

For convenience and improved readability, this version of Edith Cowan University's Cygnet Award application combines their initial submission and the additional material provided in response to the reviewers' request for more information.

To download the application in the form that it was submitted for review, please use the following links:

- [Cygnet Award application](#)
- [Institution's response to More Information Request](#)

## ★ Note to Cygnet Award applicants

As Cygnet Award applications are assessed on a case-by-case basis, one institution's application is not indicative of how much additional information another institution may be asked to provide.

Should the group of reviewers make a More Information Request, they will set a word limit on responses to help institutions gauge the amount of additional information desired.

For advice on preparing your Cygnet Award application, please refer to the [guidance materials](#) on the SAGE website or contact the SAGE advisory team at [sage@sciencegenderequity.org.au](mailto:sage@sciencegenderequity.org.au).

For guidance on responding to More Information Requests, contact the Peer Review Secretariat at [peerreview@sciencegenderequity.org.au](mailto:peerreview@sciencegenderequity.org.au).



# SAGE

SCIENCE IN AUSTRALIA  
GENDER EQUITY

## SAGE Cygnet Awards

for the SAGE Athena Swan  
Accreditation Pathway



Edith Cowan University (ECU)  
Application Form

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## SAGE CYGNET AWARD APPLICATION FORM



# SAGE

SCIENCE IN AUSTRALIA  
GENDER EQUITY

## SAGE Cygnet Award Application

<b>Name of Institution</b>	Edith Cowan University (ECU)
<b>Date of Application</b>	25 March 2022
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## GLOSSARY

AHSSBL	Arts, Humanities, Social Science and Business and Law (includes the Schools of Arts and Humanities, Education, WA Academy of Performing Arts and Business and Law)
ASSSFWA	ECU's Athena Swan Staff Survey on FWA
ASBAP	ECU's Athena Swan Bronze Action Plan
BAM	Brand and Marketing
CaLD	culturally and linguistically diverse
CLT	Centre for Learning and Teaching
DVC RF	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Regional Futures)
ECU	Edith Cowan University
ECUASCC	ECU Athena Swan Charter Committee
FWA	flexible working arrangements
FTE	hours worked by 1 employee on a full-time basis
GEDI	gender equality, diversity, and inclusion
HRSC	Human Resources Service Centre
HRBP	Human Resources Service Centre Business Partners
LGBTIQA+	lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer community, asexual
LSC	Library Services Centre
+M (after STEM)	Medicine [includes Schools of Nursing and Midwifery (SNM) and School of Medical and Health Sciences (SMHS)]
ODAR	Office of Development and Alumni Relations
ODVC RF	Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Regional Futures)
RFS	Research Focused Scholar
SAH	School of Arts and Humanities
SEDU	School of Education
SENG	School of Engineering
SES	ECU's biennial Staff Engagement Survey
SMHS	School of Medical and Health Sciences
STEM	science, technology, engineering, and mathematics [includes Schools of Engineering (SENG) and Science (SSCI)]
STEMM	science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and medicine
SGS	Strategic and Governance Services
TFS	Teaching Focused Scholar
TO	Teaching Only
TRS	Teaching and Research Focused Scholar
Tracking Dashboard	ECU 's Tracking Dashboard that monitors the <i>ECU Athena Swan Bronze Action Plan 2018 - 2023</i>
UE	University Executive – ECU's University Executive team meeting
VC	Vice-Chancellor
WA	Western Australia
WAAPA	Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts
WFH	Work-From-Home
WSC	Workforce Strategy and Capability

## Edith Cowan University: SAGE CYGNET 1

Word limit – 2500 words (excluding the institutional context and excluding the action plan)

	✓ Current Cygnet	<b>Barrier</b> • List the Barrier addressed in this Cygnet • List the Barrier for Cygnets already submitted
[Mandatory] Institution-wide barrier	✓	Flexible Working Arrangements (FWA)
[Mandatory] Sub-group barrier		
[Please select] Institution-wide/Sub-group barrier		
[Please select] Institution-wide/Sub-group barrier		
[Please select] Institution-wide/Sub-group barrier		

## KEY BARRIER

An identified barrier to the attraction, retention, and progression of women at ECU is flexible working arrangements (FWA); specifically, the:

- ❖ lack of both managers and staff understanding regarding access to FWA;
- ❖ inconsistent application of FWA [across both individual teams / departments and University-wide]; and
- ❖ ineffective management of implementation and maintenance of FWA once in place, which has negative repercussions for staff uptake, impacting both staff and managerial perceptions.

This barrier directly affects both academic and professional staff, including managers and employees.

## EVIDENCE OF BARRIER

The reasons ECU chose FWA as a Cygnet are based on evidence from; the biennial Staff Engagement Surveys (SES), rigorous Athena Swan staff consultation during the 2016 – 2018 development of the Athena Swan Bronze submission, and *ad-hoc* feedback (provided to the Human Resources Services Centre (HRSC) and the University Executive). Findings showed there were issues of inconsistency, confusion and a lack of support surrounding ECU policies, processes, and application of FWA. Based on feedback received from reviews and surveys over the past six years, and outcomes presented through the Cygnet application process, ECU is developing maturity in its approaches to FWA (see Table 1). The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated ECU's application of FWA, with continued analysis evidencing many opportunities for improvement.

Snapshot of FWA at ECU 2016	Snapshot of FWA at ECU 2018 to 2020	Opportunities for improvement 2021-2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ECU had more than 10 separate documents covering Home-Based Work (HBW) and other FWA. Staff reported this to be a hindrance.</li> <li>• Inconsistent approaches to FWA were being applied across individual schools and service centres University-wide.</li> <li>• ECU's webpages were perceived by staff as confusing. Feedback indicated an abundance of information that was difficult to access across various locations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ECU conducted several reviews of its FWA documents including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ HBW Guidelines (see Page 25); and</li> <li>○ Athena Swan Bronze Award Application and Action Plan development.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The University now has:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Updated and improved documentation; and</li> <li>○ New documents for staff including providing advisory support.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Reviewed approach to FWA as part of the FWA Strategy and Action Plan and the Athena Swan Bronze Action Plan.</li> <li>• Improved approaches to FWA through discussion at all levels, including reviews, development of documentation to support processes, and consolidation of outdated or unclear documentation.</li> <li>• Reviewed and updated webpages and began collecting website user data.</li> <li>• Enhanced user-friendly website and HRSC monitored clicks (hits) on the relevant weblinks:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HRSC Intranet Page – Flexible Work Landing Page</li> <li>• Working Parents at ECU<sup>1</sup></li> <li>• Managers Guide to Parental Leave<sup>2</sup></li> <li>• Managers Guide to Return from Parental Leave<sup>3</sup></li> <li>• Employee/Manager/ECU Teams Checklists</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><i>*As of March in 2020, COVID-19 resulted in additional emphasis on improving ECU's approach to FWA.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback from the 2021 Athena Swan Staff Survey on FWA informs HRSC of University views and requirements.</li> <li>• Review documentation as part of the 'Fresh Perspective for Flexible Working Program' at ECU.</li> <li>• More consistent approach to FWA as feedback shows inconsistencies do still exist.</li> <li>• More Senior Leadership buy-in.</li> <li>• Online forms accessible through updated webpages.</li> </ul>

Table 1: Snapshot of FWA at ECU from 2016 - 2022

1,2,3: Throughout this application, there will be references to: Working Parents, Parental Leave, and Return to Work After Parental Leave. Whilst ECU recognises parental leave itself is not an FWA option, it is a university requirement and employee benefit, received when an employee or an employee's partner gives birth (including stillbirth, surrogacy, and adoption). The University acknowledges that flexible work is not solely for parents, nor working mothers. ECU strives for a flexible workplace that is beneficial to all staff, with working parents (of all genders), being one of several staffing groups it endeavours to support. ECU aligns itself with the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) which places emphasis on FWA providing opportunities to improve family work-life balance for those returning to the workplace. ECU chose to include references to the support it offers to parents, with this Application providing an opportunity to profile provisions to fellow SAGE members and external readers, who may not be as familiar with such offerings.

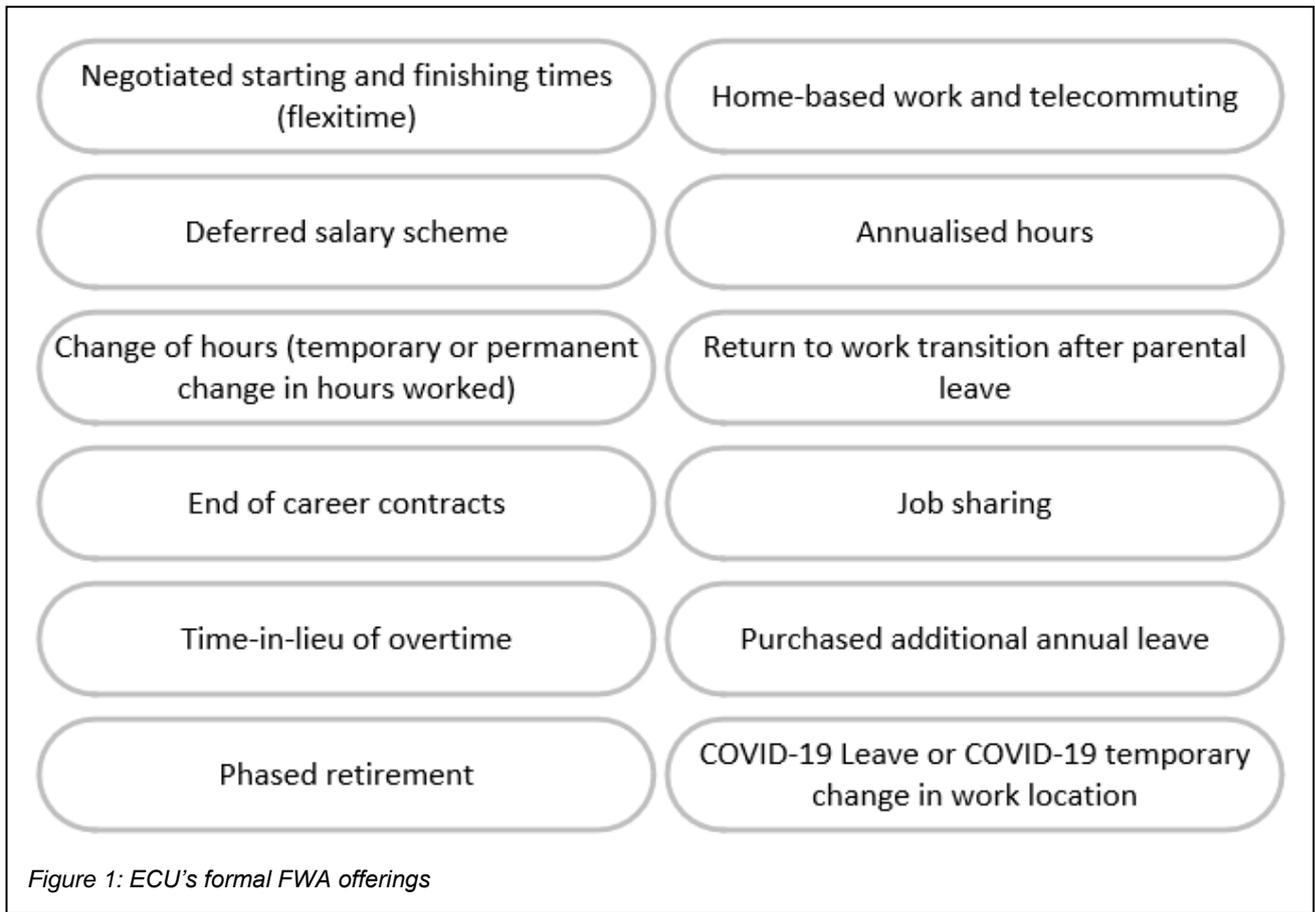
Snapshot of FWA at ECU 2016	Snapshot of FWA at ECU 2018 to 2020	Opportunities for improvement • 2021-2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Centrally did not collect data on both formal and informal FWA for individual areas.</li> <li>Centrally collected data on:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Part-time workers;</li> <li>Parental leave; and</li> <li>Return to work (post- parental leave).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Centrally did not collect data on both formal and informal FWA for individual areas.</li> <li>Centrally collected data on:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Part-time workers;</li> <li>Parental leave; and</li> <li>Return to work (post- parental leave).</li> </ul> </li> <li>In 2019, ECU developed the ECU Athena Swan Data Dashboard to better track and monitor data both for departments and University-wide.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ECU is maturing as an institution through the development of systems to better capture FWA (i.e., online forms).</li> <li>This will give ECU increased opportunities to track and monitor FWA information (i.e., capturing departmental FWA).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ECU undertook surveys to determine satisfaction with work flexibility through:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ECU's biennial Staff Engagement Survey (SES); and</li> <li>Athena Swan Staff Survey in 2016.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ECU did surveys to determine staff satisfaction with work flexibility through:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The SES in 2018; and</li> <li>Departmental 'Pulse Surveys' in 2019.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Survey conduction and analysis performed providing data baselines and granular information sets.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The SES will be conducted again in 2022.</li> <li>Moving forward, another Athena Swan FWA survey will be conducted in approximately 2024.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ECU had available FWA in place but consultation through Athena Swan-related activities showed staff understanding was unclear and promotion of uptake was lacking. (See Table 2 below)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conducted 14 'Senior Leadership and Managers Forums'.</li> <li>HRSC conducted reviews on FWA-related documentation after staff feedback requested greater clarity.</li> <li>Individual departments following up on FWA to discuss departmental-specific needs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New actions in the Cygnet Award will address current issues:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>'Fresh Perspectives on Flexible Working Program' is in development under HRSC.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Table 1: Snapshot of FWA at ECU from 2016 - 2022 (continued from previous page)

ECU acknowledges Australian and international research evidencing FWA as one of the most effective interventions in advancing gender equality and increasing women's participation in the workplace. For ECU, access to and application of its FWA (Figure 1) was identified (primarily through staff feedback) as a barrier for gender equality, diversity, and inclusion (GEDI) when preparing ECU's successful Athena Swan Institutional Bronze Award application (see Table 2).

Qualitative Feedback from ECU staff about FWA at ECU in 2016
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"ECU's commitment to flexible, family-friendly work arrangements is excellent, although it appears to be inconsistent in its application across different areas where individual managers make their own decisions..."</li> <li>"I think the flexible work arrangements need review, guidelines for Managers and Supervisors as to when and how to apply the arrangements. Education for Managers/Supervisors as to the appropriate questions in interviews (are you able to work flexible hours/do you have young children? etc)."</li> <li>"I think the head of the area has an influential part in this and consider if a more unified policy or process should be considered so it is not at the discretion of the area?"</li> <li>"Just very good management i.e., where the supervisor is clear on how to get the best out of a person no matter what gender but is also able to understand the barriers for women at various points in their career i.e., having children or being a single parent"</li> <li>"Flexible work arrangements are wide and varied in many areas of the Uni, some areas are very generous, whereas others do not afford any flexibility. Even in individual departments, the approach is different"</li> <li>"I have been able to enjoy a high degree of flexibility with start and end times which enabled me to attend to my child's needs when he was in school. It has been fabulous. I am aware however, that this is not the same everywhere in the University"</li> <li>"There are many examples where policy and process may not be sufficient to overcome unconscious bias. There is no mandated training for how unconscious bias may be overcome in processes such as recruitment and advancement..."</li> </ul>

Table 2: Qualitative Feedback from ECU staff about FWA at ECU in 2016



To obtain the data to identify evidence of this barrier, two staff surveys (including a comprehensive FWA survey in 2021), two leadership discussion forums and 14 focus group sessions for individualised areas were held over 2018-2020. These findings indicate that there remain significant opportunities to improve the practices and processes that underpin FWA at ECU.

To appropriately monitor ECU's Athena Swan Bronze Action Plan (ASBAP) actions, including progress towards achieving actions, an ECU Athena Swan Bronze Tracking Dashboard (the "Tracking Dashboard") (Figure 2) was developed. Updates are reported to ECU's University Executive (UE) fortnightly by the Athena Swan lead under a Standing Item. The Tracking Dashboard is populated each fortnight by assigned local-level Athena Swan leads who report to the Athena Swan Program Manager in an established format. The Tracking Dashboard showed ASBAP items that were designed to address barriers relating to FWA, are not-yet complete; therefore, this barrier is still relevant as all related items are tracking as 'at risk', having 'minor issues' and/or 'major issues' (Figure 3).

