

2021

Athena SWAN
Annual Report

Snapshot of Athena SWAN 2021



+12%
+12% increase of women in senior leadership since 2015



5
5 SAGE cygnet awards identified for RMIT's pathway to silver accreditation



50%
50% women in the STEM College Executive in 2021 increasing from 0% in 2020



special measures
Expansion of Special Measures in Recruitment to People with a Disability



9
9 women profiled in the Women in STEMM Gallery



4 weeks
4 weeks, partner leave doubled from 2 to 4 weeks



parental leave
Removal of the eligibility period to access primary parental leave



73%
73% success rate for women in Academic Promotion



13
13 VE Women in STEM Ambassadors



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Acknowledgement of Country

RMIT University acknowledges the people of the Woiwurrung and Boon wurrung language groups of the eastern Kulin Nations on whose unceded lands we conduct the business of the University. RMIT University respectfully acknowledges their Ancestors and Elders, past and present.

RMIT also acknowledges the Traditional Custodians and their Ancestors of the lands and waters across Australia where we conduct our business.

Image credit: 'Luwaytini' by Mark Cleaver, Palawa.



Foreword

Professor Kay Latham Athena SWAN Lead



2021 was another year of the unexpected, but we pushed on through the stress and fatigue, and as this Annual Report shows, yet again significant progress was made on our Gender, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion journey at RMIT University. We have much to celebrate and to be proud of.

There is still much to do, however, and amongst this celebration we must also acknowledge that the impacts of the pandemic have not been spread evenly, and women and under-represented groups have felt these more keenly than others. Finding effective ways to support and elevate our talented, but life-burdened staff and students, has been a key focus for the University in 2021 and will continue for 2022 and beyond. To this effect, the simple act of offering an additional 5 days of Well-being Leave at mid-semester break Semester 2; and 'slowdown', meeting-free days prior to the summer break, were well-timed initiatives, were well-received by the University community, and stimulated other local and national universities to follow suit – to pause, to take a breath.

2020 was about the establishment of a solid basis for advancing gender equity in STEM at RMIT University. Achieving the tangible outcomes set out in our Athena SWAN Action Plan – both in terms of quantitative data and the lived experience of women in STEM – that underpin our work towards Athena SWAN Silver accreditation. 2021 was a year where we began to see real impact and progress across those seven themes of the Action Plan, and this report showcases some of the highlights of that achievement.

Our Leading Local Action initiatives moved to the next level as the newly formed Diversity & Inclusion Advocacy Group (DIAG) got underway. Our Advocates, at least one per STEM School, providing energy, local context and knowledge; forming a vital connection and communication link between Schools, Colleges and University, helping to strengthen our Action Plan, and keep it real.

Student engagement (Pipeline) had another 'bumper' year (see pages 9-10), and I am also very proud of the new external partnerships that formed and created additional pathways for women to enter the STEM fields who might not have considered these careers before. The opportunity for RMIT to partner with the MYOB DevelopHer program was a particular delight, and in semester 2 2021 we welcomed our first cohort of MYOB students taking their first steps into programming through RMIT's sector-leading Bootcamp 2 Studio model.

Women in leadership at RMIT continued to make headway (43% in 2020 to 45% in 2021), with STEM College Executive moving from 0% female in mid-2020 to 50% female by mid-2021, taking the 'prize' for the most rapid turnaround. The Gender Pay Gap also reduced further to 6.1%. At the moment, we are deep into analysis and writing for our first Cygnet Award – the first major step from Bronze to Silver. Recruitment is our focus. Since 2019, our philosophy and methodology have changed significantly. Applications from women in STEM seeking to join the University have grown steadily and we are one of few in the sector to embed Achievement Relative to Opportunity (ARtO) into recruitment process.

In closing, I would like to take this opportunity to express my personal gratitude for the incredible support and encouragement I have received from everyone involved in Athena SWAN at RMIT, most especially from Maddy Yewers, Amy Heritage, and of course our fabulous team of Diversity & Inclusion Advocates. Special thanks also to the RMIT People and Health & Well-being teams, who are vital partners and allies in this work. It has been my immense privilege to lead this program of work throughout 2021, and I look forward to furthering RMIT as an increasingly diverse and inclusive place of work and study into 2022.

K. Latham

Professor Kay Latham,

Dean, STEM Diversity and Inclusion



Acknowledgements

We have been lucky enough to work with a wide range of people and teams across RMIT University and would like to acknowledge all our contributors over the past year.

Four teams work towards the Athena SWAN Bronze Award 5-year action plan for guidance, implementation, and review.

Our Athena SWAN Project Team

Owners and dedicated staff for the RMIT's Bronze Athena SWAN Action Plan.

Prof. Kay Latham, Dean, STEMM, Diversity & Inclusion

Dr. Maddy Yewers, Senior Project Coordinator

Amy Heritage, Senior Project Officer

Our Athena SWAN Steering Group (ASSG)

The purpose of this group is to govern and oversee the implementation of RMIT's Athena SWAN Action Plan. Challenge and question the project delivery team and stakeholders to ensure initiatives are strategically, financially, and operationally appropriate.

Prof. Aleks Subic, DVC STEM & VP Digital Innovation, and VCE Sponsor for Athena SWAN

Prof. Kay Latham, Dean, STEMM, Diversity & Inclusion

Meegan Marshall, Chief People Officer - Human Resources

Michelle Dickinson, Director, HR Business Partners

Amy Love, Organisational Development Senior Practice Lead – Diversity – Human Resources

Prof. Swee Mak, ADVC Research & Innovation Capability

Prof. Karin Verspoor, Dean, School of Computing Technologies, STEM College

Prof. Ron Wakefield, Dean, School of PCPM/ADVC International, College of DSC

Prof. Nava Subramaniam, Professor - Accounting, College of Business and Law

Nicole Eaton, Director, Campus Planning & Services

Megha Mano Manohar, Student representative, STEM College

Mish Eastman, Deputy Vice Chancellor VE & Vice President, College of VE

Lara Rafferty, Associate Director Equity & Inclusion, Students Group

Dist. Prof. Charlie Xue, Associate DVC International, STEM College and Chair of Cultural Inclusion Working Party

Our Athena SWAN Implementation Group

The Athena SWAN implementation group progress and action initiatives from the Athena SWAN Action Plan. This group also works towards the Cygnet Reports and the SAGE Athena SWAN Silver Award. The implementation group meet fortnightly.

Prof. Kay Latham, Dean, STEMM, Diversity & Inclusion

Dr. Maddy Yewers, Senior Project Coordinator

Amy Heritage, Senior Project Officer

Amy Love, Org Dev Snr Practice Lead - Diversity

Carol Corzo, Senior Talent & Inclusion Manager

Tim Gardner, Employer Branding Manager

Ali Hall, Learning Senior Advisor

Kate Frazer, Communications Business Partner

Kinnari Jani, Profile Planning Coordinator, STEM College

Alice Boland, Associate Director, R&I Capability

Swati Gupta, Senior HR Business Partner, STEM

Prof. Matt Duckham, ECP Director, Info & Systems (Engineering)

Nicole Fetchet, Women in STEM Engagement Coordinator, College of VE

Our STEMM Diversity and Inclusion Advocacy Group (DIAG)

The Diversity and Inclusion Advocacy Group provides informed advice and direction to their respective College Leadership Groups. The DIAG identify and address the remaining barriers to inclusion and progression for women, diverse-gendered staff and students, and those from other minority groups at the University.

