several methods: JCC (61%), dedicated JCC (27%), dedicated environmental employee representatives (49%), and quality circles (47%). Also more likely to be motivated by requests from employees (43%) and unions (18%)
- Government agencies high in JCCs (46%)
- Manufacturing and utilities had relatively high rates of quality circles (34%)
- Other dedicated teams higher in wholesale trade sector (13%)



# REDUCTION BEHAVIOURS AND PARTICIPATION

- Top 4 sectors with higher rates of behaviours: (education/training, business services, government, manufacturing/utilities):
    - All had higher-than-average rates of having been motivated by employees
    - Two (education/training + public admin) had relatively high rates of using JCCs for climate mitigation
    - Two (education/training + manufacturing/utilities) had relatively high rates of using quality circles
    - Three (education/training, public admin, and manufacturing/utilities) featured relatively substantial environmental clauses in EBAs (though at higher rates in the former two)
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# REDUCTION BEHAVIOURS AND PARTICIPATION

- Representative participation strongly associated with behaviours to reduce carbon emissions: top 2 (education/training & public admin) & 4<sup>th</sup> also ranked highly for representative participation
- These 3 also had range of representative of EP & strong forms of direct EP
- 3<sup>rd</sup> ranked business services weak on representative EP, but ranked highly for direct EP: teams and other informal mechanisms (also retail which ranked 6<sup>th</sup>)
- All had substantive EP



# CONCLUSIONS

- A majority of businesses have engaged in emissions reduction & have some means for EP in this.
- Strong association between reduction behaviours & EP
- Substantive EP had strongest impact, mainly representative but also direct in business services
- The education and training sector, particularly universities, may provide an exemplar whereby a strong input from employee participation, facilitated in part by union action and collective bargaining, may help organisations to develop and implement a more comprehensive program of climate change mitigation.

