



Gender inclusive practices and work-life balance in Australian Universities

December 2022

Research Team

University of Sydney Women Work and Policy Research Group: Myra Hamilton, Alison Williams and Marian Baird

KPMG: Sue Bussell, Natalia Thomas, Ellie Bambrick and Kathy Hilyard

Contact for further information:

Associate Professor Myra Hamilton

myra.hamilton@sydney.edu.au

Published: December 2022

Acknowledgements: The research team would like to thank Universities Australia Women for funding the research project, the Project Steering Group (Professor Rae Cooper, Professor Therese Jefferson, Professor Helen Hodgson, and Professor Sara Charlesworth) for their input and feedback, and all the university staff and other stakeholders who gave up their time to participate in this project. We would also like to thank Dr Daniel Dinale for his editorial assistance.

KPMG Australia provided support and assistance with the research and drafting of this report. The views or recommendations set out in this report are those of The University of Sydney.

Suggested citation: Hamilton, M; Williams, A; Baird, M (2022) *Gender inclusive practices and work-life balance in Australian Universities*. A Report for Universities Australia. University of Sydney: Sydney.

Contents

CONTENTS	3
TABLES AND FIGURES	5
ABBREVIATIONS	6
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	7
APPROACH AND METHOD	7
WHAT DOES THE CURRENT DATA SAY ABOUT WOMEN IN AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES?	8
WHAT ARE THE DRIVERS OF THESE DIFFERENT OUTCOMES?	8
CURRENT AND FUTURE FOCUS	9
WHAT ARE ORGANISATIONS DOING ABOUT THESE INEQUALITIES?	9
WHAT NEXT?	12
<i>Actions for creating gender-equitable change in universities</i>	13
INTRODUCTION	15
SNAPSHOT: GENDER AND THE AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITY SECTOR	15
<i>Women in the sector</i>	16
<i>Stratification</i>	16
<i>Teaching and research</i>	18
<i>The casual workforce</i>	19
<i>Gender differences in grant outcomes</i>	20
<i>Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic</i>	22
METHOD	23
LITERATURE REVIEW	23
CONSULTATIONS	23
<i>University stakeholders</i>	24
<i>Other stakeholders</i>	24
DRIVERS OF GENDER INEQUALITIES IN UNIVERSITIES	25
THE SECTORAL LEVEL	26
<i>Competition and metrification</i>	27
<i>Casualisation: The feminisation of precarious work</i>	28
<i>Grant structures (government funded)</i>	29
<i>Impacts of COVID</i>	31
THE ORGANISATIONAL LEVEL	32
<i>The gendered distribution of work: workloads and academic housework</i>	32
<i>Gendered performance measurement: recruitment, promotions and recognition</i>	34
<i>(In)flexible working arrangements: The flexibility illusion</i>	39
THE INTRA-UNIVERSITY LEVEL	40
<i>Homosociality, networks and professional development</i>	40
<i>Managerial intermediaries</i>	40
<i>Misogyny and sexual harassment</i>	41
<i>Intersectional inequalities</i>	42
<i>Differential experiences of professional staff</i>	43
THE INDIVIDUAL/FAMILIAL LEVEL	44
<i>Work-life balance and the care penalty: Career interruptions and opportunities at work</i>	44
SUMMARY	46
LEADING GENDER-INCLUSIVE PRACTICES IN KNOWLEDGE INDUSTRY EMPLOYERS	51
ORGANISATION	52
<i>Strategy</i>	52
<i>Data collection and analysis</i>	55
<i>Recruitment</i>	60
<i>Performance and career progression</i>	62

<i>Pay equity</i>	66
<i>Work-life balance policies</i>	67
<i>Workloads</i>	73
<i>Casual workforce</i>	75
INFLUENCERS.....	76
<i>Governance</i>	76
<i>Executive</i>	77
<i>Equity and diversity leads</i>	79
<i>Senior leaders/managers</i>	80
<i>Employee resource groups or networks</i>	82
ECOSYSTEM.....	84
<i>Environmental Change</i>	84
<i>Sectoral Approaches</i>	85
CONCLUSIONS	88
REFERENCES	90

Tables and Figures

<u>Table 1</u>	DVC and PVC Equity-focused Roles in Public Universities	17
<u>Table 2</u>	Summary of the Investigator Grant (sole CI) funding outcomes based on gender	21
<u>Table 3</u>	What kinds of data?	56
<u>Table 4</u>	Examples of new leave entitlements offered by organisations	72
<u>Figure 1</u>	Full-time and Fractional Full-time Staff by Current Duties Classification and Gender, 2021	16
<u>Figure 2</u>	% of FTE academic staff by gender and job classification in 2020	16
<u>Figure 3</u>	Public university executive teams, 2022, by gender	17
<u>Figure 4</u>	FTE for full-time, fractional full-time and casual staff by function, 2011 & 2020	18
<u>Figure 5</u>	% FTE Academic staff by function and gender, 2021	18
<u>Figure 6</u>	Casual Staff, by duties 2020, % of total FTE	19
<u>Figure 7</u>	Full-time, Fractional Full-time & Casual Staff by Function, 2011 and 2020	20
<u>Figure 8</u>	Lead investigators applying for Linkage grants: proportion of female and male investigators and success rates, 2011-2020	21
<u>Figure 9</u>	Changes in ability to submit research papers by gender and country	22

Abbreviations

AHEIA	Australian Higher Education Industrial Association
ARC	Australian Research Council
CI	Chief Investigator
DECRA	Discovery Early Career Researcher Award
DESE	Department of Education, Skills and Employment
DV	Domestic Violence
DVC	Deputy Vice Chancellor
EDI	Equity Diversity and Inclusion
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
HASS	Humanities and Social Sciences
HEW	Higher Education Worker
KPI	Key Performance Indicators
NCGP	National Competitive Grants Program
NHMRC	National Health and Medical Research Council
NTEU	National Tertiary Education Union
PVC	Pro Vice Chancellor
PD	Position Description
ROPE	Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence
SAGE	Science in Australia Gender Equity
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths
TEQSA	Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency
UA	Universities Australia
UAW	Universities Australia Women
VC	Vice Chancellor
WATTLE	Women Attaining Leadership
WGEA	Workplace Gender Equality Agency

Executive Summary

This report was commissioned by Universities Australia, the peak organisation representing 39 universities in Australia. In particular, its sub-group, Universities Australia Women, was responsible for conceiving the project as part of its charter of improving gender equality and employment outcomes for women in Australian universities. The projects' objectives are to:

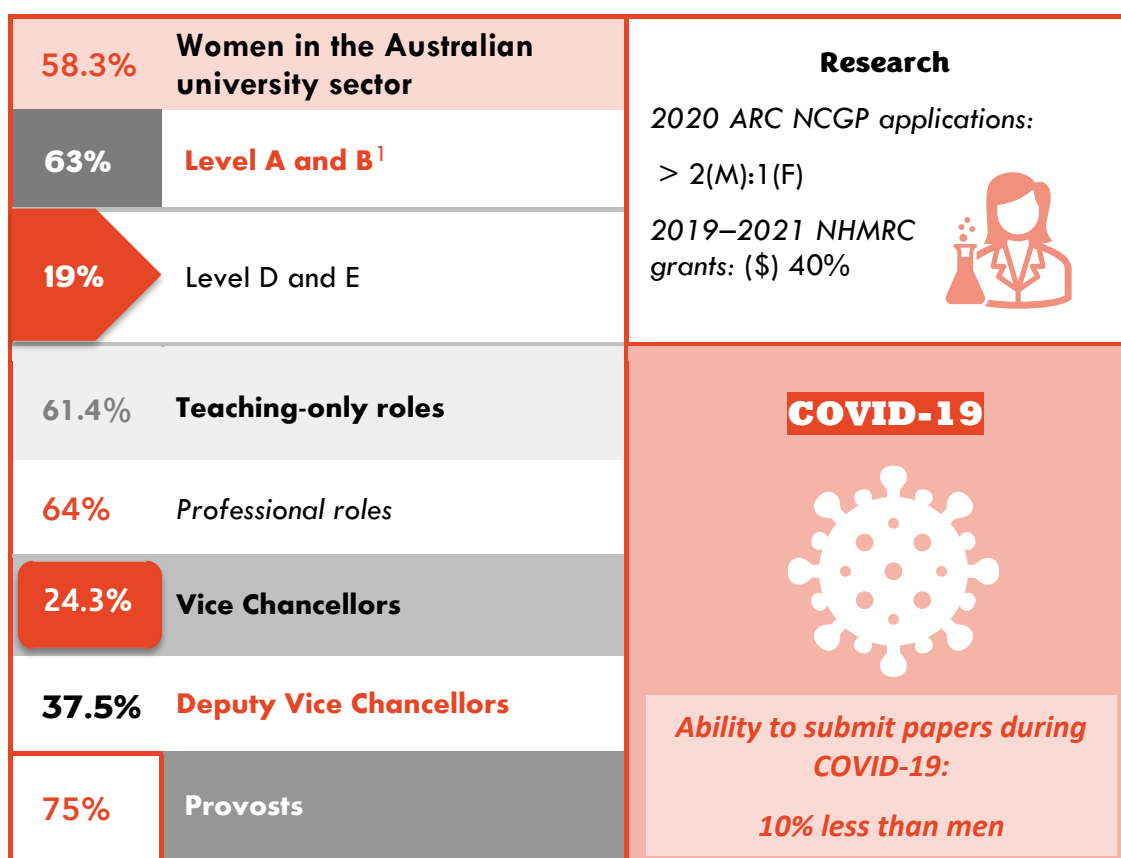
- a) Contribute to the evidence base on the nature and drivers of gender inequalities, including during and after the pandemic
- b) Identify examples of leading gender-inclusive practice in universities and other knowledge-based industries
- c) Produce a report and a practical toolkit on gender-inclusive practice for university leaders.

Approach and method

The project, led by the University of Sydney with contributions from KPMG and approved by the University of Sydney Ethics Committee (approval number 2021/905) included three phases:

1. A review of current Australian data on gender in Australian universities, and a review of the Australian and international literature on the drivers of gender inequalities in universities, and examples of gender-inclusive practice
2. Consultations with 53 stakeholders across a range of areas.
3. Consultation on the development of a toolkit.

Snapshot: Gender and the Australian university sector



What are the drivers of these different outcomes?

The research identified several drivers of gender equity across four levels.

1. Drivers at the organisational level – including policies, practices and culture at a university

- The narrow and rigid ways in which **merit** is defined and rewarded and the gendered structures of opportunity underpinning them.
- The way in which teaching, research and service are **distributed, and accorded value**, in gendered ways.
- The culture of **overwork** that undermines the substantial **flexibility** available to academic staff and its potential to facilitate work/life balance. The flexibility available to academic staff is not always available to professional staff. For casual staff, flexibility is often limited by the need to ‘say yes’ to remain in favour.

2. Drivers at the intra-organisational level – including disciplinary norms and the importance of leadership and leaders

- The central role of managers as interpreters of university policy and gatekeepers of opportunities for women.
- Women’s more limited opportunities to access informal networks.

¹ The standard ranking of academic roles is by levels, with Level A (for roles such as Tutor, Research Associate and Associate Lecturer) being the most junior, and Level E (Professor) the most senior.

- Aspects of the university environment fuel sexual harassment.

3. Drivers at the individual/familial level – people’s personal and family lives that shape their work

- Care responsibilities, usually undertaken by women, had negative effects on opportunities for publication, obtaining grants, supervision of higher degree by research (HDR) students, and promotion.

4. Drivers at the ecosystem level – including sectoral pressures and structures

- Competition and metrification.
- Casualisation.
- Current Category 1 grant funding structures disadvantage women and may be contributing to gendered grant outcomes.
- The gendered impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Current and future focus

The focus of this report has been on women in universities. This is justified because as the data show there continues to be a genuine need to focus on women and how to address inequities. However, while more academic women came forward for the research and they are more often studied, the drivers of gender equity and inclusiveness among **professional staff** have a different profile and while they are presented to a small extent here, they warrant more attention. This is a group whose voices are less well represented in the literature.

The drivers of gender equity in universities are also shaped by **other axes of inequality**. For example, LGBTIQ+, gender identity, cultural background, age and disability all drive inequities in the university workforce and intersect with gender in different ways. More work is needed to examine issues of intersectionality and the experiences and barriers faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and LGBTIQ+ people working in universities.

What are organisations doing about these inequalities?

This research indicates that universities are engaged in a large amount of activity in the area of gender inclusion, but that universities have different levels of commitment to gender inclusion. The research also suggests that there are some areas in which universities are falling behind other knowledge-based organisations. These organisations potentially offer new and innovative practices that could be transferred into the university sector.

Universities and other organisations in knowledge-based industries that are leading the way on gender equality were aligned in a belief that genuine change requires interventions across multiple spheres, often at once, including: **Organisation, Influencer, and the Ecosystem**.

The **organisational** level includes organisational policies, practices and cultures in individual businesses or universities; the **influencer** level includes individuals and groups *within* an organisation with the power to shape/affect change; and the **ecosystem** refers to activities that organisations participate in to affect change at the sectoral level, beyond their organisation.

While the drivers also include the individual/familial level, this framework does not include an individual level as the responses to overcoming the inequalities associated with family/care responsibilities operate across the organisational, influencer and ecosystem level.

Organisational level

Strategy

- Leading universities and knowledge organisations positioned gender equity at the centre of their *business* strategy and integrated it into their broader strategic and operational objectives. Leading universities have now developed their Gender Equity Strategies, setting clear goals and KPIs, accompanied by substantial communication strategies and cultural change activities across the institution.
- **Areas for improvement** are that strategies are not always adequately communicated to staff, coordinated with other equity activities across the institution, or adequately embedded in, or aligned with other priorities in, broader business strategies.

Data collection and analysis

- Leading universities and knowledge organisations have sophisticated approaches to *using* the data to achieve change, through: people **analytics** (uses statistical insights from employee data to identify and optimize procedures); providing data to decision-makers during decisions; and high levels of data **transparency** to staff. Leading universities collect substantial amounts of data and feed it into their gender equity strategies. Data gaps identified were on workload distribution, pay equity and casual staff.
- **Areas for improvement:** While data is being collected, it is rarely transparently available to staff. This makes it easier for institutions to collect data performatively but not necessarily do anything with it.

Recruitment and attraction

- Leading universities and knowledge organisations have identified and pursued targets to improve representation of women, with **training and policies** to disrupt and manage bias. Actions have included women-only roles in areas with low female representation, eliminating gendered language in job advertisements, mandating gender balance on shortlists, requiring recruitment firms to report on gender equity in their processes, mandated gender balanced panels, and introduced bias training/awareness procedures for panels.

Performance and career progression

- Leading universities and knowledge organisations reported innovative activities in the areas of the measurement of performance (moving from number driven metrics to a mix of metrics and qualitative assessments of team-based performance etc.), career progression support for women on or returning from parental leave (including vertical job share arrangements), and strategic support for women who have been unsuccessful in applications for leadership positions. Leading universities are taking a multifaceted approach to build a more gender-inclusive promotion process, including mentorship, support with writing promotion applications and interview preparation, the development of balanced panels, and bias training or activities for panels. Leading universities have also undertaken some work challenging the definitions of merit that favour men.
- **Areas for improvement:** There is much yet to be done in challenging the gendered nature of performance metrics, and properly situating performance assessment in the context of career interruptions such as care responsibilities.

Pay equity

- Leading universities and knowledge organisations are transparent about their pay equity data, regularly reporting to staff, acknowledging problem areas, and providing opportunities for staff to ask questions about the data. Examples of leading practice in

this area include gender pay equity clauses in some enterprise agreements, and the conduct of pay equity audits.

- **Areas for improvement:** there is little transparency in the pay equity data, especially regarding market and merit-based loadings, and little access by staff, which limits possibilities for interrogation of data.

Work/life balance policies

- Leading universities and knowledge organisations not only offer gender-neutral paid parental leave that can be taken by either parent with no qualifying period but also encourage both parents to embrace paid parental leave. Leading universities offer 26-36 weeks parental leave on full pay and the six WGEA Employers of Choice universities offer no qualifying period. Leading universities have also introduced measures to support people on parental leave or after leave, such as research grants when returning, reduced teaching loads upon return, fractional roles, stipulations about meeting times, childcare onsite.

Leading organisations are working to ensure that flexible work is not intrinsically linked with overwork or being available for work at all hours. Leading organisations support staff caring for a family member with a disability or chronic illness, or an ageing relative, who often have different needs from parents of dependent children, by providing policies such as integrated carer strategies for identifying and supporting carers and help with referrals to services and support with planning and coordinating services.

- **Areas for improvement:** In universities, support for forms of care other than parental care of young children is less developed, except for carers leave which is relatively generous. Flexibility a) is undermined by overwork; and b) if not accompanied by always being available, is met with a reduction in career opportunities.

Workloads

- Leading universities and knowledge organisations have created more equitable workload distribution, through new workload allocation models, monitoring bias, improving transparency, providing greater recognition in promotion processes for achievements outside of research, such as in teaching and leadership.

Influencer level

Board and governance

- In leading universities and knowledge organisations alignment between the executive team and the Council/Board/Senate is essential to effective gender equity strategies. In other knowledge organisations, ensuring gender parity at Board level was a common strategy to embed greater gender diversity in the governance of an organisation. Boards contributed to gender equity through: strategy; governance, through embedding inclusive thinking and behaviours in decisions; talent, through ensuring CEO/senior leader appointees demonstrate inclusive capacities; and performance, through monitoring progress against diversity and equity goals.

Executives

- In leading universities and knowledge organisations, senior executives were deeply and directly involved in the design and implementation of gender equity strategies, including: chairing gender equity committees and promotion committees; taking on the role of executive sponsor of SAGE-Athena SWAN (universities); personally participating in gender equity-focused career mentoring (universities) and sponsorship programs (other knowledge organisations); intervening directly to correct gender bias; and mandating

targets and measures of gender equity for their direct reports and throughout the wider organisation.

EDI leads and units

- Leading universities and knowledge organisations appointed EDI leaders (i.e., DVC/PVC level, EDI units, and/or EDI staff ambassadors/champions) to provide dedicated resources to drive change, build coordinated approaches, keep the executive accountable, and filter strategies and practices through the organisation.

Managers

- Leading universities and knowledge organisations provide managers with gender-focused targets and KPIs and provided training, coaching, or consultancy support for managers to upskill them in gender equitable decision-making. In universities, this involves providing managers with training in supporting their staff to prepare and apply for promotion; overcoming flexibility biases; and equity principles to support them to understand biases in their decision-making.

Employee groups

- Leading universities and knowledge organisations create and resource employee networks with reporting channels to the executive. These networks make equity efforts visible across organisations, ensure that gender equity strategies are informed by the experiences of staff, help to hold organisations accountable for progress and change, and provide avenues for likeminded employees to connect and feel included.

Ecosystem level

Advocacy

- Leading practitioners in universities and other knowledge organisations play an advocacy role beyond their institution, driving change in structures outside of any one institution but with impacts on gender equity within institutions. In universities, key focus areas are priorities in funding for certain disciplines, and another is cuts in grant funding.

Sectoral collaboration

Leading universities and knowledge organisations build sectoral coalitions with other organisations in their sector on key shared gender equity issues. This recognises sectoral gender barriers, enables knowledge exchange, coordinates efforts, sets collective targets, pools resources, keeps universities accountable. Universities' approach to sectoral work is building slowly. Other knowledge sectors have developed more comprehensive approaches to sectoral collaboration, setting industry standards and working together to implement and maintain them.

What next?

In some areas universities lag other knowledge-based organisations in actions to address gender equality and inclusiveness. There is an opportunity to learn from these leading-practice organisations and adapt policies and practices to suit the university context. A key finding from the knowledge sector is that gender equity thrives when it is part of core business. Rather than gender equity and inclusion strategies being regarded as 'extras' they are most beneficial when integrated into organisation visions and strategies and 'owned' by university leaders.

Gender equity and inclusiveness is, however, not only about innovative policies and practices, but it is also about protecting the current policies and practices that do work. Constant attention to equity and inclusion and the application of a gender lens to all activities is essential for progress to be made. There are also large gains to be made in mobilising as a sector to identify shared challenges and collaborative approaches.

The research evidence base was used by the researchers to develop a detailed practical toolkit, *Gender Equity & Inclusion By Design*, for Universities Australia to make available to the sector. This can be utilised to explore gender equitable practices further in their own institutions.

The table below summarises the actions that are identified in this report that will help to drive change and establish gender equitable practices in universities.

Actions for creating gender-equitable change in universities

	Action	Purpose/outcomes
Organisational policy and practice – shifting stubborn gender inequities	Develop a gender equity strategy that is part of / closely linked to organisational business strategy	Communicates commitment, frames KPIs, facilitates resources, and coordinates efforts, to tackle gender inequities, ensures that gender equity measures are not siloed/add on but a part of core business
	Undertake data collection, analysis and transparent reporting	Keeps leaders accountable, tracks progress, identifies emerging issues and strategic focus areas
	Build gender-inclusive recruitment processes	Increases representation of women, particularly in male dominated disciplines or senior leadership
	Build gender-inclusive performance appraisal and promotion processes	Increases representation of women in Levels C-E (academic) and 7-10 (professional), increases representation of women in senior leadership
	Monitor, report on, and improve pay equity	Overcomes inequitable pay structures, helps identify and address larger inequities (i.e., different starting salaries and what they say about bias in recruitment systems)
	Create and promote opportunities for work-life balance, and support people with care responsibilities, in a manner that mitigates, rather than reinforces, negative impacts on career progression	Overcomes deeply entrenched inequities arising from having unpaid care responsibilities, provides high performing staff with care responsibilities with equitable access to opportunities for career progression and leadership, improves retention, productivity and wellbeing of staff with care responsibilities

	Monitor and overcome gender inequities in the distribution and recognition of work (research, teaching and service)	Reduces inequities associated with disproportionate allocation of teaching and some service/leadership activities to women, more adequately values teaching and leadership
	Monitor and address impacts of casualisation on gender inequity in the organisation	Produces data that better represents university workforce, extends equity measures to casual staff, potential to improve retention of ECR women
Influencers – the leaders we need	Demonstrate board/senate and executive commitment	Drives meaningful and sustained cultural change, models inclusive behaviours and cultures, steers implementation and adaptation in strategic direction, corrects persistent biases
	Appoint EDI leaders (i.e., DVC/PVC level, EDI units, and/or EDI staff ambassadors/champions)	Provides dedicated resources to drive change and build coordinated approach, keeps the executive accountable, supports the filtration of strategies and practices through the organisation
	Incentivise (i.e., KPIs) and train senior managers (Deans, Heads of Schools, Heads of Departments) to improve gender equity in their area	Creates more equitable decisions at Faculty/School/Department level on providing flexibility, allocating workloads, supporting promotion, facilitating leadership opportunities in gender equitable ways
	Create and resource employee networks with reporting channels to the executive	Makes equity efforts visible across organisations, ensures that gender equity strategies are informed by the experiences of staff, helps to hold organisations accountable for progress and change, provides avenues for likeminded employees to connect and feel included
Sector collaboration – shared challenges and solutions	Engage in advocacy to shape structures external to universities that drive gender inequities in universities	Challenges government funding and grant structures that drive gender inequities, i.e., the increasing valuation of male-dominated disciplines in university and grant funding, leverages collective power and resources
	Build sectoral coalitions with other universities on key shared gender equity issues	Recognises sectoral gender barriers, enables knowledge exchange, coordinates efforts, sets collective targets, pools resources, keeps universities accountable.

Introduction

This report offers new research into the experience of women working in the university sector, with a focus on practices to overcome gender inequalities. Although women now outnumber men in higher education, both as students and staff, they continue to be substantially underrepresented in senior and executive-level positions (Lipton, 2017; Whitehouse & Nestic, 2014) and experience considerable barriers to career progression (Baird, Hamilton, & Constantin, 2021; Eslan-Ziya & Yildirim, 2021; Strachan, et al., 2016).

While most Australian universities have adopted progressive gender equity strategies, there remains a disconnect between institutional policy and practice (Gilbert, Denson, & Weidmann, 2020). Further, while the Australian university sector has historically led the development of equity and diversity policies, they have been falling behind Australia's private sector and governments (Whitehouse & Nestic, 2014).

This report sets out to shed new light on the contemporary drivers of gender inequities in Australian universities in a post-COVID world. For women working in the university sector, in research, teaching and as professional staff, the vicissitudes of recent years are compounding the challenges of having a successful career in their chosen profession.

The report also sets out to examine leading gender-inclusive practice in Australian universities, and to uncover what universities can learn from leading practice in other knowledge-based industries. Equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) policies and programs are key initiatives to promote the representation and participation of women in the university sector (Baker, 2009; Eslan-Ziya & Yildirim, 2021; Lipton, 2017; Nash & Churchill, 2020), as well as addressing structural issues. Sharing leading practices between institutions and from other knowledge industries will help ensure these practices are effectively connected and is a key mechanism to create consistent, inclusive experiences and outcomes for women in the sector.

Women are the focus of this report. Nevertheless, the experiences and barriers faced by LGBTIQ+ and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples working in universities, and issues of intersectionality, are very important and further research is recommended to fully understand their intersections with gender. Further, while the focus of the research was on all women in the university sector, there is a great deal more literature on academic women and academic women were more forthcoming as interviewees in this project than non-academic women. A further area of research should therefore be a closer examination of gender equity and inclusion of professional women in universities.

The report focuses on gender *equity*, addressing the structures, strategies and practices that operate to prevent women's equal access to opportunities in universities. The term *equality* will be used when discussing gender equal *outcomes* for women.

Snapshot: Gender and the Australian university sector

The Higher Education Sector is one of Australia's major industries and export earners, contributing \$40.3 billion to the Australian economy in the year prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, but falling by almost half to \$22.5 billion in 2021 (Hare, 2022).

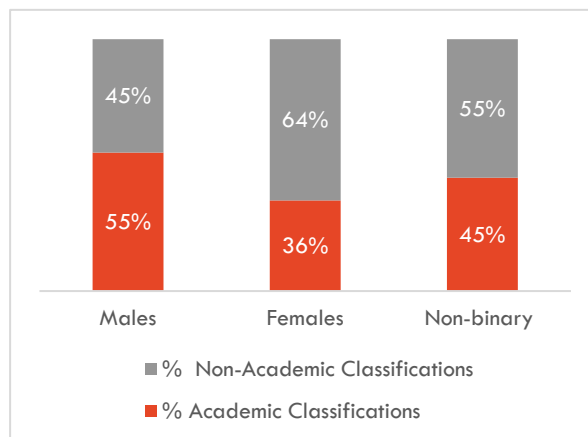
Universities Australia represents all 37 of Australia's public universities and two of the private sector universities, Bond and Notre Dame (UA, 2022). In total, the sector consists of 189 public universities, private universities, local campuses of overseas universities and other providers such as institutes of higher education (TEQSA, 2022). Data on universities is published each year by

the federal Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE). In 2021, data was collected from 43 public and private universities and one other institution (DESE, 2021 a).

Women in the sector

In 2021 women represented 58.3% (70,806 persons) of Australia's 121,364 total university workforce, men represented 41.6% (50,430 persons) and non-binary/other genders made up the remaining 0.1% (128 persons). Gender representation was not evenly distributed between academics and non-academics, with women more highly concentrated in the non-academic roles (Figure 1). For the non-casual workforce, 36% of women working in universities are in academic roles and 64% in professional roles (or 'non-academic' roles), compared to 55% of men in academic roles and 45% in professional roles. More than half (55%) of the small non-binary workforce are employed in professional roles (DESE, 2021 a).