Prof. Kay Latham, Dean, STEMM, Diversity & Inclusion

Prof. Matt Duckham, ECP Director, Info & Systems (Engineering)

Prof. Mark Easton, Director, RMIT Advanced Manufacturing Precinct, Engineering – STEM

Melissa Tinetti, Assoc. Director Built Env & Sustainability, College of VE

Paula McKenry, Associate DVC, Learning & Teaching, College of VE

Prof. Vanessa Cooper, School of Accounting, Info Systems & Supply Chain, CoBL

A./Prof. Anthony Jaworowski, Associate Dean HDR, School of Health & Biomedical Sciences, STEM

Dr. Nicola Willand, Lecturer, School of Property Construction & Project Management, DSC

Dr. Rebecca Leshinsky, Senior Lecturer, School of Property Construction & Project Management, DSC

A./Prof. Ricarda Bigolin, Associate Dean Fashion & Textiles Design, School of Fashion & Textiles, DSC

A./Prof. Julie Porteous, School of Computing Technologies, STEM

Dr. Ruwini Edirisinghe, Lecturer, School of Property Construction & Project Management, DSC

Special mention to the Cultural, Diverse Genders, Sexes and Sexualities, and Accessibility Working Parties, and the VC's Advisory Group for the Prevention of Gender-Based Harm, for their invaluable insights and contributions to the Athena SWAN program of work.

We also thank all staff and students for their ongoing support and contributions - work that has enabled us to continue to make gender equality a reality in STEMM.



Work towards the identified-Cygnets is approximately 40-50% progressed. Submissions will be phased, commencing with the Recruitment Cygnet in Q2 2022 with others to follow until late 2024, with Silver submission start 2025 at latest. Significant and additional qualitative and quantitative feedback and review by stakeholders will be required between 2021 and 2025 to support the new Cygnet Award applications, on top of our Silver submission.

Recruitment Cygnet

RMIT's pathway to an Athena SWAN Silver award includes our first Cygnet award focusing on recruitment practices. It includes an evaluative report on initiatives such as Special Measures recruitment for women, transgender and Indigenous people, embedding Achievement Relative to Opportunity (ARtO) in recruitment practices, along with other inclusive hiring practices and decision-making modules. As part of this process, RMIT has collated and reviewed quantitative and qualitative data of our progress to date, and to explore areas of future opportunity. Our key focus has been on understanding the lived experience of women in STEMM recruited to RMIT as well as hiring managers through focus groups and 1:1 sessions.



Athena SWAN, pathway to Silver

Athena SWAN Cygnet Awards

RMIT University was successful in achieving Athena SWAN Bronze Accreditation in February 2020. This accreditation is valid for 5-years (i.e. until February 2025).

Successful implementation of the Athena SWAN Bronze Action Plan, together with receipt of 5 intermediary Cygnet Awards for impact in our high-priority areas, will enable RMIT to secure Silver accreditation in 5-years. 4 out of 5 Key Priority Areas have been identified for RMIT's Cygnet Awards to-date. In order of submission, these are:

1. Recruitment
2. Parents and Carers
3. Respectful Cultures and Behaviours
4. Career Progression
5. Local Cygnet, yet to be confirmed. This Cygnet focuses on a specific sub-group e.g. discipline or cohort





Leading local action

Leading transformation to support female careers in STEM

Objective: Enable managers to lead effective change locally and build an inclusive culture through everyday decisions and actions.

Diversity and Inclusion Advocacy Group

Our STEM Diversity & Inclusion Advocates had their first full year of meetings in 2021. Our Advocates gathered information from across their Schools to identify concerns and opportunities. As part of their induction program, they had the opportunity to participate in intersectionality training from SAGE and from RMIT - DGSS Ally training.

A professional development session in the form of an Intersectionality Walk was hosted by Science in Australia Gender Equity (SAGE). The workshop gave the opportunity to actively contribute to understanding and educating others in why intersectionality is important for innovative organisations as well as seeing intersectionality at work in individual lives and exploring how organisations can make the most of diverse perspectives to remove barriers to equity, diversity and inclusion.

The STEM Diversity and Inclusion Advocacy Group shared their highlights of 2021: -

- “Developing real strategies to activate change”
- “The camaraderie of the group and insights from the broader areas of STEM”
- “Access to professional development”
- “Meeting all the wonderful people who are working to improve gender equality and to hear the diverse views about what the hurdles are”

We thank all STEM Diversity and Inclusion Advocates for their work in 2021. We commend Dr. Rebecca Leshinsky for her work as Advocate in Property Construction and Project Management (PCPM), and Prof. Matt Duckham, likewise for Science. Rebecca and Matt move to other projects in 2022, but may return. We also welcome our new PCPM Advocate, Dr. Ruwini Edirisinghe (new Science Advocate TBA).

Diversity and Inclusion Advocate

Feedback on 2021 with the Diversity and Inclusion Advocacy Group

“The privilege of gleaning insights around the impact of (initiatives in) other areas across the organisation and how these could/should be part of all academic practices.”

Executive Leadership Inclusive Capability Program

Our Executive Leadership Inclusive Capability program worked with 70 leaders across STEM College in 2021. We collaborated with Symmetra, a leading diversity and inclusion consultancy, to hold two interactive webinars, one on Psychological Safety and the second on Boundary Spanning, to aid leaders to support and facilitate the creation of inclusive and safe working environments for all.

The program sought to tap into the strong community of leaders who work together to shape the future of RMIT for its students, staff and the communities in which we live and work. It focused on further developing inclusive leadership capability, as strong leadership practice amongst a cohort of competent leaders.

STEM College executive staff

Psychological safety webinar

“I am grateful for this session on psychological safety. This really wasn't on my radar... but it is extremely important to me that my staff feel comfortable and safe in the environment I expect them to operate.”

STEM Dashboards

Last year we developed local level data Dashboards for more informed decision-making. In 2021, a new Power BI Dashboard has been developed giving College Executive teams real-time analysis of the representation of women in senior positions within their College.

Each STEM School's Dashboard has continued to be updated with staff and student data giving leaders real-time data for strategy, decision-making and planning with diversity, equity and inclusion at the centre.



Vice-Chancellor's Research Fellowships & Special Measures

Working closely with the Research & Innovation Capability team, the Vice-Chancellor's Research Fellowships (VCRF) program significantly contributes to progressing RMIT's commitment towards gender balance – especially within the STEM disciplines. Special Measures are supported where female-only appointments can be made, and Research and Senior Research Fellowships applications accepted only from female applicants, for recruitment to Schools where there is less than 40% female representation.