Action No.	Planned action/ objective (what)	Lead Action Owner/ Responsibility	Within Timeframe (Yes, No, complete)	Overall Action Status/Trend (-, ↑, ↓)
<b>Theme 4. Better practice – inclusive culture</b>		Complete <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Strategy Status	
4.1	<b>Provide flexible working opportunities consistently.</b>			
	a) Train staff and managers in flexible working practices. This will be integrated into workshops/training, including staff recruitment, change management, job design, and performance management.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	●	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DVCRF</li> <li>D HRSC</li> </ul> Yes ● =
	b) The Delegations Policy and Flexibility Policy will be amended to allow for escalation of approval to next level up for 'refusal of flexible working request'.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	●	
4.2	<b>Further investigate school part-time work modes proportionate to the work roles (reduced FTE) to inform policy, practice and management changes.</b>			
	a) Require formal sign off for rejecting a request to work part-time – escalation to Line Manager +1.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	●	Exec. Deans No ● =

Figure 2: ECU Athena Swan Bronze Action Plan Tracking Dashboard – Actions 4.1 and 4.2 relating to FWA

Detailed Theme Tracking Dashboard – Example

Action No.	Planned action/ objective (what)	Complete <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Strategy Status	Lead Action Owner/ Responsibility	Within Timeframe (Yes, No, complete)	Overall Action Status/Trend (=, ↑, ↓)
<b>Theme 1. Leadership – entrench Athena SWAN</b>						
1.1	<b>Monitor the implementation of our Action Plan</b>					
	a) Use Athena SWAN report cards at institutional, school and service centre level.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	●	DVCRF	Yes	● =
	b) Athena SWAN Action Plan progress is a standing item for fortnightly UE meetings	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> - Continuing	●			
	c) Log of leading practice initiatives on a global scale maintained to inform new initiatives (established Dec. 2018 and updated in Nov. each year).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> - Continuing	●			

**Legend**

● Complete and continuing	● On schedule	● At risk and/or minor issues	● Not on schedule and/or major issues
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Is the action strategy complete? (✓ - Yes, ✗ - No)      Trend for the entire action based on the previous reporting period ('=' - no change, ↑ - positive trend in outcomes, ↓ - negative trend in outcomes)

Figure 3: ECU Athena Swan Bronze Action Plan Tracking Dashboard – Example Action

While partial progress had been made across FWA in ASBAP Actions 4.1/4.2 (Figure 2), including the development of FWA resources, the actions haven't been completed. This is the result of competing priorities against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has resulted in limitations to staff resourcing (including recruitment freezes). ECU must still address its inconsistent approaches to FWA, as it remains a persistent barrier for gender equality at ECU.

Action 1.1	Map 2021 Athena Swan Staff Survey feedback (the identified key themes) against existing ECU policy framework and review ECU's FWA's webpage incl. relevant documents (checklists, forms, and guidelines).
Action 2.2	Develop an approach to FWA, endorsed by the executive and senior leadership, that can be personalised to each school and centre to inform related processes on an as-needed basis.

### BARRIERS TO ATTRACTION

Recruitment advertising campaigns for ongoing positions were identified as a barrier to attraction during the Bronze Award Application. Currently, job adverts include flexibility statements referring to negotiating working arrangements to meet personal circumstances, as opposed to flexible working provisions for the position. This potentially adds a further layer of complexity for new staff entering ECU, sending mixed messages about FWA to potential applicants.

### BARRIERS TO RETENTION AND PROGRESSION

#### Formal training for employees and managers

During development of the ASBAP, ECU identified a lack of training for employees and managers, arranging/managing FWA. The Tracking Dashboard indicates that Actions 4.1(A&B) are yet to be completed. With a significant increase in online teaching and/or remote work across ECU schools in 2020 as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic, face-to-face training opportunities were limited. Where possible, ECU's HRSC continues to progress these action items, engaging with individual schools and service centres to promote and support the increased uptake of FWA. However, understanding of FWA continues to remain a barrier, at individual and team levels.

#### Application process for FWA

Post-completion of the ASBAP, further evidence of barriers relating to FWA were derived from staffing groups, including ECU's Athena Swan Champions (n=38), and targeted focus groups within schools and service centres. This provided for a consistent body of *ad-hoc* feedback. Sub-issues identified included inconsistent levels of support for and implementation of, FWA within local areas. The 'red-tape' around application processes for formalised FWA, was noted as an impediment, often preventing employees from applying in the first instance.

Action 1.1	Map 2021 Athena Swan Staff Survey feedback (the identified key themes) against existing ECU policy framework and review ECU's FWA's webpage incl. relevant documents (checklists, forms, and guidelines).
Action 1.2	Examine opportunities to transfer paper-based processes to online forms (i.e., Staff Kiosk) and investigate the escalation process for rejected formal FWA requests.

### Identified limitations to monitoring FWA barriers

Employee data collection that informed the ASBAP indicated a general lack of awareness of ECU's FWA policy including associated formal options and entitlements. ECU is limited when tracking its levels of FWA uptake, with reportable data only available for staff undertaking part-time work and purchased leave. This doesn't begin to encapsulate what ECU anecdotally understands are large numbers of informal and *ad-hoc* FWA being undertaken (i.e., WFH, varied starting and ending times and compressed working weeks). Hence, a key element of transparency is lacking when attempting to quantify the extent to which flexible work is utilised and more importantly, how consistently it's applied. This is further impacted by the innate flexibility that academic staff have due to the nature of their work (i.e., teaching hours and research). While not specifically a barrier, it contributes to the lack of clarity in determining the extent of FWA at ECU.

Action 1.3	Specifically examine experiences of academic staff by benchmarking evidence across the higher education sector that can substantiate how FWA contributes to improving academic culture and outcomes.
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### ECU's Athena Swan Staff Survey on FWA (ASSSFWA)

The ASSSFWA was circulated to the ECU community in December 2021 via a global email from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Regional Futures) [DVC(RF)], Vice-President and Athena Swan lead. This survey was designed to build on ECU's existing evidence base and understanding of FWA, as emerging themes indicate that specific areas required investigation to further identify other issues and challenges. The qualitative data collated from staff responses has provided a granular picture of staff attitudes towards FWA, and the opportunities for improvement across ECU's processes.

### Capturing staff attitudes towards FWA

ECU's biennial SES was conducted in 2016, 2018 and 2020, and they included two specific questions on flexibility and work/life balance (Figure 4). A COVID-19 'Pulse Survey' was conducted in April/May 2020 to evaluate ECU's flexibility approaches in the lead up to and during the pandemic. Within the SES, ECU found high levels of university-wide staff satisfaction in all three years when staff were presented with the statement: "*I have the flexibility I need to manage work and caring responsibilities*". Ratings of 85%, 82% and 84% were provided respectively. Ratings were not as consistent for specific departments with many areas having notable declines in response ratings between 2016 and 2020.

Additionally, when staff were presented with the statement "I maintain a good balance between work and other aspects of my life", responses indicated significantly lower University-wide ratings at 70% in 2016 and falling to 65% in 2018 and 66% in 2020. While there were no significant improvements in ratings across the two years, satisfaction levels were maintained, and this is significant considering the pressures that the COVID-19 pandemic placed on staff.

Action 1.4	Develop an ECU suite of leading practice including initiatives and testimonials that relate to FWA, to a higher education setting.
Action 2.1	Conduct targeted focus groups with specific areas of ECU where staff satisfaction levels for workplace flexibility is significantly high or low (as indicated in the Staff Engagement Surveys) to collate lessons learnt and best practice.
Action 2.2	Develop an approach to FWA, endorsed by the executive and senior leadership, that can be personalised to each school and centre to inform related processes on an as-needed basis.

### ECU Staff Engagement Survey data – 2016,2018 & 2020

ECU overall	I have the flexibility I need to manage my work & caring responsibilities	I maintain a good balance between work & other aspects of my life	Male	Female	Other Gender Identity (Gender X)	Not selected - Gender	Academic Staff	Professional Staff	Diff 2020 to 2016 - Flexibility	Diff 2020 to 2016 - Work Life Balance	Diff 2020 to 2018 - Flexibility	Diff 2020 to 2018 - Work Life Balance
2016	85%	70%	430	797	136	N/A	465	931				
2018	82%	65%	498	943	22	67	557	973	-1%	-4%	+2%	+1%
2020	84%	66%	441	923	29	88	548	933				

School/Centre	I have the flexibility I need to manage my work & caring responsibilities			I maintain a good balance between work & other aspects of my life			Diff 2020 to 2016 - Flexibility	Diff 2020 to 2016 - Work-life Balance
	2016	2018	2020	2016	2018	2020		
BAM	89%*	95%	93%	89%*	95%	84%	+4%	-5%
BGD	N/A	78%	80%	N/A	76%	80%	+2%	+4%
CLT	92%	71%	74%	94%	66%	55%	-18%	-39%
DCS	91%**	76%	89%	71%**	68%	84%	-2%	+13%
FBSC	89%	88%	93%	80%	90%	93%	+4%	+13%
HRSC	94%	95%	88%	88%	95%	68%	-6%	-20%
Kurongkurl Katitjin	91%	93%	86%	86%	83%	73%	-5%	-13%
LSC	80%	68%	79%	67%	72%	73%	-1%	+6%
ODAR	67%	83%	82%	69%	77%	64%	+15%	-5%
Research Services	86%***	81%	87%	74%***	79%	70%	+1%	-4%
SAH	91%	88%	94%	56%	55%	55%	+3%	-1%
SBL	83%	81%	85%	58%	60%	64%	+2%	+6%
SEDU	68%	84%	88%	51%	42%	42%	+20%	-9%
SENG	85%	82%	67%	60%	57%	52%	-18%	-8%
SMHS	81%	78%	81%	52%	47%	54%	Even	+2%
SNM	87%	84%	82%	67%	54%	53%	-5%	-14%
SSCI	93%	93%	91%	63%	66%	63%	-2%	Even
SGS	85%^	92%	81%	85%^	78%	79%	-4%	-6%
Student Admin	77%^^^	59%	77%	80%^^^	62%	70%	Even	-10%
Student Life	77%^^^	73%	76%	80%^^^	65%	76%	-1%	-4%
WAAPA	88%	78%	65%	63%	50%	48%	-23%	-15%

- \* Formerly Marketing and Communications Services Centre in 2016
- \*\* Formerly Facilities and Services Centre in 2016
- \*\*\* Formerly Office of Research and Innovation
- ^ Formerly Planning, Quality & Equity Services Centre
- ^^ In 2016 Student Admin and Student Life were a part of Student Services Centre

#### Colour Legend

>=80%	High
50% - 80%	Medium
<=50%	Low
No change	

>=1% - 9% increase
0% - 9% decrease
>=10% increase
>9% decrease

Figure 4: ECU SES 2018 and 2020 - responses to the selected questions on flexibility and work-life balance (See Figure 5 for table legend)

**School/Centre Legend**

School/Centre	Abbreviation
Brand and Marketing*	BAM*
Business Growth and Development	BGD
Centre for Learning and Teaching	CLT
Digital and Campus Services**	DCS**
Finance and Business Services Centre	FBSC
Human Resources Service Centre	HRSC
Kurungkurl Katitjin	Kurungkurl Katitjin
Library Services Centre	LSC
Office of Development and Alumni Relations	ODAR
Research Services***	Research Services***
School of Arts and Humanities	SAH
School of Business and Law	SBL
School of Education	SEDU
School of Engineering	SENG
School of Medical and Health Sciences	SMHS
School of Nursing and Midwifery	SNM
School of Science	SSCI
Strategic Governance Services^	SGS
Student Administration^^	Student Admin
Student Life^^	Student Life
Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts	WAAPA

Figure 5: ECU SES 2016, 2018 & 2020 – Table legend

## ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

ECU has undertaken many activities simultaneously relating to FWA, based on the stated actions in the ASBAP. Summary of activities (Table 3) and resulting outputs (Table 4) are below:

Activities	Year Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ECU's HRSC conducted a series of FWA discussion forums (14 in total) with key leadership groups to develop an understanding of how senior leaders viewed both real and perceived barriers to FWA:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior Leadership Roundtable Meeting 1</li> <li>• Senior Leadership Roundtable Meeting 2</li> <li>• Leaders and Managers Roundtable Meetings for all Schools x6</li> <li>• Leaders and Managers Roundtable Meetings for all Service Centres x6</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	2018/2019
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ASBAP contains actions relating to recruitment strategies and the composition of recruitment panels, whereby candidates needed be considered for their potential, not simply previous experience. ECU's flexible working approaches and parent-friendly environment are promoted through all stages of the recruitment process.</li> </ul>	2018/2019
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insertion of reference to FWA in all job advertisements for ECU with clear reference to supporting work/life balance for staff and negotiable FWA to meet personal circumstances.</li> </ul>	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targeted conversations between Human Resource Business Partners (HRBP) and management when preparing change management and recruitment. HRBPs continue to be a source of advisory support in local areas and strong advocates of FWA, assisting areas to identify options and problem solve issues, particularly where there are complex arrangements.</li> </ul>	2018 - ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The development of the Athena Swan Data Dashboard - a bespoke data dashboard created within 'Tableau', the data analytics software and visualisation platform, was developed by ECU's Human Resources Service Centre (HRSC) in conjunction with the Enterprise Analytics and Performance Improvement team (EAPI). It provides staff-based information relating to gender break downs for part-time work, separations, and parental leave arrangements.</li> </ul>	2018/2019
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of ECU's existing 'Home-based Work Arrangements Guidelines' took place over the course of 2019/2020 and an updated version of this document was finalised in September 2020.</li> </ul>	2019/2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of ECU's internal and external webpages regarding FWA.</li> </ul>	2019/2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of FWA-related wording as a critical part of our Employee Value Proposition with highlights on ECU's Employment Opportunities webpage.</li> </ul>	2019/2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set up of a strategic partnership between ECU and the Department of Water and Environmental Research (DWER) as an Industry Partner facilitated by the DVC(RF), to engage in collaborative research including FWA.</li> </ul>	2019
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of a new ongoing full-time position the Program Manager – Athena Swan, reporting to the DVC (RF) to support and maintain ECU Bronze Institutional Action Plan 2018 – 2023 and liaise with other departments to ensure actions were completed.</li> </ul>	2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing consultations through individual departmental SES 'Pulse' Surveys, one-on-one discussions with individual departments and continued engagement with individual sub-units, feeding insights into FWA approaches and contributing to the ongoing development of best practice.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ E.g., across 2021, the Program Manager – Athena Swan, alongside Athena Swan Champions in SMHS, led a series of in-depth discussions with individuals, small groups, and larger disciplines to enact the FWA actions set out in the SMHS Operational Plan.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	2020/2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment of the Centre for Work + Wellbeing. Launched on 24 November 2020, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) announced the creation of the Centre with research focused on impacting policy and organisational practice to promote positive mental health and organisational wellbeing including flexible and remote work.</li> </ul>	2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developed and completed a 2021 Athena Swan Staff Survey on Flexible Work Arrangements (ASSSFWA). Analysis also extended to a desk audit of appropriate surveys and comparative analysis with the 2016 Athena Swan Staff Survey, The ASSSFWA was developed in conjunction with the ECU Surveys Team in Strategic and Governance Services and it was piloted with the Cygnet Working Group, ECUASCC Members and Athena Swan Champions.</li> </ul>	2020/2021

Table 3: FWA Activities implemented at ECU

Outputs	Year Completed
Developed and published the ' <i>Flexible Working at ECU</i> ' strategy.	2017 / 2018
Case studies of staff through external facing webpage Staff Profiles e.g., showcasing fathers and how they balance their work and family lives.	2018 - ongoing
Recruitment strategies and processes embed ECU's flexible working approaches and parent-friendly environment through all stages of the recruitment process.	2018 / 2019
Vice-Chancellor's (VC) global email 'Progress towards gender equality' identifies 'providing and promoting existing flexible working options consistently across the University' as a key point and measure of focus.	Ongoing
Release of the Athena Swan Tableau Data which includes staff data that specifically identifies FWA-related information (i.e., part-time, separations and parental leave). This facilitates managers having real-time reference to departmental activity.	2019
• Increased FWA resources for employees via the FWA intranet pages, supporting staff to develop the ability to recognise FWA opportunities, and equipping managers to embrace such approaches.	2019
• The 'FWA Guidelines and Checklists' for employees and teams considering FWA, and managers wanting to understand FWA processes to guide their direct reports.	2019
• The ' <i>Parental leave</i> ' and ' <i>Return to Work from Parental leave</i> ' booklets were developed and published June 2019.	2019
• DVC(RF) presented at staff induction training sessions that are attended by all new staff at ECU, 'Reach your Potential', whereby slides display the ' <i>Parental leave</i> ' and ' <i>Return to Work from Parental leave</i> ' booklets and hard copies are handed out to attendees.	2019
• Additional resources for employees, managers and supervisors were provided on ECU's dedicated 'Working parents at ECU' webpage. These accompanying webpages were promoted through HRSC, ECU's fortnightly electronic newsletter and major events across ECU. They outline the types of flexible working available, including checklists to help staff and managers understand how they can implement a flexible work arrangement for their situation.	2019
• The release of the above resources assisted ECU in ascertaining the extent of FWA, and its application across ECU, thereby facilitating the ability to better address barriers to uptake. It was anticipated that having formalised resources may provide the means for particularly reticent managers to confidently understand FWA.	2020
• SMHS had a review of FWA within their respective school and this included specific items within their operational planning, which aimed to ensure activities were completed.	2021
• Output from the Centre for Work + Wellbeing included an ECU Lecture Series Event held entitled – 'Lessons on leadership from the great work-from-home experiment' by Professor Tim Bentley. Professor Bentley explored how we have changed the way we work and what we do, and the resulting impacts on teamwork and supervision. With COVID-19 restrictions placing additional demands on workers and loss of in-person contact and support, Professor Bentley examined implications for leaders in this rapidly developing scenario and how they can prepare for the future.	2021
• Deployment of the ASSSFWA to all ECU staff members through a global email to staff. Promotion and reminders were sent through the ECU fortnightly staff internal email, Athena Swan Team, and school/centre Athena Swan Champions.	2021

Table 4: *Outputs from FWA activities at ECU*

As discussed, from the ASBAP, ECU's actions specifically for FWA are referenced under Actions 4.1 and 4.2 (page 7):

- Bronze Action Item 4.1 - Provide flexible working opportunities consistently.
- Bronze Action Item 4.2 - Further investigate school part-time work modes proportionate to the work roles (reduced FTE) to inform policy, practice, and management changes.