Figure 1 - Full-time and Fractional Full-time Staff by Current Duties Classification and Gender, 2021



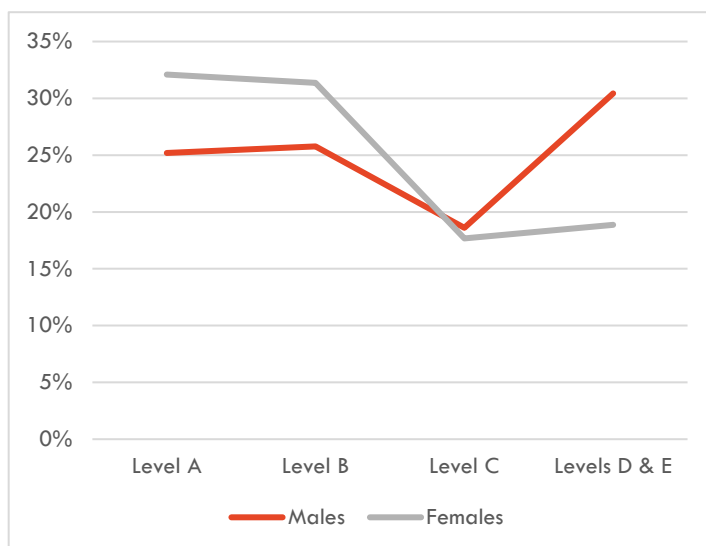
Source: DESE, 2021a, Table 2.9

Stratification

In the academic workforce, women are not equally represented at all levels. Women academic staff are overrepresented at Levels A and B but are under-represented compared to men from Level C (Senior Lecturer) (Figure 2).²

Other data suggests that this disparity gets even wider beyond Levels D and E. In 2022, according to information publicly available on websites of Australia's 37 public universities (Figure 3), female Vice Chancellors (VCs) led only 9 (24%) of these universities, four of these were in Queensland, with three in NSW, two in Victoria and one in Western Australia. The number of female VCs has slightly decreased from 25% in 2016 (Strachan, et al., 2016). Men (62.5%) continue to heavily outnumber women (37.5%) in Deputy

Figure 2 - % of FTE academic staff by gender and job classification in 2020

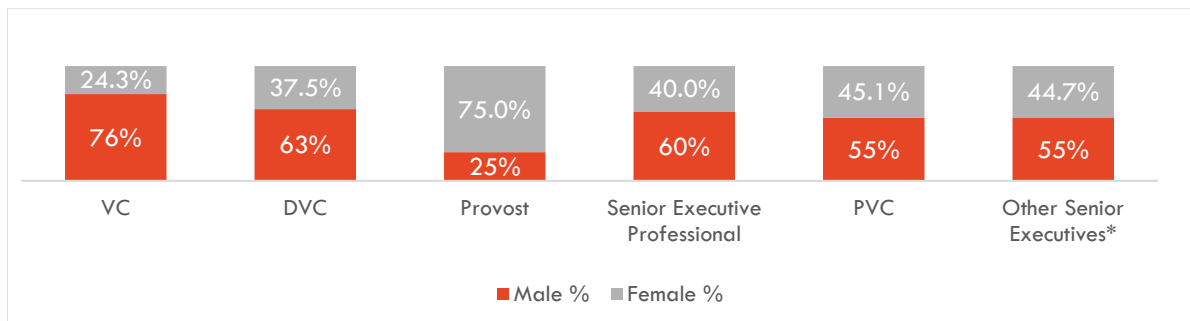


Source: DESE Appendix 1.4. FTE for Full-time, Fractional Full-time and Actual Casual Staff by State, Higher Education Institution, Current Duties Classification and Gender, 2020

² This discussion is based on 2020 data in order to include casuals. DESE only makes casual staff available a year after the initial data collection, so 2021 casual data is not yet available.

Vice Chancellor (DVC) roles as well as in senior executive professional roles (60% male). However, there are three times the number of women (75%) than men in Provost roles noting the smaller number of these roles overall – 16 in total.

Figure 3 - Public university executive teams, 2022, by gender



* Roles such as Chair of Academic Senate/Board; Executive Deans; Senior Counsel; Deputy Vice President & Deputy Provost

Women make up 40% of senior executive professional roles, 45% of Pro Vice Chancellor (PVC) roles in those universities that have this classification and 45% of other senior executive roles (such as Chair of Academic Senate/Board, Executive Deans and Deputy Vice President & Deputy Provost roles). While only 12 (32%) of the Chancellor roles in public universities were held by women, this percentage has more than doubled from 15% in 2016 (Jarboe, 2017).

In recognition of the importance of equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) challenges, some universities have introduced roles in the senior executive teams focusing on EDI, though these are more commonly focused on indigeneity than on gender. These roles are occasionally at the DVC level but are slightly more common at the PVC level. According to the information publicly available on their websites, 12 (32%) of the 37 Australian public universities have such a designated senior role. Women hold double the number of these positions than men (Table 1).

Table 1 – DVC and PVC Equity-focused Roles in Public Universities

	Male	Female	Total
DVC	1	4	5
PVC	3	4	7
Total	4	8	12

Source: University websites, accessed May 2022

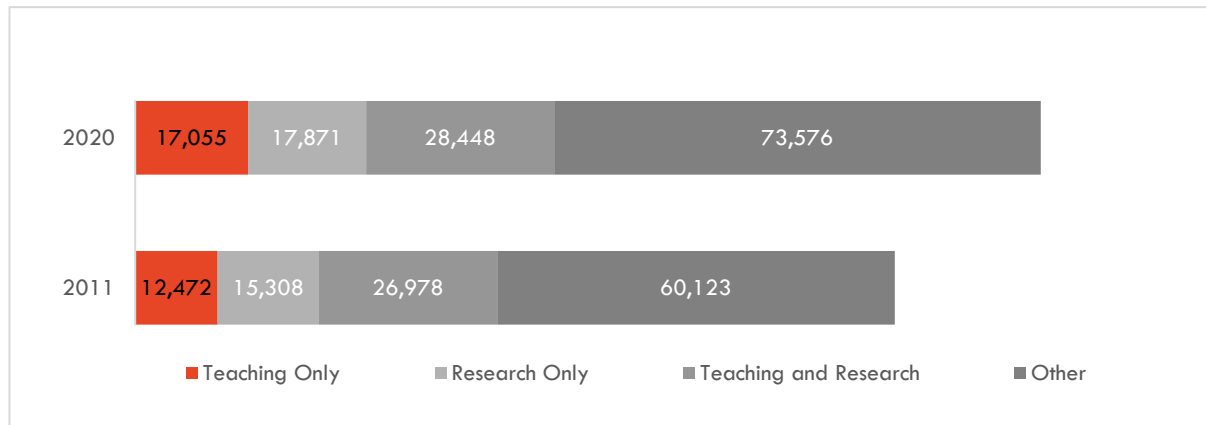
Among professional staff, there are similar gender differences in role level, although the gender difference at higher levels begins to emerge closer to the top of the distribution, with the middle being more gender equal. Men begin to overtake women at Level 7 and are overrepresented in Levels 7-10. The proportion of women in the permanent and fixed-term non-academic workforce increased by 3% to 64% between 2001 and 2011 (Strachan et al., 2016).³

³ These data tables are drawn directly from Strachan et al. (2016). We were not able to obtain more recent, publicly available data on professionals.

Teaching and research

In the last decade there has been a growth in teaching-focused roles. In 2011, teaching-only roles made up less than half of the number of teaching and research roles, whereas in 2020 teaching-only roles (17,055) amounted to around 60% of the number of combined teaching and research roles (28,448) (Figure 4).

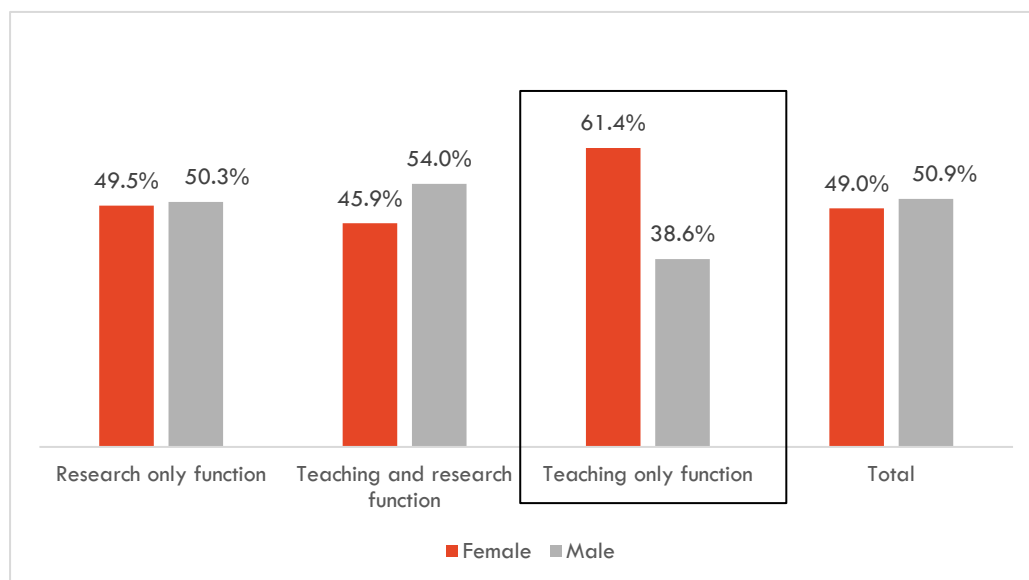
Figure 4 - FTE for full-time, fractional full-time and casual staff by function, 2011 & 2020



Source: DESE Higher Education Statistics, 2021 Staff Pivot Table

Women are overrepresented in teaching-only roles (Figure 5). In 2021 while they comprised 58.3% of overall FTE staff, they held 61.4% of teaching-only roles. Research-only roles are held equally by men (50.3%) and women (49.5%) but given there are fewer men staff overall (41.6%), they are over-represented in research (DESE, 2022). Men are also over-represented (54.6%) in combined teaching and research roles.

Figure 5 - % FTE Academic staff by function and gender, 2021



Source: DESE Higher Education Statistics, 2021 Staff Pivot Table

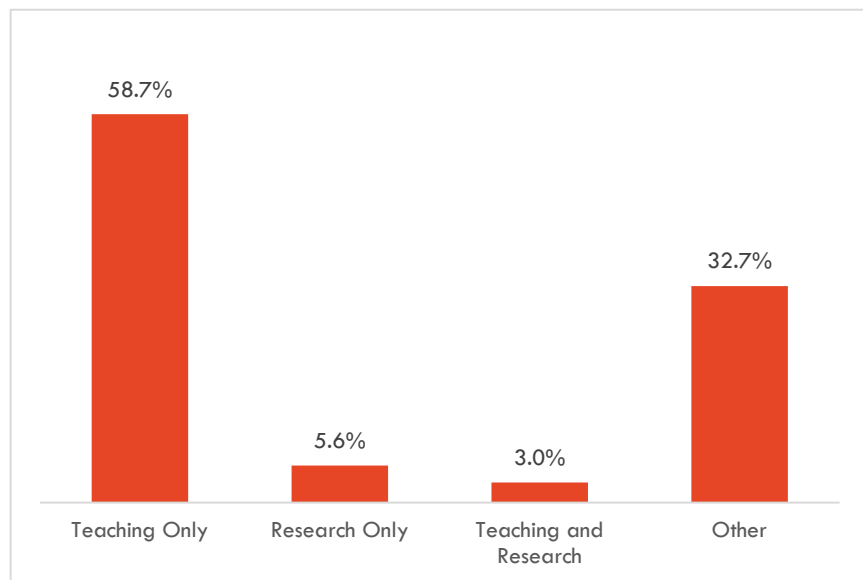
There are also gender differences in the *evaluation* of teaching by students, with women teachers being treated more harshly. In a recent Australian study, men were 1.25 times the more likely than women to receive higher student evaluation scores from female students, and 1.43 more likely to receive higher scores from male students (Fan, et al., 2019). This differs by discipline, with differences greatest in medicine and engineering, followed by business, and lowest in Arts and Social Sciences (Fan, et al., 2019).

The casual workforce

In 2019, prior to the pandemic, casuals made up 17.8% of the total university workforce. In 2020, this had dropped to 14.7% (DESE, 2021). Women comprised 58.3% of the casual workforce in 2020, a percentage that has varied little over the last ten years (DESE, 2021b) (DESE, Appendix 1.16, 2021). At the same time, the percentage of women who are full-time or fractional workers in the sector has slowly increased, from 54.9% in 2011 to 57.2% in 2020 (DESE, 2021b).

In 2020, of the total casual workforce, there were 11,785 FTE casual academics working on teaching-only contracts (58.7%) and another 612 FTE casuals working on combined teaching and research contracts (3%) (Figure 6). Nearly a third of casuals (32.7%) were employed in non-academic 'other' roles. This data is not disaggregated by gender.

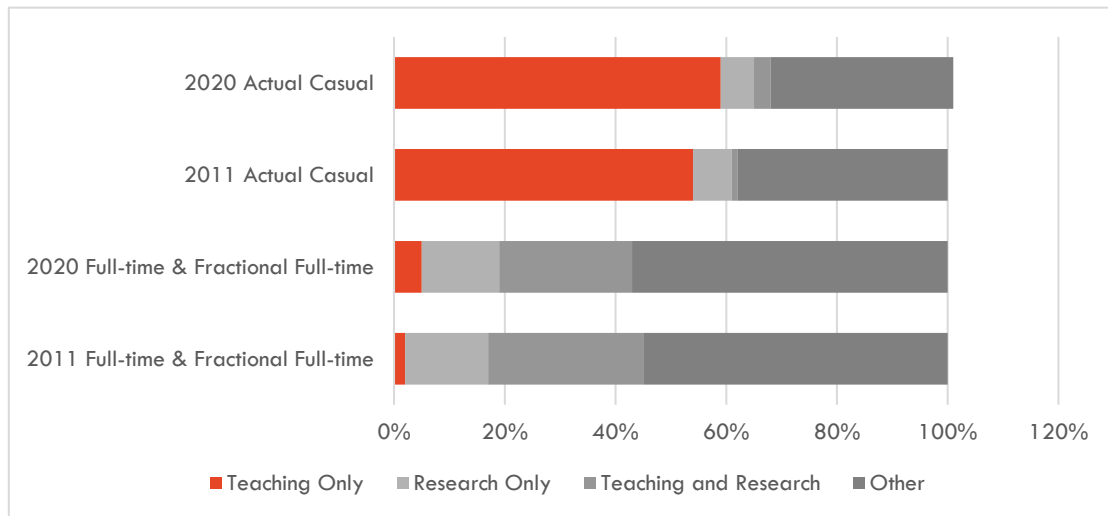
Figure 6 - Casual Staff, by duties 2020, % of total FTE



Source: 2021 Staff Appendix 1 – Actual staff FTE, Appendix 1.7. FTE for Casual Staff by State, Higher Education Institution and Function, 2020

The percentage of casuals employed in 'teaching only' roles has continued to climb in the last 10 years (Figure 7). In 2011 casuals held 54% of these roles; in 2020 this is now 59%. If the professional (or 'other' staff) are removed from Figure 7, 87% of *academic* casuals are teaching-only.

Figure 7 - Full-time, Fractional Full-time & Casual Staff by Function, 2011 and 2020



Source: 2021 Staff Appendix 1 – Actual staff FTE, Appendix 1.15 FTE for Full-time, Fractional Full-time and Actual Casual Staff by Function, 2011 to 2020

Gender differences in grant outcomes

Women are less successful than men in relation to Category 1 grant funding. According to ARC data on the National Competitive Grants Program, since 2002, the ratio by gender for the number of investigators in grants applications has been 1(F): 2.9(M). In 2020, the proportion of males (69%) to females (31%) included in applications for the ARC NCGP was more than 2:1. The success rates for both male and female investigators were the same, sitting at an average of 23% (ARC, 2021). In sum, when they do apply, women have similar rates of success than men, but because women have much lower application rates, men succeed in obtaining more grant funding than women.

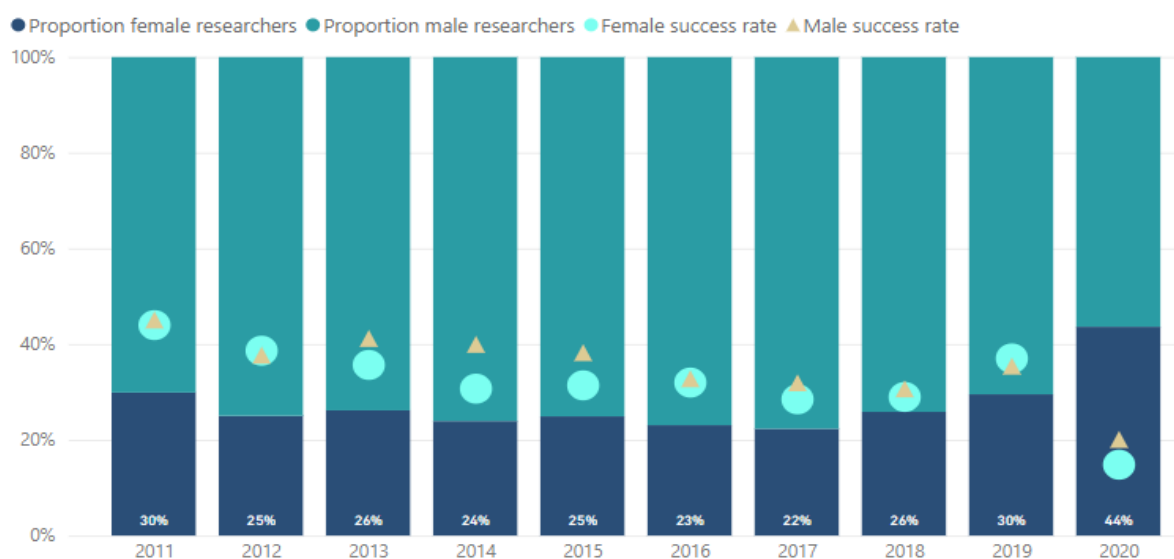
Application and success rates vary by discipline. In 2020, 5,024 ARC applications were made of which 3,984 were made in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) and 1,256 in humanities and social sciences (HASS) (ARC, 2022). Women are less likely than men to be listed on a STEM application (31%) but when they do apply their success rates are similar to those of men – 26% success for men and 25% for women. In contrast, women are more likely to be included on a grant application from a HASS discipline (50%). Women are also more likely than men (20% compared to 16%) to be successful on a HASS grant application.

In 2016, the ARC Linkage Program was altered so that it had rolling applications rather than one application round each year. Figure 8, below, shows the proportion of male and female Lead Chief Investigators (CIs) on Linkage grants since 2011. As can be seen in Figure 8 below, the proportion of applications led by a woman increased by 21% between 2016 and 2020. This suggests that the rolling applications may have had a positive impact on women’s capacity to submit grant applications, though more investigation is necessary to understand this more fully. Notably, the success rate of both women and men dropped considerably in 2020, with a larger drop in the success rate of women. This could in part be a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, though the fact that many applications for the 2020 round would already have been submitted

or well developed before the pandemic hit suggests that something else could be at play to explain the drop-in success rates.

Women are also seriously underrepresented in successful applications for 2019–2021 National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Grants. Table 2 shows the total funding (including salaries and laboratory supports) awarded in all major NHMRC grant programs by the gender of the chief investigator over the last three years of a new funding system. Male CIs have received nearly \$400M more than female CIs.

Figure 8 - Lead investigators applying for Linkage grants: proportion of female and male investigators and success rates, 2011-2020



Source: NCGP Trends: Gender data visualisations.

Table 2 – Summary of the Investigator Grant (sole CI) funding outcomes based on gender

Funding year	Total	Men	Women	\$ Difference (Men - Women)
2019	\$655,419,596	\$400,125,499	\$255,294,097	\$144,831,402
2020	\$622,555,129	\$371,817,749	\$250,737,380	\$121,080,369
2021	\$722,480,321	\$427,295,793	\$295,184,528	\$132,111,265
Total (2019-2021)	\$1,996,349,546	\$1,199,239,041 (60%)	\$797,110,505 (40%)	\$398,023,036

Source: (Equity in Australian STEMM, 2022)

Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic

Some of these gender inequalities are likely to have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, affecting women's opportunities to apply for promotion, take on leadership roles, apply for grants, and publish papers. Data suggests women were 9% and 12% more likely than men in Australia to report a decline in their ability to submit papers (Peetz, et al., 2022). Women were almost three times as likely to report a decline than an increase in their ability to submit research papers; for men the ratio was less – closer to two times (Peetz, et al., 2022) (Figure 9).

Figure 9 – Changes in ability to submit research papers by gender and country

Survey Question: *Your ability to finish or submit research papers has increased, decreased or remained the same as a result of the changes associated with moving from pre-COVID to COVID.*

		Decreased	Stayed the same	Increased	Total
Australia	Male	47	25	28	100
	Female	56	23	21	100
Canada	Male	49	30	21	100
	Female	60	22	18	100

$\chi^2_{(2,1694)} = 16.757, p < .001$ for Australia; $\chi^2_{(2,1179)} = 16.301, p < .001$ for Canada.

Source: Reproduced with the permission of Peetz, et al. (2022)

Method

The research, approved by the University of Sydney Ethics Committee (approval number 2021/905), took place in three phases between January and June 2022 and included:

1. A literature review
2. Qualitative consultations, including
 - a. Interviews with a diverse range of stakeholders in the university sector, and interviews and focus groups with university staff and university executives
 - b. Interviews with stakeholders in other knowledge-based industries with examples of leading practice, and
3. Consultation on the development of a toolkit.

Literature review

The first phase of the project included a literature review. The literature review aimed to examine what is known about the drivers of inequality in universities and examples of gender inclusive practice in universities and other knowledge-based industries. It aimed to provide the evidence base for the current state of gender inclusivity and work-life balance and to offer examples of national and international leading gender-inclusive practice in universities and other knowledge-based industries, which have innovative solutions to many of the challenges faced by women in the workforce that can be transferred into the university sector.

While the remit of this project is women, the authors also recognise that there are additional and compounding challenges experienced by trans and/or non-binary individuals that may intersect with the drivers of gender inequality outlined in this literature review. The authors also recognised the way other axes of inequality intersect with gender to produce differential outcomes in universities. In particular, due to the limited scope of the project, the experiences of, and barriers facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples working in Australian universities, and the ways these intersect with gender, is not adequately addressed in this report and should be the subject of further, more targeted research.

The literature review method is set out in the Appendix.

Additional information about the Australian university sector and individual universities was obtained from publicly available sources including data on the Australian Research Council and Department of Education, Skills and Employment websites, university websites and the Workplace Agreements Database held by the Attorney General's Department. The latter database was interrogated for enterprise agreements that included gender equity terms.

Consultations

The consultations included a series of interviews and focus groups with a range of stakeholders between February and July 2022. The stakeholders include university stakeholders, with a range of knowledge and expertise about the university sector, and non-university stakeholders, including leaders of gender inclusive practice in other knowledge-based industries.

University stakeholders

Focus groups and semi structured interviews were conducted with 45 stakeholders with knowledge of various aspects of the drivers of gender equity in universities and examples of gender-inclusive practice. First, interviews were conducted with nine scholars with research expertise in gender in Australian universities to identify issues at the forefront of current Australian research on gender inclusion. Next, interviews were conducted with five advocates representing university staff on the drivers and challenges for gender equity in the sector and examples of, or appetite for, gender inclusive practice. Then consultations were conducted with three individuals from government agencies with expertise in higher education (two interviews, and one provided written responses to the questions) to identify key aspects of the regulatory context and sectoral trends in the area of gender-inclusive practice. All interviews were conducted online and lasted between 30-60 minutes.

Next, focus groups and interviews were conducted with 18 university staff (13 academics, five professionals; 16 women, 1 man, and 1 non-binary) to identify their experiences of gender equity in the workplace and university policies and practices. Focus groups and interviews were online and lasted for 90 and 40-60 minutes respectively. During the first four groups of consultations, the research team identified examples of leading practice in Australian universities, and in the final stage of the university stakeholder consultations, interviews were conducted with 10 leaders overseeing these identified examples.

Other stakeholders

The research also included interviews with representatives of businesses with examples of leading practice in other knowledge-based industries. The purpose of these interviews was to examine examples of leading gender inclusive practice in organisations known to be leading the way in the field. This sample was selected purposively so that all participants had specific experience of various aspects of gender-inclusive practice. Participants had roles at different levels within organisations, including senior executive, HR, and EDI roles, and organisations varied from large corporations to smaller companies and public sector organisations. Eight individuals were interviewed from seven organisations.

Interviews and focus groups were recorded and transcribed and were manually coded and analysed thematically. The analytical framework combined axial and open codes, in order to allow analysis of the project's research areas and the emergence of other themes (Grbich, 1999).

The practices listed in this report are not an exhaustive list of practices in the Australian university sector or in knowledge industries, but rather represent the views of those consulted for this report. The information in this report that was obtained from consultations is reproduced with the permission of the participants.

At each phase of the project, the project team received input from a Project Steering Group comprised of experts in the field of gender inclusive practice and Australian universities, who provided expertise at the stages of design, data collection and analysis.

Drivers of gender inequalities in universities

Consultation findings

This section presents the results of the qualitative consultation strategy with university stakeholders and focuses on stakeholders' experiences of gender inclusion and their perceptions of the drivers of gender inequalities within the Australian higher education system. The empirical data presented here is also at times corroborated by reference to the literature (as set out in the literature review, see the Appendix).

While the consultations engaged a wide range of experts and stakeholders in the higher education sector including university staff, it is important to note that these consultations are not representative of all university staff. In particular, it was difficult to recruit an adequate number of professional staff for the study, and while the interviews and focus group with professional staff provided rich insights into important similarities and differences in experiences and perceptions between academic and professional staff, these must be interpreted with caution given the sample size. The literature review suggested that this is consistent with a broader gap in research with professional staff and a key recommendation of this research is further work focused on seeking out and engaging with professional staff. Throughout this section of the report, the type of stakeholder, including whether they were an academic or professional staff member, is denoted in parentheses after a quote or sentiment.

There was wide consensus among consultation participants that the drivers of gender inequalities are highly complex and multi-layered and are deeply embedded into both structures and cultures *within* Australian universities, and in the structures that sit *around* them (Scholar 1; Professional 5). In response, in order to address gender inequalities, many participants were strongly of the view that change needs to be at multiple levels, starting from and led by the top and effectively filtering throughout the organisation. If one level is not operating effectively in pursuit of the objectives of gender equity, then the broader project is undermined (Academic 11, Leaders 1-5). Most participants reported that addressing gender inequalities required foundational change, not just tinkering at the edges.

I think we need to radically rethink, I guess, the role and values of universities and recognise the way that the foundations are gendered and that's going to inevitably always cause inequalities in whichever avenue. So I mean, that's a really hard task to try and burn it down and build it back up again. But at least to actually look at that a little bit more and not just tack on some sort of solutions without acknowledging that. (Scholar 1)

In recognition of the multiple layers at which the drivers of gender inequalities operate, this section has been organised into four levels, and the drivers within each level, set out in the structure below.

1. The sectoral level
 - a. Competition and metrification
 - b. Casualisation: The feminisation of precarious work
 - c. Grant structures (Government-funded)
 - d. Impacts of COVID-19
2. The organisational level
 - a. The gendered distribution of work: workloads and academic housework
 - b. Gendered performance measurement: recruitment, promotions and recognition
 - c. (In)flexible working arrangements: The flexibility illusion
3. The intra-university level

- a. Homosociality, networks and professional development
 - b. Managerial intermediaries
 - c. Misogyny and sexual harassment
 - d. Intersectional inequalities
 - e. Differential experiences of professional staff
4. The individual/familial level
- a. Work-life balance and the care penalty

The sectoral level

Across the sector, participants identified several major factors impeding gender equity. First, while there is appetite for change within universities, universities are a context in which change can often be slow and interventions siloed in separate universities or different parts of the same university. This lack of integration impedes change.

At the moment we just chip away in individual kind of pockets and hope it might address the problem over the institution and over the sector but sometimes it works and then something shifts, and I feel like we're back to square one. (Academic 6)

Second, the focus of gender equity strategies is on innovation and new forms of practice, and little attention is paid to protecting those existing institutional structures that can and do produce gender equitable outcomes. For example, pathways to job security, sabbaticals, and workload ratios, are rarely approached as 'gender issues', yet all have the potential to produce or protect more gender-equitable outcomes. Yet these structures are all under threat across the sector and it is rarely acknowledged that increases in insecure work, fewer sabbaticals and individually negotiated workload allocations are likely to create the conditions in which gender inequalities deepen.