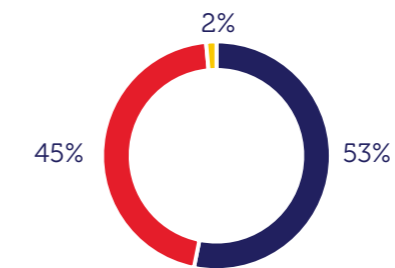
As at December 2021, the recruitment of Fellows for 2022 commencement numbers were:

- 67% of Fellowship offers were made to females across the entire scheme
- 88% of the offers to female candidates were in the Research Fellow and Senior Research Fellow categories

Special Measures were also applied to our Indigenous Research Fellowships round (only Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people eligible to apply). As at December 2021, one Indigenous Fellowship had been offered.

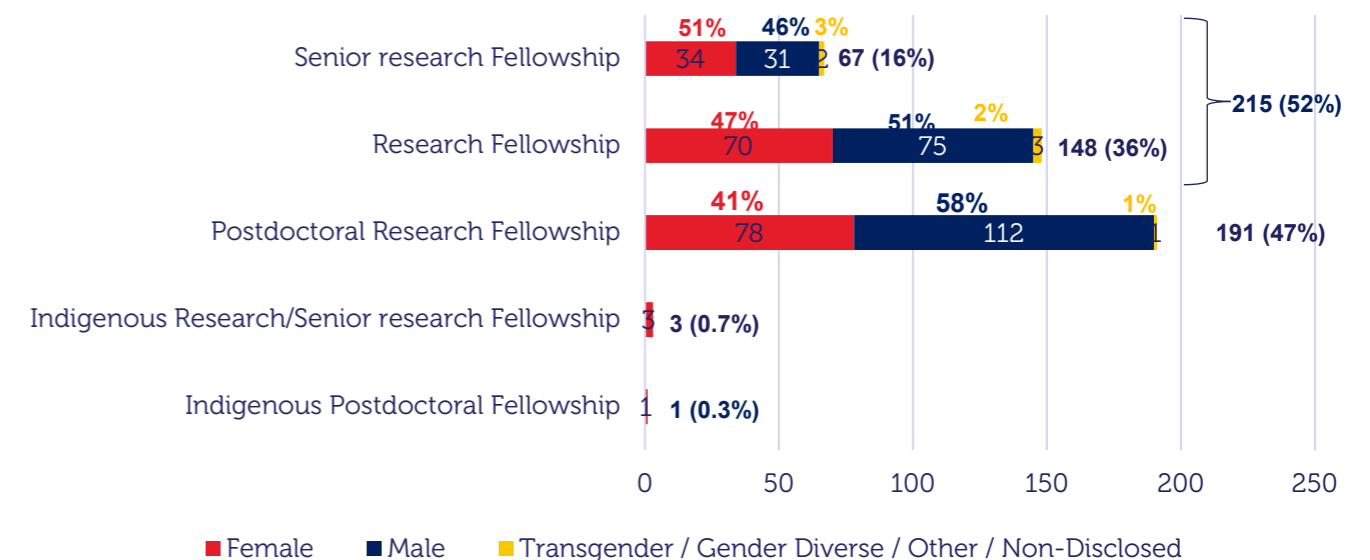
For the most recent VCRF recruitment round for commencement in 2022, applications closed in September 2021. A breakdown of the 410 applications submitted is highlighted below (see graph 2A and 2B):

Gender Balance Submitted Applications



■ Male ■ Female ■ Transgender / Gender Diverse / Other / Non-Disclosed

Gender Balance Submitted Applications by Fellowship Category



■ Female ■ Male ■ Transgender / Gender Diverse / Other / Non-Disclosed

Building the pipeline

Inspiring and attracting future female talent

Objective: Increase the proportion of STEM females from studentship to academia and encourage more females to seek career opportunities in STEM.

Special Measures in Recruitment

At RMIT, utilisation of Special Measures has included: women, trans and gender-diverse, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander targeted recruitment. This has been utilised in the recruitment of Vice-Chancellor's Research Fellows and specific advertised roles in under-represented disciplines in STEM College and the College of Business and Law, since 2019.

This approach has had a demonstrable impact in improving gender equality and the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander within the academic workforce across RMIT, positioning us as a leading contemporary employer in the STEM fields. In 2021, we expanded the use of Special Measures for Colleges and Schools to also include people with disabilities.



Women in STEMM

Outreach



Dr Wenyue Zou and Prof Madhu Bhaskaran shared their research on Health Assisted Technologies with Dandenong High Schools' year 10 STEM innovator students who have been working on their own projects in this area.

Girls in CSIT

Girls in CSIT online workshops as part of RMIT I Belong's schools outreach program for underrepresented high school part of the SNAP school network. Students worked in small groups to develop their own website based on a Q&A session with women working in the technology industry.

EnGenius

Seven interactive STEM webinars were held for year 7-10 high school students. These sessions provided the opportunity to connect with current VE and HE students, to ask questions and explore the pathway opportunities available to students. This included two sessions for Engineering final year students to share their EnGenius projects. The online format allowed great reach into regional areas including multiple classes from Greater Shepparton Secondary College as well as international audiences from the USA and Malaysia.

BGIS

New BGIS women in engineering scholarship for financial support, mentoring and a paid work placement. BGIS were so impressed with the RMIT shortlisted students they have offered all of them mentoring and work placement.



The College of Vocational Education (CoVE) designed and hosted lunchtime sessions with over 35 attendees for CoVE students covering Women in STEM (WiS) activities, interview practice and networking skills. The sessions aimed to foster networking and connection amongst the student cohort while also developing desirable graduate skills. These were well received with diverse representation from across the college.

Open Day

Women in STEMM was a key focus in RMIT's Next Fest and Open Day 2021 including in the panel events "Careers of the future in digital industries" and "Hear from our women in STEM"

WiSTEM Ambassadors

Women in STEM Ambassadors facilitated four in person workshops on campus for 100 Year 9 students from Balcombe Grammar School. These workshops explored IT and aimed to increase student confidence in STEM, provide visible role models and share the RMIT City Campus with prospective students.

Vocational Education Conference

The Women in STEM VE Conference was held virtually bringing together current staff, students, alumni and industry experts through keynote presentations, panel discussions and a practical interview preparation workshop. Despite digital fatigue the conference was attended by more than 50 people and received excellent feedback.

"I enjoyed the interview activity. I got some great feedback as well as really good advice."