To facilitate implementation, ECU took the extra step of breaking actions down into strategies and these were tracked and monitored through ECU's Bronze Action Plan Tracking Dashboard.

- Bronze Action Item 4.1:
  - A) *Train staff and managers in flexible working will be integrated into workshops/training, including staff recruitment, change management, job design, and performance management.*
  - B) *The Delegations Policy and Flexibility Policy will be amended to allow for escalation of approval to next level up for 'refusal of flexible working request'.*
- Bronze Action Item 4.2:
  - A) *Require formal sign off for rejecting a request to work part-time – escalation to Line Manager +1.*

## Appraisal of Actions

Refer to the Activities Table above (Table 3) for activities that were implemented. The table below provides an overview of the above actions and whether they have been progressed, are still to be progressed, or whether future action is required.

Action/Ref No.	Appraisal of Actions	Implemented (Yes/No)	Future Action (if required)
<b>Bronze Action</b> <b>Item 4.1:</b> <i>Provide flexible working opportunities consistently.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The inconsistent application of FWA University-wide was noted as a key barrier for ECU.</li> <li>This barrier was further evidenced through ad-hoc forms of feedback from various staffing groups including ECU's Athena Swan Champions and targeted focus groups conducted with schools and centres.</li> <li>Sub-issues identified (below) included inconsistent levels of support for and implementation of FWA at local levels.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Yes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>While significant progress has been made on providing and promoting centrally accessible and enhanced FWA resources, ECU must address the broader challenge of inconsistent managerial approach and application experienced at the local unit/area level.</li> <li>SES and Athena Swan Staff Surveys indicate improved awareness of and engagement with FWA resources, however staff feedback still identifies clear opportunities for improvement.</li> </ul>
<b>4.1 – Sub issue action:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Red tape around the application process for formalised FWA.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To address staff perceptions relating to the bureaucracy surrounding applying for formalised FWA, the Senior Leadership 'Flexible Working Discussion Forums' provided an opportunity for roundtable discussions including University Executives/Directors/High-level managers (see Page 21).</li> <li>This enabled dialogue around the real and perceived barriers when applying FWA, facilitating an agreed understanding of the definitions and benefits. This in turn cascaded to generating conversations at a local level including suggestions for improvement and support needed (See Page 22).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Yes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FWA are formalised appropriately via individual flexibility agreements (agreements between line managers and individual employees).</li> <li>Attempting to track all FWA at the University does not support the building of flexible working culture, due to its compliance-like nature which would inevitably increase the risk of being seen as a deterrent. This would further add to perceptions of 'red-tape' around FWA-related processes.</li> <li>In building trust through greater dialogue between managers and their teams, staff will feel empowered through higher levels of autonomy in their work.</li> <li>Staff surveys will continue to be a useful tool in tracking sentiments and attitudes towards FWA culture and this will be coupled with ongoing monitoring of the Tracking Dashboard.</li> </ul>
<b>4.1 – Sub issue action:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Review of existing HBW Guidelines.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ECU undertook a review of the existing 'Home-based Work Arrangements Guidelines over 2019/2020. The updated document was finalised in September 2020 (See Page 25).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Yes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No further action required.</li> <li>The review was as a result of feedback given during the Leadership and Management Roundtable discussions in 2018/2019 and addressed their issues.</li> <li>Any future review of documentation will be part the standard review of policies.</li> </ul>
<b>4.1 – Sub issue action:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Flexible working at ECU strategy</i></li> <li><i>FWA Guidelines / Checklists for:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Employees</i></li> <li><i>Teams</i></li> <li><i>Managers</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In 2017, ECU developed a 'Flexible Working at ECU' strategy, followed by 'FWA Guidelines and Checklists' for employees and teams considering FWA, and managers wanting to understand and guide FWA processes.</li> <li>The Guidelines and Checklists were created to address staff perceptions relating to the element of bureaucracy surrounding formalised FWA. The new resources endeavoured to redress any mixed messages/confusion staff may have around related processes.</li> <li>Staff traffic to the FWA website and the 2021 ASSSFWA indicated staff felt more enabled to access and utilise FWA resources, encouraging more staff to consider FWA for their work-life balance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Yes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No further action required.</li> <li>The development of resources was in conjunction with the analysis of results from feedback given during the Leadership and Management Roundtable discussions in 2018/2019.</li> <li>Any future review of documentation will be part the standard review of policies.</li> </ul>

Table 5: Appraisal of ECU FWA activities as per the ASBAP

Action/Ref No.	Appraisal of Actions	Implemented (Yes/No)	Future Action (if required)
4.1 – Sub issue action: • Parental Leave and Return to Work Booklets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In 2019, ECU developed these resource booklets to assist staff returning to work after parental leave.</li> <li>Including FWA information, the resources equip staff with an understanding of options available to them after career breaks.</li> </ul>	• Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No further action required. The development of these resources aligned with analysis and feedback from the Bronze Athena Swan application development process.</li> <li>Any future review of the booklets would be part of a standard review update for ongoing relevancy and currency.</li> </ul>
A) Train staff and managers in flexible working will be integrated into workshops / training, including staff recruitment, change management, job design, and performance management.	<p><b>Training/workshops</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As part of ECU's Athena Swan Bronze Award application journey across 2016 to 2018, interviews and staff workshops indicated a perceived lack of training for staff or managers arranging or managing FWA.</li> <li>In 2019, ECU's HRSC developed a revised suite of FWA resources for employees via the FWA intranet pages.</li> <li>As a direct impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, there were significant increases to online teaching and/or remote work across ECU schools in 2020. Subsequently, face-to-face training opportunities were limited. This was further exasperated by limitations of staff resources (i.e., support services being redirected to manage the impacts of the pandemic) coupled with recruitment freezes to mitigate financial shortfalls. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The pandemic has generated a growing awareness of WFH practices. This has resulted in a growing appetite for resources and information on contemporary flexible work approaches.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	• No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ECU's HRSC continues to engage with individual schools and service centres to promote and support the increased uptake of FWA (where appropriate) and advise staff on the strategies, policies, guidelines, and checklists.</li> <li>As documented in the Cygnet Action Plan (Action Item 3), the 'Fresh Perspectives on Flexible Working Program' will contain activities relating to the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identification of manager experience issues.</li> <li>Identification of manager experience capabilities (linking to Manager development programs).</li> <li>Identification of tools/information sheets to support managers (linking to Manager development programs).</li> <li>The promotion of access to Manager development programs.</li> <li>The development of content for the ECU Managers' orientation program relating to the University's flexible working principles.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<p><b>Recruitment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Within a recruitment context, a FWA statement was included in all ECU job adverts. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Benefits such as flexible working arrangements may also be negotiated to meet your personal circumstances.</li> </ul> </li> <li>For a further example see the Case Study on Page 18.</li> </ul>	• Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is important in recruiting and attracting new staff that managers and leaders have a shared understanding and vision of FWA at ECU. For example, the Senior Leadership 'Flexible Working Discussion Forums' were a critical step in gaining this.</li> <li>Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, while FWA training for managers is yet to be implemented, it is anticipated as documented in the Cygnet Action Plan (Action Item 3), the 'Fresh Perspectives on Flexible Working Program', will provide support to managers in having conversations with staff relating to FWA.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Performance Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In enabling managers and supervisors, ECU's Flexible Work Strategy refers to initiatives including a review of existing performance management processes including focus on better assessing individual performance through an increased focus on results and outcomes achieved.</li> </ul>	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To date while there has been no direct progress, the ECU's COVID-19 remote working resources and guides do make indirect reference to performance expectations.</li> <li>In addition, discussing performance expectations is highlighted in the Flexible Working Checklist resource for Teams.</li> <li>As part of building FWA culture at ECU, performance management is about encouraging ongoing dialogue between managers and staff. Managers can discuss specific concerns with their respective HRBPs.</li> </ul>

Table 5: Appraisal of ECU FWA activities as per the ASBAP (continued from previous page)

Action/Ref No.	Appraisal of Actions	Implemented (Yes/No)	Future Action (if required)
<b>B) The Delegations Policy and Flexibility Policy will be amended to allow for escalation of approval to next level up for 'refusal of flexible working request'</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As part of ECU's ASBAP development, the Delegations Policy and Flexibility Policy was identified as requiring amendment to allow for escalation of approval to a higher managerial level when a FWA request was refused.</li> </ul>		Appraisal of this action has been split into two sections, referring to each policy for individual focus.
	<p><b>Delegations Policy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Due to the complex and diverse nature of circumstances in which staff requests for FWA are denied (as evidenced in 2021 ASSFWA feedback) this is yet to be achieved.</li> <li>Functionality requirements for automated escalation are not available within internal ECU online systems currently, hence could not be detailed within policy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As documented in the Cygnet Action Plan (Action Item 1), opportunities will be examined for the transfer of paper-based FWA forms to online format.</li> <li>Also, in the Cygnet Action Plan (Action Item 3), the 'Fresh Perspectives on Flexible Working Program' will include activities relating to the uptake and impact of changes to online platforms. This will include an assessment of whether 'escalation of approval' is required, subsequently determining if policy revision is needed.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Flexibility policy</b></p> <p>FWA policies were developed/reviewed/updated across the last 6 years. Including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TOIL guidelines - created May 2018.</li> <li>Flexible Working Hours Policy - updated in May 2018.</li> <li>Flexitime Guidelines - created May 2018 and updated in 2020.</li> <li>Flexible work request form – created 2018 and updated in 2020.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ECU will continue to revisit satisfaction with FWA-related processes through the SES and Athena Swan-related surveys.</li> </ul>
<b>Bronze Action Item 4.2:</b> <i>Further investigate school part-time work modes proportionate to the work roles (reduced FTE) to inform policy, practice and management changes.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No formal review was undertaken for school part-time work models.</li> <li>In transitioning staff back into the workplace after parental leave, ECU has provisions in place (information is included in the Parental Leave and Return to Work Booklets): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Being able to return to their position held prior to parental leave; and</li> <li>Having the option to return on a part-time basis for up to 3 years (and including the option to revert back to full-time).</li> </ul> </li> <li>Feedback from each school and centre was provided through the Senior Leadership 'Flexible Working Discussion Forums'.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Return to Work Booklet provided staff with an understanding of their FWA options including part-time provisions.</li> <li>Referred to in the Cygnet Action Plan (Action Item 3), the 'Fresh Perspectives on Flexible Working Program' will continue to further look at part-time work including why staff elect it (i.e., does increased flexibility reduce the need for part-time work?).</li> <li>Additionally, specific attention will be given to the academic staffing cohort.</li> </ul>
<b>A) Require formal sign off for rejecting a request to work part-time – escalation to Line Manager +1.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ECU requires a formal sign off for part-time requests. In the event of a decline/rejection it currently does not get escalated to the next manager up. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work arrangements should be in writing and within 21 days of request.</li> </ul> </li> <li>The developed FWA Checklists for managers, employees and teams was identified as a better tool in managing request escalations, placing greater emphasis on facilitating dialogue (versus transferring the request to a more senior delegate).</li> <li>As per 4.1B, functionality is not currently available within internal ECU online systems for automatic escalations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As noted, in the Cygnet Action Plan (Action Item 3), the 'Fresh Perspectives on Flexible Working Program' will contain actions that will allow ECU to continue to assess whether 'escalation of approval' is required.</li> <li>This in turn will determine if policy and related process needs to be revised.</li> </ul>

Table 5: Appraisal of ECU FWA activities as per the ASBAP (continued from previous page)

### **Case Study for actioning items: Recruitment (incl. staff testimonial)**

An example of an identified area for further focus and action was recruitment. Within its job advertisements, ECU refers to FWA, and its fundamental role in attracting future and potential staff. Language and images on ECU's website aim to promote the University's stance on FWA. By way of example, as referred to within an ECU job advert, the University's current flexibility statement is as follows:

- *ECU supports a work/life balance for staff. Benefits such as flexible working arrangements may also be negotiated to meet your personal circumstances.*

ECU's Ally Network, Athena Swan and Healthy Workplace badging are included in all recruitment advertising.



This FWA statement can be read by potential applicants as something that needs to be negotiated (as opposed to whether flexible working is possible for the position). In reducing the risk of mixed messaging or genderising the applicant pool, it has been important for the University to have round table discussions to ensure senior leaderships find a shared viewpoint when recruiting new staff. With new resources for managers now in place, despite training yet to be implemented given the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is anticipated that moving forward through ECU's Strategic Plan (Figure 6) coupled with this Cygnet's Action Plan (development of Fresh Perspectives Program and Strategy), managers will feel more enabled to conduct conversations with staff around FWA.

ECU makes specific reference to the self-directed nature of a career in academia:

*"At ECU you will be encouraged and supported to further develop your career in a number of ways including tailored mentoring, networking opportunities both within the school and across the University. The University has a strong focus on being inclusive, flexible and relevant and we offer dedicated schemes to remove obstacles and enable career development and progression. ECU offers and promotes employees having flexible working arrangements that help you manage your work and life responsibilities. Additionally, the self-directed nature of an academic career allows a level of flexibility outside of timetabled commitments."*

*"ECU is a diverse and inclusive workplace reflecting the differences in society. Specific strategies and initiatives are in place to address underrepresentation of specific groups. Applications are encouraged from suitably qualified people from all backgrounds. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are strongly encouraged to apply."*

Testimonials are included from academics targeting and encouraging women to apply:

*Testimonial - Dr Themelina Paraskeva - Lecturer and Discipline Coordinator in Civil and Environmental Engineering*

*"I have joined the School of Engineering at ECU in 2019, as it is one of the top engineering schools in Australia and worldwide..." ..."I enjoy working at ECU because of the positive, vibrant and stimulating work environment; it values, supports, and promotes academics who strive for excellence and it provides many opportunities for advancement and professional growth and development. So far, I have received a great deal of support from my colleagues, and I have been able to advance my career in many different ways. As a female academic, I really appreciate the work-life balance school policy and the flexible working environment."*

*Case Study 1: Recruitment (incl. staff testimonial)*

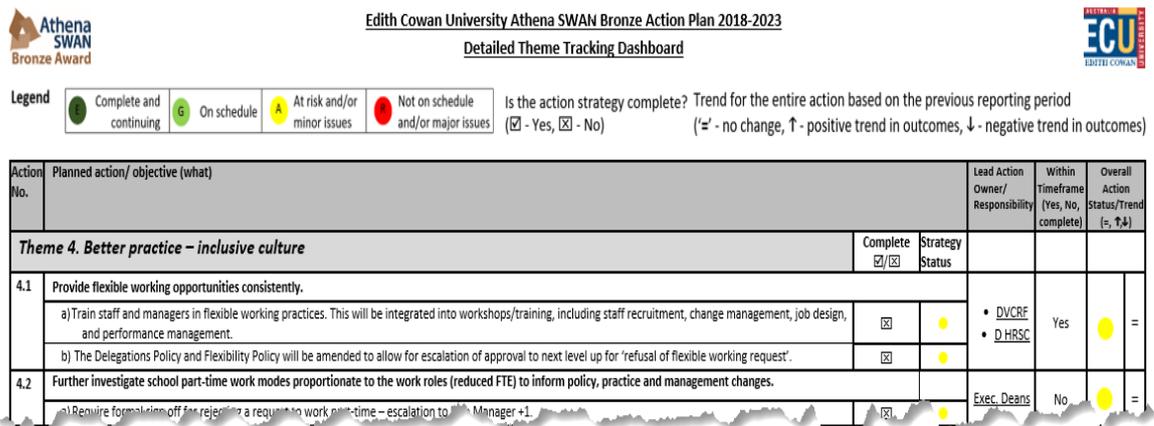
To further monitor action items in the ASBAP, ECU employed an Athena Swan Program Manager whose key role is to manage and maintain the implementation of the ECUASBAP. This role was created during COVID-19, during a period of extreme cutbacks and financial strain for many in the Higher Education Sector. Despite such constraints, ECU proved its support for gender equity, and the Athena Swan Lead took the requirement for the role to the ECU Staffing Expenditure Committee (established as a result of COVID-19 impacts) and was successful in creating this new and ongoing full-time position.

Additionally, ECU can ascertain which actions have been implemented and which are future actions, through our ASBAP Tracking Dashboard. As noted, this allows ECU to have systematic and structured evaluations of actions and their timeframes (see case study below).