It's not just a matter of coming up with new things, but defending the limited things that people have, to stop conditions deteriorating. Because when universities start doing that, they will deteriorate, it will have a bigger impact on women than it will have on men. (Scholar 2)

Third, across the sector, the focus of gender equity measures tends to be on women. There were widespread reports of women being heavily involved in advocacy for, and design and delivery of, activities. Several participants noted that a key gap is the engagement of men in the gender equity project in Australian universities.

We need to change the whole culture of the workplace. So, we need our male colleagues to come through with us. And we need our nonbinary colleagues to come through with us, you know. (Academic 12)

Leader 5 reported that bringing men into their Gender Equity Committee was an important organisational strategy for better engaging men in the cultivation of a gender-inclusive workplace.

Finally, in spite of the sectoral nature of the gender equity challenge and the shared challenges facing institutions, the tendency is to focus inwards, to the practices within an institution, rather than to seek out opportunities for knowledge sharing across the sector or sectoral advocacy to promote change and reshape features of the regulatory context that perpetuate gender inequalities (Academic 3).

Participants reported a number of trends and pressures at the sectoral level that result in highly gendered outcomes across Australian universities. These include:

1. Increasing competition and metrification within the sector
2. Casualisation and the 'disposable academic'
3. Grant funding structures and the favouring of 'masculinised' disciplines, and
4. The COVID-19 pandemic.

The first three trends, and particularly the first two (competition and metrification, and casualisation), were widely viewed as arising from the marketisation of universities more broadly (Scholar 1; Scholar 4).

Competition and metrification

According to participants, the growing focus on metrics in universities drives competition and the valuing of merit in a manner that disadvantages women. The view of many was that this is created and reinforced by the regulatory context in which government funding for universities and for research grants is based on narrow metrics and priorities (Academic 11). According to participants, this focus on metrics and competition is often legitimised by what is described as the cultivation of a 'culture of excellence'. But while the metrics are constructed as objective measures, they are underwritten by narrow expectations and assumptions about what constitutes achievement. Five participants described these measures as masculinist in nature.

'Metrification' focuses on narrow measures such as the volume of very specific kinds of outputs that academics produce (i.e., journal articles), the number of citations those outputs receive, and the citation rating of the journals in which they are published. These narrow parameters mean that other forms of achievement are marginalised. According to participants, examples of these marginalised contributions are collaboration, capacity building (Scholar 3), teaching, and governance (Scholar 7), all activities in which female academics are often more heavily engaged. Other suggested that metrification does not adequately recognise the *qualitative* nature of the outputs, the contexts in which they were produced, and the wider impacts that those outputs have (Scholar 4).

The way the beans, well, which colour beans are counted, I suppose doesn't always act in women's interests. (Scholar 2)

It's really not about kind of how many blobs of this have I kind of generated. And I think we've been really saturated with the kind of productivity model that's very at odds with many dimensions of life that are coded as feminine. (Scholar 7)

This metrification also drives up expectations and creates a culture of overwork. Most participants described a process of work intensification associated with metrics (Academic 1; Advocate 4; Scholar 1; Academic 2) that creates an idealised worker, focuses on the atomised scholar with complete fidelity to work (Scholar 8), and generates a drive to meet ever increasing expectations which, in turn, push metrics up even further and create unobtainable goals.

I think the masculinist discourse that exists. The obsession with metrics. The obsession with the individual superstar. The obsession with H indexes. The competitiveness... all of that has its gendered effects. (Scholar 3)

This 'competition mindset' (Academic 3), 'pressure to perform' (Scholar 3), 'hyper-productive model' (Scholar 7) in which 'all hours are potentially work hours' (Scholar 8) marginalises those with care responsibilities that may limit their 'fidelity to work' (i.e., constant availability for and devotion to work) and their ability to obtain the 'super-productivity' valued by the academy.

To be a professor in Australia is like being a super professor, ... it's just crazy compared to my colleagues in [other countries], you know, the expectations here are enormous and

that will have an effect on women even more so because of that burden, if you will, of the caring burden that is placed on them. (Scholar 3)

It's simply exhausting trying to perform in every single area. (Academic 6)

People with family responsibilities, more likely to be women, are more likely to feel excluded, marginalised, unrecognised or alienated by these kind of work expectations.

I even sometimes get scared of saying that I'm just going to go on annual leave, I'm going to have a week off... (Academic 1)

Metrics are so competitive. That to be able to meet those metrics, you do need to work overtime ... expected to work at nights and weekends. And once caring responsibilities hit, and they do impact on women more, you just can't necessarily meet the metrics that are required to go for a promotion at a university and that does impact more so on women than it does on men... ...our director [told] us all at a staff meeting that if we want to get anywhere in academia, we have to expect to give up our weekends and our evenings.... So in essence, you kind of hear, you're being told to give up your family, your life, etcetera, to be able to become a professor. (Academic 12)

According to several participants, this culture was also disrupting what some thought scholarship should be about:

We actually all work for a not for profit... Why are we running like we're ... some sort of corporation? (Academic 2)

Casualisation: The feminisation of precarious work

Casualisation was identified by almost all participants as one of the strongest drivers of gender inequalities. Consistent with the data set out above (DESE, 2021a), participants reported that casualisation disproportionately affects those at lower levels of the career scale, and those in teaching focused positions. Women are more likely to be both in Levels A and B, and in teaching only/focused roles. Casualisation in professional staff also disproportionately affects women because a higher percentage of professional staff are women (Advocates 2 and 3; Academic 7).

The majority of the women here are on short term contracts. I think in my time working at [university], I've been on 22 short-term contracts. Never ever get to that place where I can be considered like I'm in a safe spot. (Academic 12)

Some participants reported that casualisation can create unequal power relationships, which could at times be exploitative (Scholar 6; Academic 13) and could also create the conditions under which staff felt pressured to say yes to requests from their employer, or to make their family needs secondary to their work. One participant put it like this:

If you're [junior] you are likely to more likely to be female, or, even worse, if you're in a precarious position in sessional contracts, wondering where the next one's coming your way, you will be by stealth obliged to do more. You put your hand up to do more. You will be given more. There's very little rescue from that. And what's expected of you will be different.... That's with precarity of work as much as anything, but there is a gendered aspect to precarity of work. So the issue, just keeps going around in a circle like that. (Academic 11)

One participant reported that these unequal power relationships can also affect people's willingness to report sexual harassment (Advocate 3).

Another participant reported that they had done some analysis of conversion circumstances at their own institution and their perception was that access to conversion was unequal. Men at their institution, they argued, had been more likely to be successful in their conversion applications because:

They've been able to prove they have X number of, or more, years. Their work has been more regular because they have been more available. They have been able to produce more outputs because they've had less constrictions on their time and more ability to put that time in. (Academic 7)

Several participants also reported that casual/insecure work contributed to women colleagues leaving the sector, particularly early career women (Scholar 8; Academic 5). Several said they had considered leaving academia themselves when they were on casual or short-term contracts. This was in part due to the lack of secure career pathways but also because combining paid work and unpaid care was more difficult for casual workers:

Because as an early career researcher looking at the next 5-10 years of my life, what else do I, what other goals do I have outside of work as a whole person? And will academia allow me to even attempt to be those, to achieve those goals as well. I don't know. So that instability and lack of financial security, is a really big factor, I think. (Academic 5)

Finally, several participants reported that casualisation undermines the effectiveness of the gender equity measures more broadly, because a growing proportion of staff does not have access to the equity measures such as access to leaves, professional development, and so on (Scholar 5). One leader described their efforts to extend some opportunities, such as mentorship and career development, to casuals (Leader 5).

Grant structures (government funded)

In line with the data presented above, participants reported concern that women on average tend to have poorer outcomes than men when it comes to Category 1 funding (i.e., ARC and NHMRC grants) While the data suggests improvement in some areas (Government stakeholder 2), participants suggested that this improvement conceals some persistent gendered patterns. While success rates among women Chief Investigators (CIs) have increased (ARC, 2022), women are less likely to be lead CIs, and on average receive less grant funding. One participant described the reasons for this difference in the following way: *'partly because there's more men in science where the grants are bigger, but it's also because women tend to get less for the grants that they apply for and tend to ask for less.'* (Scholar 7). According to one participant, there remain challenges for certain groups of women. This participant said that level D women, for example, do poorly on ARC grants because ECRs:

can be the junior person on a big project led by a big man, and that's a sort of very familiar role and that's okay. But ... it's much harder to get on a project if you're a level D woman... your time is expensive. You're not clearly sort of subordinate... What are you there to do really? (Scholar 7)

In the area of medical research, changes in NHMRC grant funding have failed to reduce gender inequalities. In February 2022 the CEO of the NHMRC issued a communique confirming that more of its new investigator grants, introduced in 2018-2019, were 'awarded to men than women and men have received more funding than women' (Kelso, 2022).

Participants described several other aspects of the grant system that contribute to fewer grant opportunities among women. These were identified as:

1. time and timing

2. bias in assessment, and
3. changes to the structure of research funding.

1. The **time and timing** involved in the preparation of grant applications was identified as a major barrier to success for women. According to participants, the inordinate amount of time (often out of work hours) spent on preparing grant applications is less possible for people with family responsibilities, who are more likely to be women (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2020). At the same time, in the context of the Australian Research Council, the timing of the due dates for several major grants (in the most recent round, for example, the DECRA, Discovery Indigenous, Centre of Excellence, and Laureate schemes) regularly fall early in the new year, which means that a large portion of the summer holidays must be spent in grant writing.

[Grant applications take] a massive, massive, massive amount of time in the middle of the summer when people have kids off school... you would not devise a grant process like that if you wanted it to be fair, I think, that's, that's a huge, huge factor. (Scholar 7)

If you wanted to design something to be as difficult as possible for people with caring responsibilities, you basically design the ARC system. (Scholar 8)

The transition of the Linkage Scheme to a rolling application process in 2016 is likely to have mitigated this somewhat and the data analysed earlier in this report suggests the proportion of Linkage applications made by women gradually and consistently increased from 2016, but more research is required to study this more closely.

2. According to the participants, grant schemes are also **based on assessments of merit** (Government stakeholder 2) that are weighed against women. Participants reported that the ROPE (Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence) Statement is important but has considerable limitations. The ROPE process has two components: one aspect is the way it governs *eligibility* for schemes like the ARC Discovery Early Career Researcher Award (DECRA) and Future Fellowship Schemes and the second is the way it governs how *performance* is assessed. Under the DECRA and Future Fellowship schemes, eligibility to apply is based on the number of years between the conferral date of a PhD and the grant submission closing date. For the DECRA, for example, a researcher is eligible to apply in the 5-year period beyond the conferral of their PhD. However, this eligibility period may be extended to accommodate career interruptions. This aspect of the ROPE process was not raised at all by participants, suggesting that the current provisions are functioning well. The much more important aspect identified by participants was the second aspect, the way ROPE is used to evaluate performance in the context of career interruptions. including how it is set up to value certain kinds of activities more than others, the inadequate way it captures career interruptions, how research offices advise people to use the ROPE section, and how the assessors interpret it (Scholar 4, see also *Metriification* above and *Gendered performance measurement* below). The participants were concerned that this results in bias in peer review processes, which leads to women receiving lower scores and therefore less funding. Several participants had the perception that this is self-perpetuating, because lower funding in one round means that a person's track record looks worse the next round (Scholar 6; Scholar 7)

I thought the point was to talk about obstacles and interruptions, but it somehow collapses the research achievements into that same space. So ... I see the ROPE section kind of moving away from what it was originally intended to do. (Scholar 7)

Although we write ROPEs, ... there's no real feedback on how they are considered and whether it actually made a difference in terms of that assessment, so often applicants walk away thinking well did they even read that? Was that even factored in? And often comments that are fed back seem to suggest that it wasn't factored in, so that really is a concern and

I know that people have felt the ... ARC assessors... they acknowledge that there's been this break, but then say hey, but there hasn't been enough pubs that have come out during that time, so they seem contradictory kind of positions. ... I we need some reassurance that that's definitely acknowledged. (Scholar 4)

Many participants were also concerned about what they perceived to be inadequate processes and lack of training on bias when it comes to the assessment of applications (Scholar 6).

3. Finally, participants noted that changes to the **structures of government research funding** indirectly disadvantages women. For example, participants described the valuation of STEM disciplines over the arts and social science, with quantitative impacts on the amount of grant funding obtained by women (who are overrepresented in the arts and social sciences) and qualitative impacts in the way in which women feel their research is valued. This is evidenced, for example, in the growing focus of ARC funding on advanced manufacturing and the reductions in government funding for humanities and social sciences degrees. Several participants articulated it in the following way:

Dominant sciences are valued and obsessed over, versus those more feminised fields like education, like nursing, all of those professional fields are not considered, you know, they're not worthy. And so all of that has its gendered effects. (Scholar 3)

You can see the dividing up now, for instance, as we see the impact of the government's policy on subjects within the humanities on Arts degrees, so that women in those disciplines are going to be kind of double victimised to some extent because of that. (Academic 11)

In medical research, there have been reports that reconfiguration of the NHMRC grant schemes in 2019 have widened rather than reduced gender inequalities, with the outcomes of the new NHMRC investigator grants identified as a major source if these widening gender inequalities:

They don't even get to report that when they're renewing their grant, they'll just be considered to have received the same amount of funding as the men, so if they haven't achieved as much as the men, obviously they're not as good as the men, and this is what's happening. (Scholar 6)

In 2021 only 21% of grants at the most senior level, L3, were awarded to women, resulting in them receiving \$66m less funding than men (Purton & Borger, 2021; Borger, 2022). In October 2022, the NHMRC addressed the concerns about the 'very distinct advantage for male researchers' (Butler, 2022), so that from 2023 its five-year Investigator Grants will be funded on a 50:50 basis for men and women.

At the same time, a decrease in government grant funding meant that some researchers relied more heavily on philanthropy, which is much less transparent and according to one participant, more likely to generate gender inequalities in the way it is acquired and distributed (Scholar 6).

One participant reported that while the funding arrangements were out of the control of individual universities, they were disappointed at what was perceived as a lack of advocacy work by universities to overcome some of these issues (Advocate 2).

Impacts of COVID

Participants described mixed impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. On the one hand, the pandemic created conditions that improved the acceptance of flexibility (Advocate 4; Scholar 9; Academic 11, Professional 4) and commitment to understanding and attending to employees' health and wellbeing and care responsibilities (Academic 5).

I think for a long time, academics felt like they couldn't ever mention that there was that life outside of work and you needed to be that dedicated, focused, professional academic, I suppose, who lives and breathes the work. And so I think that's changed, so that's been a positive. And if we can maintain that then that's great. (Scholar 4)

But while there was greater understanding of people's care responsibilities, several participants noted that in their own Schools, expectations about output did not change (Scholar 1) and the pressure to maintain metrics for many was immense. Some participants also reported that while the flexibility was beneficial, working from home could be a challenge, particularly for those with care responsibilities at home, because it did not permit prolonged periods of focusing on research/writing (Scholar 2).

Some participants reported other effects of the pandemic that were gendered in the way they were experienced. Several reported that the pandemic created more time required on teaching and administration and pastoral care (Academic 2, Scholar 1), all tasks that women often do more of (see *The gendered distribution of work: workloads and academic housework*, below). Others observed a gendered impact on research projects, with one stating that while interruptions to research projects affected both women and men (Scholar 2), 'we're in research where we're [doing qualitative work with vulnerable populations]. So... we weren't allowed to work with people who we would normally work with [because services shut down etc]. So ... the research couldn't go ahead. We got further behind. Our outputs slowed down, and because we're people-focused, you know, we're actually qualitative ... We're not churning out articles like say, somebody who [does] quantitative analysis at their computer' (Academic 12). Academic 1 agreed with this account, suggesting the gendered patterns of involvement in certain types of research could have exacerbated the gendered impacts of the pandemic.

The organisational level

The gendered distribution of work: workloads and academic housework

According to participants, research, teaching and service are distributed, and accorded value, in gendered ways. First, participants reported experiencing implicit biases about women being more 'caring', and consequently allocated more teaching, or teaching-intensive roles, and more pastoral care focused work (Advocate 3; Scholar 5; Scholar 4, Academic 11). This is in part likely to be because women are more heavily represented in the Level B and C roles where a large proportion of the teaching lies. One participant observed that women are often allocated the first-year high volume undergraduate classes that are intensive to teach and have high pastoral care responsibilities (Professional 5). However, participants reported that teaching is not recognised and rewarded in the same way as research (Scholar 4).

Research is always prized as this prestigious thing that scholars do, which is sort of part of that masculine ideal worker, ideal researcher and education is kind of pushed to this sort of like feminised realm. (Scholar 1)

Participants widely reported that women are also more likely to be allocated, or take on, roles in service and leadership that include substantial pastoral care responsibilities, taking on leading roles in student support and guidance, and leading roles in educational administration and governance, such as convenor of undergraduate programs, or director of academic programs, doing a large amount of work in performance reviews, etc. (Scholar 4; Scholar 9; Scholar 2; Academic 12).

We domesticate the university and make it more approachable and homey for students to reach out for support and things. But we don't actually put in any additional support to support academics in that. (Scholar 1)

I see women taking on leadership roles, prematurely. I see women at level C and so forth being heads of school. I see women at level C being associate deans. And this is I think, a kind of feminised pathway to... a particular kind of feminised academic career that involves a certain kind of leadership. And it often involves student-facing leadership... But I think that there's a kind of circularity around this, whereas those roles are already seen as kind of pastoral, therefore not intellectual. Then the fact that when you get women in these roles that exacerbates the way they're understood as pastoral not intellectual... And that is I think what women often struggle with still, is to be promoted on the basis of intellectual activity, to have their careers being seen, to be seen as about intellectual activity. (Scholar 8)

In addition, participants reported that most gender inclusion work (Advocate 2; Scholar 9) falls on the shoulders of women and other marginalised groups and is extremely time consuming, and the women who did it were highly committed but reported that it felt their commitment was being taken advantage of. One put it this way:

And they end up doing all this kind of free labour over and above their work. And it's really important and I personally wouldn't give it away, ever. But it does, you know, it's really taxing on time, and it just seems if there was a senior person who that fell within their portfolio that then they might ensure that it's appropriately structured, the work, and that it might be appropriately workloaded as well. (Scholar 4)

This is described as 'academic housework' (Scholar 1), 'caring labour' (Scholar 2), 'invisible skills' (Advocate 3), 'domesticating the university', and 'institutional health work' (Scholar 9), and participants consistently described the ways in which this work, while highly skilled and important to the successful running of the university, is not adequately recognised or remunerated in the systems that are set up for identifying and rewarding achievement within the university (Advocate 3; Scholar 6; Scholar 8; Scholar 9). One noted that a signifier of this lack of recognition of teaching is the way in which time is managed when it comes to teaching compared with research. They argued that while teaching hours tend to be 'micromanaged', there is a great deal of autonomy about how research hours are organised, suggesting a greater level of respect for research than teaching (Academic 9).

This 'academic housework' also limits the time available for the activities that ARE valued, such as research (Advocate 3; Scholar 2; Academic 13; Academic 11).

You're never going to be able to do the right research or get the right teaching award or whatever it is you need to stay in the job or to get promoted if you never have the time to reflect on it or do it. (Scholar 5)

They're extremely high teaching loads. And those, I mean it's a death sentence for an academic career because, you know it's, I refer to it as a terminal role because there is no way to do anything... And this disproportionately affects our women. And so gender is part of that, but also high workloads. (Academic 9)

Consequently, according to most participants, women are doing a large amount of work that is not adequately recognised for promotions and have much less time to do the work that IS recognised. According to one:

Decisions are made about promotions more than anything based on research performance and for research performance, the dice are loaded against women maybe partly cause of

what happens on the teaching and the admin side, but also because of what happens on the lack of time side, but the ability to find the time to do research. (Scholar 2)

Even when women are allocated research time, there are barriers that need addressing in their capacity to use it, which will be explored in the next section. The siloing of research and teaching through the creation of teaching-focused roles deepens these inequalities (Scholar 1). Several said they expected this to be exacerbated by the shift towards the individual negotiation of workloads (Academic 10, Scholar 7).

Gendered performance measurement: recruitment, promotions and recognition

The strongest theme emerging at the organisational level was the gendered way in which performance is measured and rewarded. This has two key aspects: one concerns the kind of achievements that are recognised, and the other concerns the way in which opportunities for research are understood and measured. According to participants, both of these operate to limit women's access to opportunities for careers in universities.

The first aspect, the kind of achievements that are recognised, concerns **definitions of merit**. The definitions of merit derive in part from the context of competition and metrification identified in the earlier section. Key measures of success include the number of grants, whereby Category 1 grants are favoured, the number of outputs, whereby first authored journal articles in high-ranking journals are favoured, and the number of citations. Many participants articulated in different ways the way in which the measures of success are ostensibly objective but are underpinned by gendered structures of opportunity (Academic 6). Several participants recounted the way in which smaller and more applied grants, collaborative work, capacity building activities, publications in journals with a more applied focus, and other forms of impact (beyond citations) are not as well recognised (Advocate 2). Yet, several participants had the perception that women are more likely to apply for smaller grants, engage in capacity building work, and to be engaged in research for which publication can sometimes be slower, such as qualitative work (for more details, see *Competition and metrification*, above – there is a lack of research evidence on whether participation in capacity building activities is gendered, and on the existing the distribution of grants by size outside of Category 1 grants).

The women that I know, and myself speaking, we're more likely to want to have our students be first authors and ... our staff really involved in a project, giving them responsibility. But under leadership that I've had in various positions, I haven't experienced the same from male colleagues, which I think has impacted career-wise. (Academic 12)

Merit also focuses much more on research than teaching (Advocate 2), and women are more likely to be in teaching intensive roles, and when teaching is appraised, it can be appraised in gendered ways, with students rating women teachers more harshly than men (Academic 11; Academic 6). These definitions of merit, and ways of measuring them, result in more men having their achievements recognised, being promoted, and being successful in obtaining research funding and other opportunities (Advocate 2; Advocate 4).

The second aspect concerns the way in which **opportunities for research** are understood and measured. There was a widely held view among participants that women are more likely to have fewer opportunities to achieve the research measures of success, because they have less research time, either because of the high levels of teaching and administration, or because of the time they spend engaged in unpaid family care.

Women might have less time, less extra time beyond their core working hours to be pumping out extra papers. (Advocate 2)

In recognition that not all scholars have the same access to opportunities for research, most institutions have introduced the consideration of ROPE. ROPE is also included as part of all Category 1 grant applications. Participants agreed that having ROPE is better than not having anything but identified a number of foundational problems in the way in which it operates.

According to most participants, the way ROPE is assessed across the sector is not adequately nuanced, is not applied equally across institutions and contexts (Advocate 2) and is not applied in a way that is transparent and accountable.

The first issue raised was the limitations in the way in which 'interruptions' and their potential impact on research opportunities were understood. For example, interruptions are widely understood as an extended break from research, for example a period of parental leave, or less so, a period of working on a reduced FTE. But according to our participants, care responsibilities have an impact on opportunities beyond the reduced FTE and period on parental leave. This is largely because of a culture in universities that, in order to meet the performance expectations, requires or encourages scholars to work hours that far exceed their contracted hours. Consequently, while many scholars work long days, evenings and weekends in order to achieve the grant and publication metrics required for success, those with care responsibilities find it much more difficult to carry out this extra labour (Scholar 9; Advocate 2). Yet ROPE is based on an assumption that the 'uninterrupted' career is 38 hours per week. It does not, therefore, take account of the extra research opportunities afforded by having care-free evenings and weekends. Several of the participants framed it in the following ways:

So if you say, as an academic, your contract says you do, I don't know, 37 and a half hours a week, so you can look at time lost below that... but it's very difficult to capture the hours that someone chooses to work because they're in a position to be able to do that extra work. So, relative to opportunity, things can also always look at baseline and less than the baseline, but it's very hard to get them to look at more than the baseline. And I don't know if you could get people to say, well, actually I have nothing else to do with my time. So I spend every weekend in the lab. Maybe we need to be encouraging the over workers to work down to the hours they're paid for. (Advocate 2)

I just think that the ROPE should also talk about how to manage the privilege. How have you managed this with your privilege? In actual fact have you underperformed based on your privilege? That's a very different question... (Scholar 9)

[People without care responsibilities or gender affirmation challenges] can throw themselves into their work in a way that looks much better on a performance development review than people from other kind of demographics. (Professional 5)

If I want to go above a level C I really feel like I'm probably going to have to wait 'til my children are adults just to cope with that workload. (Academic 2)

According to participants, ROPE also does not account for the body and emotion work involved in having children or caring for others. For example, having a miscarriage, being pregnant, breastfeeding, or the emotional labour involved in providing care for an infant or another family member may all affect a person's productivity even if their hours at work remain the same. ROPE is currently inadequate in the way in which it captures these kinds of limitations on research opportunities (i.e., Scholar 4).

Others raised concerns about the ways in which men had begun drawing on ROPE sections as an example of the way the ROPE process is inadequately equipped to understand the nuanced ways in which care responsibilities shape opportunities for research. They were also raised as examples of the way in which pre-existing gender biases of promotion committees and assessors can shape the way accounts of career interruptions are interpreted.

Obviously, it's really, really, really good when men do care work... But when I see these men who write ROPE sections about how childcare has interrupted their careers, and I know that they have a partner who's doing the primary childcare, like I know it 'cause I know these people... I'm slightly disconcerted by that, and I worry about it really because it is true that young men these days do much more in terms of looking after children than, say, the kind of iconic gentleman professor of decades ago. But to me, baths and reading books at bedtime is not the same as breastfeeding, as being really the primary carer. So I worry a little bit about [it]... that kind of seems to me taking away from what we know is a really, really strongly gendered pattern of caring labour. (Scholar 8)

Men just simply have a much longer period in which they can be having children. And so when parental leave is being given to people who are in their sort of forties and fifties who are just having a baby for the first time or whatever, it's a completely different kind of career interruption. It's not the one that kind of knocks you off your perch when you are trying to get established. And I think it's just one example of that whole way in which a bodily life isn't really factored into this and nor is any kind of in depth understanding of gendered life, really. (Scholar 7)

Where a male applicant put in a relative to opportunity based on parental responsibilities and caring for older people in his family and the committee in both instances were highly praiseworthy. Whereas for women, it almost goes unmentioned, like it's almost a, you have to have it here as a kind of an explanation for deficiency. (Scholar 9)

The growing propensity for men to use ROPE sections could be a reflection not just of greater involvement of men in childcare, but also of creeping workloads and intense pressure on academics working long hours, which could create the perception among some fathers that in order to compete with those men who work all evening and weekend, they must highlight that they are participating in, say, bathing the kids in the evening, or going to their sport on the weekend. The intensified pressure for complete fidelity to work, therefore, may be contributing to a situation in which fathers engaging in family activities outside of work time are drawing on the ROPE section and distorting its original purpose.

Another important distortion of the ROPE principle was raised by participants who described how they were now advised by their research offices, and by the ARC, to draft their ROPE sections as a 'triumph' over adversity, in which the focus is on how much they had achieved in spite of their care responsibilities, rather than how their care responsibilities may have limited their research opportunities. The focus has shifted, therefore, towards minimising the care responsibilities and maximising outputs during periods of care.

Last couple of times I applied I initially wrote something that was actually about things that had limited me. And it got sent straight back by the research office who said, 'no, you can't begin with that. You've got to begin with this is how I sort of triumphed over all adversity and became the brilliant person I am today'. And that seems to me really undercuts some of the original purpose of that... (Scholar 7)

I guess I've been sort of told by my supervisor that you can put that in there, ... But they still wanna see you hitting all of the markers... (Academic 3)

It's that thing about being expected to give up life and give up children, your family life, so to be able to meet those metrics. (Academic 12)

I was on the ground with three other men. And I couldn't believe the things that they were writing, in that section which I think was originally designed to allow you to say there have been these difficulties without saying 'and I am the most magnificent person in the world',

[now] it's very much sort of subordinated to that overall project of selling yourself. (Scholar 7)

This is compounded in the emphasis on ROPE as an explanation for deficiency, rather than an explanation of context (Scholar 9), in which care responsibilities are constructed exclusively as a burden that makes one 'unproductive', rather than something that can contribute positively to a person's research career and life.