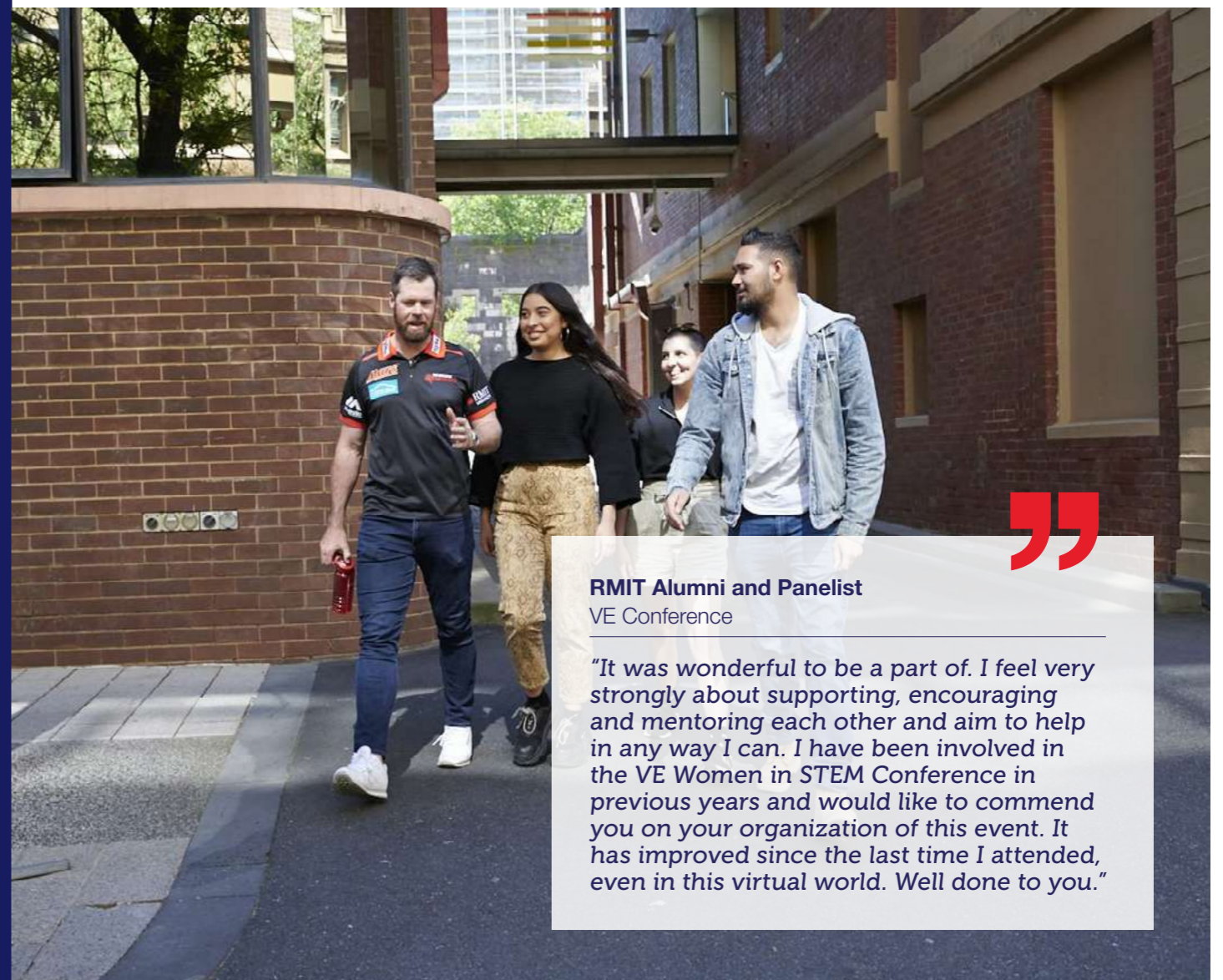
"The address by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor was extremely insightful and inspiring. The interactive session at the end was also a great experience to get feedback"

"Thanks for such an amazing session!"

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Plan 2021-2022

A key focus for 2021 was the development of RMIT's workforce through the implementation of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Plan 2021-2022 and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Future Workforce Strategy 2021-2025. The strategy and plan implemented a whole of University approach to employment, development and retention and embedding accountability with each College and Portfolio. Critical to 2021 was the development of College and Portfolio Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Action Plans, which outlined College commitment to employment, retention and cultural safety.

RMIT met both its employment and retention targets under the RMIT Scorecard 2021. Under Athena SWAN, STEM College also commenced a project to focus on increasing representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women in STEMM.



RMIT Alumni and Panelist VE Conference

"It was wonderful to be a part of. I feel very strongly about supporting, encouraging and mentoring each other and aim to help in any way I can. I have been involved in the VE Women in STEM Conference in previous years and would like to commend you on your organization of this event. It has improved since the last time I attended, even in this virtual world. Well done to you."



CoVE Student
CoVE Women in STEM
lunchtime sessions



"I really enjoyed the opportunity to talk to new people and other women [in] STEM."



Women in STEM Ambassador
Women in STEM Ambassador Training

"It [the training] was a different and new experience for me, and I wish to have more Women in STEM sessions."



—
Supporting women career changing into tech

RMIT STEM College announced a new partnership with MYOB as the education provider of the DevelopHer program designed to redress gender imbalance in the technology industry. For many it is a chance to upskill and change careers into technology. The program offers a paid full-time internship for women seeking a career in software development. MYOB DevelopHer participants studied in RMIT's innovative Programming Bootcamp to Studio Model focused on interactive, hands-on experiential learning and received supportive coaching sessions from RMIT and MYOB. On successful completion of the course, participants received a Graduate Certificate of Application Development, plus full-time employment at MYOB as a Graduate Developer.

—
Future STEM Leaders

In 2021 we were pleased to launch the new outreach program Future STEM Leaders supported by the Toyota Foundation. The Future STEM Leaders program has multiple touchpoints for lasting student engagement. Participation is for years 7-10 students and includes leadership development of year 9 and 10 women with industry experts and current university students. The year 9 and 10 STEM leaders then guide younger students of all genders in practical STEM workshops.

—
Women in STEM Cadetships

RMIT was awarded places in the Federal Government Women in STEM Cadetship and Advanced Apprenticeship Program. This program offers women in paid employment an opportunity to study a part-time higher education Diploma of Information Technology. Employers will receive grant funds of \$5,000 per employee per year to cover any costs incurred by studying.

—
Women in STEM Pre-doctoral/Teaching Fellowships

At RMIT Vietnam we launched a new Pre-doctoral/Teaching Fellowship scheme to build the pipeline of female STEM academic staff. Each Fellow will be enrolled in a PhD program whilst employed, spending approximately 80% of their time on research and 20% of their time engaged in teaching activities over the 4 years. The successful candidates being jointly supervised across RMIT Melbourne and RMIT

Vietnam campuses and/or with industry partners. 3 positions were offered in 2021 with a focus on AI, robotics and food/biotechnology respectively, the first of our new recruits commencing in early February 2022 – straight after Tét.

—
College of Vocational Education Women in STEM Ambassadors

Thirteen Women in STEM Ambassadors were recruited along with two Women in STEM Officers in the College of Vocational Education. The Women in STEM Ambassadors and Officers support and promote activities with external and internal stakeholders to encourage participation of women in STEM. Training was completed with our Ambassadors and Officers, exploring individual STEM journeys and an in-person event building relationships, confidence and knowledge.

Positive feedback includes a sense of belonging and connectedness.

