

## MACKIE INTERNATIONAL LTD

James Mackie & Sons Ltd was established in 1847. It belonged to the Mackie family until 1977/78 when the Mackie Foundation was set up and effectively transferred ownership of the company to its employees. Lummus Industries Plc, based in Columbus, Georgia, acquired the company in June 1990. The business is the design and manufacture of textile machinery. In 1993 the Company name changed to Mackie International Limited.

Until April 1992, the main plant was the "Albert Foundry" on Springfield Road, West Belfast. Since then the vast majority of the workforce has been relocated to the new "Springvale" factory which is located on the opposite side of the road and on the site where the Company's "Woodvale factory" was previously situated. The Commission's investigation began in 1991 and was completed in 1994.

### PROFILE OF THE WORKFORCE

TABLE 1 WORKFORCE COMPOSITION (FEB 1990 - FEB 1994)

Year	Protestant	Roman Catholic	Non-Determined	Total
1990	769 (83.4%) [85.8%]	127 (13.8%) [14.2%]	26 (2.8%)	922
1991	529 (84.5%) [86.3%]	84 (13.4%) [13.7%]	13 (2.1%)	626
1992	312 (86.0%) [88.4%]	41 (11.3%) [11.6%]	10 (2.7%)	363
1993	235 (81.1%) [84.0%]	45 (15.5%) [16.0%]	10 (3.4%)	290
1994	265 (74.9%) [76.8%]	80 (22.6%) [23.2%]	9 (2.5%)	354

Table 1 shows the composition of the company's workforce in the period February 1990 - February 1994. At a time of the investigation the majority of the workforce 248 (68.3%) were manual workers of whom 202 [84.2%] were Protestant and 38 [15.8%] were Roman Catholic. Of the 115 staff in the non-manual grades 3 [2.7%] were Roman Catholic.

Between 1992 and 1994 there was an increase in recruitment in the Company. In 1993 the Roman Catholic proportion increased to 45 [16%]. Of 354 employees in February 1994, 265 [76.8%] were Protestant and 80 [23.2%] were Roman Catholic.

## RECRUITMENT

During the period February 1990 - 1992 there were only 5 posts filled. The composition of applicants for these posts was 150 [61.2%] Protestant and 95 [38.8%] Roman Catholic. In the period February 1992-1994 the Company appointed 105 people. The composition of applicants was 403 [64.6%] Protestant and 221 [35.4%] Roman Catholic. Of those appointed 58 [55.8%] were Protestant and 46 [44.2%] were Roman Catholic.

## CATCHMENT AREA

The majority of the Company's manual employees are drawn from Belfast District Council area and other district council areas in Greater Belfast. In the past a large proportion of the workforce was drawn from predominantly Protestant areas in close proximity to the factory with a lower proportion drawn from predominantly Roman Catholic areas which are also very close to the factory.

The Company was traditionally recognised as a major employer of Protestants and in the past there may have been a chill factor in relation to Roman Catholic applicants. There was evidence that management and clerical staff are drawn from a wider area although the majority of employees in these grades were from the Belfast travel-to-work area. Table 2 shows the composition of the economically active and the unemployed in the Company's catchment area.

**TABLE 2 WORKFORCE COMPARATORS**

	Protestant	Roman Catholic
<b>1991 CENSUS: ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE POPULATION 16-64</b>		
Belfast District Council Area	[55.7%]	[44.3%]
Belfast Travel-To-Work Area	[70.6%]	[29.4%]
Belfast Travel-To-Work Area excluding Belfast District Council Area	[77.8%]	[22.2%]
Estimate of labour availability which takes account of the residence pattern of the workforce	[63.0%]	[37.0%]
<b>NORTH &amp; WEST BELFAST ELECTORAL AREAS</b>		
Upper Falls	[ 3.2%]	[96.8%]
Lower Falls	[ 1.8%]	[98.2%]
Court	[94.0%]	[ 6.0%]
Castle	[61.0%]	[39.0%]
Oldpark	[35.6%]	[64.4%]
Total North & West Belfast Electoral Areas:	[37.3%]	[62.7%]
<b>1991 CENSUS: UNEMPLOYED</b>		
Belfast District Council Area	[43.0%]	[57.0%]

## EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

The Company had made efforts to improve its employment practices since the completion of the Fair Employment Support Scheme and since its takeover by Lummus Industries. However, further work was required to ensure that these are fully in line with the recommendations of the Fair Employment Code of Practice.

The Company's Chief Executive has taken an open approach to declaring his commitment to equality of opportunity. Contact has been made with the local community and sporting events have been sponsored to demonstrate the Company's commitment to equal opportunities.

## INVESTIGATION FINDINGS

As a result of this investigation, the Commission has formed the opinion that:

- while there is evidence that the employment pattern is changing, there is a significant under-representation of Roman Catholics in the Company's workforce;
- while there is evidence that the Company has modified its employment practices following consultancy support under the Fair Employment Support Scheme and the takeover by Lummus Industries Plc, further work needs to be done to bring these fully in line with the recommendations of the Fair Employment Code of Practice;
- in the past the potential for change was extremely limited. However, in recent years, the Company has taken steps to develop an equal opportunities programme and to openly and publicly declare its commitment to equal opportunities. This has led to a marked increase in the Roman Catholic proportion both in terms of recruitment and workforce composition. It will be important to maintain a pro-active approach to equal opportunities to ensure fair participation of the Roman Catholic community in the Company's workforce.

## AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROGRAMME

The Commission, therefore, recommended that the Company should enter into a written and binding agreement with the Commission to take affirmative action to ensure fair participation of Roman Catholics in the Company's workforce.

The Commission recommended a programme of affirmative action to the Company. This included amendments to employment policies, practices and procedures and outreach measures to encourage applications from Roman Catholics. It also included goals and timetables against which progress can be measured.

The affirmative action programme agreed is as follows:

### Equal Opportunity Policy

The Company's equal opportunity policy will be revised to include clear statements of the commitment of the Company to:-

- the prevention of direct and indirect discrimination;

- ensuring fair participation of both communities in the workforce;
- the promotion of affirmative action including goals and timetables;
- ensuring a neutral and harmonious working environment. It will be made clear in the policy statement that the Company will not tolerate the display of flags, emblems, posters, graffiti or any form of intimidation, harassment or action likely to cause apprehension to any employee or groups of employees or to any applicant for employment. Such behaviour will be regarded by the Company as gross misconduct which may warrant dismissal.

The Policy Statement will clearly identify the senior manager responsible for its implementation and the formal procedures by which both applicants and employees may readily and confidentially raise concerns about discrimination or adverse treatment.

The revised Policy Statement will be issued to all employees and applicants for employment. It will be made a condition of employment of all employees that they will abide by the policy. Responsibility for ensuring compliance with the policy by all staff will be incorporated into the job descriptions of management and supervisory staff.

A copy of the Policy Statement and a copy of the resolution of the Board of Directors of the Company adopting the Policy shall be furnished to the Commission.

### **Employment Practices**

The Company will undertake regular audits of its employment practices and procedures to ensure that they comply with the Fair Employment Code of Practice and that the Company's Equal Opportunity Policy is being fully implemented.

The following action will be undertaken by the Company immediately:-

- procedures for recruiting and promoting employees will be revised to ensure that they are in line with the recommendations of paragraph 5.3 of the Fair Employment Code of Practice. Application forms will be used for all recruitment and promotion exercises and only criteria which are justifiable, appropriate to the job and clearly objective will be used in assessing candidates. The Company will ensure that previous employment experience in Mackie International Limited will not be included as a selection criterion for posts. However, relevant employment or training experience either gained in the Company or elsewhere may be considered.
- shortlisting and interviewing for all posts will be conducted by at least two persons who have been trained in selection techniques - this training will particularly address fair employment legislation and its implications;
- records of decisions at each stage of the selection process including all notes and assessment records of interviewers will be retained for three years in a separate file for each recruitment exercise;
- as far as is practicable there will be cross-community representation on all selection panels;

- formal non-discriminatory procedures for selection for transfer and promotion will be developed. Supervisors will not solely be responsible for promotion decisions;
- a programme of training will be developed to ensure that all staff are fully aware of the Company's commitment to equality of opportunity and their role in making this commitment a reality;
- formal non-discriminatory procedures for selection for training, further education, and redundancy will be developed;
- a record system will be maintained of those who have participated in further education and of those who have been transferred or given additional responsibilities;
- exit interviewing forms will be completed for all leavers and requests will be made on the exit interviewing form for leavers' views of equal opportunities within the Company;
- a procedure for dealing with complaints of discrimination, intimidation and harassment will be developed and circulated to all employees;
- consultation will take place with the trade unions about the implementation of this affirmative action programme.

#### **Encouraging Applications from Members of the Roman Catholic Community**

The following specific action will be taken to encourage applications from the Roman Catholic community. The Company will:

- request staff in Training and Employment Agency offices to canvas vacancies through their offices in the catchment area. Each such request will be recorded;
- advertise all vacancies for employment widely, ensuring that newspapers read mainly by the Roman Catholic community are included;
- include a statement in all its job advertisements welcoming applicants from all sections of the community. The Company will monitor the proportion of applicants from the Roman Catholic community on an annual basis. If the improved proportion of Roman Catholic applicants is not maintained the Company will consider specifically targeting the Roman Catholic community in job advertisements.
- hold meetings with influential individuals and organisations within the Roman Catholic community with a view to encouraging applicants from that community.
- develop links with schools, colleges, job agencies, training organisations, job clubs, ACE schemes and community organisations in North and West Belfast in an effort to attract applicants from the Roman Catholic community and to offer work experience to trainees.

## Goals and Timetables

Taking account of the nature of its employment and the community composition of those available for such employment in its catchment area, the Company will set the following goals and timetables for changes:

- (i) to measure the effectiveness of its affirmative action programme, a target will be set of achieving a Roman Catholic proportion of not less than 45% among applicants and appointees for all posts during each year for the three year period following the date of this undertaking.
- (ii) an overall goal of increasing the Roman Catholic proportion of its workforce to 40%.

Progress towards these goals will be reviewed at the end of each year.