**Case Study: Example of Action Item tracking using the Athena Swan Bronze Action Plan Tracking Dashboard and the Athena Swan Data Dashboard:**

Each fortnight, ECU has a standing item for the University Executive fortnightly meetings - the Athena Swan Standing Item – a dedicated agenda item every meeting. The DVC(RF), as Athena Swan Lead, updates the most senior leaders at the University with progress on the Athena Swan Action Plan and key gender equity information. Because of this detailed monitoring of Action Items data, at the Executive level, there are the following benefits:

- ECU can reveal any barriers, or potential barriers, to gender equality.
- ECU can identify unexpected barriers because it draws attention to the Action Plan and affords fortnightly scrutiny and modifications to address problems arising.
- It gives ECU a sense of openness and transparency.
- It allows the Executive to benchmark across schools and centres and bare areas that might be lagging, as well as creating a sense of competition to complete actions to get 'green status'.
- It helps stimulate change through talking about issues as well as successes.
- It enables better planning and decision-making for future actions.
- Holds ECU's VC, senior executive leaders, the Executive Deans and Directors accountable for their actions.



Additionally, if relevant this includes dashboard monitoring as the Athena Swan Data Dashboard is used to provide data for a number of items.



Case Study 2: Athena Swan Bronze Action Plan Tracking Dashboard and the Athena Swan Data Dashboard

**Prioritisation of FWA in strategic planning**

A strategic objective to “recruit and retain high performing, talented academics and highly-skilled professional staff”, was ingrained within ECU’s previous strategic plan ‘**ECU’s Strategic Plan 2017 – 2021: World Ready**’, with consideration given to ECU’s formalised FWA offerings in building a supportive organisational culture that attracts quality applicants from a competitive employment market.

While ECU's previous strategic plan was a guide for our ASBAP, the **ECU Strategic Plan 2022-2026; Towards the University of the Future**, has an even stronger focus on an organisational culture that empowers the talent and potential of staff and diversity and inclusion.

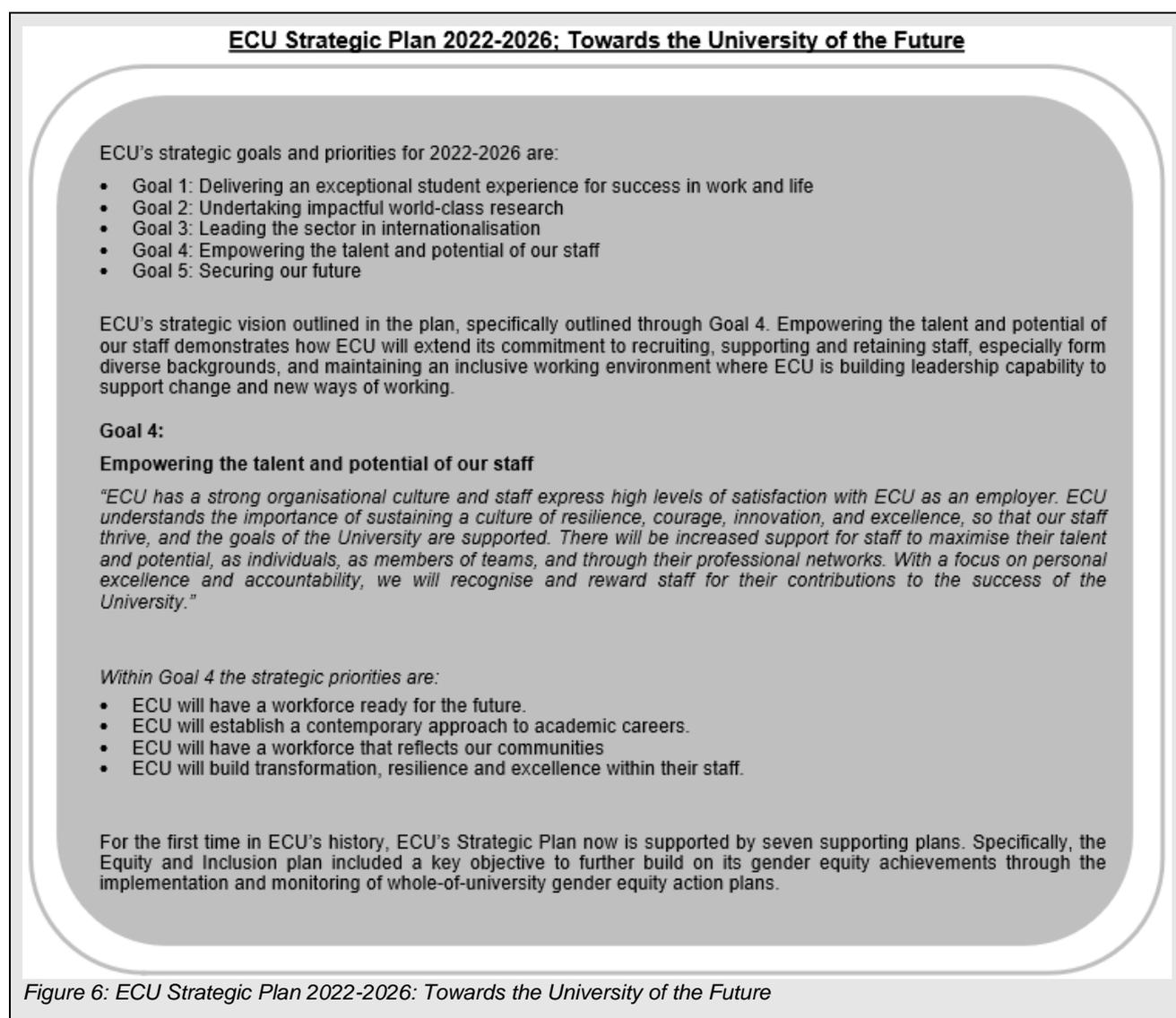


Figure 6: ECU Strategic Plan 2022-2026: Towards the University of the Future

The development of strategic approaches is fundamental in building capability for future workforce needs. The ASBAP's **Actions 4.1 and 4.2** reaffirm ECU's position on flexible work (Figure 2).

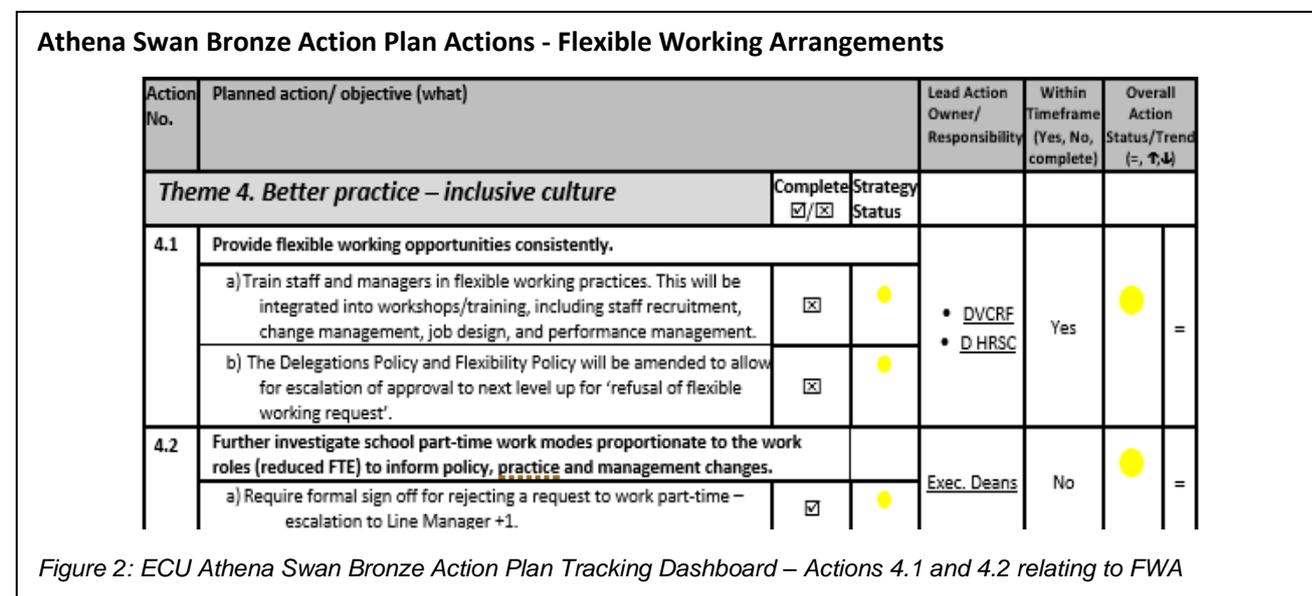


Figure 2: ECU Athena Swan Bronze Action Plan Tracking Dashboard – Actions 4.1 and 4.2 relating to FWA

## Leadership Consultation

In 2018, HRSC conducted a series of **FWA discussion forums** with key leadership groups to develop an understanding of how senior leaders viewed both real and perceived barriers to FWA.

### Senior Leadership Forums Overview

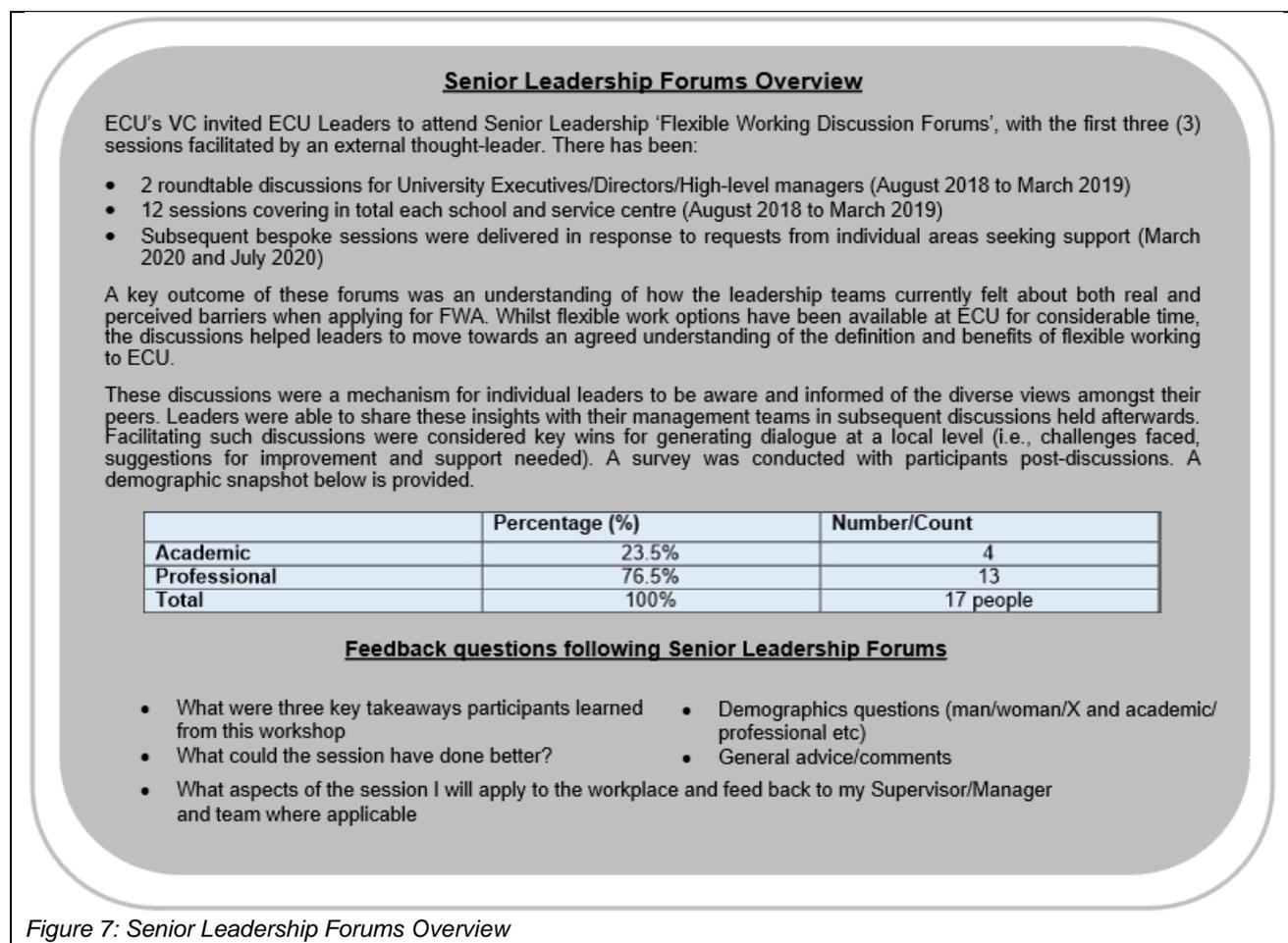


Figure 7: Senior Leadership Forums Overview

### Discussions Forums – Commentary provided by senior leaders

Aspects of the session I will apply to the workplace and feed back to my Supervisor/Manager and team where applicable:	Key takeaways I learned from this workshop
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It has highlighted some gaps in the resources available and where we may want to put some time into developing some supporting information.</li> <li>• We are already applying quite a wide variety of flexible work arrangements across our team and will continue to do so.</li> <li>• We already encourage flexibility and model it among the school executive, and work on performance so that it's about outcome rather than time spent at work.</li> <li>• We also already try to encourage academics to work from home regularly so that they can some periods with less interruptions.</li> <li>• Across the board if there are ad hoc needs people WFH.</li> <li>• Encourage more proactive search for what's happening when people seem stressed, and to consider managers suggesting a more flexible arrangement if that is an appropriate solution.</li> <li>• Working from home consideration for customer facing staff members.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ECU is keen to promote and engage in FWA options</li> <li>• There is a policy and guidelines - which I intend to read/refresh myself with.</li> <li>• Different roles in ECU can accept FWA options to different degrees.</li> <li>• Flexible working is broadly supported by ECU.</li> <li>• Flexibility is negotiable, i.e. the needs of ECU must be met. That in meeting flexibility requests, it's about understanding what the underlying need is.</li> <li>• Implement what we can to validate value of FWA</li> <li>• There are potentially flexible work options in all areas/role - some need more consideration/planning than others as they are less obviously conducive.</li> <li>• Need for a whole of institution approach but remember not one size fits all.</li> <li>• Broad range of flexible options - Flexibility should be more than just 'working from home'.</li> <li>• Flexibility is great and to give it a try.</li> <li>• Review policies and guidelines/consider templates for documentation of agreements.</li> <li>• Continue meaningful conversations with managers.</li> </ul>

Table 6: Feedback from senior leaders at the Senior Leadership Forums

Additional feedback provided by senior leaders on Discussion Forums

Additional advice/comments following discussions - Exemplars
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It might be good to canvass areas on their understanding of flexible work arrangements and ask them to provide examples of these in practice before inviting staff to the sessions, if the point is to make flexible arrangements happen in more departments across the university.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We are aware arrangements vary across the institution, but we are already onboard with this.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I don't think the workshop was valuable for people who already offer flexible work arrangements - a more interesting discussion would have been around when we can say no to requests due to business needs - there is pressure to be flexible but sometimes that is to the detriment of the business or to servicing internal clients.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Challenging area as this is something all the managers in my area need to understand and manage on an ongoing basis.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I would like to have more discussion about flexibility with PD. We need PD that doesn't require us to all be in one room, that can be online with discussion boards, asynchronous communication, and allows us to begin from the point where we have common understanding and go deeper from there.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The 'flexible working' conversation is not "coming" it is already here.</li> </ul>

*Table 7: Additional commentary from Senior Leadership Forums*

Following these Senior Leadership discussion sessions, ECU conducted discussions for leadership across ECU's 12 schools and service centres.

Discussions Forums – Commentary provided by departmental leaders and managers

<u>Key discussions outcomes included:</u>	
Current / Successes	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Managing both formal and informal FWA, navigating a diverse range of scenarios (i.e., compressed hours, extended parental leave, part-time arrangements).</li> <li>Trust is key.</li> <li>More ad hoc /informal arrangements - in particular, WFH.</li> <li>Academic roles have a lot of flexibility - negotiating academic timetables. Reason for being an academic – enjoy autonomy. Academic staff working from elsewhere in Australia &amp; overseas (to secure expertise) – technology has supported this.</li> <li>Supporting Academics to manage student expectations on email responses.</li> <li>Leadership modelling appropriate behaviours (i.e., no weekend emails).</li> <li>Part time roles are attracting staff.</li> <li>Team norms monitor behaviours and having clear team expectations.</li> <li>Systems in place to manage employee expectations for requests and discussion.</li> <li>Looking at individual strengths when setting academic workload.</li> <li>Flexibility in delivery of outputs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Managing staff expectations and creating consistency around FWA practice (i.e., building trust, dialogue around expectations, mitigating impact on staff performance).</li> <li>Accountability/productivity when working across multiple campuses.</li> <li>Ensuring on-campus presence of academics for team members to connect/collaborate.</li> <li>Out of hours work given technology/ lack of technology application reliability.</li> <li>Expectations are one way (not reciprocated)/team expectations.</li> <li>Impact on team/team morale – then workload falls to others.</li> <li>Equality based on access to options (i.e., WFH) - Mindset - Perceived/actual inequality.</li> <li>Too much flexibility to provide service / support.</li> <li>Part time academics (additional hours, abuse of ECU facilities/nature of academic roles – outcomes required, part-time researchers, ROPE/R2O).</li> <li>Research drops off if less time not there in shared space.</li> <li>Work getting done – changing expectations / measuring outputs.</li> <li>Having a physical presence (Perception if not in office that not working).</li> <li>Inflexible teaching timetable for technical and academic staff.</li> </ul>

*Table 8: Feedback from departmental leaders and managers Senior Leadership Forums*

How did senior leaders and managers forums inform ECU's FWA approach?