Families and children are kind of positioned as this burden that we, that this terrible thing that has happened to people and that we need to declare that this has ...had a negative impact on your ability to achieve at work. But actually like that's so awful to think of these, as your children like that, as burdens to your careers, when actually they're complimentary and they're amazing, and they're an output in and of themselves as well... framing it in a way that isn't a negative and that allows you to bring a whole new set of skills to your work from your experiences outside of work as well...we bring our whole selves to work and we are not just like leave everything at the door and become this ideal academic. (Scholar 1)

They think maternity leave is an excuse for lack of productivity. (Scholar 6)

Finally, several participants reported being concerned about a lack of consistency, transparency, and disingenuous ways in which ROPEs were considered by assessors. One asked 'how do you prove that you have taken something into account?' (Academic 11). Due to the centrality of the (flawed) ROPE process to promotion and grants, most participants suggested that these processes are weighted towards men (Scholar 1, Scholar 7, Academic 11, others).

Other gendered barriers in recruitment and promotion

Participants reported that other aspects of the recruitment and promotions processes created gendered barriers to career progression. While most reported that universities have come a long way in improving their processes, such as through using gender balanced panels and shortlists and so on, there remained gendered barriers. For example, a few participants reported issues remained in recruitment processes, such as standardised position descriptions (PDs) and the use of external recruitment firms to recruit senior leaders, and firms which have gender biases in their processes (Scholar 9).

They probably think they're being fair and equitable by having the same PD... But standardised PDs are only standardised by what you know, and what you know is appointing male academics. (Scholar 9)

One participant recounted a particular high level recruitment process at their institution and the ripple effects it had on the university more broadly:

People were picked as high-level researchers who were performers, and they were sort of brought in as ... golden children of the PVC ... brought in as these star performers were a group of a senior academics who are older, who were brought in also and they were pretty much all men ... And they really set an agenda around performance being male dominated in, not in terms of who was doing that work, but in terms of how that work was performed and produced. (Academic 4)

In promotions, in addition to the challenges associated with how performance relative to opportunity is assessed, participants reported barriers such as insidious messages that part-time workers will not be promoted, or that people with career interruptions are 'not ready' (Scholar 4) (often perpetuated by Heads of Schools or Departments (Academic 11, Academic 1)), or that women are less likely to be 'tapped on the shoulder' or encouraged to go for promotion. Several noted that promotions are highly time consuming and must often be fit into the 'extra time' outside working hours that people with family responsibilities find it more difficult to find

(Academic 11; Academic 9, Scholar 5). As a consequence, several reported, women are less likely to go for promotion or more likely to wait longer before they apply (Academic 6). According to a number of participants, while the promotion process is improving in overcoming gender bias (i.e., by having gender equal panels etc.), it will make insufficient difference if the metrics on which performance is assessed are not also being addressed and revised (Academic 12).

There's a lot of policies and panels and it's all pretty sharp. It's the selection that I've still got questions around and what's deemed, who's deemed to be a performer, and often people think they've got really nice objective, clean measures like number of journal articles. But people haven't begun to unpack new systems. (Academic 6)

[The process is improving but] your issue is getting the right runs on the board to be seen. (Scholar 5)

Leadership

Participants also identified gendered barriers to opportunities for leadership. Several reported that women miss out on leadership opportunities because they needed 'on the job experience' but they did not have adequate opportunities to obtain that experience (Advocate 1b): 'we know there are gendered things around that or having to be recruited up for roles' (Advocate 2). One put it this way:

It seems that you have to have done the job to be able to get the job, which doesn't necessarily open the door for new people to come in and look at how leadership can be in any university environment. (Scholar 9)

While most participants acknowledged that universities were making efforts to increase support for women to take up leadership opportunities, there was also scepticism of leadership programs because, participants reported, they teach women to 'fight through a flawed system' where the idea of what constitutes a good leader does not change, and masculine forms of leadership are still valorised, and women can succeed as leaders if they can be more like men.

There must be a problem with our definition of leadership, if men can naturally do it and women have to read a book to be told how to do it like that, it doesn't make sense to me. (Advocate 2)

I don't want to essentialise masculine or feminine leadership styles, but often, you know, collegiality isn't valued or working in teams isn't valued. There's still very much you know the idea of a successful leader is someone who's authoritative, it seems that has that individualistic style of leadership. (Scholar 4)

I went to this women in research symposium, and it was meant to be really uplifting. And there were these brilliant women and there's no denying they were brilliant women standing up there talking about how they got to where they were in a reasonably short time, you know, that they just applied themselves and everything. And every... woman said I couldn't have done it without my husband at home looking after the kids and helping in the kitchen and stuff. And it was just like, my colleague and I looked at each other and we just walked out feeling like complete failures. We didn't have that option. (Academic 12)

Some reported that while women are participating in leadership programs, they are missing out on time to do the research they need to do to progress successfully (Advocate 2). Others were sceptical of leadership programs because they felt it individualised the problem, made women feel like the problem was their lack of confidence rather than structural barriers in the university, and placed the responsibility on the women for 'not succeeding' (Scholar 1, Scholar 2). Several reported that issues concerning retention, as well as promotion, reduce women's involvement in

leadership (i.e., women leaving academia) (Scholar 2, Scholar 6), and this requires different solutions, but the solutions are focused on recruitment and promotion. Finally, several reported gender differences in recognition that were evident in the pay structures, suggesting that a pay gap exists at higher levels, and that bonuses and loadings are not transparent and are more often asked for by, and awarded to, men (Advocate 1a, Scholar 6).

A key consequence of this gendered evaluation of performance is that women are underrepresented at senior levels (Advocates 1a, 2, 4, Government stakeholder 1b, Scholar 7, Professional 5, Academic 12). There are also other more subtle differences in career progression, for example, one participant noted that women tend to get promoted later in their careers, so even if there is ostensibly a gender balance in the number of professors, the female professors may be older than the males (Scholar 8).

(In)flexible working arrangements: The flexibility illusion

Universities offer generous leaves and flexible working arrangements, which were generally appreciated among academic and most professional participants – *‘we have the option to work from home and we had that before COVID’* (Academic 12) – but there are very real, and frequently gendered, limitations to this flexibility. Chief among them is the combination of high workloads, a culture of overwork and the pressure to be exceptional in a global industry. Participants saw flexibility as *‘something with ‘a very dark side to it’* (Academic 11), with one participant stating, *‘that culture of overwork negates any kind of ... positives about flexible work’* (Scholar 4).

This view of flexibility as a *‘double edged sword’* (Scholar 8) however was only expressed by academic staff. Until COVID-19 disrupted work, flexibility, in particular working from home, was much less available to the (mostly female) professional workforce. Participants also raised equity considerations for casual and short-term contract staff who may have less access to flexible work or certain types of leave (Scholar 1) and who may not see flexibility as an adequate trade-off for poor pay and precarious work. As one academic put it *‘if you’re suddenly offered amazing amounts of flexibility but you’re being paid pretty miserably, and you never seem to get off a casual contract, then it’s all just bits’* (Academic 6).

According to participants, two sides of the same coin operate when it comes to women’s use of flexibility options: powerful workplace norms operate to create the perception that workers who use flexible work options are less committed and less valuable – *‘men don’t tend to take it up’* (Advocate 1a) – creating barriers to women’s progression; yet, perversely, when women do take on leadership roles, flexibility is less available to them due to traditional perceptions of such roles as full-time and on-campus (Academic 10).

COVID-19 lockdowns potentially have created new norms around flexibility, however participants reported that *‘these norms are not clear’* (Advocate 1a), as universities are still wrestling with new teaching delivery models, i.e., in-person or online, as students and staff return to campus, and are still weighing up the appropriateness of formal or informal flexibility arrangements. One interviewee (Advocate 1a) mentioned being aware of several mid-level managers’ *‘frustration and almost anger’* with hybrid work/home working arrangements because of what they saw as inefficiency and problems contacting employees. As managers are the gatekeepers to lower-level employees’ access to flexible work, these concerns deserve attention in order to ensure the new norms flourish rather than wither away. New flexibility norms also have the potential to lock-in gender inequities if more women than men work from home and experience presenteeism: *‘we risk kind of creating this sort of two class sort of like employee*

system where people who work from home more often or full time are sort of devalued for having less face time' (Professional 5). However, we can be cautiously optimistic about new flex norms taking root from the description of one academic of her hesitation in inquiring about flexible working conditions prior to the pandemic but who is now *finding 'a lot of job advertisements ... say yes, ... flexible working conditions are open to discussion. OK, well, I feel a bit better about applying for that job'* (Academic 5).

The intra-university level

Homosociality, networks and professional development

Informal networks in academia are essential for opening doors (resulting in a 'tap on the shoulder' for new openings), building research teams, organic mentoring opportunities and for professional development. These networks can be valuable for both academic and professional roles. When successful, and particularly for early career academics, they can provide access to research grants, conference funding, research groups and inclusion on publications:

Bringing people into research teams or this that or the other or whatever they're going to build their career in a way that individually, slaving away and trying to do it yourself is a lot, is harder, so it's opportunities, I suppose ... (Scholar 5)

Yet according to several participants, these networks can be more difficult to access for women. Three participants reported that networks can be built in a way that is homosocial (favouring people that seem similar), whereby men tend to build networks with other men, *'not even thinking to reach out to women'* (Advocate 2). Several interviewees described having to *'hustle'* to build their own networks to try and create opportunities (Academic 2, Academic 3). Several described a process through which, as more women have risen to higher levels, they too have built homosocial networks with other women and helped them to rise also.

Several participants also reported fewer opportunities to build their professional networks because of their greater family responsibilities, particularly when their families are younger. For example, they have less available time outside of normal working hours and also find it harder to leave family responsibilities behind in order to attend multi-day conferences. Finally, casuals, who are more likely to be women, can suffer from lack of access to day-to-day networks:

You're not invited to office weekly meetings, management meetings, so you just don't have the opportunity to develop those networks that are in any institution, any workplace, is what really helps you ... learn and broaden your knowledge but also gives you opportunities to think about other things. So, yes, I think that insecure work is debilitating. (Academic 7)

Managerial intermediaries

As in any large institution, managers have a critical impact on individual employees' careers. Heads of Departments, Heads of School and Deans have a large amount of discretionary power which often, according to participants, disadvantages women. Interviewees saw two important roles that their managers performed: as interpreters of institutional policy and as gatekeepers to opportunities for women, particularly for academics. In the first instance, there was recognition that universities' policies and programs to promote gender inclusion could be diluted or subverted by managers at the local level. As one advocate noted, it was sometimes necessary to include policies in the institution's enterprise agreement *'to ensure that it's actually enforced'* (Advocate 3). It should be noted that the converse can also apply where local managers can

struggle with implementing global policies and programs in more diversity-inclusive ways (Professional 5).

In the second instance, several interviewees commented that their opportunities are heavily dependent on individual managers *'and whether they're just a nice, kind person. There hasn't been much managerial training and there hasn't been consistent managerial training'* (Academic 6). Managers hold power over staff in a number of ways. They control the allocation of workloads sometimes by making quite arbitrary rules (Academic 7). Individual academics have to negotiate their workloads with their Head of School (Scholar 7), with a significant power differential. Managers also control whether academic staff's contracts will continue from year to year, or from research grant to research grant, and they control whether casual staff members are able to convert to permanent or contract staff. Managers also have discretion over whether to facilitate flexible work arrangements and leaves, so for example, one interviewee described a manager removing long-standing flexible working arrangements *'on a whim'* (Advocate 3); another described how a particular leave arrangement was not communicated to all staff, rather access relied on a positive relationship with the manager (Academic 2).

Managers have significant power in facilitating access to funding and mentorship opportunities. This can be positive:

That ... was the supervisor giving me a little push. Hey, this would suit you, you know? And she was quite good at doing that, of here's a little grant you might want to apply for. ... [H]ere's a travel grant. (Academic 8)

But where managers' discretion around funding is concerned, one respondent described instances of foregrounding women to bring in philanthropy funding that was then redistributed to men (Scholar 6).

Last, and most importantly, managers, particularly Heads of Schools, have a great deal of power over academics' ability to apply for promotion. Academics need to show the Head that they have potential for promotion, sometimes performatively. Interviewees praised Heads who gave advice and encouragement to women to seek promotion (Scholar 7, Academic 4), with one noting that eligible women may need this encouragement as they wait too long to apply for promotion compared to men (Scholar 7). More often however they described Heads who discouraged women who did not meet rigid criteria of research outputs and/or teaching units from applying for promotion, for example:

With [my boss] 'cause I've wanted to go for a promotion for the last probably three or four years. And I have been pretty much talked out of it, like because I haven't done that teaching on top of my full-time research load. (Academic 12)

Ultimately where Deans and Heads of Schools are able to set their own rules, this affects women's ability to be promoted, for example with inconsistencies between Schools and institutions in recognising achievement relative to opportunity (i.e., recognising the effect of career breaks on outputs):

It would be great if there was consistency, and it was more realistic. So you know the recognition of a 10-year period, for example, that we see instituted by some funding bodies ... seems much more reasonable than what we see at some places. (Scholar 4)

Misogyny and sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is prevalent in universities (Greider, et al., 2019; Medeiros, 2021). Four participants mentioned that sexual harassment is prevalent and identified interlinked individual and structural origins. Certain aspects of university work such as long, irregular working hours

and attendance at multi-day conferences accompanied by the drinking of alcohol create environments for sexual harassment to occur. Misogynistic attitudes held by individuals were mentioned by two participants, sometimes in the context of wider bullying. Added to this, the precarious work contracts of many junior academics within a hierarchical structure, made them vulnerable to those who held these attitudes: *'if you are sexually harassed, you are less likely to complain about it because you're worried about that security of employment'* (Advocate 3). These interviewees also expressed distrust in the efficacy of universities' policies in both preventing and resolving sexual harassment complaints, and more broadly in tackling 'internalised misogyny':

I've had very inappropriate misogynistic comments made to me from people who should not be saying those things. And there's no avenue to even report it because it's all internal and it doesn't go anywhere... And in fact, you get victim harassed, you get told you've just got to shut up otherwise you'll be gone. (Scholar 6)

Intersectional inequalities

There are many identities that individual staff or students may possess, with gender, disability, ethnicity, age and LGBTQIA+ most frequently identified, and intersectionality occurs where these coalesce or cross over. A primary driver for universities as a sector to identify, explore and value intersectionality is contained in their public mission to contemplate the 'fundamental questions of society' (Papadimitriou, 2020) and continue the evolution of knowledge. It also is apparent that universities have much to gain from adopting an intersectional approach to their policies and programs, as participants discussed. One leader described the business case of embracing diversity beyond gender:

Then you also want all your employees to feel ... included and appreciated ... the jury is absolutely in on the fact that diverse workforces come up with better ideas, better solutions, are just more effective at what they do. (Leader 3)

Two participants were clear that universities experience significant gendered and intersectional issues (Advocate 4), with one leader calling these 'intolerable' (Leader 4). More specifically, some of the issues that were identified included cultural resistance to change, the inconsistent funding of equity and diversity initiatives, and recruitment and career progression. So, for example, participants reported that the older universities have *'deeply embedded and ingrained'* cultures, where people *'are not necessarily opposed to the change but are also not committed to the additional effort required to update policies and procedures through an intersectional lens'* (Professional 5). There may also be undeclared bias against individuals who are 'othered' and excluded: *'There's language that you use to get around those things, 'cultural fit' being one of the big ones.... It's all code for I don't like what that person is or what they stand for'* (Professional 5).

Performance assessment and promotion were mentioned most frequently as areas where individuals with intersectional identities were most affected due to the lack of intersectional diversity at senior levels. Demonstrating capability in a system that was designed for *'white, non-caring, males'* is more difficult for staff in other demographics, for whom even a job application process can be fraught with anxiety if they have a disability, or are from a culture that does not support speaking up about one's achievements, or are younger workers whose take up of flexible work policies may mean they suffer from lack of visibility when assessments are made by managers who expect presenteeism (Professional 5).

Differential experiences of professional staff

According to the literature review, while there is some evidence that female professional and academic staff share similar challenges and barriers to inclusivity and progression, such as 'overloads' in teaching or administration, casualisation of the university workforce, and gendered performance measurement (Strachan, et al., 2016), the research on the experiences of professional staff is considerably smaller than research on academic staff.

The professional workforce is gendered. According to the data above, 64% of the female university workforce is employed in professional roles, compared to 45% of the male workforce. There is also gender differentiation within the professional workforce, with men more likely to be employed in areas such as facilities and technical services and women and other marginalised communities in areas such as EDI.

The professional staff that participated in this project were much less likely than the academic participants to express concern about the impact of gender on their promotional opportunities. This was in part because professional roles do not require the cumulative, metric-driven track record of publications, research grants and teaching citations that are needed to support academic promotions, and which, as is well-documented, many female academics find incompatible with raising young families. Professional female staff were generally positive about the availability of parental and other leaves and the ability to work fractional full-time hours, and the support these provided to their careers. The one area where professional staff had previously had less flexibility than academic staff was in their ability to work from home pre-COVID, which many institutions had considered unfeasible. According to professional participants, the pandemic lockdowns unequivocally demonstrated that professional staff could do their work off-campus and for many this has now given them flexibility that is more comparable to academics.

While noting that the most senior managers in their institution were men, three participants considered that the impediment to their promotion to the most senior levels was the professional/academic dichotomy rather than her gender. One put it this way:

I think there's this divide in universities, this really clear glass wall between academic and professional staff ... Never the twain shall meet. (Professional 2)

So, while the professional participants did not see gender as an impediment to promotion, some reported that there were fewer opportunities for their career progression than for academics, which left some considering leaving the sector for other industries.

Professional roles exist to support the academic mission of universities; however, some professionals consider their work is devalued because it is feminised:

Professional staff [are] ... characterised as doing busy work, but I just don't know if that attitude would necessarily exist if it was dominated by men. (Professional 5)

Others expressed disquiet that their roles are often the ones to be shed during restructures, signalling a lack of value placed on their work by the university, yet the reductions in professional staff push more work on to the academic staff. They expressed a desire for more understanding that the roles mutually support each other.

Notably, there were challenges in this research in recruiting professional staff and as a consequence, the perspectives of professional staff are underrepresented in this report and are not representative. More targeted research that examines the specific experiences of professional staff is required.

The individual/familial level

Work-life balance and the care penalty: Career interruptions and opportunities at work

According to participants, career breaks – particularly those associated with care responsibilities – have negative effects on opportunities for publication, for obtaining grant funding, for supervision of HDR students, and for promotion (Advocate 3). Consequently, career trajectories are heavily shaped not just by having children but by the timing of children (Academic 3; Academic 12). According to participants, the dominant messaging from their institution is frequently that care is incompatible with a successful academic career, and because of this, participants reported being hesitant to take career breaks, reported feeling compelled to work during career breaks, and reported feeling unsupported or disadvantaged upon returning from a career break. Some were advised by their managers not to take career breaks, not to have children, or that having children would ruin their careers.

It was 'please don't get married' and 'please don't have children' 'cause that's the end of your career. Like that was sort of the context of the shaping of a PhD. (Academic 4)

I was even told that like, yeah, you should work now, like around 11/12/13 hours because when you have a kid that's not going to happen. So you're going to fall back in your career. (Academic 1)

Like if I wanted to be a successful academic, I should never have had children. And in fact, that was kind of guidance that I was given by the head of, our former head of discipline who has children. That was their guidance, was that 'just make sure you have done your PhD before you have kids' and it's like, well, sorry, I already had two by the time I got started (Academic 2) My supervisor said the same thing. (Academic 3)

[I was] randomly lucky that [I had children] during a PhD when I had no academic track record yet, so there was nothing much to interrupt. (Academic 8)

I was just married and [my Head of School] said, ...[w]here do you wanna be in three years and five years. And I sort of said ohh, I'd quite like to be this and that and brilliant and all those things. And she said 'great, are you going to have kids?' And I just went I don't know what the answer to that question is because I don't know what the answer I should have to that is. (Academic 9)

One reported deciding against having a third child because they 'couldn't fathom it in academia' (Academic 3). Another reported selecting a PhD supervisor based on how family friendly they seemed (Academic 8). Several reported feeling pressure to continue working during parental leave:

The female academic who takes time out to have children... that affects their rate of publication. They're either expected, they feel that they've got to try and publish while they're on maternity leave. (Advocate 3)

You can have very well-meaning colleagues who haven't had that type of interruption. Who just can't quite understand why you couldn't have produced an edited a collection while you're on maternity leave. (Scholar 4)

While several reported positive initiatives upon returning from parental leave (Professional 4), most reported limitations in the support they received upon returning from career breaks, including difficulties kick starting research again, difficulty finding adequate childcare (Advocate 4), being treated as though they were going to slot back into previous levels of

productivity without taking account of their new care responsibilities (Scholar 1), or being allocated high (teaching) workloads upon returning from parental leave (Government stakeholder 1b)

You take leave, you know paternity leave, maternity leave to have a baby and then you're supposed to come back as if nothing had changed. Lots of things have changed...Thinking about how we could do that differently would be really exciting. (Scholar 1)

It almost feels like childbearing and all of the things associated with it is assumed to be the time that you're off. But it really is the trying, the time that you're, you know, growing a person, the time that you've made a person, the time that they're crying all the time, the time that they're not sleeping through the night, the time that they're, you know, taking a RAT test two minutes before you have this meeting. Like all of these things that really impact your ability to constantly be focusing. (Academic 10)

I returned from my first maternity leave to a zero allocation in research because my performance was down. After a year of leave. Yeah, apparently I hadn't done anything. I thought I'd produced a person, but they thought that that was not a great research impact (Academic 9)

Participants also reported challenges associated with caregiving that spanned well beyond the time they returned from a career break, such as difficulty carving out thinking time for research (Scholar 1) and just generally accommodating family responsibilities within the expected hours of work. For example, the participants described an environment in which, in spite of talk of a family friendly workplace, meetings were still scheduled at school pick up times with an expectation that all staff be there, international collaboration and research leadership was expected but required highly unsociable working hours (Scholar 3), and face to face teaching was scheduled early in the mornings or late in the evenings which made the drop off of children at day-care or school very difficult (Academic 4).

Female academics working at home have lost the capacity for silence and the time and space to actually think. (Academic 6)

When I sort of said, oh, I have a 10-month-old baby and I start teaching at 8:00 AM and I live 45 minutes from the university. ... And I have to get the baby into the childcare which is at the university, like is it possible to move my 8:00 AM start maybe to 10:00 AM or 9:00 AM or even 8:30? They were like 'No, sorry, only when you've been here for three years and passed probation can we sort of consider those requests. (Academic 4)

You might have a family friendly policy, but then you call a meeting about a restructure at four o'clock in the afternoon. Are you going to be absent? You certainly are not. (Scholar 9)

Others reported the heavy 'emotional load', or 'mental load' associated with juggling the high expectations of academia with care responsibilities, and the impacts that may have on their experience of the workplace and their capacity to achieve the metrics required for promotion.

I do feel like my mental load is extraordinarily high, being a parent and an academic. ... So, I feel like what's probably lacking is a kind of an institutional recognition of how exhausting it is to kind of just keep pace with the expectations of an academic role and have significant caring responsibilities. (Academic 3)

Several participants also identified what they perceived to be a lack of real opportunities for leadership that did not require full time work/overwork (Advocate 4) and that could accommodate family responsibilities.

Theoretically being a leadership role, you're able to make certain determinations about your time. You're able to say, you know what, I'm just not available during that time. But people also seem to think that they have more right to your time, perhaps. And I think as a woman, it's much harder for me to say 'no, that's my school pick up time'... it's going to affect my ability to have meetings during bedtime when, you know my 3-year-old is screaming Mummy, you know, like, it's just hard. (Academic 10)

The relentless focus on competition, metrification and career progression meant that those who sought work-life balance, or who wanted to prioritise time with their families, felt marginalised:

Now I have family I want to spend time with them. They're getting older and that time's never coming back. The papers can always be written. My classroom will always be full of students, but my children won't always be there, and that is what actually has more value in my life than my work. But to say that at work, that's like career death. I think. That's how it feels. (Academic 2)

How can I make this career that I love? I love research. How can I make this work alongside my deep commitment to be a good parent? (Academic 3)

As a consequence, several participants reported concealing their care responsibilities because of a fear of being perceived as not fully committed to work and denied opportunities accordingly.

It's taken me maybe 10 years to tell people that I have children and need to be home at particular times of day. OK. And to begin to push back against that and just to say, well, I know it's going to disadvantage me, but I find that it disadvantages me more when I have unhappy children. (Academic 4)

I basically try to keep my children secret or my family requirements as secret as possible like I bring it into the conversation occasionally, but I don't like to go into details on it. I would never say I can't come to a meeting at 3:00 PM 'cause I've got school pick up. I just I have to lie. I have to do that. (Academic 2)

Others reported that certain kinds of care responsibilities were less visible within the university and that while their universities had improved in the extent to which they recognised care responsibilities associated with having children, care responsibilities for ageing parents or a family member with a disability or illness, or care in LGBTI+ families, were much less well understood or recognised (Scholar 3; Academic 4).

Summary

This section suggests that the drivers of gender inequality in Australian universities are multi-layered and can broadly be organised according to four levels:

1. The sectoral level, which includes sectoral pressures and structures such as metrification, casualisation, grant funding, and the impacts of COVID-19.
2. The organisational level, which includes the policies, practices and culture at universities.
3. The intra-university level, which includes disciplinary norms and the importance of leadership and leaders.
4. The individual/familial level, which includes how people's personal and family lives are constructed as incompatible with a university career.

The participants made a number of experientially-based suggestions about things their universities and the sector could do to improve gender equity (see Box, *Practice suggestions from*

participants, below). Some of these activities were already underway in some institutions, some were being carried out in different forms, while for some suggestions, the study did not uncover any evidence of existing practice. Nevertheless, all ideas are reported to give genuine voice to the participants' suggestions.