"There was a strong focus on getting to know each other and how our journeys influence us"

"It [The training] was a different and new experience for me, and I wish to have more Women in STEM sessions"

—
HDR Scholarships

STEM College recognises that women remain under-represented in Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine (STEMM) – including our Higher Degrees by Research (HDR) and academic cohorts. Through our Athena SWAN analysis, we note that only 25% of the current STEMM HDR cohort is female, and that only 9-10% of our female PhD graduates take up an academic career.

We have also observed that, on average, female staff in STEMM have less time allocated to HDR supervision than male, which may impact on their ability to achieve research outcomes to the same extent as male academics.

To help promote long term change, we are addressing these inequity issues, initially, by offering Women in STEMM PhD scholarships to support female-identifying students who are seeking the opportunity to study a PhD and work on a research project supervised and led by at least one female-identifying academic staff member. In 2021, we offered four Women in STEMM PhD scholarships at mid-year to pilot the approach.





Fulfillment and progression

Nurturing female talent in STEM

Objective: Increase proportion of STEM females in senior and leadership roles: "If I can see it, I can be it".

Academic Promotions & ARtO

A key aim of the academic promotion framework is to ensure diversity and inclusion in the academic workforce and to address unequal gender and cultural representations across academic disciplines. This aligns with RMIT's overall goals, including the University's commitment to Athena SWAN.

A key element of the framework design contributes to enabling flexibility and diversity of academic careers. The principle of Achievement Relative to Opportunity (ARtO), which applicants can activate to ensure their achievements are considered in light of the opportunities that have been available to them.

As in past rounds, Promotion Committees found it easier to assess the impact of the circumstances cited if the applicant made a specific request for how they would like their ARtO claim to be considered. In 2021 a generic ARtO lens in the context of COVID-19 was applied to all applicants, as well. Committees were asked to consider the impact of COVID-19 to academic practice during 2020, as well as how this might have impacted applicants' ability to prepare their case in 2021.



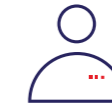
10% application rate & ARtO

This year men had an application rate of 12% compared to 10% for women against the eligible RMIT population. In 2021, 82 applicants (55%) activated ARtO which is directly on par with 2020 levels.



CALD

The success rate for applicants identifying as being from a CALD background increased to 85% (+12% from 2020) which represents a year-on-year increase since the introduction of the current promotion framework.



59 women

In 2021, there were 59 female applicants, higher than the 48 female applicants in 2020. There were 88 male applicants, significantly higher than the 58 male applicants in 2020.



Success rate by gender

The success rates for men and RMIT overall were the same – 72%, with the success rate for women slightly higher at 73%. The success rate for women remained steady from 2020 following a decrease of 8% from 2019. For men, the success rate continues on an upwards trajectory, increasing by 5% from 2020 and following a further increase of 4% from 2019.

STEMM Resource Hub

We understand there are changes and barriers throughout careers for women in STEM and intersectional communities. In 2021 we launched the new Women in STEM Resource Hub, a collection of internal and external resources, opportunities and supports for women at different career stages or transitions. RMIT staff can access resources [here](#).

Women in STEM Resources

Our RMIT / Diversity and inclusion /

At RMIT we understand there are changes and barriers throughout careers for women in STEM and intersectional communities. See our list of internal and external resources for those at any stage in their career.



Accessibility

RMIT values the richness of diversity among staff and recognises the contribution already being made by those working with disability.

[Accessibility Quick Reference \(PDF\) >](#)

Women in STEM Resources page, found on the RMIT staff site



Engaging moments of transition

In-time and flexible support mechanisms

Objective: Support gender equality in caring responsibilities and career progression for all carers improving management of career disruptions and transitions.

Parents and Carers Inclusion Strategy

The Parents and Carers Inclusion Strategy was designed to recognise that the health, safety, and wellbeing of our people is the top priority for our organisation, and this is inclusive of their families and those they provide care for. Our priority was supporting our people through this unexpected and incredibly stressful time when work and life were shared in a single space. We are proud that despite the difficult circumstances, our approach to Parents and Carers Inclusion increased the engagement and job satisfaction scores of our people with caring responsibilities. The actions of the strategy included:

- Transitioned the Parents and Carers capability program to virtual spaces to connect staff at similar stages of their parenting journey
- In 2021, Six-month Wellbeing Program for Families – Benestar/RMIT Program available to all staff members
- Employee Assistance Program extended to 6 sessions per year available to staff and family
- Supporting University leaders to understand diverse flexible working options, channels for support and opportunities to support employee wellbeing
- Partner leave extended from 2-4 weeks
- 2021 Eligibility period to access primary parental leave has been removed
- Promoted greater access and promotion of compassionate leave (3 days) and supports for staff and their partner that experience a miscarriage or stillbirth

Compassionate leave for parents and carers

RMIT's compassionate leave guideline was updated so that where an employee or their partner experiences miscarriage or stillbirth, they are now eligible for compassionate leave.

These changes provide support for staff during this time and to help to remove stigma around early pregnancy loss. Access to compassionate leave after pregnancy loss offers our employees the time and space to access emotional support (from our Employee Assistance Program or other organisations) and also validate their grief.

Change to entitlements for parental leave

RMIT's Parental Leave provisions have been updated to provide even greater support to staff who are balancing work and family responsibilities. Effective from 29 August 2021, partner leave provisions increased from a two-week entitlement to four weeks. Additionally, the eligibility period to access primary parental leave has been removed. Employees are now eligible for 18 weeks of paid leave from the time they start employment at RMIT, progressing to 24 weeks pro-rata after one year and up until three years of service for all eligible employees. Staff taking parental leave will continue to receive superannuation for the paid period of parental leave.

Parental leave options are available to staff regardless of sex, gender, gender identity, relationship status or other personal attributes.



Meegan Marshall

Chief People Officer on change to leave entitlements

"Making parental leave more accessible to all, regardless of personal attributes or length of service, shows every employee that they are a valued member of our University community from their very first day."



Dr Gail Iles

Senior Lecturer & Space Physics
Research Group Leader

Women in STEMM Gallery 2021



Career ReIgnite

The inaugural Career ReIgnite funding program was launched in 2021, providing coaching and funding at a crucial time in the careers of high potential academic staff to help reduce the impact of career breaks on research productivity and career progression. Funding decisions were made through a rigorous assessment process involving a Selection Panel of mid-career to senior academics and colleagues who in all cases, had lived experience of or have supported others through career interruptions.

Of the 46 applications that were received, the Selection Panel recommended funding for 12 applications, 11 female and 1 male, with most funding to be expended in 2022.

The Career ReIgnite Program in collaboration with the STEM College, also provided support for the VESKI Inspiring Women Career Recovery Grant winners by providing matching cash support. RMIT academics Dr Sam Grover and Dr Jessica Holien were both awarded VESKI grants in 2021.

We look forward to all aspects of the Career ReIgnite Program being embedded in our support schemes from 2022 and will continue to monitor and evaluate how our coaching participants and funding recipients achieve benefit from this support, and to ensure we continually optimise the program design to create maximum impact for both individuals and RMIT.