Impact on ECU's approach to FWA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enabled ECU to see the actual gaps in understanding when leadership and management are asked about FWA and provided insight into real attitudes and sentiments towards its application.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allowed ECU's leaders to demonstrate advocacy and leadership by having increased visibility and presence at the table for the conversation. Having support from senior leaders when they partake in exercises such as forums and roundtable discussions evidence demonstrated commitment to improving FWA culture at ECU.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensured leaders could be role models for FWA. The VC and other senior leaders ensure they 'leave loudly'. Key meeting times for the Executive were changed to be more family friendly, sending a strong message that it is acceptable to work flexibly at ECU.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enabled ECU to combine current knowledge on FWA with an extensive analysis of staff experiences.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HRSC were able to assess the specific support that was being sought after from leadership across the University.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge from different departments was blended to see what the biggest issues were for ECU applying a whole-of-institution approach.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exemplars of leaders and managers being visible role models of FWA were documented, examples including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A senior university leader worked from home as part of a return-to-work plan associated with an extended recovery period following surgery.</li> <li>○ This leader received the support, trust, and respect from the VC during this period with focus placed on the outcomes being achieved rather than visibility in the workplace.</li> <li>○ Recently appointed directors and managers accessed purchased leave arrangements within their first 12 months of appointment, providing additional leave beyond the standard four weeks per year.</li> <li>○ Managers reduced their hours as they transitioned into retirement, enabling support of aging family members. Out of office replies to emails highlighted these managers were not available specific days and indicated who to contact was matter is urgent.</li> <li>○ Managers work from home on agreed days, to accommodate childcare arrangements both on a formal and ad hoc basis.</li> <li>○ Some managers, particularly those with childcare responsibilities, have taken to including the following wording in their email signature <i>"I work flexibly, and may send messages to suit my circumstances. I don't expect that you will read, respond to, or action it outside of regular working hours."</i></li> <li>○ Executive Deans ensure meetings are scheduled in school friendly hours to ensure relevant staff members are able to attend and are not inconvenienced.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exemplars of operation and business function managers utilising reduced hours and part-time arrangements were documented.</li> <li>• Examples of this include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The creation of a job-share arrangement to support the return to work of a manager from parental leave on a part-time basis (with specific focus on how responsibilities are allocated between the individuals involved).</li> <li>○ Where a manager's immediate team has high levels of self-sufficiency, the manager provided direction on key matters and provided escalation points for specific issues in their absence.</li> <li>○ Where the manager had purchased additional annual leave, they were able to delegate specific activities to key team members during the absence period.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on ECU's Centre for Work + Wellbeing as a vehicle by which to specifically focus on FWA research with findings that will assist in the progression of ECU's Bronze Action Plan implementation.</li> <li>• This will include research and benchmarking with industry and government agencies (i.e., The Centre's involvement in a research and evaluation project on workforce flexibility with DWER).</li> </ul>

Table 9: Senior Leaders and Managers Forum impact on ECU's approach to FWA

During these roundtable discussions, several successes and challenges were raised specifically for academic staff, this enabled the HRSC to have a more targeted approach to addressing academic FWA culture (Table 10).

Academic Successes	Academic Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Looking at individual strengths when setting academic workload.</li> <li>Reason for being an academic – level of autonomy enjoyed.</li> <li>Academic staff working from elsewhere in Australia &amp; overseas (to secure expertise) – technology has supported this (Skype meetings etc).</li> <li>Supporting Academics to manage student expectations on email contact responses (48 hours response; template emails).</li> <li>Academic work very flexible (however can be v. long days while marking etc).</li> <li>Flexibility of working hours.</li> <li>Staff have student facing roles / supporting Academic activities.</li> <li>Nature of the role is to provide the service.</li> <li>Set routine of weekly / two weekly meetings – all present to discuss issues, set day and times, keep structured but allows for flexibility as this is time to catch up.</li> <li>Professorial staff working in other States.</li> <li>Academic roles have a lot of flexibility.</li> <li>Flexibility used to support personal and difficult times.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Impact on individual flexibility when taking on academic leadership roles.</b></li> <li><b>School Executive roles are 1.0 FTE as responsiveness is required.</b></li> <li><b>Knowing staff – level of trust.</b></li> <li><b>Precedent setting – equality across the team given performance concerns.</b></li> <li><b>Part time academics – particularly consultants – abuse of ECU facilities.</b></li> <li><b>Part time academics – nature of academic roles – outcomes required.</b></li> <li><b>Inflexible teaching timetable for technical and academic staff.</b></li> <li><b>Difficult to build a research culture if staff are not there in a shared space.</b></li> <li><b>Expectations from students that 24/7 service, difficult to have ‘down’ time and switch off.</b></li> </ul>

*Table 10: Academic successes and challenges through FWA*

Additionally, academic staff directly contributed and are specifically referred to in ECU's ASBAP. A total of 15 academic staff committed time to gender equity and diversity initiatives at ECU via the Self-Assessment Team (19 staff in total) which directly impacted and influenced activities of the ECUASCC, SAGE Regional Network and ECU Athena Swan Champions Network (Table 11).

ECU's Bronze Institutional Award Application development and submission
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Several action items and metrics specifically relate to the recruitment, retention, promotion, and progression of academic staff, particularly where noted gender disparities in STEMM disciplines are observed.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The academic career pattern is clearly documented including the need to provide flexibility around different accomplishment profiles.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Following parental leave, it was noted that very few academic staff reduce their FTE. Coupled with no corresponding changes in workload, increased accountability for part-time work arrangements and lack of information available to academics, returning from parental leave was identified as an issue.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interviews specifically with academic staff who are women revealed concerns regarding inability to access flexible childcare arrangements. Child-friendly meeting spaces were identified in supporting return to the workforce after parental leave.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low participation rates were identified for academic staff in equity PD programs and data on participation and effectiveness of PD for academic staff in STEMM disciplines into the Athena SWAN dashboard was identified as a key need.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting academic staff on the South West campus was highlighted with increased awareness needed for regional considerations in centralised services, metro-based meetings and travel time for those with childcare and family responsibilities.</li> </ul>

*Table 11: ECU's Bronze Institutional Award Application development and submission*

As a result of consultation in the FWA roundtable discussion sessions, a review of ECU's existing '**Home-based Work Arrangements Guidelines**' took place over the course of 2019/2020.

Changes ECU made to the Homebased-Work Guidelines:

Changes made to the Home-based Work Guidelines 2017- 2022:	Outcomes for ECU Staff	Impact for ECU staff	
<b>Document consolidation</b> <b>Streamlined forms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approximately 10 separate documents were consolidated into one document.</li> <li>Multiple documents consolidated included the:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Home Based Work Assessment Form;</li> <li>One Home-Based Guide (instead of many); and</li> <li>Equipment requests form.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff reported “gaps in the resources available” with several locations for documentation. Therefore, housing all the information in one document for Home-Based Work and having a centralised location for all FWA information allowed staff to quickly and easily find the required resources.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff felt more confident in the resources as the gaps were addressed and useful hyperlinks were included throughout the documentation.</li> <li>Enhanced accountability/productivity when working across multiple campuses.</li> <li>Enabled staff to develop autonomy and feel trusted.</li> <li>Management is better supported in handling work outcomes – feeling more enabled to define measures.</li> </ul>
<b>Centralised location for information</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Needed a central location for all documentation including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ergonomic Forms; and</li> <li>Home-based-work form.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Updated and streamlined policy frameworks (WFH OHS request).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff now have clear reference points for any WFH/OSH-related and computer resourcing issues.</li> </ul>
<b>Related FWA form inclusion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Worker’s Compensations;</li> <li>Insurance; and</li> <li>Personal Tax.</li> </ul>		
<b>Technology inclusion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Combined the procedures relating to risk assessment and the introduction of Riskware Software at ECU</li> </ul>		
<b>Additional / supporting documentation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New FWA Guidelines and Checklists were developed and implemented.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FWA Guidelines and Checklists for managers, employees and teams considering FWA provided greater awareness and understanding of processes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resources for both managers and employees wanting to understand FWA processes (and/or to guide direct reports) were developed, expanding from ‘home-based work’ to several forms of FWA.</li> <li>These guides and checklists were originally for staff and managers and a team-based conversation guide was later developed given experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic.</li> </ul>

Table 12: Changes ECU made to the Homebased-Work Guidelines

ECU acknowledges ongoing work is required to address the natural and ongoing tension that exists between an individual’s desire for flexible work versus their team’s ability to deliver outcomes, versus ECU’s ability to achieve organisational strategies and goals.

Addressing FWA within individual departments

Across ECU, following the ASBAP deep-dive and post-consultation at the FWA roundtable discussion sessions, ongoing consultation was required with individual departments/sub-units to provide further insights into FWA at the granular level. Specifically, focus was needed for areas that showed a decrease in flexibility/work-life balance ratings across SES from 2016 to 2018. Areas where staff were student facing had less of an opportunity to participate in traditional FWA such as home-based-work.

**Case Study - Library Service Centre**

ECU's Library Services Centre (LSC) is an area of the University that contains significant numbers of front facing staff. During the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was an increased expectation for staff to work from home, however essential student support services were required on campus. With specific hours of work necessitated to support students at the e-labs, there were less opportunities to be flexible.

In October 2019, ECU undertook a SES – Pulse Survey specifically within LSC to determine staff satisfaction levels. Over three quarters (79%) of the respondents are HEW level 4, 5 or 6, and approximately one in five (21%) are HEW level 7-10.

Total participants – n=29	HEW LEVEL		HEW LEVEL	
	4-6	79%	7-10	21%

ECU could see from the SES results (below) that there were concerns with the ability to be flexible across 2016 to 2018 for the question “I have the flexibility I need to manage work and caring responsibilities”. LSC dropped from 80% to 68% in 2018. The question “I maintain a good balance between work & other aspects of my life”, while improving in the time period from 2016 to 2018, still remained low.

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and from staff consultation and *ad-hoc* feedback about FWA, a requirement was identified to develop specific data sets which would determine if action needed to be taken. This Pulse survey included additional questions relating to mental health and wellbeing of staff members.

	<i>I have the flexibility I need to manage work and caring responsibilities</i>		
Year	2016	2018	2020
Library Services	80%	68%	79%

	<i>I maintain a good balance between work &amp; other aspects of my life</i>		
Year	2016	2018	2020
Library Services	67%	72%	73%

WELLNESS	TOTAL ECU 2018 n=1530	TOTAL LIBRARY 2018 n=52	TOTAL LIBRARY PULSE n=36	% Difference Library 2018 - 2019
I have the flexibility I need to manage my work and caring responsibilities	82%	68%	69%	+1%
ECU's environment is an inclusive one (My work unit is an inclusive one)	82%	78%	80%	+2%
I feel emotionally well at work	67%	47%	56%	+9%
My work unit provides a psychologically safe and supportive work environment	72%	54%	60%	+6%

Case Study 3: Library Services Centre

During 2020, ECU had the opportunity to work more remotely and feedback about the experience of working from home was widely positive through the SES, HRSC Business Partners (HRBP) and *ad-hoc* feedback. In response to staff consultation and feedback, ECU's home-based work processes have been reviewed and enhanced to support longer-term flexible work arrangements, including home-based work.

## Resources to support ECU FWA

In 2017, ECU developed a '**Flexible Working at ECU**' strategy, followed by '**FWA Guidelines and Checklists**' for employees and teams considering FWA, and managers wanting to understand FWA processes to guide their direct reports. ECU's FWA Strategy aims to increase awareness and access to FWA at ECU. Within the Strategy, the key areas were:

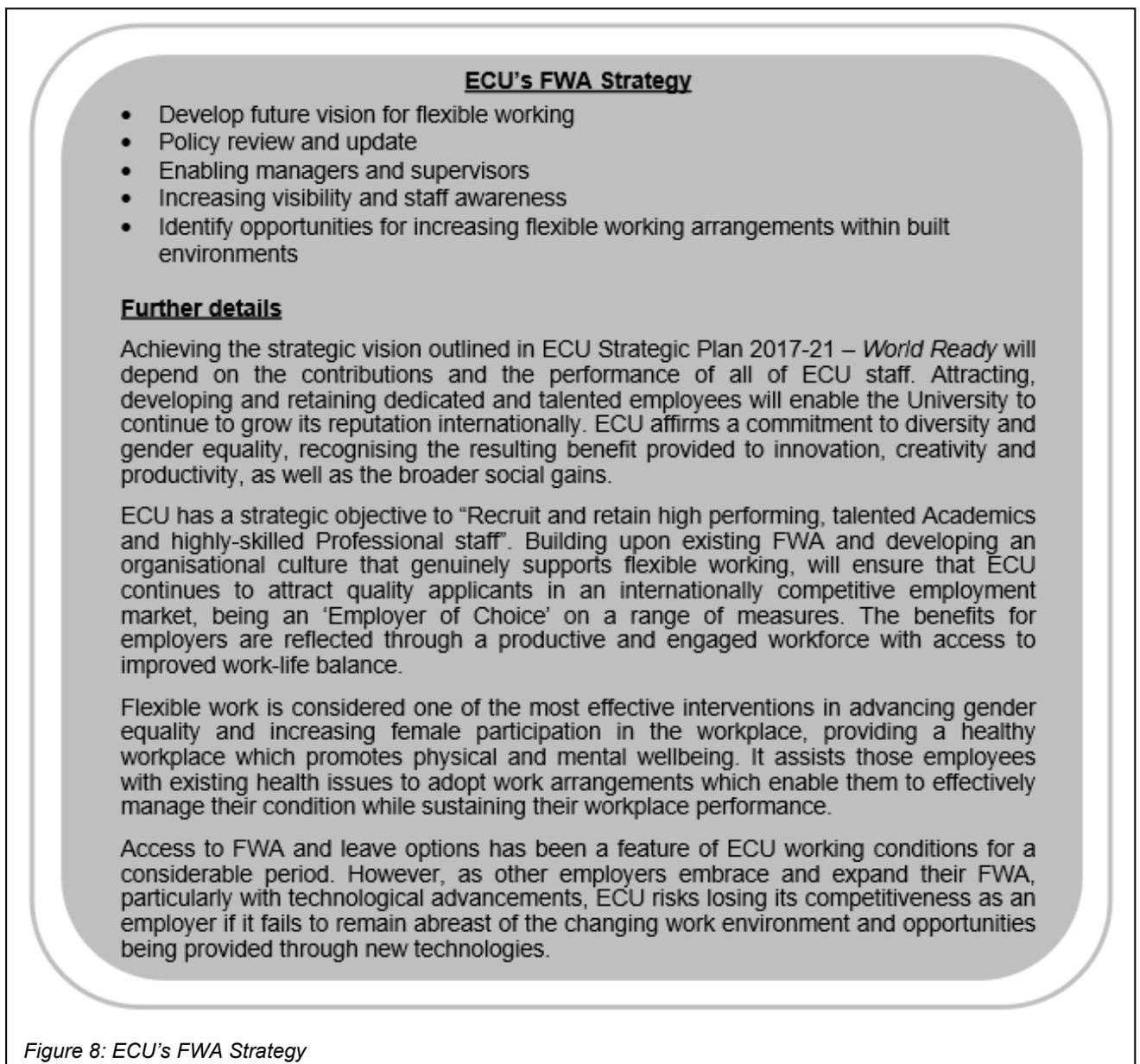


Figure 8: ECU's FWA Strategy

Therefore, ECU increased FWA resources for employees via the FWA intranet pages, supporting staff to develop the ability to recognise FWA opportunities, and equipping managers to embrace such approaches.

Through the actions of monitoring and tracking FWA, ECU observed that:

- there was an increased awareness of the FWA resources; and
- therefore, employees were more likely to access FWA information.

However, employees/managers who didn't know about FWA resources (or their location), indicates that implementation was not entirely effective. These employees are at risk of being misinformed about FWA processes and/or their application. As such, ECU acknowledges the FWA barrier is still not adequately removed.