Practice suggestions from participants

Organisation

Data

- Collect data on casual conversion rates to check for gender bias
- Collect data on who is receiving philanthropic funds and if it is gendered
- Collect data on types of academic activities – e.g., academic 'housework', research, teaching, and examine by gender
- Collect data on research allocations to check for gender bias
- Collect data on applications for promotions, and successful applicants, by gender
- Collect data on casual and short-term contracts by gender

Recruitment

- Women- only recruitment campaigns
- Proactive encouragement of women's applications
- PhDs and scholarships in areas with very few women
- Eliminate gendered language in advertising
- Mandate a gender balance on interview shortlists
- Nominate particular individuals on interview panels, not just a gender
- Explicitly state that the work can be done flexibly in job description
- Train hiring managers to identify bias
- Introduce a 'blind' academic recruitment system
- Include junior female candidates with identified potential on short lists
- Ensure recruitment search firms are instructed to prioritise gender diversity

Performance and career progression

- Senior executives chairing the promotion committee
- Gender balanced committees
- Training committee members on bias and gender issues
- Changing the promotion criteria to better acknowledge teaching and pastoral care
- Introducing Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE) in promotions policy
- ROPEs: there's no real feedback on how they are considered and whether it actually made a difference in terms of that assessment
- Assistance with writing an application

Practice suggestions from participants, continued

- Changing the narrative: encouraging women to write their applications more unapologetically for their career breaks and caring needs
- Training on the promotion system for applicants and managers
- Academic promotion support network for women
- Reducing the length of the application
- Increasing word limit to allow more nuance in explaining issues affecting opportunity
- Add interviews to written promotion application process
- Proactively encouraging and assisting women to apply for promotion
- Reviewing workloads and resources needed to build portfolio of work for promotion
- Guiding academics towards particular kinds of experience, academic papers and awards necessary for successful applications for promotion

Programs and grants

- Women-only seed funding/research grants
- Women's research and development awards
- Teaching excellence grants and awards

Pay equity

- More transparency of how internal funding is distributed
- Remove or rationalise market loadings for academics
- More transparency in salary rates
- Mandatory reporting of market loading to senior executive and to be approved by a member of the executive
- Present gender pay gap information by unit in the university to the executive group

Flexibility

- Instituting an "all roles flex" policy
- Include flexible working in enterprise agreements to ensure enforceability
- Toolkit of flexibility practices
- Support and training for managers on having 'flexibility conversations'
- Specifically promoting flexibility for senior staff
- Process focus, rather than rules focus, with a focus on local needs
- Coaching for leaders on how to manage team discussions on flexibility and help devise equitable arrangements
- Budgets aligned with flexibility policies

Parents and carers

- Change the components of parental leave to include an allocation for birth recovery solely for the mother and an allocation for care which can be taken by either parent
- Making primary carers leave available for a two-year period, rather than one, as men are more likely to take the leave in the second year
- Removing the primary and secondary carer definitions for parental leave to reinforce gender neutrality in taking of the leave
- Introduce part-time parental leave (where it is not provided)
- Remove the service period required before qualifying for paid parental leave
- Make parental leave portable between institutions

Practice suggestions from participants, continued

- Enable employees with caring responsibilities to access their long service leave after eight years, rather than 10 years, to provide care
- Ensure that recurring meetings are changed periodically so that those on fractional appointments are not permanently excluded from important meetings
- Put keeping in touch days in enterprise agreements

Workloads

- Decide on focus: university-wide or faculty or school level
- High-level committee to monitor workload and gender bias
- Improve workload transparency e.g., public dashboard
- Principles-based research workload allocation model to acknowledge wide variety of work and roles rather than a numerical model where previous years' output is calculated to determine their future workload allocation.
- Research support schemes e.g., research grants or buying out teaching loads

Embedding intersectional diversity and inclusion in university culture

- Formal Memorandum of Understanding created as a binding agreement for the university to focus on all diversity groups
- Strategic plan with a key objective of excellence in equity and inclusion
- Athena SWAN Cygnet Awards require intersectional principles when setting targets
- Linking gender strategy to other strategies, e.g., disability
- Working groups focused on areas of organisational culture, e.g., particular cultural issues that prevent women and minorities from succeeding, or a particular School with specific challenges.
- Key staff led advocacy groups, cultural inclusion network, Pride and ally network, disability employee network
- Performance appraisal criteria requiring all staff to address what they have done to promote diversity and inclusion in the previous year, and what they plan to do in the following year

Other

- Protect what we have and continue to do so – not just new things
- Get men and non-binary people involved
- Systematic integration of efforts across the organisation
- Extend equity measures such as access to leaves, professional development, to casuals

Influencers

Executive team

- Visible and demonstrated commitment from the most senior leaders
- KPIs to increase the number of women in the senior executive teams
- Collaboration between academic and professional staff e.g., dual sponsors of gender equity strategy

Equity and Diversity Leads

- Very senior executive role e.g., DVC, PVC
- Champions e.g., Gender Equity Committees and Equity and Inclusion Committees
- To get maximum benefit of diversity leads and taskforces, they should be able to review hiring, progression and talent management decisions and ask for justifications for them.

Practice suggestions from participants, continued

Employee Resource Groups

- Parents and carers networks
- Women's Advancement Committee
- Senior Women's Forum
- Women's voluntary advocacy groups
- Queer networks
- Disability networks
- Research networks

Ecosystem

- Using the 'amazing pool of gender researchers in universities' to guide the sector

The next section sets out examples of leading practice that organisations are drawing upon to address drivers of gender inequalities, across multiple levels. As the levers for *addressing* individual/familial drivers exist at the sectoral, organisational and intra-university level, a three-level model around which the examples of practice are organised is used.

Leading gender-inclusive practices in knowledge industry employers

Consultation findings

While there is a considerable amount of research on the drivers of gender inequities, there is less information available on leading gender-inclusive practices. The interviews conducted for this research identified positive and innovative approaches in knowledge industries to improve gender equity and inclusiveness.

Knowledge industries are those that primarily rely on knowledge and technology to generate revenue (Nelson, 1963). Within this category are industries such as education, consulting, finance, law, information technology and health services. Knowledge industries, including universities, have fewer women than men in leadership positions and experience lower retention of women at all levels (Chief Executive Women, 2021; WGEA, 2022a). Indeed, the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) reported only one in four organisations have a gender-balanced⁴ leadership team in 2020-21 (WGEA, 2022a). National and international research suggests that the barriers experienced in universities are similar to those experienced in other knowledge-based sectors (Huang, Krivkovich, Starikova, Yee, & Zanoschi, 2018; Good, Olsen, Orpin, & Towns, 2015). This section acknowledges these realities and includes leading practice for gender-inclusivity in a range of knowledge industries, not just universities, as these industries potentially offer new and innovative practices that could be transferred into the university sector.

This section describes leading practices identified through our empirical analysis, supplemented by the literature review. The practices that have been identified should not be viewed as an exhaustive list of leading practices in Australia, but as a sample obtained from the direct experience of our research participants.

Model

The leading practices in this section are organised in the according to the following model:

Organisation	Influencer	Ecosystem
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strategy ▪ Data collection & analysis ▪ Recruitment & attraction ▪ Performance & career progression ▪ Pay equity ▪ Work-life balance policies ▪ Workloads ▪ Casual workforce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Board (or university equivalent) and governance ▪ Executive ▪ Equity & Diversity Leads ▪ Managers ▪ Employee resource groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Environmental change ▪ Sector alliances

⁴ WGEA classifies this as 40-60% females in leadership roles.

Universities and other knowledge-based organisations that are leading the way on gender equity were aligned in a belief that genuine change requires interventions across multiple levels, often at once. Consultations with leaders at knowledge-based organisations and subsequent thematic analysis clearly delineated the three levels used throughout this report to articulate spheres of gender equitable practice: the Organisation level, the Influencer level, and the Ecosystem level. The Organisation level includes organisational policies, practices and cultures in individual organisations or universities; the Influencer level includes individuals and groups *within* an organisation with the power to shape/affect change; and the Ecosystem refers to activities that organisations participate in to affect change at the sectoral level, beyond their organisation.

Organisation

Organisations with leading gender-inclusive practices adopt systemic and coherent approaches to diversity, equity, and inclusion. They adopt measures to remove bias from systems, not people. Identified practices include: developing comprehensive gender equity strategies; using high quality data to understand the drivers of inequitable practices; implementing targeted actions to combat the gendered recognition of performance across the employee lifecycle (i.e., recruitment, performance and promotion, remuneration and in universities, workloads); and taking measures to mitigate the impacts of family life on organisational opportunities. Their efforts are almost always underpinned by accompanying policy changes that include measures to shift culture and values.

Strategy

Organisations that have led successful gender initiatives have articulated a strong narrative and compelling case for change with ambitious but practical goals enshrined in their organisational strategies/strategic plans.

Universities

Gender equity strategies are now common in Australian universities. Nash and Churchill (2020) noted that 83% of all higher education employers in Australia have a gender equity policy or strategy, compared to 75% of all Australian industries. The challenge that many universities are facing is to ensure that their strategies are effectively implemented throughout the whole organisation.

Participants reported that effective gender strategies focus on systems rather than individuals – ‘*We need to fix the system and stop trying to fix women*’ (Leader 2) – and are adequately resourced through budgets and staffing (Advocate 4; Professional 4; Professional 5). Effective gender equity strategies identify targets and KPIs concerning gender across core areas in the university, such as recruitment targets or greater representation of women across different levels and sections in the university workforce (Leader 3) and track their effectiveness (Leader 4).

Effective strategies are also accompanied by governance structures, champions and staff engagement techniques that enable the objectives and activities set out in the strategy to be clearly understood, embraced and enacted by staff at all levels of the university. One university has established a taskforce to oversee the implementation of each different objective in their gender strategy and embed these objectives throughout the university (Government stakeholder 1b). In another a gender equality committee is chaired at the senior executive level that includes Faculty Deans (Leader 2), prompting Deans to develop their own Faculty strategies in response to the university level strategy, and staff are engaged in the development of implementation of the strategy (i.e., employee groups, women’s networks, manager training –

see *Influencers*). One organisation links its gender equity strategy, priorities and activities to cutting edge research on gender equality carried out by its own research scholars, providing internal funding and recognition for research on improving gender equity within the organisation (see Box, *Tapping into the university's research strengths to improve organisational gender equity*).

Tapping into the university's research strengths to improve organisational gender equity

Western Sydney University draws on research by staff specialising in gender equity and organisational practice to identify priorities and recommend remedial activities that are then fed into the institution's gender equality strategy and activities. They do this through providing internal research grants for proposals focusing on particular aspects of gender equity within the institution. This has several benefits:

- the institution's gender equity priorities and activities are underpinned by a strong evidence base from within the organisation.
- staff are engaged in the development of university strategy and activities, providing staff with a greater stake and potentially increasing awareness and buy in.
- it capitalises on a university's own institutional expertise.
- it operates as a gender equity strategy in itself, transforming the internal service and advocacy work that some staff (mostly women) carry out to improve gender equity in the organisation into funded research with opportunities for publication. This transforms the work from an activity that is poorly recognised and takes *time* away from the female scholars' core tasks of research and teaching, into an integrated part of their research program that can make a positive contribution to their research outputs and trajectory.

One participant described the approach in this way:

The VC gives funding to researchers to do particular pieces of gender research, which are very much driven by things that the organisation needs, the organisation wants to know more about... there've been a lot of different projects around the parents and carers work... the researchers are doing it as research work. It's funded. It's not additional to their core research. They come up with recommendations through that research, the recommendations then get woven into practice at the university.

Some organisations organise their gender strategies according to the priorities and activities of schemes such as WGEA Employers of Choice and SAGE-Athena SWAN, which provide them with a valuable template to drive the strategy, its objectives, and the data they collect on gender (see Boxes – *WGEA Employer of Choice*, *SAGE-Athena SWAN*).

WGEA Employer of Choice

Organisations aiming for citation as a WGEA Employer of Choice must:

- develop objectives and measures to support their strategy.
- monitor their policies and practices through a gender lens.
- track gender pay equity, flexible working practices and women in leadership in their data.
- have policies in place that help achieve gender equality in recruitment and promotion, and remuneration.
- have policies in place that develop leadership and career opportunities, support flexible working and caring responsibilities, and prevent gender-based harassment and discrimination, sexual harassment, and bullying.
- provide training for managers on how to tackle resistance to gender equality.
- champion their strategy through the CEO both internally and externally.
- develop methods of encouraging more women to take opportunities; and
- implement KPIs for managers of university programs to create gender equality (WGEA, 2022b).

SAGE Accreditation

Institutions aiming for the first level of accreditation, the Bronze Award, must:

- self-assess the existing status of gender equity, diversity and inclusion
- self-assess the 'structural, systemic and cultural barriers that impede attraction, retention and progression' (SAGE, n.d.)
- develop an Action Plan to remove or reduce five Key Barriers.

Institutions work towards the Silver Award via a series of Cygnet Awards (SAGE, Pathway to Athena Swan, n.d.) over a period of seven years. The Cygnet Awards allow institutions to develop a strategy for five gender equity issues, and work towards achieving five separate awards. They are required to report the outcomes and impact of their actions, as well as any lessons learned when objectives were not achieved, and how they will continue to achieve or sustain progress. any further actions they will take to achieve or sustain the desired progress, outcomes and impact once they have achieved five Cygnet Awards organisations can apply for a Silver Award. The first Cygnet award was awarded to Edith Cowan University in August 2022. The process and criteria for a Silver Award are still being developed. This award represents institutional maturity but provide the opportunity to 'to re-evaluate their position and plan their next steps' (SAGE, n.d.).

In 2022 just six Australian universities are recognised as WGEA Employers of Choice.⁵ In 2022, 43 Australian universities and research institutions are members of SAGE (Science in Australia Gender Equity), of which 41 are holders of an Athena SWAN Bronze Award (SAGE, 2021).

Leaders also reported that effective gender strategies are complementary with other strategies within the institution, such as disability strategies or reconciliation plans, as siloing can lead to a lack of cohesiveness and duplication (Advocate 2; Advocate 4). They are also designed and

⁵ These are: Australian Catholic University, Charles Sturt University, Macquarie University, RMIT University, Victoria University and Western Sydney University.

implemented in a 'joined up' manner, whereby strategies and activities focused on gender equity are coordinated across the institution. Examples of strategies not operating in a coordinated manner with other activities were provided, such as (in one case) a Parents and Carers Network duplicating work done by those overseeing the gender equity strategy.

Gender equity strategies are not always adequately embedded in, or aligned with other priorities in, broader business strategies. One participant provided an example of this, stating that at their university two of the six priorities in the strategic plan are focused on inclusiveness and collaboration, but these are undermined by the other four principles that operate in a way that was antithetical to gender equity:

Four of the six are very much focused on competitiveness. And then there's two that have like kind of a bit of caring kind of thing. (Academic 12)

Other knowledge-based organisations

Like universities, organisational leaders emphasised the importance of focusing on systems (not individual women), and of ensuring that gender initiatives and strategies are adequately resourced and funded. Parallels were drawn to Indigenous Reconciliation Action Plans, which often do not align funding, strategy, and resourcing, leading to a dilution and stalling of progress against initiatives. While acknowledging the benefits of targets, leaders were aligned in a belief that targets often mask the fact that broader structural or cultural changes are required to enhance equity and inclusion, and cautioned against an over-reliance on targets. Common strategic focus areas included: flexibility, diversification of leadership roles, pay parity and removing bias from the talent lifecycle, including attraction, recruitment, and promotion.

Leading practice organisations positioned gender equity at the centre of their business strategy, as part of broader EDI and People strategies and in their Environmental, Social and Governance strategies. Gender equity strategies were therefore well integrated into the broader strategic and operational objectives of the organisation, rather than operating separately or being unaligned. As gender equity was embedded into broader business strategies (as a key principle, objective, or series of strategies) business decisions were then considered through a gender lens.

While having a strong strategic framework was considered necessary, leaders also emphasised that dynamism, adaptation, and reflection are key to driving and enabling continuous improvement. Effective strategies should be 'living' rather than 'static' documents. Consequently, leaders stressed the importance of regular open dialogue with staff and the cultivation of opportunities to improve, update and transform gender equity strategies as the organisation evolves.

Data collection and analysis

Focused and data driven efforts to improve diversity and inclusion is critical when confronting problems resulting from systemic and unconscious bias (Bonet, 2016). Data helps organisations move beyond tick box exercises and allows for identification and honest appraisal of areas where they fall short (Bonet, 2016).

Universities

Universities that are members of SAGE collect comprehensive data as part of the program, noting, however, that to date this has had a STEM focus. They use this data to devise action plans 'to address the main barriers to gender equity, diversity and inclusion' (Advocate 4). Several advocates (Advocate 2; Advocate 4) mentioned that the SAGE-Athena SWAN data collection process is a useful model to commence with and to then apply to the wider university, not just in

STEM. The specific usefulness of the SAGE program is that data is not just collected but must be monitored as part of a process of continuous improvement.

The WGEA Employer of Choice program is also data-driven, including the setting of gender targets in areas such as pay equity, management and flexible working. Organisations must evaluate their progress yearly against their gender equity strategy. Leading universities collect this data and feed it into their gender equity strategies. For example, one university requires their executive search firms to provide statistics on all the people they have contacted during the search and reasons for why they did not proceed (Leader 2). The same university requires their executive group's KPIs to have several items on gender equity and collects data to track these KPIs (Leader 2). Table 3 – *What kinds of data?* – lists some examples of data that interviewees found to be valuable when implementing gender equity strategies.

Specific areas where data collection could be improved included the prevalence and characteristics of the insecure (casual or short-term contract) workforce (Advocate 3) and obtaining baseline data on intersectionality.

There are also reservations about how representative is the data that is collected by universities. For example, collecting data based on a full-time equivalent workload of 35-38 hours a week, when many academics are working 50-60 hours a week, or more, may fail to provide useful data when investigating gender issues around workloads. 'Missing' data could also be very useful but is rarely considered – for example, qualitative data that is currently being collected for university-based and external gender equity programs does not include the voices of those women who have left their institutions or the sector entirely. The views of those women who have found the institution or the system to be intolerable arguably would provide valuable insights.

While much data is being collected, in most instances it is rarely transparently available to staff on whose behalf it has been compiled. This makes it easier for institutions to collect it performatively but not necessarily do anything with it. As an example, the data that is submitted to the WGEA program is a summary based on self-assessment by each institution but is not separately assessed by WGEA.

Table 3 – What kinds of data?

The qualitative interviews in this project identified some useful data that universities could collect to target improvements in gender equity.

RECRUITMENT

Consider:

- Are there pockets within the university that are not attracting, and appointing, women and other diversity groups?
- Are diversity groups represented on recruitment panels?

Measures:

- Track number of applicants, shortlisted candidates, and appointees by gender.
- Track recruitment panel composition by gender, other diversity characteristics, and department.

PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT AND PROMOTION

Consider:

- Do men and women have different performance outcomes on average?
- Do male and female teaching staff receive different student evaluations?

Measures:

- Number of women and men promoted at each level, against number of applications.
- Number of applications against gender breakdown of staff in each Faculty
- Gender-based differences in student evaluation and feedback.
- Promotion rates by seniority, job types, and department.

PAY EQUITY

Consider:

- What are the points at which pay inequities can emerge?

Measures:

- Data on starting salaries by gender
- Data on bonuses and loadings by gender
- Data on consultants/'non-standard' contracts by gender

FLEXIBLE WORKING/CARE

Consider:

- Are staff enabled and empowered to work when and where best suit their individual needs?
- Are women penalised for working flexibly?

Measures:

- Flexible work uptake data
- Flexibility availability for professional staff
- Career progress of staff, against full-time and fractional workloads.
- Staff experience/pulse data on perceived manager support for flexibility/family friendly environment

WORKLOADS

Consider:

- Do women have greater teaching loads than men?
- Are there differences in the amount and type of service allocations?
- Are men receiving larger and more prestigious grants?

Measures:

- Types of academic activities – e.g., academic 'housework', research, teaching – by gender
- Grant awards & funding amounts, by gender.
- CIs on grants by gender.
- First/last author analysis by gender.

PRECARITY

Consider:

- Are women remaining in casual roles for longer than their male peers?
- Are women more likely to be tutors (and therefore casual) than lecturers?

Measures:

- Casual and short-term contracts by gender, and by type of role

- Duration of casual/short term contract employment by gender
- Conversion rate from casual to permanent roles by gender.

LEADERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Consider:

- Do leaders actively support or provide opportunities to women?
- Do leaders and managers effectively support and foster an equitable and inclusive culture and enhance diversity in their teams?

Measures:

- Proportion of leaders who are women, against organisational/school composition by gender
- Data on reasons women leave leadership roles, using exit interviews and surveys.
- Leaders' KPI progress on improvements to and maintenance of their team's gender diversity and opportunities by gender
- Staff feedback on their leader's commitment to university EDI policies.

DISCRIMINATION AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Consider:

- Can staff safely report issues of concern – from casual sexism to more extreme forms of bullying, harassment and violence?
- Do casual staff under-report sexual harassment and bullying?

Measures:

- Staff turnover data, by gender and department
- Summary of EAP usage
- Stop Bullying applications to the Fair Work Commission
- Pulse data on staff experience of sexism, bullying and harassment
- Academic staff evaluations by students, segmented by gender and age of the academic

INTERSECTIONALITY

- Number of women and men promoted at each level, segmented by gender and other grounds of discrimination, e.g., age, race, sexuality, etc.

PROFESSIONAL STAFF

- Staff by work category, and occupation, by gender

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Targets or quotas?
- Whole of university or faculty, department level?
- Quantitative or qualitative data, or both?

Other knowledge-based organisations

Leading organisations regularly capture and review data across the whole talent lifecycle, including attraction, recruitment, performance, promotion, parental leave, succession planning and exit data. These organisations also have sophisticated approaches to *using* the data to achieve change, through **analytical techniques** and **transparency**.

People analytics (the application of scientific and statistical methods to behavioural data) is being used in leading knowledge organisations to improve people-focused decisions and inform new policy, program, and process designs to address gender inequality. People analytics involves the use of data by organisations to run their HR departments like they run their finance and marketing departments, replacing intuition, informal networks and traditional rules of thumb with quantifiable data and rigorous analysis (Bonet, 2016). Specifically, people analytics can be used in management decisions and workforce planning to support strategic, equitable and predictive analysis of employee selection, development, engagement. For example, organisations may adopt people analytics to understand retention of women in leadership roles, by collecting data on the reasons women exit such roles (through exit interviews and surveys), conducting thematic analysis of characteristics of those leaving, how and when they leave, and their reasons for leaving, and conducting predictive modelling of how changes to the workplace may shape future retention.

While the capture and collation of data is the backbone of EDI efforts, experts were quick to offer a warning about bias and performative reporting in the area of data. It was noted, for example, that a focus on quantitative metrics alone does not account for the complexities of gender inequities, such as the precarious nature of female leadership, nor the influence and quality of experience that accompanies promotion. One view that emerged was a need to expand the data to capture lead indicators (such as how and where ambition wanes over time), quality metrics – including those who stay, go, flourish, or stagnate – as well as intersectionality.

In order to overcome some of the limitations of data on gender equity, including its selective and/or performative nature, interrogation and reporting of data is considered by many participants to be critical in building buy-in and trust for initiatives. Leading organisations regularly publish data on pay discrepancies and share data on equitable recruitment practices, promotion, retention and recruitment across each tier of the organisation. One EDI practitioner, when speaking of the role that data, and importantly, data transparency, plays in addressing deep mistrust, noted:

The ‘Parent Trap’

Technology giant, Google has been at the forefront of using large data to improve its people practices (Bonet, 2016). The ‘People Operations’ team (formerly HR) collects large amounts of personnel data and uses statistical insights from employee data to identify and optimize its procedures (Bonet, 2016). In 2015, the organisation used its data to unearth a ‘parent trap’ noting that young mothers more likely than the average Google employee to leave the organisation (Bonet, 2016). Such insights prompted Google to introduce a new maternity and paternity leave plan, immediately increasing retention of its female staff (Bonet, 2016).

Our efforts backfire when we do not allow the hurt, the real transparent disclaimers around the gender pay gaps, that the marketing and communications teams would usually be horrified if we shared. The only way a woman who has been the subject of systemic, historic discrimination is going to trust us, is if we create a space for transparency and the anger that naturally comes with injustice.

Leading organisations are also using data as a mechanism to drive more equitable decision making by leaders and to bring about behavioural change. In these organisations, managers are provided in targeted ways with up-to-date data and analysis about the gender pay gap prior to performance conversations. The data is accompanied by a clear message that now is the time to address these discrepancies.

One large government organisation uses data from across the business to create a behavioural charter for leaders. The behavioural charter explicitly states the behaviours that leaders in the

organisation will model, cultivate, and reward and those that they will unlearn as part of their inclusion agenda. Leaders undertook habit change activities across the business, to ensure that new behaviours were embedded in their teams.

The Australian Public Service puts questions about diversity and inclusion into its annual employee engagement survey, prompting employees to reflect on opportunities to work on assignments that are important to their careers, the value placed on diverse opinions and perceptions of belonging and inclusion. Leaders (and their teams) have access to the data from their team, which may be benchmarked across their organisation and the APS more broadly and are encouraged to facilitate a dialogue with their team to initiate improvement.

Recruitment

Recruitment is a key area of policy reform to improve gender diversity and inclusion outcomes in organisations (WGEA, 2017; The Behavioural Insights Team, 2021).

Universities

Leading universities embed gender equity measures into their recruitment processes in several ways. In some cases, governance structures such as Gender Equity Committees, operating at the senior executive level but also sometimes embedded at the faculty or even departmental level with members drawn from both professional and academic staff, are given oversight of recruitment processes (Leader 6).

Leading universities effectively employ targets and pursue them through the active targeting of women to improve representation of women, particularly in areas with poor gender diversity, e.g., Engineering. Methods to achieve this included applying for an exemption from anti-discrimination legislation and implementing women-only recruitment campaigns and offering women-only PhDs and scholarships (Advocate 4). Another is to ensure recruitment search firms are instructed to prioritise gender diversity (Leader 3). Carefully crafting recruitment advertisements and job descriptions so that they appeal more to women is also used, such as explicitly stating that the job could be conducted flexibly (Academic 5) and eliminating gendered language in advertisements, e.g., by using Gender Decoder software (Leader 6, Government stakeholder 1).

Other strategies for increasing the number of women who reach the interview stage include mandating a gender balance on interview shortlists (Government stakeholder 1b), assessing all job applications through a gender lens (Government stakeholder 1b) and including junior female candidates with identified potential on short lists (Leader 2). At one university, women were proactively encouraged to apply for roles in Engineering and all women applicants were interviewed. This strategy resulted in the appointment of six women, taking the number of women in the school to 25%, one of the highest percentages in Australia.

Finally, while many universities require interview panels to be gender-balanced, more nuance in panel selection by including particular individuals, not just defaulting to a gender, was reported to be an effective strategy (Academic 4, Government stakeholder 1b).

There's a certain requirement for gender balance, et cetera, but actually the actual individual people on the committee is really important. (Scholar 7)

Universities also adopt formal and informal measures to address biases that they identify in existing systems. One university developed a 'blind' academic recruitment system that removed at the long list stage the name, the gender or any gender giveaways, and place of PhD (to remove cultural biases) from candidates (Leader 6). Once the long list was created, the

candidates' identities were made visible. Another focused on identifying unconscious bias, including training hiring managers to identify bias (Professional 4). Several described less formal debiasing sessions immediately before promotions committee meetings (Scholar 9).

Other knowledge-based organisations

In leading practice organisations, recruitment interventions most commonly take the form of **targets, training, or policies** to disrupt and manage bias.

Like universities, other organisations are overcoming barriers by removing gendered language in recruitment criteria, either through specific training for managers and recruitment roles, or by leveraging technology which identifies words or phrases that are perceived as male-oriented (Huang, Krivkovich, Starikova, Yee, & Zanoschi, 2018; Foley, Cooper, & Mosseri, Gender Equitable Recruitment and Promotion, 2019). An effective strategy to diversify talent pipelines is forming partnerships with organisations or recruitment agencies that are in direct contact with women from diverse backgrounds.

Leaders and hiring managers are also increasing hiring rates by requiring candidate shortlists to have a set threshold of female applicants. Some request shortlists that are at least 50% women, while others use the 40/40/20 (40% men, 40% women, 20% either men or women) approach. For organisations that use assessment centres (a combination of tasks and activities that test applicants' suitability for a specific job or role type), they require 50/50 (male/female) gender representation, regardless of the gender of the person who was being interviewed. As the Head of People for a large national customer experience firm stated:

First and foremost, whether this is with our own internal talent acquisition teams, or whether we're using external agencies, we're always asking for a balanced shortlist. This is the first thing our recruitment partners know, and our internal teams know is that we won't interview any candidates without a gender balanced shortlist.

Interview 'nudges'

One case study organisation has adopted a 'nudges' (indirect suggestions to influence behaviour and decision making) approach during interviews to prompt hiring managers to reflect on whether they are favouring one group of candidates over another and why this may be the case. These could include anonymising CVs or reflection questions for the hiring manager to answer post-interview.

Organisations are also creating **training** programs to promote inclusive practices among hiring managers. These programs promote the importance of inclusive recruitment and provide managers with practical advice, including sharing open roles on a range of platforms (not just the organisation's 'Careers' webpage) and actively ensuring the job advertisements are reaching diverse audiences through targeted and sponsored posting. In some instances, this training involves the use of 'nudges' in challenging manager bias (see Box – *Interview nudges*). There are also measures to increase the accountability of managers to recruitment targets. For example, as part of its broader commitment to EDI, Mirvac staff report regularly against targets for gender equitable recruitment practices and ensuring a diverse pipeline of talent

(Mircac, 2022). Leaders in leading practice organisations have also started to take on greater involvement in recruitment processes, working with hiring managers to check for conscious and unconscious bias and to challenge previously held assumptions about 'ideal' employees that may be evident at an organisation (see Box – *Mitigating conscious & unconscious bias*).