COVID recovery grant award winners

We congratulated Dr Samantha Grover and Dr Jessica Holien as recipients of the VESKI Inspiring Women Career Recovery grant. This grant provides vital and timely support via short-term flexible funding to boost research and help restore pre-pandemic competitiveness for female mid-career leaders or emerging leaders in STEM in Victoria. Samantha and Jessica were each awarded \$50,000 co-funded by RMIT and VESKI.



Julia Lang
 Chief Pilot, Head of Operations
 Point Cook Flight School

RMIT Vice-Chancellor Awards for Excellence

Each year, the RMIT Vice-Chancellor's Awards for Excellence provide an opportunity to recognise RMIT staff at any level, in any role, who have demonstrated outstanding leadership or have made a significant contribution to our community. We congratulate all winners for their RMIT Excellence Awards in 2021 and make a special mention to both Professor Kay Latham and Lara Rafferty for their service to diversity, equity and inclusion.

Professor Kay Latham was the 2021 recipient of the Vice-Chancellor's Leadership Award for Passion. This is in recognition of her work as a motivational and influential leader for the RMIT community. Her passion is evident through her ability to empower people, in particular women in the STEMM fields and minority groups, and to address emergent issues.

Kay is an experienced materials' research chemist, educator, and passionate advocate for equity and diversity in STEMM. Her career to-date spans 10 years in the chemical industry, and 25+ years in the higher education sector.

Kay has worked at RMIT for 22 years, commencing as a Postdoctoral Fellow and rising to Professor. Since 2015, and alongside these additional roles, Kay has led the University's SAGE Athena SWAN activities to increase the participation of women and gender-diverse people, of all backgrounds and cultures, in STEMM and into leadership.

In 2020, in recognition of this work, Kay was appointed Dean - STEMM Diversity and Inclusion at RMIT – a Victorian first, bolstering RMIT's commitment to gender equity from strategy, and policy to action and impact.



Professor Kay Latham, Dean STEMM Diversity and Inclusion



Lara Rafferty, Associate Director, Equity and Inclusion for the Students' Group

Lara Rafferty was the 2021 recipient of the Vice Chancellor's Leadership Award for Inclusion. This award is recognition of Lara's inclusive and positive impact on staff and students.

As Associate Director, Equity and Inclusion for the Students' Group at RMIT – a role she has held for the last seven years – Lara has illustrated positive outcomes to ensure that students are always well supported and included in all aspects of their RMIT journey.

In that role Lara has led the development and implementation of the University's diversity and inclusion strategy and programs for students, in partnership with so many across the RMIT community. These have led to significant improvements for students and staff as well as national and international recognition for RMIT's achievements and progress.

Lara also advises on sector-wide research, policy and programs, including through her membership as an Advisory Board member for the National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education and as Secretary of the Equity Practitioners in Higher Education Australasia.

Culture and wellbeing

An inclusive, respectful and compassionate workplace

Objective: Grow RMIT's inclusive culture supporting diversity and gender equity through enterprise-wide action and local leadership.



STEM College Athena SWAN Excellence Award

The 2021 RMIT STEM College Staff Awards recognised and celebrated the many exceptional individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to the College through their professional and academic roles. Athena SWAN were delighted to be involved this year with the category 'STEM Athena SWAN Award'. Congratulations to Professor Madhu Bhaskaran and Professor Asha Rao, our winners of 2021.

Professor Asha Rao is RMIT's Associate Dean of Mathematical Sciences within the School of Science. Asha is a trans-disciplinary researcher with several diverse research partnerships, ranging from mathematics and communication technologies to social media and architecture, resulting in highly ranked publications and over \$1.5M in funding over the past 8 years. We also congratulate Asha for being inducted into the 2021 Victorian Honour Roll of Women in the Trailblazer category.

'Asha is a major advocate and activist for gender and equality. She is across the entire STEM eco-system spreading the value of STEM education and encouraging more women to participate. From ensuring that her pre-school grandchildren are not influenced by gender stereotyping, to her work as a busy leader of a university

much of her personal time in the evening to connect, support and encourage teachers through the Twitter platforms #PrimarySTEMChat, #PST Chat, #GlobalGEG and #TLAPdownunder, to build their confidence in mathematics and to boost positive messaging of the field to their young charges. Alongside the above, Asha has achieved a 13% increase in the proportion of women in her own department, such that in just 4 years RMIT is almost at parity in mathematics (48%). A highly creditable achievement in this male-dominated field and due in no small part to her leadership, profile in the community, insight, and determination.' - Professor Kay Latham Dean STEM Diversity and Inclusion

Professor Madhu Bhaskaran is an Engineer, Professor Co-Chair of Women in STEM Australia, Node Director, Chief Investigator, and Equity & Diversity Director of the ARC Centre of Excellence for Transformative Meta-Optical Systems.

'I once heard Madhu speak at an EEO (Equal Employment Opportunity Network) conference, I believe in honour of International Women's Day, where she made a very valuable point. We often talk of the lack of role-models in STEM for women and diverse-gendered people, and trot out the line, 'you cannot be, what you cannot see'. She said, 'but what happens until then?', there has to be a generation of women who dream and become what they cannot see'....

and Madhu has done exactly that being the first woman to be awarded the ATSE's Batterham Medal for engineers under 40, and in her recent work on REMi sensors in partnership with Sleepite.' - Professor Kay Latham Dean STEM Diversity and Inclusion.



Professor Madhu Bhaskaran, Node Director, Chief Investigator, and Equity & Diversity Director, ARC TMOS

International Day of Women and Girls in Science

STEM College and Athena SWAN hosted a virtual afternoon tea to celebrate the International Day of Women and Girls in Science.

We welcomed our new Associate DVC Learning, Teaching and Quality, Professor Angela Carbone along with a competition for the best Microsoft Teams background inspired by Women and Girls in STEM. Our winner was Professor Suelynn Choy with our judge Professor Angela Carbone

The Bevy, an Athena SWAN Newsletter

The Bevy, An Athena SWAN Newsletter, is a quarterly newsletter designed and produced by the Athena SWAN team to share news, opportunities, and project updates across our 9 STEM Schools. In 2021, we were excited to share staff and student stories and wins including Julia Lang, Chief Pilot, Head of Operation at our Point Cook Flight School, BGIS Women in Engineering Scholarship recipient Myah Newton, our additional 9 amazing female researchers in our Women in STEM Gallery, and more.

For those wondering, a Bevy is a collective noun referring to a large group of people or a large group of similar things, even swans!

STEM Hub & Diversity and Inclusion

The STEM Diversity and Inclusion SharePoint web page was developed and launched in mid-July 2021, and features governance for STEM Reconciliation and Athena SWAN, recommended resources, and a Diversity and Inclusion Query Form for all STEM Schools to share ideas, feedback and ask any questions related to STEM D&I. Query responses are reviewed by the Athena SWAN team and by respective School STEM Diversity and Inclusion Advocate(s).