To ensure quality of documents being produced, ECU benchmarked resources on FWA as follows:

Actions	Description	
<b>Environmental scan and desk audit of relevant documents</b>	a. Australian universities	Pre-work as well as canvassing our drafts with other universities and public service entities. Material from a range of public sector entities and other universities was reviewed and considered. However, in developing the material, there was a conscious effort not to be overly prescriptive as such an approach does not reflect a true flexible working culture or philosophy.
	b. Athena Swan Institutions (thematic analysis was conducted by a dedicated additional HEW 7 Project Officer for 12 months to solely work on this benchmarking project).	<p>Within <i>Theme 1 Leadership – entrench Athena Swan</i>, a planned action was to ‘Develop a log of leading practice initiatives on a global scale maintained to inform new initiatives’.</p> <p>A database was developed to log the leading practice initiatives of 28 Australian universities and 50 United Kingdom (UK) and Ireland universities. The purpose of the database is to support the implementation of ECU’s action plan and to provide a tool to benchmark and audit gender equality processes and initiatives adopted. This aims to inform and assist senior leaders in strategic decision making when entrenching future initiatives.</p> <p>Flexible Work was a topic of interest as part of this benchmarking. ECU documents were revised to ensure they were comparable and to the standard of leading institutions.</p>
<b>Review of biennial Staff Engagement Survey Responses</b>	Responses to the questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>“I have the flexibility I need to manage my work and other commitments”</i>; and</li> <li>○ <i>“I have access to the technology and support I need to work from home”</i>.</li> </ul>	<p>ECU can view staff satisfaction rates relating to flexibility needs through survey responses. This allows us to see if satisfaction is high or low in workplace flexibility, informing appropriate decision-making.</p> <p>These results are both imported into the Athena Swan Data dashboard and reported to at University Executive meeting. Additionally, they are communications through internal emails from the VC and via ECU internal webpages.</p>
<b>Review of Staff Engagement Survey COVID-19 Pulse Survey Responses</b>	Responses to the questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>“I have access to the technology and support I need to work from home”</i>;</li> <li>○ <i>“This organisation has enough flexible work arrangements to meet my needs”</i>; and</li> <li>○ <i>“I am able to meet my family responsibilities while still doing what is expected of me at work”</i>.</li> </ul>	<p>ECU can view staff satisfaction rates relating to flexibility needs through survey responses. This allows us to see if satisfaction is high or low in workplace flexibility, informing appropriate decision-making.</p> <p>These results are both imported into the Athena Swan Data dashboard and reported to at University Executive meeting. Additionally, they are communications through internal emails from the VC and via ECU internal webpages.</p>

Table 13: How ECU benchmarked FWA resources

The quality and content of resources is a direct response to staff feedback from ECU leaders and managers. It endeavours to address their needs in managing staff expectations and achieving business outcomes.

Support sought from ECU for leaders and managers	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidelines for Managers about conversations (often difficult) for WFH and discussing impacts on team. 'Cheat Sheets' for what to consider, say etc.</li> <li>• Converting informal into formal / Capturing informal arrangements.</li> <li>• Set of University wide principles on Flexible Working.</li> <li>• Flexible locations supporting intense teaching delivery.</li> <li>• Template for employee requests to capture key information.</li> <li>• Managing performance / quality in a flexible work environment and have accountability for performance.</li> <li>• Areas for collaboration across ECU.</li> <li>• Consistency between campus facilities.</li> <li>• Technology support (mobility) and supporting culture (easy to use).</li> <li>• Part time academic – faith in asking for achievement R2O - Need training.</li> <li>• Academic leadership – being able to seek promotion when research drops off.</li> <li>• Expectations of the role.</li> <li>• Creating norms and culture.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore circumstances/stage of life/future.</li> <li>• Trust in individual.</li> <li>• Conditions compared to industry – micro management approach in other sectors.</li> <li>• Communication of expectations – what is expected at ECU and in the team.</li> <li>• OSH issues – work at home.</li> <li>• Capturing flexible work in policy / procedures that encourages flexibility, and benefits to individual, team, Uni.</li> <li>• Culture change – raising awareness needs to come from central administration.</li> <li>• Streamline and update administrative requirements – less paperwork.</li> <li>• Clarity and consistency for flexitime.</li> <li>• FWA need to fit with team requirements.</li> <li>• Academic timeframes for marking.</li> <li>• Caring responsibilities for family (access to support and types of leave).</li> <li>• Collaborative meeting rooms needed.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Table 14: Support sought from ECU for leaders and managers</i></p>	

The 2021 Athena SWAN Staff Survey on FWA provided another opportunity for ECU to review the quality of FWA resources.

Examples of qualitative responses from the ECU ASSSFWA:	
<i>Resources are fine, it's battling entrenched mindsets that you need to work on campus that needs be overcome.</i>	<i>The resources have good and bad sides. They can be insightful for those who aren't familiar with options, but they can come across as prescriptive and thereby pose a barrier to true flexibility which comes from a trust based relationship between manager and staff member.</i>
<i>The website was useful as I wasn't initially aware of all options.</i>	<i>They are useful but again are reliant on Managers support and approval in most cases.</i>
<i>I need them to assist and guide me manage. It is needed to have some ECU/Corporate level policy - not just manager discretion.</i>	<i>Very useful to help guide a conversation on flexible work.</i>
<p><i>Table 15: Examples of qualitative responses from the ECU ASSSFWA</i></p>	

Additionally, in 2019 ECU developed '**Parental leave**' and '**Return to Work from Parental leave**' **booklets** (Figure 9). Accompanying webpages were also launched and promoted through HRSC, ECU's fortnightly electronic newsletter and major events across ECU.

The release of all these resources assisted ECU in ascertaining the extent of FWA, and its application across ECU, thereby facilitating the ability to better address barriers to uptake. It was anticipated that having formalised resources may provide the means for particularly reticent managers to confidently understand FWA. While not developed specifically for professional staff, the flexible nature of academic work was not specifically addressed within resource content.



Figure 9. 'Parental leave' and 'Return to Work from Parental leave' booklets containing specific information on

### Athena Swan Staff Survey on Flexible Work Arrangements (ASSFWA)

The extensive data collected from this survey allowed ECU to develop a more targeted focus on flexible work using intersectional approaches. Being a substantial survey in size, a response rate of 14% (272 respondents) was considered very positive. 70% of these respondents answered all questions, both mandatory and optional, further reflecting strong staff engagement. ECU has many assumptions that underpin FWA with supporting resources (Figure 10).

**Resources and assumptions underpinning FWA at ECU**

- The role flexible work options play in staff attraction/retention, work-life balance and workforce planning which has a direct impact on gender equality.
- The role of work and position design in maximising opportunities for flexible working arrangements within schools, service centres and work areas.
- As managers, their responsibilities under legislation, enterprise agreements and ECU policy.

- The skills, capabilities and self-awareness required:
  - In managing the challenges which arise in flexible workplace arrangements, including conscious and unconscious biases; and
  - Developing viable outcomes, using a team decision-making approach where appropriate, in response to requests for flexible working
- Resources are available, including:
  - Flexible Working Arrangements Guidelines', to be read in conjunction with ECU's Occupational Health and Safety requirements.
  - 'Flexible Working Arrangements Checklists' for the manager, employee and teams.
  - A 'Flexible Work Request' form which supports both employees in setting out a business case and ECU being better enabled to capture data on the various types of flexible working being sought.

Figure 10. Resources and assumptions underpinning FWA at ECU

Through specific demographic questions, ECU has begun to understand intersectional needs, including those for culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) staff, Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander peoples, and staff living with a disability. ECU relies on self-reporting for members of the LGBTIQ+ community as there is no reason to collect this data unless an employee wants to identify their gender within a specific University project. Therefore, having an anonymous survey provided the opportunity for more honest feedback. This was a key focus of the survey as an intersectional approach was not a focus in previous data collection. By providing an intersectional lens when removing and/or reducing this barrier, more consideration is given to a diverse range of perspectives which will drive targeted actions.

## OUTCOMES

ECU does not centrally capture the informal/*ad-hoc* FWA undertaken at ECU and therefore doesn't know how many staff use FWA in these capacities (i.e., flexitime, compressed hours, *ad-hoc* WFH etc.). The decision was made by ECU not to keep track of FWA centrally for the entire University. FWA is formalised appropriately via individual flexibility agreements (agreements between line managers and individual employees) to ensure consistency in application and greater visibility within schools, service centres, teams and across ECU. The rationale for not supporting further FWA data collation is predominately based on the risk of increasing administrative burden. An archaic 'punch-in/punch-out' system does not support the building of FWA culture due to its compliance-like nature which would inevitably increase the risk of it being seen as a deterrent. This would further add to perceptions of 'red-tape' around FWA-related processes, consequently impacting uptake. The building of staff and manager rapport through informal FWA discussions will build greater trust and confidence in the process, encouraging greater accessibility.

In building trust through greater dialogue between managers and their teams across the University, staff will feel empowered through higher levels of autonomy in their work when a greater focus is placed on results and outcomes achieved rather than a physical presence in the workplace. Staff surveys will continue to be a useful tool in tracking sentiments and attitudes towards FWA culture and this will be coupled with ongoing monitoring of the Bronze Action Plan Tracking Dashboard.

In maintaining staff confidentiality of responses within SES, while gender is included in the demographic information requested, results aren't published for privacy reasons. This is pertinent in smaller areas where gender can make a staff identifiable. The following table covers SES responses to questions relating to flexibility and work-life balance in 2016, 2018 and 2020 respectively.

ECU overall	I have the flexibility I need to manage my work & caring responsibilities	I maintain a good balance between work & other aspects of my life	Male	Female	Other Gender Identity (Gender X)	Not selected - Gender	Academic Staff	Professional Staff	Diff 2020 to 2016 - Flexibility	Diff 2020 to 2016 - Work Life Balance	Diff 2020 to 2018 - Flexibility	Diff 2020 to 2018 - Work Life Balance
2016	85%	70%	430	797	136	N/A	465	931				
2018	82%	65%	498	943	22	67	557	973	-1%	-4%	+2%	+1%
2020	84%	66%	441	923	29	88	548	933				

Figure 11: ECU Staff Engagement Survey Data – 2016 to 2020 (ECU overall)

## ECU outcomes for increasing the access to and awareness of FWA

As noted, ECU does not centrally capture informal FWA, however, to support the application of FWA, data is regularly collected and monitored for those staff members who are working part-time hours (as this is one of the most common forms of FWA) and for sick leave taken as this will often correlate with staff satisfaction in those areas. The breakdown for part-time staff members and sick leave is by catagorisable and can be viewed by gender, academic area, school/centre and other relevant demographics.

Snapshot of FWA at ECU 2016	Snapshot of FWA at ECU 2018 to 2020	Opportunities for improvement 2021-2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ECU had more than 10 separate documents covering Home-Based Work (HBW) and other FWA. Staff reported this to be a hindrance.</li> <li>• Inconsistent approaches to FWA were being applied across individual schools and service centres University-wide.</li> <li>• ECU's webpages were perceived by staff as confusing. Feedback indicated an abundance of information that was difficult to access across various locations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ECU conducted several reviews of its FWA documents including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ HBW Guidelines (see Page 25); and</li> <li>○ Athena Swan Bronze Award Application and Action Plan development.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The University now has:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Updated and improved documentation; and</li> <li>○ New documents for staff including providing advisory support.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Reviewed approach to FWA as part of the FWA Strategy and Action Plan and the Athena Swan Bronze Action Plan.</li> <li>• Improved approaches to FWA through discussion at all levels, including reviews, development of documentation to support processes, and consolidation of outdated or unclear documentation.</li> <li>• Reviewed and updated webpages and began collecting website user data.</li> <li>• Enhanced user-friendly website and HRSC monitored clicks (hits) on the relevant weblinks:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HRSC Intranet Page – Flexible Work Landing Page</li> <li>• Working Parents at ECU<sup>1</sup></li> <li>• Managers Guide to Parental Leave<sup>2</sup></li> <li>• Managers Guide to Return form Parental Leave<sup>3</sup></li> <li>• Employee/Manager/ECU Teams Checklists</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><i>*As of March in 2020, COVID-19 resulted in additional emphasis on improving ECU's approach to FWA.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback from the 2021 Athena Swan Staff Survey on FWA informs HRSC of University views and requirements.</li> <li>• Review documentation as part of the 'Fresh Perspective for Flexible Working Program' at ECU.</li> <li>• More consistent approach to FWA as feedback shows inconsistencies do still exist.</li> <li>• More Senior Leadership buy-in.</li> </ul> <p>Online forms accessible through updated webpages.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Centrally did not collect data on both formal and informal FWA for individual areas.</li> <li>• Centrally collected data on:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Part-time workers;</li> <li>○ Parental leave; and</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Return to work (post-parental leave).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Centrally did not collect data on both formal and informal FWA for individual areas.</li> <li>• Centrally collected data on:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Part-time workers;</li> <li>○ Parental leave; and</li> <li>○ Return to work (post- parental leave).</li> </ul> </li> <li>• In 2019, ECU developed the ECU Athena Swan Data Dashboard to better track and monitor data both for departments and University-wide.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ECU is maturing as an institution through the development of systems to better capture FWA (i.e., online forms).</li> <li>• This will give ECU increased opportunities to track and monitor FWA information (i.e., capturing departmental FWA</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ECU undertook surveys to determine satisfaction with work flexibility through:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ ECU's biennial Staff Engagement Survey (SES); and</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Athena Swan Staff Survey in 2016.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ECU did surveys to determine staff satisfaction with work flexibility through:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The SES in 2018; and</li> <li>○ Departmental 'Pulse Surveys' in 2019.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Survey conduction and analysis performed providing data baselines and granular information sets.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SES will be conducted again in 2022.</li> <li>• Moving forward, another Athena Swan FWA survey will be conducted in approximately 2024.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ECU had available FWA in place but consultation through Athena Swan-related activities showed staff understanding was unclear and promotion of uptake was lacking. (See Table 2)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducted 14 'Senior Leadership and Managers Forums'.</li> <li>• HRSC conducted reviews on FWA-related documentation after staff feedback requested greater clarity.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual departments following up on FWA to discuss departmental-specific needs.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New actions in the Cygnet Award will address current issues:</li> <li>• 'Fresh Perspectives on Flexible Working Program' is in development under HRSC.</li> </ul>

Table 1: Snapshot of FWA at ECU from 2016 - 2022

The ability to work part-time is an important indicator of workplace flexibility with current data showing access to part-time work mostly accessed by women (as in red below in Figure 12, and Figures 13 and 14).

Award	Emp Status	2019		2020		2021	
		F	M	F	M	F	M
Academic	Perm F/T	192	188	199	189	195	183
	Perm P/T	52	17	51	18	62	16
	Temp F/T	83	77	84	68	81	62
	Temp P/T	51	16	49	19	50	30
Executive	Temp F/T	8	8	8	9	8	9
Professional Staff	Perm F/T	404	234	394	245	396	250
	Perm P/T	222	16	226	22	236	24
	Temp F/T	89	75	116	56	111	55
	Temp P/T	92	15	99	19	90	20
		2019		2020		2021	
		F	M	F	M	F	M
Academic	Full Time	275	265	283	257	276	245
	Part Time	103	33	100	37	112	46
Professional Staff	Full Time	493	309	510	301	507	305
	Part Time	314	31	325	41	326	44
<b>Permanent Full Time – Perm F/T</b>		<b>Temporary Full Time – Temp F/T</b>					
<b>Permanent Part Time – Perm P/T</b>		<b>Temporary Part Time – Temp P/T</b>					

Figure 12: ECU Permanent and Temporary Full-time versus Part-time staff numbers between 2019 – 2021, broken down by year, gender and employment status.

	Gender	Level A		Level B		Level C		Level D		Level E	
		Full-Time	Part-Time								
2021	F	39	29	124	47	65	23	32	8	16	5
	M	30	14	84	9	67	10	29	5	35	8
2020	F	39	34	127	41	72	13	32	6	14	5
	M	32	13	84	8	71	7	33	2	37	7
2019	F	39	32	114	42	71	16	37	5	14	4
	M	39	6	85	9	76	5	31	2	36	9
2018	F	33	26	105	43	72	15	35	1	12	2
	M	34	6	96	9	76	5	32	2	37	7
2017	F	30	20	101	41	66	20	30	1	12	3
	M	26	8	90	11	75	4	35	1	31	6

Figure 13: ECU Full-time versus Part-time staff numbers between 2017 – 2021, broken down by year, gender and employment status.