Mitigating conscious and unconscious bias

Restructuring recruitment processes to mitigate conscious and unconscious bias that may prejudice certain candidates (KPMG, 2016) can vary in scale but are generally comprised of:

- Reframing concepts of 'merit' and broadening the scope of acceptable candidate profiles to disrupt uninterrogated views of who is considered a successful candidate (McKinsey & Company, Workplace Gender Equality Agency, Business Council of Australia, 2017; Australian Human Rights Commission, 2013; The Behavioural Insights Team, 2021)
- Ensuring recruitment or interview panels are gender diverse (Women on Boards, 2013; Australian Human Rights Commission, 2013)
- Offering flexible working by default in job advertisements (The Behavioural Insights Team, 2021)
- Offering interviews to women applicants in the first instance (Huang, Krivkovich, Starikova, Yee, & Zanoschi, 2018; Foley, Cooper, & Mosseri, 2019).

Performance and career progression

Universities

Leading practice universities are deeply committed to strategies for improved promotional outcomes for women. Approaches were also **data** driven, for example, data on how many women apply at each level can identify critical blockage points, e.g., levels or disciplines (Academic 8, Scholar 5). A common first strategy after reviewing data was to conduct a full review of the promotions system (Leader 1, Leader 2, Leader 6). Some universities elected to implement gender targets based on their data, for example at one university these were set for Levels C, D and E academic staff and for senior professional staff (Advocate 4). Universities seeking to become WGEA Employers of Choice are required to set targets for areas in which there are fewer than 40% women (WGEA, 2022b).

Successful interventions to the promotions process included developing new application forms/processes (see Box, *Changing the application form*), new promotions criteria, and addressing the composition, training and functioning of promotion committees.

Changing the application form

Changing promotion application forms can remove hidden barriers. Suggestions include:

- Reducing the amount of paperwork required, which can be a disincentive to those with limited 'non-work' time
- Increasing the word limit for the ROPE section from 50 words to 200 words to allow more nuance in explaining issues affecting opportunity
- Changing the promotions process from a written application process only to also include interviews

[if] you're asking people about ... special circumstances, and you're not hearing the nuances of what that might be, you are always going to miss very important elements. And sometimes people don't want to go into writing about issues that may be pertinent to gender or to opportunity, but it will come out in a very supportive and in camera interview in this sort of way. (Leader 1)

As discussed in the section on the drivers of gender inequalities in universities, **promotions criteria** have often been rigid, focused on outputs such as research publications at the expense

of other contributions, and indifferent to care and other external responsibilities. To address these deficiencies, universities have implemented various strategies. One that was commonly mentioned was introducing ROPE to promotions policy (in some institutions described as achievement relative to opportunity (ARTO)) to recognise achievements beyond just research so that time taken for career breaks for family reasons is removed and ‘*impact measurement done over your active years, not including your years on maternity leave or from working part-time or so on*’ (Leader 3). Another was acknowledging and valuing ‘institutional health work’ (more pastoral care focused leadership and teaching roles), typically undertaken more by women (Scholar 4), such as by naming ‘*unit coordination*’ to ‘*subject management*’ as ‘*unit leadership*’ (Scholar 9). For some universities reviewing their promotions criteria has led to developing a completely new system (see Box, Case study – Pillars and Points).

Case study: Pillars and Points Macquarie University

A new system: In 2015 Macquarie University implemented a new promotions system. They adapted Ernest Boyer’s model of scholarship (Boyer, 1990) that advocates four pillars of university academics’ work: (1) research; (2) teaching; (3) application; and (4) integration. To this, they added a further pillar: (5) leadership and citizenship.

Process: Applicants for promotion self-assessed a maximum of 3 points for each of the 5 pillars. A minimum of 8 points was required to progress from Level A to B, and Level B to C, with a minimum of 9 out of a possible 15 points required to progress from Level C to D, and Level D to E. An applicant must have obtained the maximum 3 points in at least one pillar, not only in research, in order to signify excellence.

From Level A to B, and Level B to C, applicants must obtain at least 1 point in leadership and citizenship.

Support: The university provided intensive training sessions on the new system for a period of two years for both academics seeking promotion and also Department and School heads. Training for academics has continued at intervals.

Outcomes: More people applied for promotion overall, male and female and nonbinary, but the most significant increase was in women. The number of applications by men increased 49% and the number by women increased 87%. Within 2-3 years there was a 100% increase in the number of women applying for promotion. Women have been slightly more successful than men at all levels except for level D.

“... a lot of women have said things like ... I never thought I'd be able to get promoted again. You know, they'd got to sort of senior lecturer and they'd say 'cause I haven't got an ARC grants I wasn't even going to bother. But now I see from this system that I can actually show my achievements in other ways. So they did.”

In leading universities, senior executive leaders are actively involved in the work being done by their universities in this area (Leader 6; Leader 3). In one institution the Vice Chancellor chairs the **promotions committees** to indicate the importance attached to equity throughout the promotions process (Leader 2). Gender balance on the committee is also a strategy adopted by some (Advocate 1a). An effective strategy is training of committee members on gender equity issues in order to help them recognise and reward difference in applicants’ CVs – and not solely focus on metrics – and to understand the context of women’s applications (Scholar 3; Scholar 4). In one institution, a convenor of a senior promotions committee held a pre-meeting

to discuss ROPE and other gender issues specifically to allow committee members to challenge each other's biases.

All these biases [were] on the table from the outset, so that when we subsequently got applications, we could almost hear somebody's bias ... And so that helped shape the committee's thinking. (Scholar 9).

There is also widespread investment in **mentorship and structured support** for women's promotion and progression (while noting that the problem is the system and not women and that consequently mentorship must be accompanied by other measures to adjust the system). This includes targeted identification of and support for women approaching promotion, mentorship and support through the application and interview process, and support for building strategic readiness for promotion or leadership roles (see Box, *Supports for women seeking promotion*). Some provide leadership programs to support and coach women into leadership opportunities, such as the University of New South Wales Women in Leadership Program (UNSW, 2020) or at the multi-institutional level, the WATTLE program (outlined in the *Ecosystem* section). The potential for leadership or profile-building workshops to impinge on time available for conducting research (Academic 2), means effective leadership programs are provided in a time effective manner and must be supported by time buyouts by their institutions.

Supports for women seeking promotion

- Information on how to write a promotion application, e.g., website with information, advice and slide presentations, plus seminars.
- Changing the narrative: encouraging women to write their applications more unapologetically for their career breaks and caring needs.
- Mentorship: understanding the 'unwritten rules' of promotion, preparing a strategy for promotion, reviewing applications, and interview preparation. One university introduced speed mentoring from senior executives on career planning.
- Interview support, e.g., mock interviews, allowing a sponsor.
- Training on the promotion system for applicants and managers.
- Academic promotion support network for women.

To be in a position to apply for promotion, women must have already achieved success in their academic or professional endeavours. Examples of **programs and grants** that were instituted to increase the number of women in the career pipeline include women-only seed funding/research grants (Scholar 3), women's research and development awards (Scholar 4) and teaching excellence grants and awards (Government stakeholder 1b).

Other knowledge-based organisations

Like universities, other knowledge-based organisations still tend to value industrial metrics of success, including output, productivity, and masculine traits, which permeate through, and can be exacerbated by, the performance process. Business leaders shared strategies that they had adopted to disrupt gender bias within the performance cycle.

Leading organisations shared similar practices to universities in the area of changes to promotion committees and mentorship and support for women applying for promotion. They reported innovative practices in the measurement of performance, career progression support for women

on or returning from parental leave, unconscious bias training, and strategic support for women who have been unsuccessful in applications for leadership positions.

In high-performing organisations, there is often a culture of individual competition within teams, enabled by a revenue or targets-focused performance process. Leading organisations have changed their **performance measurement framework**, to allow for anonymised performance assessments and begun determining promotion outcomes based on work product or questionnaires alone, rather than KPIs, metrics, or other static indicators (WGEA, 2017). In 2013, Microsoft reshaped its performance rating and review process after feedback from staff that it was driving the wrong behaviours and outcomes, leading to unproductive internal competition. They replaced the system to focus on impact, including impact on others, contribution to their own success, their team the business and the customer (Frost & Kalman, 2017). One customer-focused organisation has begun to unpick this long-held expectation in their sales teams by increasing the focus on an individual's contribution to the team, beyond their revenue or KPIs. Under this performance model, the performance of the employee is overlaid with a determination about their role in a team environment. This means, for example, those in the team who demonstrate and promote more inclusive behaviours and ideals are recognised for this in tangible, career-benefiting ways. Several organisations also noted that they engage independent observers to sit in on calibration sessions to ensure that decisions being made are inclusive and well rounded.

Leading organisations also provide **career progression support to staff on or returning from parental leave** (See Box – *Vertical job sharing*). Historically, when women take maternity leave, they have done so with the expectation that they will be effectively 'pausing' their career. Leading practice organisations have started to change this expectation by including employees on parental leave in performance discussions and promotion conversations (noting that this does not extend to expecting parents to perform work during parental leave).

There is also growing recognition that **unconscious bias training** contributes to productive conversations 'in the moment' but does not translate to sustained behavioural change. EDI practitioners believed that diversity training was most effective when part of an enterprise-wide strategic approach, including both awareness and skills development. Leading organisations have relied more heavily on providing training to managers to personalise their interactions with their teams and make more equitable decisions regarding the processes they can control, performance measurement, promotions, and pay.

Organisations reported that women are less likely to apply for promotion into senior roles compared with men, and significantly less likely to reapply for these roles after narrowly missing out. One organisation invested in **candidate care** post-recruitment including a follow up email

Vertical job sharing

To ensure that workload is adjusted when women return to work full time, one organisation has adopted the practice of 'vertical job share.' When a woman returns from maternity leave, they review her job description and identify tasks or functions that could be undertaken by a more junior staff member who is looking to take on more responsibility. These 'stretch' areas are often process-focused or administrative tasks but provide the more junior team member to professionally grow. They are built into the junior staff member's role, providing additional experience and adjusted remuneration to align with the increase in responsibility. For the woman who has returned from maternity leave, vertical job sharing creates more time to dedicate to activities that not only align with her role at the organisation but enables more opportunity to dedicate time towards career progression.

and phone call with the recruitment manager which focused on how well the applicant had done and encouraged them to reapply.

Pay equity

Pay equity for women means that they receive the same pay as men for performing work of equal or comparable value (WGEA, 2022c). This does not just cover base pay but also other remuneration components such as bonuses, allowances and performance payments. The gender pay gap measures the difference between men's and women's pay, which in Australia as at August 2022 is 14.1%, that is, there is a gap of 14.1% between the full-time earnings of women and men (WGEA, 2022c).

Universities

In higher education, the full-time gender pay gap is 12.7% and the total gender pay gap including part-time & casuals is 11.6% (WGEA, 2022d). Most universities undertake gender pay equity analyses, though there can be limitations in the way data is collected and analysed (i.e., the exclusion of contract staff, consultants, some senior executives), which can result in misleading results. Examples of leading practice in this area include **gender pay equity clauses** in some enterprise agreements, and provisions about **pay transparency**.

Universities with gender pay equity clauses in their enterprise agreements include Edith Cowan University (WA), Macquarie University (NSW) and Notre Dame University (NSW).⁶ At Edith Cowan, employees who believe their work has not been recognised on the basis of gender can appeal to the Vice Chancellor. During a reclassification of professional staff that allowed broad banding across two adjoining classifications, Notre Dame agreed to a principle that 'It should not have the effect of widening the gender pay gap'.

Although academic and professional staff pay rates are publicly available in enterprise agreements, the breakdown of who receives what by gender is not always so readily available. Macquarie's enterprise agreement provides for some pay transparency by requiring annual reporting of aggregate salary data for professional staff to be provided to the Gender Equity Strategy Committee and executive team for input into its workplace gender equity strategy and also to be made available to unions or staff. Transparency, i.e., publishing clear policies and guidelines, is also important when it comes to additional payments such as market loadings that are paid in some faculties, but there was no evidence of data transparency on this matter. One participant put it this way:

I was shocked in my previous university when I was Acting Dean of a faculty ... And I had all the HR files that the old Dean had. Not one woman ..., including myself, had a market allowance. ... All of the men did. (Scholar 9)

Data transparency of how internal funding is distributed within Schools was recommended (Scholar 6), but not reported in any institutions. Examining gender pay gaps regularly at team or School level to ensure that the gaps are not rendered invisible by the process of averaging was also recommended, but not reported by any of the institutions.

⁶ See: *Edith Cowan University Enterprise Agreement 2017*, cl 62; *University of Notre Dame Australia Staff Enterprise Agreement 2018-2021*, cl28; and *Macquarie University's Professional Staff Enterprise Agreement 2018*, cl 25

Other knowledge-based organisations

Under its Pay Equity Ambassador scheme (note: this is currently under review), WGEA sets the following standard for organisations to become leaders in gender pay equity:

- Conduct a pay gap analysis of its workforce within the previous two years
- Report the data from the analysis to the executive and the Board
- Take action on the results
- Inform their employees of the actions they are taking on gender pay equity, and
- Promote their initiatives alongside WGEA (WGEA, n.d.)

Knowledge-based organisations that are listed as WGEA Pay Equity Ambassadors include global recruiter and HR consulting firm Randstad, consulting firm Pitt&Sherry, American Express and national law firm McInnes Wilson.

The Commonwealth Bank (CBA) has created a number of tools for managers to improve pay equity. These include a Pay Range Tool for recruiters that benchmarks salaries against the market and highlights gender bias, as well as a dashboard for managers that shows 'like-for-like' pay gaps in their teams (Male Champions of Change, 2017). The government-owned Queensland Investment Corporation (QIC) benchmarked almost all of its employees' salaries against the market and determined that it had a gender pay gap. It reduced this gap to 0.3% by redirecting a large amount of its remuneration annual budget from its business units to women who were being paid below market (Male Champions of Change, 2017).

Pay transparency is an important practice for improving gender equity, by allowing individuals to benchmark themselves against others performing similar work. Lendlease communicates regularly with its employees about its gender pay gap and the actions it is taking to address it (Male Champions of Change, 2017)

Work-life balance policies

Many solutions to improve working conditions for women are well-known, such as paid parental leave, flexible working hours, designated spaces for breast feeding, and increasingly, new forms of leave (International Labour Office, Bureau for Employers' Activities, 2017). These policies present organisations with opportunities to demonstrate their commitment to gender diversity and inclusion in the workplace and to more fully enable women to participate.

Universities

Leading practices relating to care and career breaks in the university sector include paid parental leave, equitable recruitment and promotion policies and processes that fairly and consistently and transparently consider care responsibilities, and even family-friendly work events (Cardel, et al., 2020). Strategies, such as paid parental leave or flexible working arrangements, should be clearly communicated to staff and easily available for reference, and the process for accessing them should not be time consuming, complicated or unnecessarily bureaucratic (Gilbert, Denson, & Weidmann, 2020; Carlson, et al., 2021).

Parental leave: Universities have generous parental leave schemes by industry standards. WGEA Employers of Choice must provide at least eight weeks paid parental leave on full pay for primary carers and at least three weeks for secondary carers with no specification of gender

in who takes these roles. Leading practice universities provide substantially more than that, at 26-36 weeks on full pay, with opportunities to take this part-time over a longer period.⁷

In addition to parental leaves, leading practice universities provide a range of other supports for parents on or after returning from parental leave. Support can be categorised as targeted financial supports for research (see Box, *Examples of financial supports*), supports during parental leave and supports after returning to work.

Examples of financial supports

- The Australian Catholic University (*Australian Catholic University Staff Enterprise Agreement 2017-2021*, cl. 4.7) provides two financial supports for women academic staff specifically as a “gender equity initiative”. The first provides three awards of \$12,500 per annum for women academic staff returning to work within two years of the birth or adoption of a young child, to re-establish their research profile. The second provides three awards of up to \$1,250 for childcare for women academics within three years of returning to work in order to assist them to present a refereed paper at an international conference.
- The University of NSW’s Career Advancement Fund for Female Academics During or Returning from Maternity/ Adoption Leave provides grants of up to \$10,000 for full-time or fractional female academics for research supports such as research assistance during or following maternity/adoption leave, equipment, conferences or courses, or employment of casual to reduce the teaching load.

Before and during leave, leading universities communicate with the staff member before the leave commences to clarify the staff member’s communication preferences during the leave period (Professional 4). Keeping in touch days are also provided to maintain links between the

staff member and the workplace (Government stakeholder 1b). Leading universities also promote the taking of parental leave among male staff (Government stakeholder 1b).

Practical supports for women returning to work (see Box, *Help with returning to work*) after parental leave include breastfeeding supports (Advocate 1a), fractional and flexible work (Scholar 4), parents support groups (Government stakeholder 1b), changes to teaching loads (Scholar 4) and allowing HDR students on scholarships to convert them to part-time (Leader 6). In a number of cases supports are codified in the institution’s enterprise agreements, providing enforceability and certainty as a condition of employment (Government stakeholder 1b).

Help with returning to work

- Part-time and flexible work on return
- Phased return
- Onboarding returning staff
- Non-teaching semester upon return
- Parent and Carer working party to address concerns about limited support and/or increased workloads

⁷ See for example: *Australian Catholic University Staff Enterprise Agreement 2017-2021*, [2018] FWCA 7676, cl.3.9; *University of NSW (Professional Staff) Enterprise Agreement 2018* [2019] FWCA 3504, cl.29.5.1; and *University of Sydney Enterprise Agreement 2018-2021* [2018] FWCA 2265, cl.246.

Childcare is a significant work and family challenge. Leading universities provide childcare located on-campus or proximately to campus, and provide extended hours (see Box, *Childcare at Victoria University*).

Childcare at Victoria University

University B operates on a dual sector vocational and traditional academic model with courses offered in a block study mode. The student population is culturally and socially diverse and located in a number of different campuses in Victoria and NSW.

Preferential subsidised childcare places are provided at its Footscray and Werribee campuses, with extended opening times to assist staff and students balance their work, study and care commitments. The Footscray Nicholson centre is open from 7.30am - 6.00pm and the Werribee centre from 7.15am - 6.15pm.

Leading universities also provide short-term parking near on-campus childcare centres to enable quick drop offs before work, and longer-term affordable parking is valued by parents with day-care and school drop offs further from campus (Academic 4, Professional 5).

Working flexibly: Around 90% per cent of all Australian higher education employers offer flexible working arrangements compared with 72% per cent of all Australian industries (Nash & Churchill, 2020). Universities are taking steps to improve flexibility in the workplace, such as establishing meeting-free days, incorporating ‘achievement relative to opportunity’ principles into employment processes, and normalising flexible working options for senior staff.

Regular working from home for professional and academic staff has been perhaps the most visible change in universities since the pandemic, with practices including more flexibility on where work is conducted, hybrid home/campus arrangements and complete flexibility of the working day. Leading universities provide adequate flexibility to both academic and non-academic staff.

A one size fits all approach to bums on seats and who should be in the office is just not going to cut the mustard anymore. (Advocate 4)

See Box, *Snapshot of flex practices*, for some leading approaches to flexibility.

Examples of practices aimed at reducing long working hours or expectations about constant availability for work (which, according to the *Drivers* section, undermine the capacity of flexibility to reduce working hours) did not emerge in the consultations.

Other leaves in universities: Leading organisations have introduced, or are in the process of introducing, a variety of other types of leave to achieve work-life balance.

Domestic violence (DV) leave is well-established in the university sector and included in enterprise agreements, and many universities already offer what is a rapidly developing employee entitlement in Australia following from a Fair Work Commission decision to include 10 days unpaid DV leave in modern awards and the new federal Labor Government’s introduction of legislation to include 10 days’ paid DV leave in the National Employment Standards, including for casual employees.

Snapshot of flex practices

- Toolkit of flexibility practices for managers
- Support and training for managers on having 'flexibility conversations'
- Coaching managers on how to manage team discussions on flexibility and devise equitable arrangements
- Promoting flexibility for senior staff
- A process rather than rules for flexibility, focusing on local needs, equity for team members and devolution of authority
- Training 'Flex Champions' to work with local areas on work design
- Ensuring budgets are aligned with flexibility policies with the support of senior management:
You want the executive to understand that you've got these work-life balance policies because they support a gender-diverse workforce and an inclusive workforce. And therefore ... they are costing us more money, [but] they're worth it. (Leader 3)
- Flexible working in enterprise agreements to ensure enforceability.

Other birth or parenting-related leaves provided in leading universities include miscarriage leave, grandparent leave and purchased leave. **Miscarriage bereavement leave** has recently been introduced by one university with an entitlement of three days (Academic 10), noting that the federal government amended the Fair Work Act in October 2021 to introduce two days' paid miscarriage bereavement leave.

Grandparent leave is available in some enterprise agreements for grandparents who are primary carers of pre-school-aged children.⁸ No evidence of grandparent leave for non-primary carers was identified.

Additional purchased leave, with the cost averaged across the year, can not only assist employees to care for children in the school holiday periods, but can also be implemented with limited stigma.

I mean it's a small thing, you don't have to tell everybody. Not everybody necessarily knows that you've actually done it, especially in the academic setting. You just say I'm not going to be here for those, you know, so it doesn't make you stand out: 'Oh, you've got children and that's why you've going off'. It's a quite under the radar sort of little thing. (Scholar 5)

Gender affirmation leave is emerging as a new entitlement in enterprise agreements (Professional 5), as well as the right to work flexibly if needed to attend appointments or any other activities in relation to gender transition.

Women are more likely than men to provide care for other family members such as **elders and adults with disabilities** (ABS, 2022). Leading universities provide periods of carer leave for these kinds of care responsibilities in excess of the National Employment Standards minimum of 10 days of paid leave per annum. However, providing other assistance and resources for employees with these care responsibilities is not as well developed as resources for parents (Government stakeholder 1b) in universities.

Staff at the UTS Centre for Carers Research conducted a consultation process with carers at the university about their experiences and needs, and identified areas in which carers could be

⁸ For example, the ACT Public Sector Canberra Institute of Technology (Teaching Staff) Enterprise Agreement 2018-2021 which provides up to 52 weeks over a five-year period

better supported. (Gleeson, Visvanathan, Frijat, Teague, & Taylor, 2020) In 2020, UTS became the only university accredited with the Carers NSW Carers and Employers Program. Accredited employers must meet Carers and Employers standards of commitments to, and practices to support, the creation of a care-friendly workplace. UTS currently has Level 1 accreditation, which involves meeting 9 criteria to support carers, including demonstrated commitment to identifying and supporting carers, commitment to raising awareness of carers within the organisation, and commitment to developing practices to support carers in the workplace. Organisations that mature in their support for carers move on to Levels 2 and 3.

Other knowledge-based organisations

Leading organisations regularly review and update their policies and processes to reflect societal change and promote more contemporary practice.

Parental leave: Organisations that are leading the way in parental leave are those who offer gender-neutral leave that can be taken by either parent with no qualifying period (WGEA, 2022a). Leading organisations are also *encouraging* both parents to embrace paid parental leave (Fagg, Hellicar, Sanders, & Zeng, 2015; Diversity Council of Australia, 2021; Hegewisch, 2009). Leading policies include adopting a new industry standard of 26 weeks gender neutral paid leave and contributing superannuation for periods of unpaid leave. One organisation has introduced bonus paid parental leave when parents split parental leave time, an initiative aimed at increasing the number of men taking paid parental leave.

Working flexibly: Coming out of the pandemic, a growing number of organisations have announced their plan to embrace 'hybrid' work' in response to shifting perceptions around where, when and how work is completed. Research from the United States suggests that the proclamations about flexible work may be oversimplifying the challenges that come with making flexibility core to the organisation's strategy and operations (Kossek, Gettings, & Kaumudi, 2021). Leading organisations are working with new ways of ensuring that flexible work is not intrinsically linked with overwork or being available for work at all hours.

For example, in 2020, Microsoft found that when a large team moved to remote work, employees worked an average of four more hours a week, sent more messages at non-standard hours and spent more time in meetings. Realising that this was unsustainable, leaders encouraged team to develop guidelines to ensure that both work and non-work time (clear cut shifts, daily breaks and dedicated solo work hours) were put into place (Kossek, Gettings, & Kaumudi, 2021).

Organisations such as LifeWorks (formerly Morneau Shepell) are addressing this challenge by developing clear written frameworks with principles that guide decision making about and expectations for flexibility (Kossek, Gettings, & Kaumudi, 2021). The organisations flexible working policies are clear about expectations and communicated widely with messaging that the goal of flexible working is to achieve equality. Employees are asked to document their planned versus actual work hours to foster work routines and increase transparency about when they are working and when they are not. Finally, they use clear metrics to evaluate employees on the quality of their work, not the timing or quantity (Kossek, Gettings, & Kaumudi, 2021).

Notably, many of the organisations interviewed have already standardised flexible work prior to the pandemic. Far from regarding flexibility as an accommodation for women with caring responsibilities, flexible work and flexible teams have been positioned as an integral element of work life integration and business continuity. They have shifted from core business hours (e.g., 9am – 5pm) where employees are expected to be present at the office, to focusing on the outputs and contributions of individuals who are enabled to work in a way that suits them (e.g., working towards a pre-determined deadline at times and locations that were most suitable).

Organisations with a mature approach to flexible work have created workplace cultures where many employees are entitled to and are able to utilise flexible working arrangements without perceived or real repercussions. In this sense, a conscious choice has been made by organisations to position flexible work as a mechanism to enhance work life balance, increase productivity, and enable all employees to actively share caring responsibilities (see Box – *Bringing Strategy to Life*). These cultures are reinforced by modelling by leaders.

Bringing strategy to life

Property group, Mirvac, partnered with the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) to create a video as part of the ‘Equilibrium Man’ Challenge. This collaborative project was established to challenge workplace stereotypes of flexible work and as a way of building engagement and buy-in for working flexibly across the business. While Mirvac would go on to adopt more sophisticated strategies, the video series has been credited with re-setting the way that flexible work was viewed within the organisation, beginning a broader process of mainstreaming flexible work. Importantly, Mirvac considered that actions were most likely to fail when the organisation and its leaders had not been able to identify and articulate clearly enough the ‘why’ behind decisions and initiatives.

Moving from conceiving to implementing flexible work can be difficult. In recognition of this, the WGEA Employer of Choice citation requires an organisation’s managers to be trained in how to deal with flexible work and requests for flexible work. They are also required to have a process for challenging stereotypes on flexible work (WGEA, 2022b).

Leading organisations also provided **new and innovative forms of leave** to facilitate work life balance (Baird M. , Hamilton, Dinale, Gulesserian, & Heron, (2022)). Examples of these types of leave are set out in Table 4, below. Many universities already provide some combination of such leaves.

Support for family carers: Some leading organisations also have well-developed approaches to supporting staff caring for a family member with a disability or chronic illness, or an ageing relative, who often have different needs from parents of dependent

children. For example, in addition to flexible work arrangements and carers leave, some leading organisations internationally: have developed integrated carer strategies for identifying and supporting carers in their workforces; provide help with referrals to correct services and support with planning and coordinating services; carers registers that identify carers and provide them

Table 4 – Examples of new leave entitlements offered by organisations

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Life leave ▪ Miscarriage leave ▪ Gender affirmation leave 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Unlimited annual leave ▪ Family planning/fertility leave ▪ Grandparents leave
---	---

Source: Baird, et al. (forthcoming, 2022)

with resources, information, and fast-tracked leave approvals and other services; and provide respite care or back up in home care for a care recipient in the form of a fixed number of hours annually (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2013). In Australia, a number of organisations have gained accreditation with the three-level Carers + Employers Program, run by Carers NSW, to recognise their practices for supporting staff with caring responsibilities (see Box – *Suncorp*). Internationally, other companies have introduced more extensive measures to support carers. For example, American mortgage association Fannie Mae has for many years employed a geriatric care manager to support its employees with care responsibilities for ageing relatives, by providing help with referral, care service navigation, and crisis support (Smolkin, 2017; Australian Human Rights Commission, 2013).

The gendered distribution of work, particularly among academic staff, is a key area of tension in universities. This has become more pronounced as teaching focused roles, two-thirds held by women, have gained traction.

