

‘Practices and Attitudes of Australian Employers in Relation to the Use of Genetic Information: Report on a National Study’

Forthcoming in the *Comparative Labor Law and Policy Journal* (2009)

Margaret Otlowski, Mark Stranger, Sandra Taylor, Kristine Barlow-Stewart and Susan Treloar

Abstract

Differential treatment on the basis of genetic status (genetic discrimination) has become an issue of international concern. The Genetic Discrimination Project (GDP) is an Australia-wide study which has investigated the phenomenon of genetic discrimination from a number of perspectives, including consumer perceptions and experiences, third party practices and attitudes, and cases litigated within the Australian legal system. A major component of this project, within the third party context has been the study of the employment sector to establish the practices and attitudes of Australian employers in relation to the use of genetic information. This paper reports on the findings of this employment study and evaluates the data, drawing also on the findings from other key components of the GDP, including data from consumers and from the legal system study. Implications of the GDP data are considered in the context of the reform debate, in particular, the recommendations for reforms with regard to the use of genetic information in the workplace made by the Australian Law Reform Commission and the Australian Health Ethics Committee in its inquiry into the protection of human genetic information.