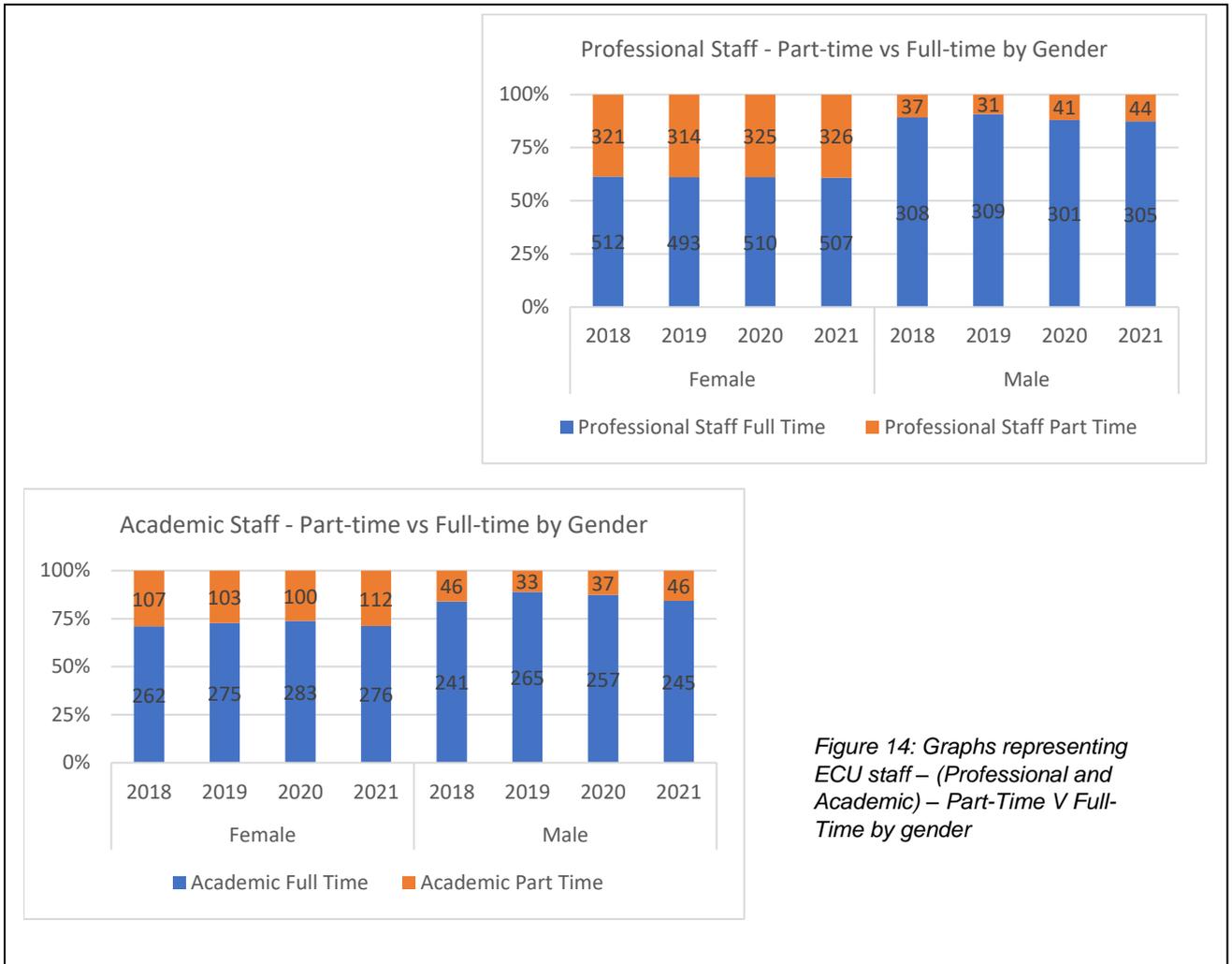


Figure 14: Graphs representing ECU staff – (Professional and Academic) – Part-Time V Full-Time by gender

Additionally, women more predominately utilise sick leave for family/carer-related reasons as opposed to men, with the exception of areas that are male-dominated (i.e., School of Engineering) which will have an obvious skew due to gender disparity.

As can be seen in Figures 15 and 16, sick leave data can be assessed and dissected by academic/professional staff cohort and academic discipline/area groupings respectively.

Academic Staff			2019		2020		2021	
STEMM Code	Sick Leave Reason	GENDER	No. of bookings	Ave No. of Hrs booked	No. of bookings	Ave No. of Hrs booked	No. of bookings	Ave No. of Hrs booked
Arts, Humanities, Social Science, Business, Law (AHSSBL)	Family	F	105	20.8	93	11.9	89	17.5
		M	56	18.8	32	15.6	41	8.4
	Self	F	292	19.0	308	15.2	357	18.1
		M	136	20.8	117	39.1	188	15.7
<i>AHSSBL Total</i>			589	19.7	550	19.7	675	16.8
Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths (STEM)	Family	F	12	49.2	12	8.5	15	6.7
		M	46	20.6	18	7.2	12	10.4
	Self	F	55	15.8	32	10.0	65	20.5
		M	71	21.2	42	17.9	60	15.5
<i>STEM Total</i>			184	21.3	104	12.5	152	16.4
Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths, Medicine (STEMM)	Family	F	42	17.1	55	10.9	63	9.0
		M	29	10.3	21	6.6	40	7.5
	Self	F	198	17.4	248	17.1	229	22.2
		M	53	20.0	45	18.9	64	14.4
<i>STEMM Total</i>			322	17.1	369	15.8	396	17.3
<b>Grand Total</b>			<b>1095</b>	<b>19.2</b>	<b>1023</b>	<b>17.6</b>	<b>1223</b>	<b>16.9</b>

Figure 15: ECU staff sick leave numbers between 2019 – 2021 broken down by gender academic discipline/area and reason for leave (family/self)

AWARD	Sick Leave Reason	GENDER	2019		2020		2021	
			No. of bookings	Ave No. of Hrs booked	No. of bookings	Ave No. of Hrs booked	No. of bookings	Ave No. of Hrs booked
Academic	Family	F	184	20.0	170	10.8	182	12.9
		M	140	17.7	77	10.5	98	8.2
	Self	F	597	17.6	637	15.4	730	18.7
		M	274	20.4	229	31.3	328	14.9
<i>Academic Total</i>			1195	18.6	1113	17.6	1338	16.2
Professional Staff	Family	F	1148	7.6	971	7.6	1102	7.1
		M	425	8.5	435	8.9	402	8.2
	Self	F	3925	9.9	3741	10.2	4406	9.1
		M	1360	10.5	1185	10.2	1572	10.7
<i>Professional Staff Total</i>			6858	9.6	6332	9.7	7482	9.1
<b>Grand Total</b>			<b>8053</b>	<b>10.9</b>	<b>7445</b>	<b>10.9</b>	<b>8820</b>	<b>10.2</b>

Figure 16: ECU staff sick leave numbers between 2019 – 2021 broken down by gender, academic/professional staff grouping and reason for leave (family/self).

As can be seen in Figures 17 and 18, sick leave can also be assessed and dissected by key intersectionality groups which ensures a wider breadth of data analysis and clearer picture of staff experience.

Award	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Y_N	Sick Leave Reason	GENDER	2019		2020		2021	
				No. of bookings	Ave No. of Hrs booked	No. of bookings	Ave No. of Hrs booked	No. of bookings	Ave No. of Hrs booked
Academic	N	Family	F	140	21.1	159	11.2	168	11.1
			M	133	17.0	71	9.7	94	7.9
		Self	F	549	17.7	596	15.5	675	19.1
			M	246	20.6	203	33.8	298	14.0
	Not Known	Family	F	44	16.4	11	5.0	14	34.4
			M	4	15.0	5	21.8	4	14.1
		Self	F	48	15.6	41	13.5	52	13.7
			M	20	22.0	9	12.8	20	16.6
	Y	Family	M	3	50.0	1	7.5		
			F						
		Self	F					3	15.0
			M	8	11.3	17	11.3	10	36.8
Professional Staff	N	Family	F	1055	7.6	835	7.6	993	6.8
			M	388	8.2	393	8.8	360	8.6
		Self	F	3500	10.1	3354	10.4	3978	9.2
			M	1216	10.7	1069	10.1	1397	10.6
	Not Known	Family	F	62	7.6	102	7.1	78	9.3
			M	31	12.4	30	12.3	33	4.4
		Self	F	320	9.1	259	8.0	273	7.7
			M	102	8.6	72	12.9	118	11.4
	Y	Family	F	31	6.4	34	9.9	31	12.8
			M	6	7.2	12	5.5	9	8.4
		Self	F	105	8.1	128	8.3	155	8.7
			M	42	8.7	44	9.9	57	10.8
<b>Grand Total</b>				<b>8053</b>	<b>10.9</b>	<b>7445</b>	<b>10.9</b>	<b>8820</b>	<b>10.2</b>

Figure 17: ECU staff sick leave numbers between 2019 – 2021 broken down by gender, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people and reason for leave (family/self)

Figure 18: ECU staff sick leave numbers between 2019 – 2021 broken down by - gender, disability and reason for leave (family/self)

AWARD	Disability Y_N	Sick Leave Reason	GENDER	2019		2020		2021	
				No. of bookings	Ave No. of Hrs booked	No. of bookings	Ave No. of Hrs booked	No. of bookings	Ave No. of Hrs booked
Academic	N	Family	F	106	22.1	116	9.8	146	11.9
			M	127	18.4	62	9.6	81	7.7
		Self	F	474	17.1	484	15.1	593	17.5
			M	215	20.1	189	27.3	263	13.7
	Not Advised	Family	F	72	16.9	53	13.1	32	18.4
			M	11	10.9	15	14.3	17	10.4
		Self	F	106	19.7	140	15.9	116	20.9
			M	51	23.8	37	51.9	55	15.8
	Y	Family	F	6	19.3	1	7.5	4	5.3
			M	2	6.8				
		Self	F	17	16.8	13	18.5	21	41.7
			M	8	9.4	3	27.5	10	42.0
Professional Staff	N	Family	F	1014	7.6	782	7.7	960	7.0
			M	364	7.8	374	8.4	380	8.1
		Self	F	3316	9.9	3217	10.1	3780	9.0
			M	1112	10.0	1030	9.8	1372	10.7
	Not Advised	Family	F	120	7.6	172	7.4	127	8.3
			M	53	12.1	55	12.6	19	10.3
		Self	F	517	10.0	445	10.7	538	9.5
			M	220	13.2	120	13.1	176	10.6
	Y	Family	F	14	7.4	17	5.4	15	6.6
			M	8	17.1	6	7.5	3	6.2
		Self	F	92	9.8	79	12.5	88	8.9
			M	28	9.7	35	12.6	24	9.3
<b>Grand Total</b>				<b>8053</b>	<b>10.9</b>	<b>7445</b>	<b>10.9</b>	<b>8820</b>	<b>10.2</b>

## Parental Leave<sup>1</sup> and Return to Work at ECU

FWA are an important aspect of staff returning back to work after parental leave, given the nature and challenges of balancing work and childcare responsibilities.

Ensuring staff feel encouraged and supported in returning back to work is a critical aspect of both staff retention and career progression, cultivating and maintaining a diverse talent pool for ECU. Tracking return rates as part of this is key to identifying trends at the University, including those who choose to return at a part-time fraction. ECU have low rates of staff ceasing employment prior to returning back to work (post-parental leave), reflecting an established culture that supports working parents.

The following data relates specifically to parental leave and return to work at ECU, namely the number of staff:

- Taking parental leave (both as a primary or secondary carer) in 2021
- Ceasing employment before returning from parental leave in 2021
- Taking secondary carer's parental leave in 2021

Staff information relating to parental leave can easily be accessed by managers in ECU's Athena Swan Data Dashboard across their respective area/s. It is important to monitor the levels of both men and women accessing parental leave as in order to progress a gender diverse work force, men play a critical role in their spouses returning to work after parental and/or carer responsibilities.

ECU continues to look at numbers for those who take a career break and are returning to work, specifically from parental leave. As well, the University looks at the numbers of those who take a career break and are returning, again specifically from parental leave.

<sup>1</sup> Again, just a note that throughout this application, there will be references to: Working Parents, Parental Leave, and Return to Work After Parental Leave. Whilst ECU recognises parental leave itself is not an FWA option, it is a university requirement and employee benefit, received when an employee or an employee's partner gives birth (including stillbirth, surrogacy, and adoption). The University acknowledges that flexible work is not solely for parents, nor working mothers. ECU strives for a flexible workplace that is beneficial to all staff, with working parents (of all genders), being one of several staffing groups it endeavours to support. ECU aligns itself with the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) which places emphasis on FWA providing opportunities to improve family work-life balance for those returning to the workplace. ECU chose to include references to the support it offers to parents, with this Application providing an opportunity to profile provisions to fellow SAGE members and external readers, who may not be as familiar with such offerings.

		2021		Female	Male	Total
<b>Employees that ceased employment before returning to work from parental leave, regardless of when the leave commenced</b>	Full Time	Permanent	0	1	1	
		Fixed-Term Contract	0	0	0	
	Part-time	Permanent	0	0	0	
		Fixed-Term Contract	0	0	0	

Employees that have taken primary carer's parental leave (paid and/or unpaid)	2021		Female	Male	Total	Employees that have taken secondary carer's parental leave (paid and/or unpaid)	2021		Female	Male	Total
	Full Time	Permanent	9	6	15		Full Time	Permanent	1	12	13
	Fixed-Term Contract	4	0	4		Fixed-Term Contract		2	2		
Part-time	Permanent	21	0	21	Part-time	Permanent		1	1		
	Fixed-Term Contract	12	0	12		Fixed-Term Contract	1		1		



Figure 19: 2021 data for parental and carer leave, latest 2020 extract from Athena Swan Tableau Data Dashboard

Additionally, to continuously determine the quality of our FWA resources and what is required for ECU staff members, a key measure on staff access to FWA is responses to questions on flexible working in the biennial SES (see Figure 4 below).

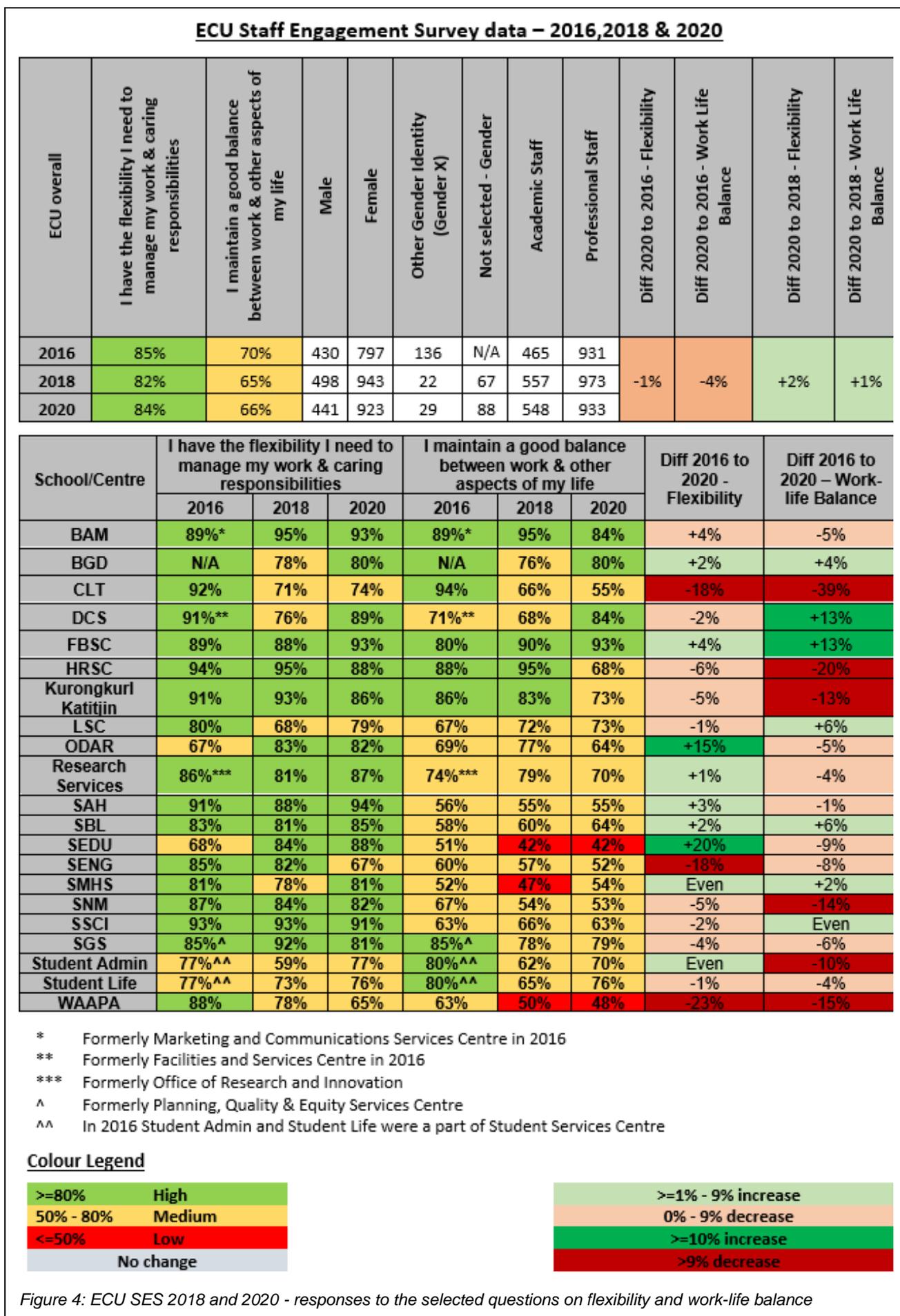


Figure 4: ECU SES 2018 and 2020 - responses to the selected questions on flexibility and work-life balance

COVID-19 Pulse Survey - Results April/May 2020

The data shows that overwhelmingly, ECU staff responded favourably to the question: 'I have access to the technology and support I need to work from home'. This was examined alongside staff clicks on the related webpages (see Figure 20).