Women in STEM Gallery

Our 2021 Women in STEM Gallery launched in June with an additional 9 female leaders across STEM. The gallery is an initiative aligned to our Athena SWAN Action Plan, to create a visual representation of our female leaders and researchers at RMIT. The gallery illustrates RMIT's commitment to "bringing your whole-self to work". The gallery has been shared on Yammer, with images being used by our leaders for personal profiles.



Top, Professor Angela Carbone, Dean Learning, Teaching and Quality STEM College. Below, Adjunct Associate Professor Leah Heiss, School of Design



Professor Kay Latham
Dean, STEM Diversity and Inclusion

Asha is a major advocate and activist for gender and equality. She is across the entire STEM eco-system spreading the value of STEM education and encouraging more women to participate.



Change the Course - Respect

Our RMIT Respect team, guided by the work under the Respect.Now.Always. initiative made great progress this year - continuing our work to create a culture of inclusion and respect at RMIT, where every member is safe, free from sexual harm.

Gender-based violence policies (Prevention and Response to Sexual Harm, Family and Domestic Violence and Child Safety) have been developed, as well as The Prevention and Response to Sexual Harm policy suite, which is currently online for University consultation.

Development of a specialist training and decision-making resource to support Senior Officers in the hearing of student conduct matters involving gender-based violence, was also achieved, including the implementation of a centralised case management system to support data collection and case management on gender-based violence (including sexual harm) within the RMIT community.

A pilot project is planned for 2022/2023 on Gender Equity and Justice with a focus on engaging men in primary prevention efforts, taking a community Ally approach to working with men.

Other initiatives have included:

- Development of Respectful Research Training to high-impact HDR supervisors and students
- Development of a new suite of Student Conduct documentation outlining a trauma-informed response to conduct matters that involved sexual harm and violent behaviour, by the Academic Registrars Group in 2020/2021
- Development (finalisation in early 2022) of a sexual harm risk assessment and management tool into the Safer Community intake process.
- Conduct of a child safety audit to inform our child safety policy and procedures.
- Participation in the second National Student Safety Survey on SASH in September October 2021.
- Development of a discussion paper for the future consideration of SASH within RMIT in response to the University of Adelaide ICAC Response by KPMG (June 2021) and the Australian Human Rights Commission

Report on SH in the Workplace (June 2021). This includes the consideration of the creation of an independent unit to investigate, case manage, conduct hearings and to determine outcomes concerning matters of sexual harm and violence at RMIT. This discussion is ongoing into 2022.

Gender Equity Training free #TAFE

RMIT in partnership with the Victorian government will be supporting two new courses in gender equity and family violence under the free #TAFE scheme from 2022.

The Gender Equity training is the first accredited training program of its type in Australia.

The Gender Equity Training was created in collaboration with Women's Health Victoria to help people responsible for services and programs, management and leadership build their skills to lead transformational change, and to address gender inequality and family violence.

In addition, RMIT in collaboration with Monash University and the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine to begin delivery in 2022 of the newly, nationally accredited Course in *Recognising and Responding to Sexual Violence*.

Safeguarding against burnout

Since the transition to working from home, many of us have found ourselves working long hours, attending back-to-back meetings and missing out on those important transition times (e.g. the daily commute) which previously provided much needed separation between work and home. In conditions like these, we may be at risk of burnout – leaving us feeling overwhelmed, emotionally drained, and unable to keep up with life's demands.

During National Mental Health Month our Staff Wellbeing team hosted a webinar exploring the signs and symptoms of burnout at work and at home, what kinds of things can put you at risk of burnout and what will protect against its effects as well as practical strategies to prevent and alleviate the impacts of burnout. The webinar was one of three webinars launched during the month of October, including 'Managing anxiety through COVID-19' and 'Positive adaptation: Fostering post-pandemic growth', RMIT Staff can find these recordings on the RMIT Mental Wellbeing SharePoint site.





Professor Flora Salim

School of Computing Technologies

Women in STEMM Gallery 2021



Flexible working

RMIT has been active in promoting flexible working to all staff, in order to make work more manageable for a variety of reasons. Our flexibility resources are gender neutral and supportive of both men and women working flexibly in the arrangement that best suits them and their teams.

RMIT works to ensure a diverse group of staff are visually represented in all RMIT guidelines that support flexibility and on the staff flexibility webpage and articles on flexibility. This involves using photos of both men and women of all ages.

In 2021, RMIT continued to promote resources and supports for parents and carers, flexible work and accessibility which features both men and women, with and without caring responsibilities, through a number of methods:

- All staff communications
- RMIT Staff Flexibility Webpage / Hybrid ways of working
- HR Consultation
- Learning and Development
- Promoting Flexibility to Prospective Employees

Wellbeing Leave

Our global RMIT community continues to make an extraordinary contribution during difficult times. During 2021 ongoing lockdowns and restrictions had taken a toll on our people and their wellbeing. To help staff take a break, RMIT offered fixed-term and continuing staff five wellbeing leave days to be taken before Friday 17 December 2021 for RMIT Australia and Europe staff. RMIT planned a slowdown period for RMIT University Australia encouraging as many staff as possible to take this leave during HE and VE mid-Semester break (Monday 30 August - Friday 3 September 2021). This included academic, teaching and professional staff members.



Encouraging our intersectional communities

Continue to drive change and improve support

Objective: Embed inclusive culture and practices with tailored supports for RMIT's intersectional communities: DGSS, CALD, people with disability, Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander community.

PACE Mentoring

It was fantastic having RMIT participate again in the PACE Mentoring program with Australian Network on Disability (AND) seeing the partnerships that developed amongst mentors and mentees. RMIT had 4 STEM staff volunteering as mentors to young jobseekers and STEM students with disabilities in 2021.

AND saw autumn mentors report a 37% increase in their confidence to welcome an employee with disability into their team. We also saw mentees report a 50% increase in their confidence in sharing disability-related information with employers, and out of the mentees that applied for a job throughout the course of the program 70% were successful in their applications!

Regional STEM Roadshow

The Regional STEM Roadshow is an outreach program which visits regional high and primary schools, giving students access to first-hand accounts of what it's like to work and study in STEM fields. In 2021, the roadshow engaged with over 500 students from years 3 - 10, visiting schools in northern Victoria, Eaglehawk SC, Wedderburn P-12 and Kyabram P-12. Schools chosen were those with higher Indigenous populations. The roadshow was lead by STEM College in collaboration with Ngarara Willim and the VE College. A range of STEM workshops were delivered from rocket making, to computer coding and elephant's toothpaste.



Regional STEM Roadshow 2021 at RMIT's Pilot Training Centre in Bendigo with, Student Engagement Coordinator Will Sullivan

Pride Week

Each year RMIT Pride Week is an important opportunity for us to bring together and celebrate our DGSS (diverse genders, sexes and sexualities) community.

Aligning with the 2021 IDAHOBIT theme, 'Together: Resisting, Supporting, Healing!' this year's Pride Week had a focus on bringing community back together, reconnecting and supporting one another after a challenging year.