Suncorp

The Queensland-based insurer is accredited at Level 2 with the Carers NSW Carers + Employers Program. Employees with caring needs are supported with:

- Employee Resources Group 'enAble' supporting employees with disability and accessibility requirements, carers and their supporters.
- Flexible working options and paid carers leave additional to the legislated minimum
- Communication of carer-specific information and resources
- A carers intranet providing a clear definition of a 'carer', to assist with self-identification, and
- Links to internal and external resources, leader-specific resources and educational resources
- Webinars and learning pathways

Workloads

The redistribution of academic housework is identified as a key initiative to creating the space for women to undertake research activities, providing the opportunity for women to invest their time in similar ways as their male colleagues (Cannizzo & Osbaldiston, 2016; Gilbert, Denson, & Weidmann, 2020). As part of this redistribution of the overall workload allocation for university staff, including professional staff, leading universities build in greater transparency and equity requirements, ensuring equitable expectations of outcomes and greater recognition of administration and pastoral care-work that is disproportionately undertaken by women and casualised staff (Cannizzo & Osbaldiston, 2016; Gilbert, Denson, & Weidmann, 2020).

The gendered distribution of work, particularly among academic staff, is a key area of tension in universities. This has become more pronounced as teaching focused roles, two-thirds held by women, have gained traction.

The redistribution of academic housework is identified as a key initiative to creating the space for women to undertake research activities, providing the opportunity for women to invest their time in similar ways as their male colleagues (Cannizzo & Osbaldiston, 2016; Gilbert, Denson, & Weidmann, 2020). As part of this redistribution of the overall workload allocation for university staff, including professional staff, leading universities build in greater transparency and equity requirements, ensuring equitable expectations of outcomes and greater recognition of administration and pastoral care-work that is disproportionately undertaken by women and casualised staff (Cannizzo & Osbaldiston, 2016; Gilbert, Denson, & Weidmann, 2020).

Case Study: Narrative-based workload allocation

In a humanities School, academics provide a narrative of their previous three years research outputs, including reasons for interruptions, and their plans for the coming year. The narrative is reviewed by peers within the work group and by a School-based work plan committee. The narrative allows often unacknowledged tasks such as journal editorships to be recognised by the peer group, as well as parental leave breaks, and an additional research allocation to be made:

we can see you've had a difficult time and you're planning on finishing this book this year, so maybe you need another 5% or 10% time for research

Strategies for managing workloads may be university-wide or at the faculty or school level. One university monitors workload through a high-level committee under the lead of the DVC-Research and with the inclusion of a NTEU representative (Professional 4). The committee reviews gender bias in the work that is being performed, as well as gender representation within particular Schools. A faculty-level initiative in one institution to improve workload transparency is a public dashboard that allows staff to see how their workload compares to others in the faculty (Advocate 4), allowing gender bias to be observed.

Workload Allocation Estimation Tool (WAET)

The WAET is a validated tool, developed at the University of Tasmania, for measuring academic workloads across a range of different research, teaching and service activities. [Find out more](#)

Researchers at the University of Tasmania have developed a tool to estimate workload allocation (see Box, at left). The tool is still being developed, based on user feedback. A principles-based research workload allocation model (such as developed by SAGE, see Box, *SAGE Workload Allocation Principles Matrix*) can work more effectively than a numerical model that calculates individual academics' number of publications and research money over previous years to

determine their future workload allocation. Using a principles-based model acknowledges the wide variety of work and roles in each discipline (Advocate 2).

Research support schemes, such as research grants or buying out teaching loads for a limited time, have a positive impact on women's research careers. These schemes are gender neutral in design, for example Charles Sturt University has positioned their scheme as 'return to research' for people who have become less research active for any reason, although staff who have taken leave for caring responsibilities are specifically targeted (CSU, 2021).

SAGE Workload Allocation Principles Matrix

A SAGE Workload Special Interest Group (WSIG) has been investigating equitable models for workload allocation since April 2021, in response to a need frequently expressed in Athena Swan Bronze Award applications, and in response to the disruption wrought by COVID.

The WSIG is developing a Workload Allocation Principles Matrix that can be used by universities as an evidence-based tool to guide leading practice in diverse operational areas. The draft Matrix is based on 5 principles:

Principle 1 – Transparency and Clarity: to enable comparison with others with clearly understood benchmarks for work tasks

Principle 2 – Credit: to ensure role clarity, and to recognise and reward additional effort

Principle 3 – Fair and Considerate: to ensure equity and support staff wellbeing

Principle 4 – Context and Flexibility: to recognise individual strengths and individual needs, and allow staff input into their workload allocation

Principle 5 – Accountability: to hold individuals and managers accountable for work quality, in a safe and healthy way. The draft Matrix lists expectations and provides guidance at the level of: Institution, Delegated officers/Local level managers and Individuals. The principles are currently being piloted, – see [here](#) for more information.

Casual workforce

Casualisation was identified by research participants as a key driver of gender inequities in universities. This was acknowledged as a challenge by university stakeholders yet practice in this area was only in an emergent stage.

Leading universities provide increases in opportunities for continuing positions, or structured opportunities for casuals to meet with managers to receive advice/develop plans on pathways towards continuing work (Scholar 4). As an example of the former, Western Sydney University has recently agreed to create 150 new FTE academic positions which will enable casual staff to convert to continuing employment (Matchett, 2022).⁹ Leading universities also extended gender equity measures in some areas to casual staff, such as career development mentoring or access to internal research grants (Scholar 4). One participant raised the value of inviting casuals to important School or Faculty meetings (Academic 7). Leading organisations also included casual staff in additional discretionary support and recognition payments during the pandemic (Leader 2).

The limited inclusion of casual staff in university data collection processes means that the profile of gender equity in a university excludes a large proportion of its workforce. In recognition of these limitations, leading universities are placing greater emphasis on collecting data about/from casual staff, including Pulse Surveys of casual staff (i.e., Leader 5). More nuance in the data on casual staff that is collected was also recommended, e.g., monitoring whether, as academics retire or are made redundant, if their permanent teaching/research/service roles

⁹ This provision was negotiated in July 2022, during bargaining for their 2022 enterprise agreement; but note that staff have not yet voted to approve the agreement.

are being replaced with education-focused, and short-term, contracts for early career academics, and if this is gendered.

Influencers

Gender equity strategies in leading organisations are almost always underpinned by a strong commitment from leaders who embed inclusive practice into the systems and values of their organisations, accompanied by an openness to experimentation and new ideas.

Consequently, organisational policies and practices are accompanied by strategies to drive cultural change through all levels of an organisation. Organisational culture generally is understood to comprise the shared values, interests and behaviours of the individuals who work within an organisation, or ‘the way we do things around here’ (Schein, 1985). Creating more gender-equitable organisations requires first the understanding that ‘the way things are done’ may have been constructed over many decades to meet men’s needs, and second, the reconstructing of these cultural elements to meet the needs of more diverse groups.

For the purpose of this report, the word used to describe the leaders who affect change is *influencers*. Influencers are not just senior leaders, though they are included as well. They are individuals at all levels who hold positional power to drive change in the area of gender equity. In corporations these include the Board and Chairman, CEO and Executive; in universities these include the Senate, the Council, the Vice Chancellor and Executive; and in both it includes those people who others listen to and approach for advice, guidance, and advocacy on gender equity.

Governance

In this section we will briefly examine how governance structures in knowledge-based organisations drive or reflect desired change.

Universities

Leading universities altered their governance and leadership structures to add or remove layers of leadership to facilitate the implementation of gender equity strategies. Some universities created a very senior executive role, at the level of Deputy Vice Chancellor or Pro Vice Chancellor, with the specific remit of driving gender (and other) equity (see section below for fuller description of these roles). Others removed layers of governance to create more direct channels between the most senior leaders and the faculty deans, to facilitate the effective dissemination of gender equity strategies throughout the institution (Leader 1, Leader 2). No examples arose of gender equity measures at the level of university Senates. While it may not always be possible to create positions at the very most senior levels, it should nonetheless be evident to all in the organisation who is responsible for driving the agenda for gender equity.

Other knowledge-based organisations

In contrast to universities, leaders outside the university sector spoke extensively about the imperative for governing body members – or Boards – to adopt a strong stance on gender equity. There was a widely held view among interviewees that changes in the regulatory and stakeholder environment have created this imperative. Boards were seen to influence gender equity across four areas:

1. Strategy
2. Governance, through embedding inclusive thinking and behaviours in decisions

3. Talent, through ensuring CEO/senior leader appointees demonstrate inclusive capacities
4. Performance, through monitoring progress against diversity and equity goals.

KPMG Australia

KPMG Australia's partnership agreement specifically states that a commitment to genuine diversity is a factor in key decision making. Some specific examples of its Board's actions include: It has made a conscious effort to ensure that their Board had equal representation of men and women. Six out of eleven Board members are currently women. It has also directly intervened on occasion to ensure that candidates were representative of the community and business, including directly approaching individuals who may not have had the confidence to self-nominate for leadership roles, and ensuring that there is equal representation in shortlists.

In leading organisations, ensuring gender parity at Board level is a common strategy to embed greater gender diversity in the governance of an organisation. Metrics are captured and reported to the governing body (including the number of women shortlisted for senior roles in organisations, number of women hired proportionate to men, turnover by gender, gender pay gaps and performance ratings).

For example, KPMG Australia made a conscious effort to ensure that their Board had equal representation of men and women. This was credited, in part, to the partnership agreement which specifically states that a commitment to genuine diversity be a factor in key decision making (see Box – KPMG Australia).

Executive

While organisations can establish the policy basis for improving gender diversity and inclusion outcomes, additional action is needed from leaders to drive meaningful and sustained cultural change

(Good, Olsen, Orpin, & Towns, 2015). Without this leadership, improved outcomes are unlikely (International Labour Office, Bureau for Employers' Activities, 2017; USAID, 2021; KPMG Australia, 2016). Similarly, sustained change is challenged where the leadership of a few 'committed individuals' is relied upon in the absence of institutionalised policies and procedures (Crawford & Kilby, 2011). In universities, the focus is on Vice Chancellors. In other knowledge-based organisations, the focus is on CEOs.

Universities

Leading universities exhibit very high commitment to gender equity from the most senior leaders:

[it] really has to come from the Vice Chancellor down. Because if you haven't got a gender inclusive led organisation, it's not going to go very far, very quickly. (Scholar 9)

Visible demonstrations of this commitment include senior leaders chairing gender equity committees, chairing promotion committees or Respect Now committees (Government stakeholder 1b; Advocate 4; Professional 4; Leader 2; Leader 4). Some Vice Chancellors have taken on the role of executive sponsor of SAGE-Athena SWAN (Advocate 4). One university has used inclusion as the basis for the leadership capability framework for senior leaders (Professional 4) and in another university, senior executives personally participate in a speed career mentoring program with nominated individuals including women and people from different cultural backgrounds (Scholar 4).

Senior executives in leading universities mandate targets and measures of gender equity for their direct reports and throughout the wider university (Government stakeholder 1b; Advocate 4; Professional 4; Leader 2; Leader 4). KPIs to increase the number of women in the senior executive teams are also employed:

We do have KPIs around women in leadership positions, around in terms of trying to maintain a balance. So a 50% balance of women in leadership positions. (Professional 4)

Some leaders also commented that collaboration between senior executive academic and professional staff is vital to the success of their gender equity strategies (Leader 2, Leader 6). At one university the gender equity strategy has dual sponsors, one male and one female, one a senior professional executive and the other a senior academic executive.

Other knowledge-based organisations

In other knowledge-based organisations, leaders report that leadership is the number one driver for the cultural changes required to foster gender equity in organisations. As a CEO noted: *'I think fundamentally it is around leadership buy in by the CEO and by the Chairman... A strong leader is critical.'* Leaders credit much of their success to alignment with, and enablement of, high performing and high trust executive teams and a Chairperson who are united by a common purpose. The commitment from successful Executives is twofold:

- Reinforcing the commitment to inclusion, equity, and diversity through the stories they told, behaviours they modelled and decisions they made and;
- Intervening directly to correct bias or address lack of movement on equity issues.

CEOs and leaders provided many examples of where they had directly intervened to correct or address biases, including withholding funding for travel, vetoing recruitment decisions and restructuring areas of the business to replace change-averse leaders. Leaders also cited examples of CEOs directly intervening in matters associated with their partners and contractors, such as CEOs of property development companies contacting delivery partners on large projects to discuss incidents of harassment that had occurred on construction sites where their employees were conducting a site visit.

Formal sponsorship: Leading organisations are unequivocal in their support of formal sponsorship programs to mobilise senior leaders on gender equitable cultures and practices. As one female executive noted:

The Sponsorship Program can be quite ground-breaking, it has made senior men realise, 'I have been hurting women all my life, I didn't know I was doing it. How can I set it right?'

Sponsorship, in contrast to mentorship, involves the 'active and deliberative use of power (organisational position, professional standing, influence and connections) to facilitate the careers of others' (de Vries & Binns, 2018) Unlike in universities, where sponsorship exists informally in some contexts 'with little or no external guidance, accountability, recognition, training or support' (de Vries & Binns, 2018), leaders in other knowledge-based organisations develop formalised sponsorship programs.

Formal Sponsorship programs have been adopted and independently evaluated by organisations including KPMG, Arup and AECOM. Programs are reported as most effective when the onus is on the sponsor and stretches them to advocate and influence on behalf of the sponsee. Successful programs are structured with clear guidance on the role of the sponsor and sponsee, encourage regular meetings and have consequences for those who do not invest adequate time and resources to the program.

While the Sponsorship programs were beneficial for female participants, the most transformative component was the realisation among many male participants that power had benefited them and how much of their own success was the result of the formal or informal support they had received.

Accountability: Research conducted by the United Kingdom's Behavioural Insights Team (BIT) has highlighted the importance of creating strong mechanisms to ensure that leaders are accountable for the diversity and inclusion outcomes in their teams (The Behavioural Insights Team, 2021). Leading organisations are increasingly holding their leaders accountable for diversity and inclusion outcomes through KPIs and financial incentives, such as bonuses. The key factor for success is ensuring the KPIs and targets that leaders must meet include diversity metrics, and the performance against these metrics is transparent to employees. For example, Geoscience Australia has stipulated that leader's performance and progress will be assessed based on their active contribution to enhancing the organisation's inclusion goals, building this into leader's performance agreements to embed it into the leader's fundamental role. Leading organisations reported an increase in female participation and representation in leadership since introducing EDI-related targets and expected behaviours into roles.

To promote accountability for outcomes, a common practice at large national or global organisations is to hold online all-staff forums that have opportunities for employees to anonymously ask questions of their leaders.

Equity and diversity leads

Diversity leads and taskforces play an important role in holding the executive accountable for inclusion efforts and outcomes. Having a diversity lead is also associated with better representation of women and minority groups in organisations (Dobbin & Kalev, 2016).

Universities

Universities with leading practice send powerful messages of the importance of diversity through their organisational charts by activities such as creating the position of Deputy/Pro Vice Chancellor Equity Diversity and Inclusion, moving the university's SAGE Committee from Human Resources to the Provost's office, or creating a governance unit focused on Equity and Diversity reporting directly to a DVC. Other universities have introduced positions at the level of Dean or Associate Dean to drive equity, diversity and inclusivity (Scholar 6). Leaders supportive of these roles report that the formalisation of the role increases accountability of the executive and proper resourcing of the implementation of gender strategies and activities (Advocate 2; Advocate 4):

I think this work is often seen as an add on, whereas having that role in the executive sort of formalises it a bit more... the buck stops with that person (Advocate 2)

I question the capacity and the maturity at the moment of leaders to be responsible for a particular area, say the DVC Research, and also to have the capacity to then look at, address all the issues that we still have in relation to gender equity, diversity, and inclusion. (Advocate 4)

However, there is debate over whether the creation of such roles continues to compartmentalise diversity and inclusion instead of mainstreaming it:

The risk of having a DVC Equity and Diversity is it kind of gives the impression it's not everyone's business, it's only their business. Whereas I think they have to make equity and diversity how the leadership expectation of leaders at all levels. (Leader 3)

One leader commented that such a role can improve a university's maturity in equity and diversity (Leader 3) but may not be required once the university had reached maturity.

Most universities have an Equity and Diversity Unit, usually located in Human Resources, responsible for equity and inclusion programs for staff and students. Staff from such units also commonly assist the diversity and inclusion committees in universities (Leader 6). Some leading

universities have located their unit in the Chancellery, taking on more of a governance and strategic guidance role (Professional 5).

In leading universities, while equity leads are most commonly in the executive or senior leadership, several drew on staff who were not formal leaders or in leadership appointments to act as equity champions. **Staff led equity champions include:** SAGE-Athena SWAN committees, Gender Equity Committees and Equity and Inclusion Committees, at the university or in faculties and professional staff portfolios. Committees have their own strategic goals and action plans (Leader 6). University A uses **Flex Champions** to work with local areas where flexible working has not been the norm. These Champions are identified by senior managers as people who have 'soft power', i.e., they are well-regarded and influential opinion leaders. The Champions are trained in how to coach and support local area teams to review their work design and the ways in which it is best done, as well as how to devolve the authority and responsibility for doing the work.

Other knowledge-based organisations

Leading organisations have appointed leads of inclusion change initiatives. In some cases, the inclusion and diversity team has been folded into the broader Human Resources Group and in other instances the team has an independent function. Leaders noted a range of factors that helped EDI practitioners to be successful in their roles, including:

- License to shape future initiatives with input from leaders and staff
- The freedom and ability to audit and review policies, pay and processes and the ability to keep these in line with diversity conversations occurring across Australia
- A direct line of access and reporting to the board and executive team
- A separate budget.

As one EDI practitioner noted:

When you have someone in the gender equity space who can challenge HR and policies and practices and could do so respectfully and with authority, you have more leeway.

Senior leaders/managers

Universities

Given the central role of managers (i.e., Heads of Schools, Heads of Departments, and Deans) in decisions and opportunities concerning workloads, promotions, flexible working arrangements, and more, the actions and activities of these managers are critical in the success of university-level strategies and policies and in fostering gender equity in the university. Leading universities target managers as the site of intervention.

The first area is the creation of KPIs focused on gender equity. While most KPIs tend to focus on student loads, staff satisfaction, workloads, and budgets (Scholar 9; Academic 9), leading universities have begun providing managers with gender-focused targets and KPIs (Advocate 4), including gender balance in: leadership of local committees (Scholar 9); those being promoted; and the proportion of women in leadership positions (Academic 9; Professional 4).

I want our managers at both professional and academic units to be responsible for seeing women in leadership, women going for promotion. I want them to be innovating. I want that to be the indicator that that they're thinking about. (Academic 9)

One leader provides managers with different options for gender-focused KPIs:

The other thing we do is that is... [senior leaders'] KPIs must include a couple items around gender equity... I offer each of my direct reports a menu of choices of things that they can choose to select as a part of their KPIs that they work up with me every year. Could be, you know, refusal to participate on panels that are not gender equal. (Leader 2)

Even where KPIs for leaders do not exist, participants reported widespread support for them (Academic 1; Academic 11; Scholar 9; Academic 9).

Leaders also reported the provision of training, coaching, or consultancy support (Professional 4) for managers (i.e., heads of schools, heads of departments, and deans) to upskill them in: supporting their staff to prepare and apply for promotion (Advocate 4); overcoming flexibility biases i.e., favouring presenteeism (Professional 5); and equity principles to support them to understand biases in their decision-making (Scholar 4). Another reported a leadership framework throughout the university that includes inclusion (Professional 5).

Leading managers at the level of head of school or head of department also proactively encourage and offer specific assistance to 'women who clearly should be thinking about going for promotion and who aren't' (Scholar 8; Scholar 7). They make a difference by:

- Reviewing academics' workloads and resources and providing more resources to build their portfolio of work for promotion (Academic 4)
- Guiding academics towards particular kinds of experience, academic papers and awards necessary for successful applications for promotion (Scholar 5).
- Having discussions with staff about their desires and plans for promotions and being proactive about supporting them in the process, such as encouraging them if they are ready (Scholar 4) or if they are not, 'putting in place very well supported, scaffolded ideas about how they can become ready' (Advocate 4)
- Supporting staff with drafting applications (Scholar 9).

One leader reported that the faculties in which Deans took this approach at their institution had the highest female promotion rates (Scholar 7). Another put it this way:

The Vice Chancellor acknowledged at one stage that the number of staff being promoted in [my school] was far above any other school. Because I identify staff every year. I shouldn't say target, it sounds very managerial, but I think, right, these people are up for promotion. What can I do? I need to have this conversation. You need to put yourself forward. (Scholar 9)

Other knowledge-based industries

While there is broad recognition that managers play a key role in making individuals feel visible, valued, and protected, many organisations continue to grapple with the role of manager as a champion and enabler of an inclusive culture. A core challenge identified and articulated by leaders and EDI practitioners, is covert resistance to gender equity initiatives. As one executive noted, 'we would set the expectation, and managers would smile at you and carry on doing exactly what they had been doing before.' In such cases as these, many accept that turnover is a regrettable but necessary part of cultural change. Where organisations have been successful, they have been clear and unrelenting in their expectations and tolerance of manager behaviours. For example, in some public sector departments managers have KPIs based on 360° feedback from their staff on their demonstrated commitment to EDI and how well they enable their staff's work-life balance.

Growing awareness of the role of managers in staff engagement, inclusion and safety has also led organisations to define the mindsets, values, and attributes of future leaders more clearly. Leadership capability frameworks frequently reference self-awareness, curiosity, growth mindsets, cultural competence, courage, and commitment to collaboration as traits to be rewarded and encouraged in future leaders.

Employee resource groups or networks

Employee resource groups play an important role in making diversity and equity efforts visible across organisations, ensuring that gender equity strategies are informed by the experiences of staff, and helping to hold organisations accountable for progress and change.

Universities

Leading universities report well developed employee networks. These networks provide opportunities for staff to identify key gendered barriers and concerns, to develop options for change, and to feed these to the university executive. Importantly, they allow changes to university policy and practice to be informed by the lived experience of current employees. An example is a parents and carers network that audits policies, collects data on experiences, and champions gender-inclusive practice such as breastfeeding facilities (Advocate 2). Another example is a voluntary women's advocacy committee that raises the profile of gender-related issues and promotes knowledge exchange about practice across heads of department (Academic 6). At Charles Sturt University, a formal group of senior women leaders meet regularly to examine issues of significance to the women of the university, such as gender bias in student feedback, and then feed their input into the senior management (see Box, Case Study, *Senior Women's Forum*, below).

Case study – Senior Women's Forum, Charles Sturt University

The Senior Women's Forum at Charles Sturt University is a formal group of women leaders, from Academic Levels D and E, and Professional/General Staff Level 10+, who act as advisors, on behalf of the women of the university, to the senior executive on particular issues affecting them. Their role is to:

- promote and advocate for cultural change within the University
- contribute to strategic planning, policy directions, and critical decision-making bodies
- provide networking opportunities between senior women internally and externally to the University
- support the professional development and advancement of women
- help to circulate relevant information
- support the Leadership Development Program for Women to enhance the career development of women at Charles Sturt University' (CSU, n.d.)

The Forum was instituted in 2006 and meets at least quarterly, with a representative attending the Vice-Chancellor's Forum. A review of the Forum is currently underway in recognition that its work is additional to its female participants' paid roles, with a proposal that tasks be transferred to the Equity and Diversity team with the Forum's focus to be on providing ideas and feedback.

The most effective networks are those that are properly resourced to carry out their work (Advocate 2), are able to operate independently from executive level (Professional 5), are provided with genuine opportunities to report to executive management, and where management is responsive to their suggestions (Leader 3). Leaders and participants did raise concerns about the amount of labour involved in running and contributing to these networks, and the lack of adequate recognition of that work in university structures of performance measurement, so a focus on resourcing these groups to limit workload, and on recognising the work in promotions and other processes within the university, is important (Leader 3; Academic 6). One university with leading practice provides research grants to staff to undertake research

The most effective networks are those that are properly resourced to carry out their work (Advocate 2), are able to operate independently from executive level (Professional 5), are provided with genuine opportunities to report to executive management, and where management is responsive to their suggestions (Leader 3). Leaders and participants did raise concerns about the amount of labour involved in running and contributing to these networks, and the lack of adequate recognition of that work in university structures of performance measurement, so a focus on resourcing these groups to limit workload, and on recognising the work in promotions and other processes within the university, is important (Leader 3; Academic 6). One university with leading practice provides research grants to staff to undertake research on gender-related barriers within the institution and supports the staff to publish from the research (Advocate 2). This is one excellent way of providing recognition for the work involved in the networks.

Other knowledge-based industries

In other leading organisations, employee resource groups and networks are also employed to keep diversity and inclusion efforts visible through promotion of events and panel discussions. Employee resource groups are positioned for success with committed budget, access to leaders and sponsors and compensation for work that has traditionally been considered extracurricular. Leaders in other knowledge-based organisations also reported the benefits of employee resource groups in providing avenues for like-minded employees to connect with one another.

See Box – *Employee development groups at Stockland*, for an example of how one organisation ensured its diversity and inclusion strategy was meeting the needs of its people and focusing efforts on the issues of highest importance.

Employee development groups at Stockland

Australian property development company, Stockland created a series of employee development groups. Its Parents and Carers Employee Advocacy Group was established in 2016. Meeting every month, the working group discussed ideas to maintain and improve the experience of carers (WGEA, 2021b). Such a change was in the definition of ‘Carer’ to include elder care in addition to parents caring for children (WGEA, 2021b). The working group was a catalyst for changes to parental leave benefits, including:

- Managers now have discretion to allow primary carers leave within 18 months of birth or adoption to encourage more males and secondary carers to take primary carers’ leave
- A lump sum of AUD\$3,000 (gross amount) on return from parental leave.
- A new parental leave benefit, parental Flex Options, gives employers an option of one of three benefits when taking primary carers’ leave:
 - Two additional weeks of paid parental leave
 - The employee’s regular rate of superannuation paid during unpaid parental leave for a maximum of 36 weeks

To get the maximum benefit from diversity leads and taskforces, they should be able to review hiring, progression and talent management decisions and ask for justifications for them (The Behavioural Insights Team, 2021). When people know their decisions may be reviewed by a senior manager or taskforce (sometimes called a ‘challenge panel’), they pay closer attention to the information they are basing their decisions on and make less biased decisions (The Behavioural Insights Team, 2021).

Ecosystem

There is a growing recognition that changes in the social and environmental landscape, legislative change and sector approaches drive and sustain changes that promote more equitable and inclusive practice.

Environmental Change

Universities

Leaders in leading practice universities also play an advocacy role *beyond* their institution, driving change in structures outside of any one institution but with impacts on gender equity within institutions (Advocate 3). In particular, two areas were identified as outside of any one university's control but where VCs and other members of the executive team could engage in effective strategic advocacy. One area is government priorities in funding for certain disciplines, and another is cuts in grant funding.

The area of government funding for universities is multifaceted and includes the way in which degrees are subsidised and the way in which performance-based funding is provided to universities. In the first area, there has been a devaluation of certain types of degrees or courses, such as the humanities and social sciences. Several executives spoke out publicly about the issues associated with this, though not about its potential gendered impacts. The second is cuts to university research funding and the increasing focus on commercialisation and manufacturing, also changes that can have indirect impacts on gender equality in universities through promoting a marketised model that tends to favour masculinised modes of working and drives casualisation in universities, and directing funding to male-dominated disciplines. Senior leaders at several universities had also engaged in public advocacy in this area.

There is more scope for senior executives to engage in advocacy work concerning the structures in the ARC and NH&MRC that disadvantage women. While the ARC has introduced ROPE and extended eligibility periods for those experiencing career interruptions, and has introduced the Kathleen Fitzpatrick and Georgina Sweet Australian Laureate Fellowships for outstanding women researchers (Government stakeholder 2), it remains flawed in the extent to which it understands research performance relative to opportunity and there is more than could be done to overcome gender inequalities on grant income, including to aspects of the process itself (i.e., annual timing, and the very extensive investment of time involved in an application) and the way in which the ROPE operates in the grant process (Scholar 6, Scholar 8).

Other knowledge-based organisations

Leaders noted that increasing social expectations on organisations to demonstrate their commitment to and progress on gender equity and representation affected the level of acceptance or approval that stakeholders and communities extend to a company or industry (social licence). This has been heightened during the pandemic, which has brought with it a greater focus on women's safety, equity and working conditions. As one EDI practitioner noted:

To have a social licence to operate in corporate Australia, you better be sure you are not allowing senior people to get away with non-disclosure agreements or sexually harassing people.