During August, RMIT offered a range of online events including:

- 'Pride and Disability' with LGBTIQ+ Advocate and Educator Jax Jacki Brown with RMIT students and staff which explored the unique perspective of individuals who navigate having disability and being part of the LGBTIQ+ community.
- A presentation by RMIT's library providing an overview of available LGBTIQ+ digital resources and guidance on making an LGBTIQ+ inclusive curriculum
- Transgender Victoria led a 101 seminar on gender and learning how to be an ally in this community.

International Day of People with Disability

The International Day of People with Disability is celebrated annually on 3 December, it is a day to promote the rights and wellbeing of people with disability, whilst raising awareness of practices that support accessibility for all. In 2021 the theme was: 'Leadership and participation of persons with disabilities toward an inclusive, accessible and sustainable post-COVID-19 world'.

RMIT's Accessibility Action Plan has helped the University progress strategies to support students and staff with a disability during one of the greatest work and life adjustments of our time.

This has included establishing new staff roles to support improvements in digital accessibility, ICT inclusive design, and accessibility for students with disability. We've created career pathways for students with a disability in partnership with GradWise Career services, and RMIT is proudly the first university to gain Disability Confident Recruiter Accreditation.

Our priorities, established back in 2016, continue to prepare us to apply our innovation around accessibility to a universal application from which all students and staff can benefit.



Strengthening foundations

Future proofing SAGE Athena SWAN through good governance and leadership

Objective: Continue embedding the SAGE Athena SWAN Charter by effectively managing, implementing and monitoring the Athena SWAN Action Plan ensuring all actions are appropriately sequenced, resourced and embraced over the four years and beyond building on foundations for future Departmental Awards.

Gender Equality Action Plan

RMIT's Draft Gender Equality Action Plan 2022-2025 identifies actions for sustainable gender transformation within and through the University.

RMIT as a public institution is required to submit a Gender Equity Action Plan as well as Gender Impact Assessments. The Athena SWAN contribution to the principles and the framework of the next Gender Equity Plan will create a consistent voice, commitment, and narrative to gender equity across RMIT to 2025. Since the Gender Equality Act was announced, there has been a strong collaboration between the Commissioner, SAGE (Science in Australia Gender Equity) and WGEA (Workplace Gender Equality Agency) to ensure alignment and to reduce duplication with action plans. This affirms the Athena SWAN project/Action Plan is still valid and necessary.

As part of the Victorian Gender Equality Act requirements, RMIT has been required to run an Equity, Safety and Inclusion Survey and to collect feedback, insights and information from employees through gender equity consultations. 523 employees participated in this survey, covering diverse identities of gender, cultural background, experience with disability, age, caring responsibility, and seniority level. The gender equity forums were virtual workshops facilitated by the Diversity and Inclusion team, inviting all interested employees to contribute ideas toward the next Gender Equity Action Plan. Over 100 employees participated in these forums or joined the Microsoft Teams channel to contribute ideas outside of the sessions. All findings from the survey and forums have been collated and analysed to inform the direction of the Gender Equity Action Plan to 2025 and related University strategies, policies, communication and forums to support our gender equality, safety and inclusion priorities. The Athena SWAN team has advised on all aspects of this work for alignment and consistency.

Gender Pay Gap

The theme in 2021 for Equal Pay Day, a date to acknowledge the remaining gender pay gap, was 'What's Your Pay Gap?'. Australia's national gender pay gap is 14.2 per cent.

RMIT's Pay Gap is currently 6.1% per cent. While this gap is below sector benchmarks and represents solid progress by RMIT, it shows we still need to take action to close the gap and why our Gender Equality Plan 2021-2025 is so important.

Deputy Vice Chancellor, STEM College and Vice President Digital Innovation, Professor Aleks Subic said that, "on Equal Pay Day, the College is proud to be leading the STEMM sector on gender balance".

"We have set a benchmark for ourselves and achieved a perfect gender balance across our executive leadership team and over 30 per cent of women in all other leadership roles in STEMM. While this is great progress, we have a long way to go. Sector wide we continue to see the impact of under-representation of women in academic leadership, and in STEMM disciplines," Aleks said.



DVC Professor Aleks Subic
DVC STEM & VP Digital Innovation

"It's great to see, in RMIT's draft Gender Equality Plan, reflections on the lessons learned over the last five years and our continued commitment to prioritise gender balance."

"This plan is everyone's responsibility and opportunity. Together we can create a more inclusive future and our staff, of all genders, are invited to participate actively in its development and success."



Melissa Tinetti
 Associate Director, Built Environment
 and Sustainability
 Women in STEMM Gallery 2021



Representation within senior leadership

Significant gains have been made in progressing toward gender parity in leadership roles since 2015. Even during staff mobility and the reduction in overall headcount due to COVID-19, RMIT has continued toward increasing representation of women in leadership roles.

In the next Strategic Plan, a new approach will likely be proposed to focus on maintaining gender balance within areas that have reached 40% representation, and to turn our attention to the Colleges and specific areas with under-representation of women in leadership, including applying an intersectional lens to ensure diversity of representation.

While improving intersectional representation, RMIT's revised commitment under the Gender Equality Plan 2022-2025 and Athena SWAN includes:

- Increased female representation in academic senior roles 36% (2021) target (45% by 2025), STEMM 33% (2021) target (40% by 2025)
- Closing the Pay Gap in STEMM (9%) compared to non-STEMM (6.2%)

Representation of women in leadership at RMIT			
Pay scale level	2015	2018	2021
Executive	30%	49%	51%
Academic	28%	31%	36%
Professional	52%	54%	60%
Vocational Education	38%	30%	57%
All RMIT	33%	39%	45%

2021 STEMM Academic Workforce						
Pay scale level	A	B	C	D	E	Exec
Female	37%	47%	34%	29%	27%	42%
Male	63%	53%	66%	71%	73%	58%

Implementation of Athena SWAN 5-year action plan

The Athena SWAN Action Plan and implementation has contributed to RMIT's recent public awards and recognition in Diversity and Inclusion:

- Top 3 global impact ranking in the 2021 Times Higher Education based on UN Sustainable Development Goal - Reduced Inequalities.
- 4th consecutive year of Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) listed as Employer of Choice for Gender Equality. RMIT continues to maintain its standing with the Workplace Gender Equality Agency as an Employer of Choice, with re-submission for 2022 – 2023 conducted during 2021.
- Equal second organisation for Accessibility and Inclusion by the Australian Network on Disability (AND). Involvement in the Access and Inclusion Index demonstrates commitment to progress access and inclusion across our organisation and helps set the benchmark for a more evidence-based understanding of how Australian organisations are advancing the equitable inclusion of people with disability.
- In 2020, after becoming the first organisation to receive the top recognition of Employer of the Year twice, and receiving the final recognition of Platinum Qualifier, RMIT had the opportunity to focus on a specific LGBTQ+ inclusion project – building and developing a DGSS (diverse genders, sexes and sexualities) Research Network.
- Current member of Diversity Council of Australia



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