In response, leaders in other knowledge-based organisations do not only engage in work to improve gender equity within their organisations but engage in public advocacy to drive change in the wider institutions and systems that drive gender inequities. For example, some leaders regularly use their social media presence, namely LinkedIn, to promote and answer questions

about the work that their organisation is doing; other leaders sit on industry or event panels to talk specifically about the importance of gender equity. In the case of KPMG, the company uses its platform to advocate for changes within the community, directly lobbying the Federal government to make critical changes to childcare and tax systems to increase women's workforce participation.

Sectoral Approaches

Currently in universities, there are several examples of a sectoral approach to gender equity inclusion. There is mutual involvement of universities in **knowledge sharing** in other areas (i.e., talent recruitment, workforce development) through various networks (Advocate 1b) but not understood through a gender lens. Universities have the potential to capitalise on these existing networks to build a greater focus on gender. There were reports of widespread appetite for more sectoral activity in the space of gender inclusion (Leader 4). Importantly, VCs from 18 universities have signed a *position statement* on preserving gender equity as a higher education priority (Government stakeholder 1b). One leader reported that activity at the sectoral level made it easier for them to drive change within their institution (Leader 4).

There has also been a shared sectoral response to **preventing sexual violence** in universities such as the University Australia-driven initiative *Respect. Now. Always*. The initiative involves:

- commissioning two national surveys of university students on experiences of violence
- the development of tailored training resources for university staff
- the development of guidelines for universities to respond to reports of sexual assault
- the development of principles to guide supervisor-postgraduate interactions
- the development and circulation of awareness-raising materials to residential colleges
- partnership with Our Watch and the Victorian Government on a comprehensive whole-of-university model to prevent gender-based violence (UA, n.d.).

The whole-of-university model, *Educating for Equality* (now called *Respect and Equality in Tertiary Education*), is devised specifically for universities by Our Watch, the national organisation for prevention of violence against women and children (Advocate 2). Free resources from this program include videos, podcasts, case studies and action and implementation plans for preventing gender-based violence. A number of SAGE member universities are using this program. An important component of university programs is the incorporation of the student cohort, with the recognition that students are the pipeline to future staff and the work must begin at this level (Advocate 4, Leader 1).

A whole of institution effort is really the most effective, and perhaps in our case, the only way, to really adequately prevent gender-based violence and to progress gender and diversity equity. (Leader 1)

This is consistent with activities taking place in the United States, where in 2021, the Association of American Universities, an organisation of the top 66 research universities, adopted a set of principles meant to encourage its members to do more to prevent sexual harassment, with several principles focused on thorough sexual misconduct investigations (Fortney & Morris, 2022).

There are also examples of cross institutional support for **career development programs** for women university staff, both academic and professional. For example, one stakeholder raised the Peer Mentoring Program at Swinburne and La Trobe, supporting academic women (particularly Level E women) with the promotions process, which saw an increase in women being promoted to Level E in those institutions. Another example identified by participants is the Community Mentoring Program run by the Australasian Society for Computers in Learning in Tertiary Education (ASCILITE, 2022). This is a formal mentoring program in which experienced

practitioners provide mentorship in areas such as: academic practice, early career research, teaching innovations, learning design, graphic design, and programming.

A much more extensive program identified by several participants was the WATTLE program, a residential professional development and career advancement program set up to support women at academic Levels D and E, and professional levels 9 and 10, into senior leadership positions (see Box, *Case study – WATTLE*, for details). Residential programs can be difficult for people with caring responsibilities to attend and this must be taken into account and accommodated in program design. Universities Australia Women also provides sectoral leadership programs to support the progression of women in leadership positions (i.e., Deans) into senior executive positions.

Case study – WATTLE

The program: WATTLE is a residential program for Level D and E academics and Level 9 and 10 professionals who are interested in entering senior leadership positions. The programs are usually run separately for academic and professional staff.

Process: The program includes a one-week residential stay and is offered twice per year. It builds networks, leadership skills, and strategies for career progression. Two professional women and two academic women from each university attend each workshop and return to their institution together, to support each other. WATTLE is run independently but funded by the universities through a \$22000 contribution to cover the cost of the two academic and two professional participants.

Sectoral support: The Scheme is closely based on the New Zealand Universities Women in Leadership Programme, where the Vice Chancellors of all NZ universities fund the scheme on a five-year basis. In Australia, there is widespread interest from universities and currently 15 institutions use the program. Other institutions are keen to be involved but the current scheme requires more resources to enable its expansion. Unlike the NZ scheme, it has received no seed funding to develop the infrastructure such as staff and systems required to scale up the program, and the membership fees, which are paid in NZ on a five yearly basis, are paid annually which makes planning more difficult.

Outcomes: Formal evaluation of the outcomes of the program has not been conducted due to lack of funds, although the surveys of those participating are highly positive and much anecdotal evidence of participants assuming senior leadership positions after doing the program. The program in New Zealand has been evaluated and the outcomes are extremely positive (NZUWiL, 2019).

Other knowledge-based organisations

Outside of universities, change coalitions such as the Male Champions of Change have been important to establish **industry standards** for issues like sexual harassment, flexibly, domestic violence and women's' career development. For example, the property industry has made a collective pledge for those working in the industry to only sit on panels if there is a mixture of genders and to stamp out behaviours and processes that adversely impact on women. For a traditionally male-dominated industry, this stance actively creates space for women to be more visible and to share their knowledge and experience. Membership of such coalitions has also given leaders and practitioners the moral authority to examine 'sacred cows' in organisations, including discrepancies in the performance process, pay disparity and access to flexible work.

Leaders acknowledge that fostering competition and promoting accountability through regular audits and reporting were critical to the success of sectoral measures. Consequently, external reporting forums such as WGEA and Equileap, which prompt organisations to report against common data points that can then be compared across industry competitors and against national diversity leaders, promote transparency and accountability beyond the 'walls' of the organisation. There are, however, limitations of the effectiveness of these mechanisms if data submitted by organisations is not audited by the external reporting forums, as organisational reporting can be selective and conceal important inequities.

While whole of sector and leader led initiatives have a role to play in driving and sustaining change, some leaders questioned the extent in which these forums and citations had translated into tangible behavioural change and genuine improvements in the lived experience of women working in these organisations. Leaders spoke to the benefits of ensuring there is alignment between the EDI-related message(s) conveyed in marketing campaigns and sectoral reporting exercises, and actual organisational practice.

Conclusions

The higher education sector is an important contributor to the Australian economy and a significant employer of women across academic and professional roles. Despite gender equity and inclusion strategies and practices being in place in universities for some years, women are under-represented at leadership and senior academic levels and in grant income, and over-represented in teaching positions and lower-grade professional positions.

The drivers of gender inequality in the university sector are not only evident at the structural and institutional levels where the distribution of work, policies, processes and culture all shape the experiences and outcomes of women, but also through individual circumstances, where caring responsibilities influence career progression and treatment in the workplace.

Universities are taking actions to address gender equality and inclusiveness, but this is not consistent across the sector, nor at times within universities. In some areas universities lag behind other knowledge-based organisations and there is an opportunity to learn from these leading-practice organisations and adapt policies and practices to suit the university context.

Gender inclusion is a holistic journey that organisations, including universities, need to undertake to improve experiences and outcomes of women in the workforce. As part of this journey, leadership buy-in is key to making the necessary changes in policy, processes and culture to influence broader institutional and structural shifts.

Leading practice in universities and knowledge-based organisations includes:

- Developing a data-driven business case to act as a catalyst to EDI work at an organisation, and to have this supported by leadership
- Leaders who are visible, accountable, and proactive in designing and implementing gender inclusive practices
- Performance measurement and outcomes are structured to redistribute workloads equitably across genders and remove bias from performance conversations
- Policies and processes support diverse recruitment, flexible work arrangements, and paid parental leave
- Mentoring and sponsorship are tailored for women and are enhanced through leadership buy-in and formal frameworks or guidelines.

A key finding from the knowledge sector is that gender equity thrives when it is part of core business and at the centre of a business strategy. This approach can similarly be adopted in universities. Rather than gender equity and inclusion strategies being regarded as 'extras' they are most beneficial when integrated into organisation visions and strategies and 'owned' by university leaders.

Gender equity and inclusiveness is, however, not only about innovative, new or experimental policies and practices, it is also about protecting the current policies and practices that do work. Constant attention to equity and inclusion and the application of a gender lens to all activities is essential for progress to be made.

Flexibility of work in universities, especially for academics, has benefits but also limitations for gender equity and inclusion. Working from home, catalysed by the pandemic, creates scope to reorganise current work practices, but these need to be evaluated through a gender lens to avoid further inequities in promotion, training and performance management occurring.

At the same time, the future of universities, the delivery of education and the undertaking of research has been radically restructured as a result of the pandemic. Its impacts on academic

and professional staff, women and vulnerable or disadvantaged groups are still being researched.

The focus of this report has been on women in universities. This is justified because as the data show there continues to be a genuine need to focus on women and how to address inequities. However, while more academic women came forward for the research and they are more often studied, gender equity and inclusiveness among professional staff also warrants more attention. This is a group whose voices are less well represented in the literature.

There are other limitations to the research undertaken for this report, and areas of further research are recommended. In particular, issues of intersectionality and the experiences and barriers faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and LGBTIQ+ people working in universities need exploration. Further research with them is highly recommended.

This report is accompanied by a detailed practical toolkit, *Gender Equity & Inclusion By Design, A toolkit for the Australian University Sector 2022*, for university leaders interested in exploring gender equitable practice further in their institutions.

References

- ABS. (2022, June 28). *Unpaid work and care: Census Information on unpaid domestic work, unpaid child care, and voluntary work*. Retrieved from Australian Bureau of Statistics: <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/people-and-communities/unpaid-work-and-care-census/2021>
- Accountable Now. (2017). *Global Standard for CSO Accountability*. Berlin: Accountable Now.
- Advance Higher Education. (2020). *Aurora Mentoring Toolkit: Crib Sheet for Mentors*. Retrieved February 22, 2021, from <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2020-02/Aurora%20Mentoring%20toolkit%20-%20Crib%20Sheet%20for%20Mentors.pdf>
- ARC. (2021, June 29). *NCGP Trends, Gender data visualisations*. Retrieved from Australian Research Council: <https://www.arc.gov.au/grants-and-funding/apply-funding/grants-dataset/trend-visualisation/ncgp-trends-gender-data-visualisations>
- ARC. (2022). *NCGP Trends: Success Rates*. Retrieved from Australian Research Council: <https://www.arc.gov.au/grants-and-funding/apply-funding/grants-dataset/trend-visualisation/ncgp-trends-success-rates>
- ASCILITE. (2022, February). *Community Mentoring Program*. Retrieved from Australasian Society for Computers in Learning in Tertiary Education: <https://ascilite.org/get-involved/community-mentoring-program/>
- Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2020). *Household Impacts of COVID-19 Survey*. Retrieved 2021, from <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/people-and-communities/household-impacts-covid-19-survey/6-10-july-2020>
- Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2022). *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed*. Retrieved January 2022, from <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia-detailed/dec-2021#industry-occupation-and-sector>
- Australian Fair Work Ombudsman. (2021). *Fair Work Information Statement*. Sydney: Australian Fair Work Ombudsman.
- Australian Human Rights Commission. (2013). *Women in male-dominated industries: A toolkit of strategies*. Sydney: Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.
- Australian Institute of Company Directors. (2019). *Not-for-Profit Governance Principles: Second Edition*. Sydney: Australian Institute of Company Directors.
- Baird, M., Hamilton, M., & Constantin, A. (2021). Gender equality and paid parental leave in Australia: A decade of giant leaps or baby steps? *Journal of Industrial Relations*, pp. 546-567.
- Baird, M., Hamilton, M., Dinale, D., Gulesserian, L., & Heron, A. ((2022)). Broadening our conception of leave: Leave to care for self and others over the life course. Chapter 25. In I. Dobrotić, S. Blum, & A. (. Koslowski, *Research Handbook on Leave Policy (forthcoming)*. Edward Elgar.
- Baker, M. (2009). Gender, Academia and the Managerial University. *New Zealand Sociology*, 24(1), 24-48.
- Bonet, I. (2016). *What Works: Gender Equality by Design*. United States: Belknap Press of Harvard University.
- Borger, J. (2022, February 27). *We need to address gender bias in medical research peer review*. Retrieved from Women's Agenda: <https://womensagenda.com.au/latest/the-gender-bias-in-peer-review/>
- Butler, M. (2022, October 12). *Minister for Health and Aged Care and Minister for Women - press conference*. Retrieved from <https://www.health.gov.au/ministers/the-hon-mark-butler->

mp/media/minister-for-health-and-aged-care-and-minister-for-women-press-conference-12-october-2022

- Cannizzo, F., & Osbaldiston, N. (2016). Academic work/life balance: A brief quantitative analysis of the Australian experience. *Journal of Sociology*, 52(4), 890-906.
- Cardel, M. I., Dhurandhar, E., Yarar-Fisher, C., Foster, M., Hidalgo, B., McClure, L. A., . . . Angelini, C. (2020). Turning chutes into ladders for women faculty: a review and roadmap for equity in academia. *Journal of Women's Health*, 29(5), 721-733.
- Carlson, E. R., Craigo, L., Hoontis, P. P., Jaffe, E., McGee, L., & Sayegh, J. (2021). Creating a Charrette Process to Ignite the Conversation on Equity and Inclusion. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 45(8), 608-618.
- Catalyst. (2011). *Fostering Sponsorship Success Among High Performers and Leaders*. New York: Catalyst.
- Chief Executive Women. (2021). *CEW Senior Executive Census 2021*. Sydney: Chief Executive Women.
- Chilazi, S., Bohnet, I., & Hauser, O. (2021). *Achieving Gender Balance at All Levels of Your Company*. Retrieved March 20, 2022, from <https://hbr.org/2021/11/achieving-gender-balance-at-all-levels-of-your-company>
- Crawford, J., & Kilby, P. (2011). *Closing the Gender Gap: Gender and Australian NGOs*. Canberra: Australian Council for International Development.
- CSU. (2021). *Return To Research Funding Scheme 2021*. Retrieved from Charles Sturt University: <https://research.csu.edu.au/funding-and-grants/find-a-funding-opportunity/return-to-research-funding-scheme-2021>
- CSU. (n.d.). *Senior Women's Forum*. Retrieved from Charles Sturt University: <https://www.csu.edu.au/division/people-culture/current-staff/my-employment/professional-development/leadership-programs/leadership-development-for-women/senior-womens-forum>
- Dashper, K. (2019). Challenging the gendered rhetoric of success? The limitations of women-only mentoring for tackling gender inequality in the workplace. *Gender, Work and Organization*, pp. 541-557.
- de Vries, J., & Binns, J. (2018). *Sponsorship: Creating Career Opportunities for Women in Higher Education*. Canberra, : Universities Australia Executive Women (UAEW).
- DESE. (2021a, October 20). *Higher Education Data 2021*. Retrieved from Department of Education, Skills and Employment: <https://www.dese.gov.au/higher-education-statistics/staff-data/selected-higher-education-statistics-2021-staff-data>
- DESE. (2021b, October 20). *2021 Staff Appendix 1 – Actual staff FTE; Appendix 1.6. FTE for Full-time, Fractional Full-time and Actual Casual Staff by State, Higher Education Institution and Function, 2020*. Retrieved from Department of Education, Skills and Employment: <https://www.dese.gov.au/higher-education-statistics/staff-data/selected-higher-education-statistics-2021-staff-data>
- Diversity Council of Australia. (2019). *Let's Share the Care at Work and Home: A call to action to reduce the gender pay gap*. Sydney: Diversity Council of Australia.
- Diversity Council of Australia. (2021). *Inclusion@Work Index: Mapping the State of Flex in the Australian Workforce*. Sydney: Diversity Council of Australia.
- Dobbin, F., & Kalev, A. (2016). *Why diversity programs fail*. Retrieved March 19, 2022, from <https://hbr.org/2016/07/why-diversity-programs-fail>
- Equity in Australian STEM. (2022, February 28). Position Paper. In Borger, J. *We need to address gender bias in medical research peer review*. Women's Agenda <https://womensagenda.com.au/>. Retrieved from Women's Agenda.

- Eslen-Ziya, H., & Yildirim, T. M. (2021). Perceptions of gendered-challenges in academia: How women academics see gender hierarchies as barriers to achievement. *Gender, Work & Organisation*, 29(1), 301-308.
- Fagg, K., Hellicar, M., Sanders, M., & Zeng, J. (2015). *The power of flexibility: A key enabler to boost gender parity and employee engagement*. Sydney: Bain & Company. Retrieved February 2022, from <https://www.bain.com/insights/the-power-of-flexibility/>
- Fair Work Ombudsman. (2021, August). *Flexible working arrangement Best Practice Guide*. Retrieved February 15, 2022, from Fair Work Ombudsman: <https://www.fairwork.gov.au/sites/default/files/migration/711/flexible-working-arrangements-best-practice-guide.pdf>
- Fan, Y., Shepherd, L., Slavich, E., Waters, D., Stone, M., Abel, R., & Johnston, E. (2019). Gender and cultural bias in student evaluations: Why representation matters. *PloS one*, 14(2), e0209749.
- Foley, M., & Cooper, R. (2021). Workplace gender equality in the post-pandemic era: Where to next? *Journal of Industrial Relations*, 63(4), 463-476.
- Foley, M., Cooper, R., & Mosseri, S. (2019). *Gender Equitable Recruitment and Promotion*. Agency, Workplace Gender Equality. Retrieved February 15, 2022, from https://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/Recruitment_and_Promotion_0.pdf
- Fortney, S., & Morris, T. (2022, March 23). *Colleges routinely fail to ask about new hires' history of sexual harassment*. Retrieved from The Conversation (USA): <https://theconversation.com/colleges-routinely-fail-to-ask-about-new-hires-history-of-sexual-harassment-178171>
- Frost, S., & Kalman, D. (2017). *Inclusive Talent Management, How business can thrive in an age of diversity*. New York: Kogan Page.
- Gilbert, E., Denson, N., & Weidmann, G. (2020). Negotiating Mothering and Academic Work: A Mixed methods Intersectional Feminist Study. *Unpublished manuscript*.
- Gleeson, P., Visvanathan, P., Frijat, L., Teague, T., & Taylor, H. (2020). *Supporting staff carers in higher education: A case for reform*. Available online. Retrieved from <https://www.uts.edu.au/sites/default/files/2021-08/Supporting%20Staff%20Carers%20in%20Higher%20>
- Goltz, S. M., & Hietapelto, A. B. (2013). Translating the Social Watch Gender Equity Index for university use. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*, 45(3), 66-73.
- Good, L., Olsen, J., Orpin, S., & Towns, D. (2015). *Workplace Gender and Equality Strategy Project Final Report*. Melbourne: Centre for Workplace Leadership - University of Melbourne.
- Grbich, C. (1999). *Qualitative research in health : an introduction*. St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin.
- Greider, C. W., Sheltzer, J. M., Cantalupo, N. C., Copeland, W. B., Dasgupta, N., Hopkins, N., . . . McLaughlin, B. (2019). Increasing gender diversity in the STEM research workforce. *Science*, 366(6466), 692-695.
- Hare, J. (2022, February 3). *Data shows crash in export income from overseas students*. Retrieved from Australian Financial Review, 3 February: <https://www.afr.com/work-and-careers/education/data-shows-crash-in-export-income-from-overseas-students-20220203-p59tk0>
- Hegewisch, A. (2009). *flexible working polices: a comparative review*. Manchester: Institute for Women's Policy Research.
- Hill, E. (2020). *Reducing gender inequality and boosting the economy: Fiscal policy after COVID-19*.
- Huang, J., Krivkovich, A., Starikova, I., Yee, L., & Zanoschi, D. (2018). *Women in the workplace 2018*. San Francisco: McKinsey & Company.

- International Labour Office, Bureau for Employers' Activities. (2017). *Gender Diversity Journey: Company Good Practices*. Geneva: International Labour Office.
- Jarboe, N. (2017). *Australian Universities 2016*. Women Count.
- Kelso, A. (2022, February 3). *Gender disparities in NHMRC's Investigator Grant Scheme*. Retrieved from National Health and Medical Research Council: <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/news-centre/gender-disparities-nhmrcs-investigator-grant-scheme>
- Kossek, E., Gettings, P., & Kaumudi, M. (2021). *The Future of Flexibility at Work*. *Harvard Business Review*. Retrieved March 20, 2022, from <https://hbr.org/2021/09/the-future-of-flexibility-at-work>
- KPMG. (2016). *ASX Corporate Governance Council Principles and Recommendations on Diversity*. KPMG Australia.
- KPMG. (2018). *Confidence and Sponsorship, A winning partnership for achieving gender equity at senior leadership levels*. KPMG.
- KPMG Australia. (2016). *ASX Corporate Governance Council*. Sydney: Australian Stock Exchange.
- Lipton, B. (2017). Measures of success: cruel optimism and the paradox of academic women's participation in Australian higher education. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 36(3), 486-497.
- Lipton, B. (2017). Measures of success: cruel optimism and the paradox of academic women's participation in Australian higher education. *Higher Education Reseach & Development*, 36(3), 486-497.
- Male Champions of Change. (2017). *Closing the Gender Pay Gap*. Retrieved from Male Champions of Change: https://championsofchangecoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/MCC-Closing-The-Pay-Gap_Report_2017_FINAL-1.pdf
- Mallick, M. (2021). *5 Ways to Bring Women Back into the Post-Pandemic Workforce*. Retrieved March 19, 2022, from <https://hbr.org/2021/02/5-ways-to-bring-women-back-into-the-post-pandemic-workforce>
- Matchett, S. (2022, July 26). *A big deal at Western Sydney U*. Retrieved from Campus Morning Mail: <https://campusmorningmail.com.au/a-big-deal-at-western-sydney-u/#headline1>
- McKinsey & Company. (2021). *Tips for new government leaders: Unlocking diversity and inclusion*. Retrieved February 14, 2022, from <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-and-social-sector/our-insights/tips-for-new-government-leaders-unlocking-diversity-and-inclusion>
- McKinsey & Company, Workplace Gender Equality Agency, Business Council of Australia. (2017). *Women in leadership: Lessons from Australian companies leading the way*. McKinsey & Company.
- Medeiros, K. (2021). *Sexual harrassment in Academia*. Retrieved February 15, 2022, from <https://elephantinthelab.org/sexual-harassment-in-academia/>
- Mirvac. (2022). *Mirvac named world's most gender equitable company by Equileap*. Retrieved March 19, 2022, from <https://www.mirvac.com/about/news-and-media/mirvac-named-worlds-most-gender-equitable-company-by-equileap>
- Mundy, T., & Seuffert, N. (2019). Are we there yet? Best practices for diversity and inclusion in Australia. *International Journal of the Legal Profession*, 27(1), 81-111.
- Nash, M., & Churchill, B. (2020). Caring during COVID-19: a gendered analysis of Australian university responses to managing remote working and caring responsibilities. *Gender, Work & Organisation*, 27(5), 833-846.
- Nelson, R. R. (1963). Review: Role of Knowledge in Economic Growth. *Science*, 140(3566), 473-474.
- NZUWiL. (2019). *Lumin 2019 Review of NZUWiL programme*. Retrieved from New Zealand Universities Women in Leadership Programme:

https://www.universitiesnz.ac.nz/sites/default/files/uni-nz/documents/Infographic%20-%20NZWiL%20Update%20at%2012%20yrs%202018-10-31_0.pdf

- Papadimitriou, A. (2020). Beyond rhetoric: Reinventing the public mission of higher education. . *Tertiary Education and Management*, 26(1), 1-4.
- Peetz, D., Baird, M., Banerjee, R., Bartkiw, T., Campbell, S., Charlesworth, S., & ... Weststar, J. (2022). Sustained knowledge work and thinking time amongst academics: gender and working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Labour and Industry*, 32(1), 72-92.
- Purton, L., & Borger, J. (2021, October 12). *Is Australia's largest medical research funding body doing enough to retain women in STEM?* Retrieved from Women's Agenda: <https://womensagenda.com.au/latest/is-australias-largest-medical-research-funding-body-doing-enough-to-retain-women-in-stemm/>
- SAGE. (2021, October 21). *SAGE subscribers and Athena Swan awardees*. Retrieved from Science in Australia Gender Equity (SAGE): <https://sciencegenderequity.org.au/sage-accreditation-and-awards/sage-subscribers-and-athena-swan-awardees/>
- SAGE. (n.d.). *Pathway to Athena Swan*. Retrieved from SAGE Science in Australia Gender Equity: <https://sciencegenderequity.org.au/sage-accreditation-and-awards/sage-pathway-to-athena-swan/>
- Schein, E. (1985). *Organizational Culture and Leadership* (2nd ed). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Smolkin, S. (2017, October). The Case for Caregiving. *Employee Benefit News*, pp. 17-21.
- Strachan, G., Peetz, D., Whitehouse, G., Bailey, J., Broadbent, K., May, R., . . . Nestic, M. (2016). *Women, careers and universities: Where to from here?* Brisbane: Centre for Work, Organisation and Wellbeing, Griffith University.
- TEQSA. (2022, February 24). *National Register*. Retrieved from Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA): <https://www.teqsa.gov.au/national-register>
- The Behavioural Insights Team. (2021). *How to improve gender equality in the workplace: evidence-based actions for employers*. London: The Behavioural Insights Team.
- UA. (2022, July). *Universities Australia University profiles*. Retrieved from UA: <https://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/A5-2022-University-Profiles-.pdf>
- UA. (n.d.). *Respect. Now. Always*. Retrieved from Universities Australia: <https://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/project/respect-now-always/>
- UNSW. (2020). *UNSW Women in Leadership program launches for 2020*. Retrieved from University of NSW: <https://www.inside.unsw.edu.au/social-impact/unsw-women-in-leadership-program-launches-2020>
- USAID. (2021). *Delivering Gender Equality: A Best Practices Framework for Male-Dominated Industries*. Washington, DC: Tetra Tech, Inc.
- WGEA. (2017). *Gender Equitable Recruitment and Promotion: A Guide for Organisations*. Sydney: Workplace Gender Equality Agency.
- WGEA. (2021b). *Case Study: Supporting Parents and Carers - Stockland*. Retrieved March 19, 2022, from Workplace Gender Equality Agency: <https://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/WGEA-Stockland-case-study.pdf>
- WGEA. (2022a). *Australia's gender equality scorecard*. Workplace Gender Equality Agency.
- WGEA. (2022b). *WGEA Employer of Choice for Gender Equality (EOCGE) Criteria checklist - 2022-24*. Retrieved from Workplace Gender Equality Agency: <https://www.wgea.gov.au/what-we-do/employer-of-choice-for-gender-equality>
- WGEA. (2022c). *The Gender Pay Gap*. Retrieved from Workplace Gender Equality Agency: <https://www.wgea.gov.au/the-gender-pay-gap>

- WGEA. (2022d). *Data Explorer: Comparing All industries and Higher Education*. Retrieved from Workplace Gender Equality Agency: <https://data.wgea.gov.au/comparison/?id1=1&id2=205>
- WGEA. (2022e, February). *Australia's Gender Pay Gap Statistics*. Retrieved from Workplace Gender Equality Agency: <https://www.wgea.gov.au/publications/australias-gender-pay-gap-statistics>
- WGEA. (n.d.). *Pay Equity Ambassadors*. Retrieved from Workplace Gender Equality Agency: <https://www.wgea.gov.au/what-we-do/pay-equity-ambassadors>
- White, K., Carvalho, T., & Riordan, S. (2011). Gender, power and managerialism in universities. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 33(2), 179-188.
- Whitehouse, G., & Nestic, M. (2014). Gender and career progression in academia: assessing equity and diversity policy directions in Australian universities. *The Australian Political Studies Association Annual Conference*. University of Sydney Paper.
- Women on Boards. (2013). *Guidelines for Gender Balance Performance and Reporting Australia*. Sydney: Guidelines Development Committee. Retrieved from <https://www.asx.com.au/documents/asx-compliance/guidelines-for-gender-balance-performance-and-reporting-australia.pdf>