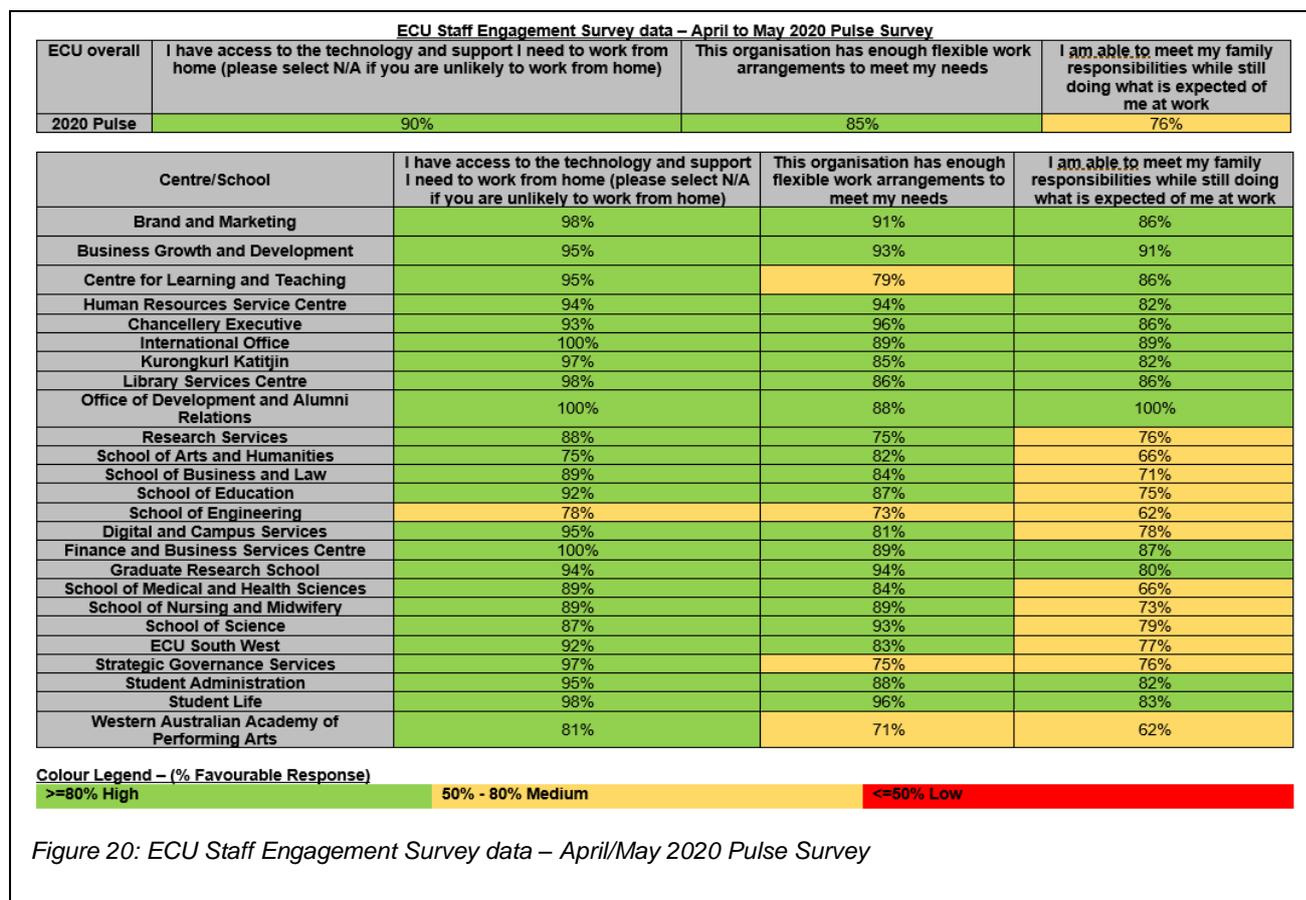


Figure 20: ECU Staff Engagement Survey data – April/May 2020 Pulse Survey

Given the nature of academic roles, flexibility is well established across schools and research centres, as it's traditionally been the modus operandi. However, the challenge has been ensuring acceptance and promotion of same amongst academic managers as well as amongst administrative and technical managers (hence ECU's focus on awareness raising, resources in the ASBAP). Additionally, at ECU, the technology is in place to support FWA at all levels of management. The University has a strong focus on being inclusive, flexible, and relevant and this is entrenched in ECU culture through the natural ebb and flow of the academic year. At ECU, there is a commitment to the self-directed nature of academic careers to achieve mutually agreed outcomes, which ensures academic staff already enjoy a high degree of flexibility in their work (see Table 16 below).

FWA for Academic Staff	
<b>Flexible work schedules</b>	Rather than adopting reduced hours or part-time work arrangements, academic managers can vary their work schedule to meet both personal needs and academic/business priorities.
<b>Cultural acceptance of FWA</b>	Outside of timetabled commitments, the general academic focus is on achievement output and outcome orientated.
<b>Consistent FWA discussions</b>	Annual discussions reviewing workload allocations take place with the relevant line executive support academic managers through the Management for Performance Scheme.
<b>Technology provisions</b>	ECU provides the necessary technology infrastructure that enables academic managers to readily work remotely (e.g., various campuses, home office or other off-campus location) should the need arise.

Table 16: FWA for Academic Staff

This level of autonomy for academic staff extends to the location of work as well as time management, although clashes between teaching, research and university commitments are an ongoing challenge.

SES results are monitored for any changes in comparative analysis with past surveys, particularly at the school level. Addressing FWA issues highlighted is done through examination of responses at both the school and university level. This ensures a holistic approach with other culture change initiatives being progressed at a school level (refer to Table 11 on Page 24 for further information).

#### Access to resources that support FWA and its consistent application

In 2019, when ECU launched its '**Parental Leave Resources**', initially, there were 547 visits to ECU's '*Working Parents at ECU*' webpage with declining numbers across 2020/2021 (Table 17). Low levels of staff interest are evident through the ongoing low engagement with the online version of the documents. In contrast however, ECU continues to have high-levels of staff return-to-work rates post-parental leave (Figure 21).

In 2020, there was a significant increase in visits to the '**Flexible working arrangements**' webpage, with notable site traffic accessing the '**Flexible Working at ECU**' Strategy and '**FWA Managers, Employees and Teams Checklist**' resources. Significant traffic was specifically directed to the '**Employee Checklist**' resource. The '**Teams Checklist**' was launched later in the same year following staff feedback requesting further information. The webpage averaged 87 visits per-month in 2019, increasing to 279 in 2020 (excl. March) and 154 in 2021. During the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, there were 3422 visits to the site.

Flexible Work Resource	2019	2020	2021 (Jan – Aug)	2021 (Jan – Dec)
<b>HR Intranet Page - Flexible Work landing Page*</b>  <i>*3422 visits in March 2020; average 87 visits per month in 2019; 279 in 2020 (excl March); 154 in 2021</i>	1041	6489	1136	1847
<b>Employee Checklist</b>	72	456	55	106
<b>Manager Checklist</b>	53	151	27	52
<b>ECU Teams Checklist*</b>  <i>*Launched in 2020 following feedback</i>	N/A	0	9	19
<b>Working Parents HR Intranet Page</b>	547	223	138	232
<b>Managers Guide to Parental Leave</b>	3	9	6	8
<b>Managers Guide to Return from Parental Leave</b>	5	8	7	10

Table 17: Visits to Flexible Working Arrangements Websites 2019 - 2021

**Return to Work after Parental Leave**

**Parental Leave**

The number of staff who commenced Primary Carer's or Secondary Carer's Leave within the year nominated.

**Return to Work**

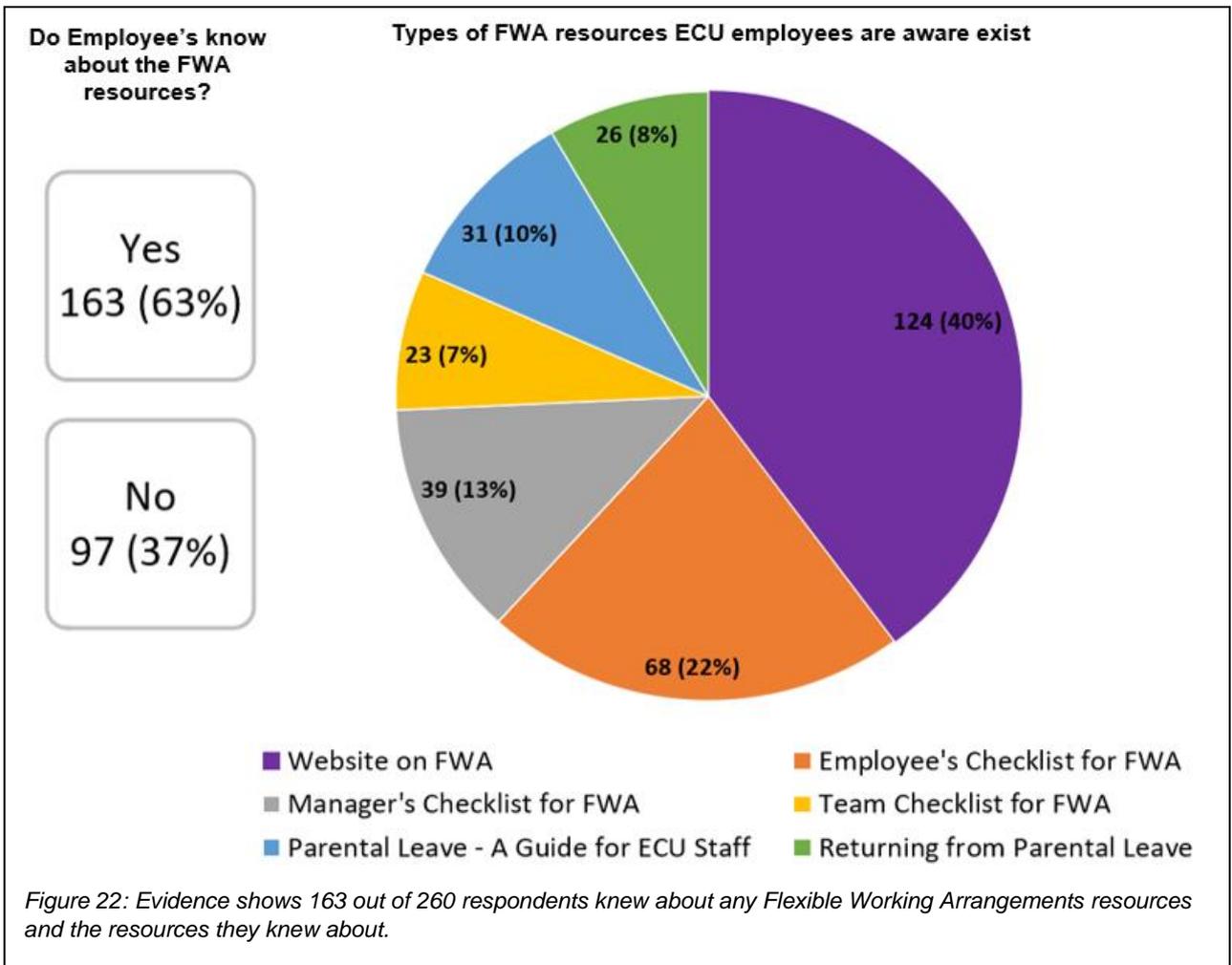
Return to work – the percentage of staff who have taken Primary Carer's Leave within the year nominated.

	2018	2019	2020
	<b>100%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>100%</b>

	2018	2019	2020
<b>Female</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>94%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Male</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Figure 21: Parents returning from parental leave data 2018 - 2020

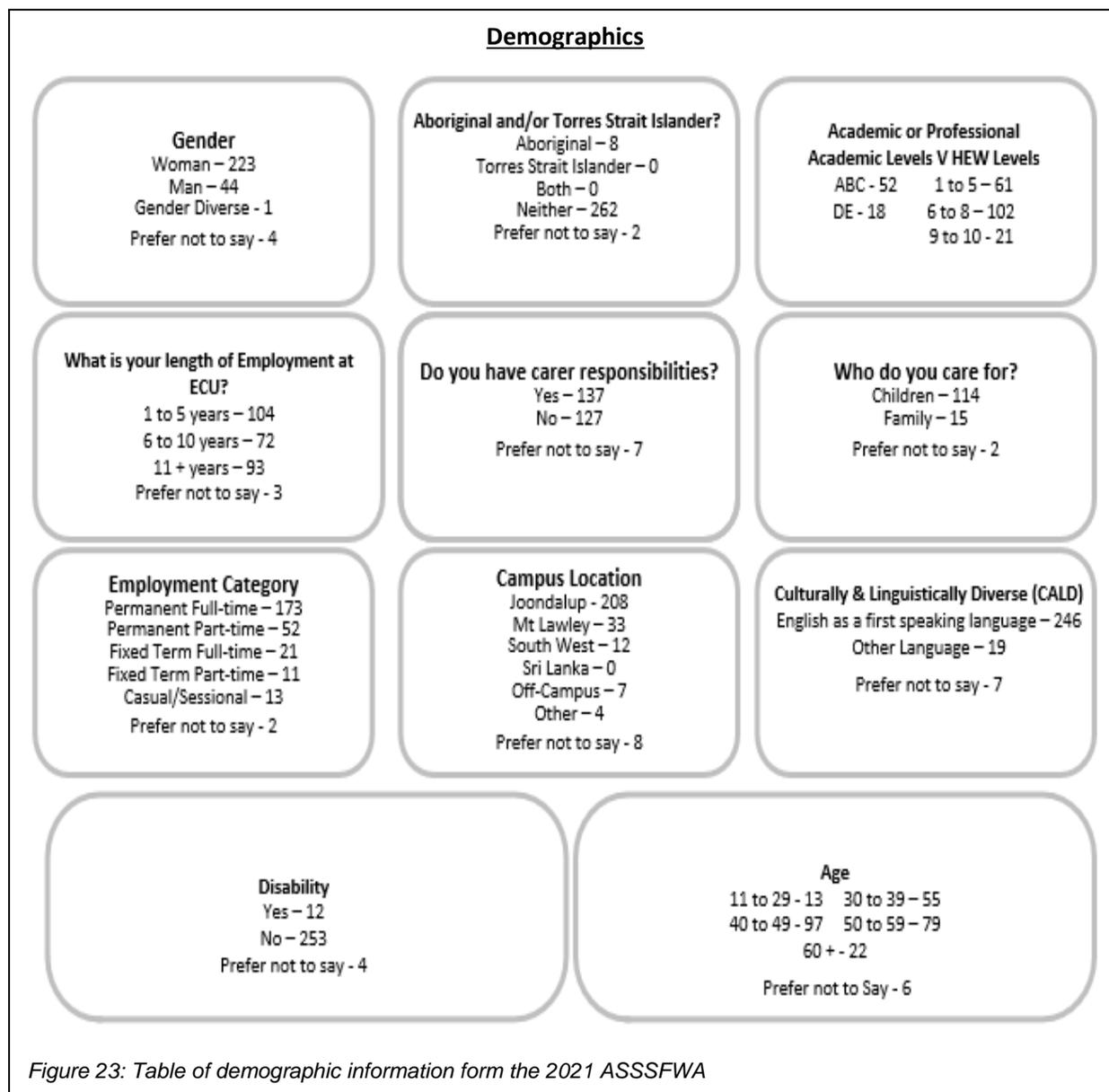
Furthermore, although resources had been available since 2019, the ASSSFWA in 2021 indicated a lack of awareness of the FWA resources with 97 (37%) of respondents indicating they were unaware the documents existed (Figure 22). Therefore, having available resources online has not been entirely successful in informing staff about FWA.



## Outcomes from surveys

The ASSSFWA was created to facilitate an assessment of staff attitudes towards flexible work practices through multiple choice and free-form text commentary, providing an opportunity to give feedback anonymously. Key variables included staff demographics of respondents, general levels of satisfaction across FWA, and a sense of how ECU was tracking against the relevant ASBAP items.

From an intersectional perspective, 246 respondents spoke English as a first language with eight Aboriginal staff respondents and 4% reporting they lived with a disability. Figure 23 provides an infographic summarising demographics explored as part of the survey.



## Emerging themes from the ASSSFWA

Survey analysis from 272 respondents, identified five key themes that could represent broad areas for future focus (Figure 24). Each theme will align to one of the five ECU values when assessing overarching impact and alignment to institutional vision, mission, and core values.

Demographic analysis contributes significantly to understanding the collected FWA data. Analysis revealed most respondents to the survey were women (n=223), professional staff (n=152) and largely in professional staffing levels: HEW 6 – 8. The age of women respondents was predominately between 40 – 59 years of age. Of the total respondents, 137 (88%) indicated that they had caring responsibilities, with only 15 (12%) identifying as men.

### ECU emerging themes from the 2021 ASSSFWA

- 1. Enhancements to policy, procedure, and process** – Resources, awareness, and application
- 2. Inconsistency in application of flexible work** – Training, nature of work and localised cultures of practice
- 3. Mental health and wellness** – Job satisfaction and staff retention, work life balance and confidence to request flexible work arrangements
- 4. Managerial practices and associated culture** – Staff empowerment vs judgement, managerial approachability, variation between management levels and 'in-house' practices
- 5. Career development and progression** – Career limiting or advancement and academic promotion including 'Relative to Opportunity'.

Figure 24: ECU emerging themes from the 2021 ASSSFWA

#### Findings from ASSSFWA based on a comparative perspective

Line managers reported predominantly positive attitudes towards FWA. However, a limitation to this was the high level of non-response to this question (Figure 25). A key barrier to using FWA identified was the nature of the work being undertaken by the reporting team (Figure 26).

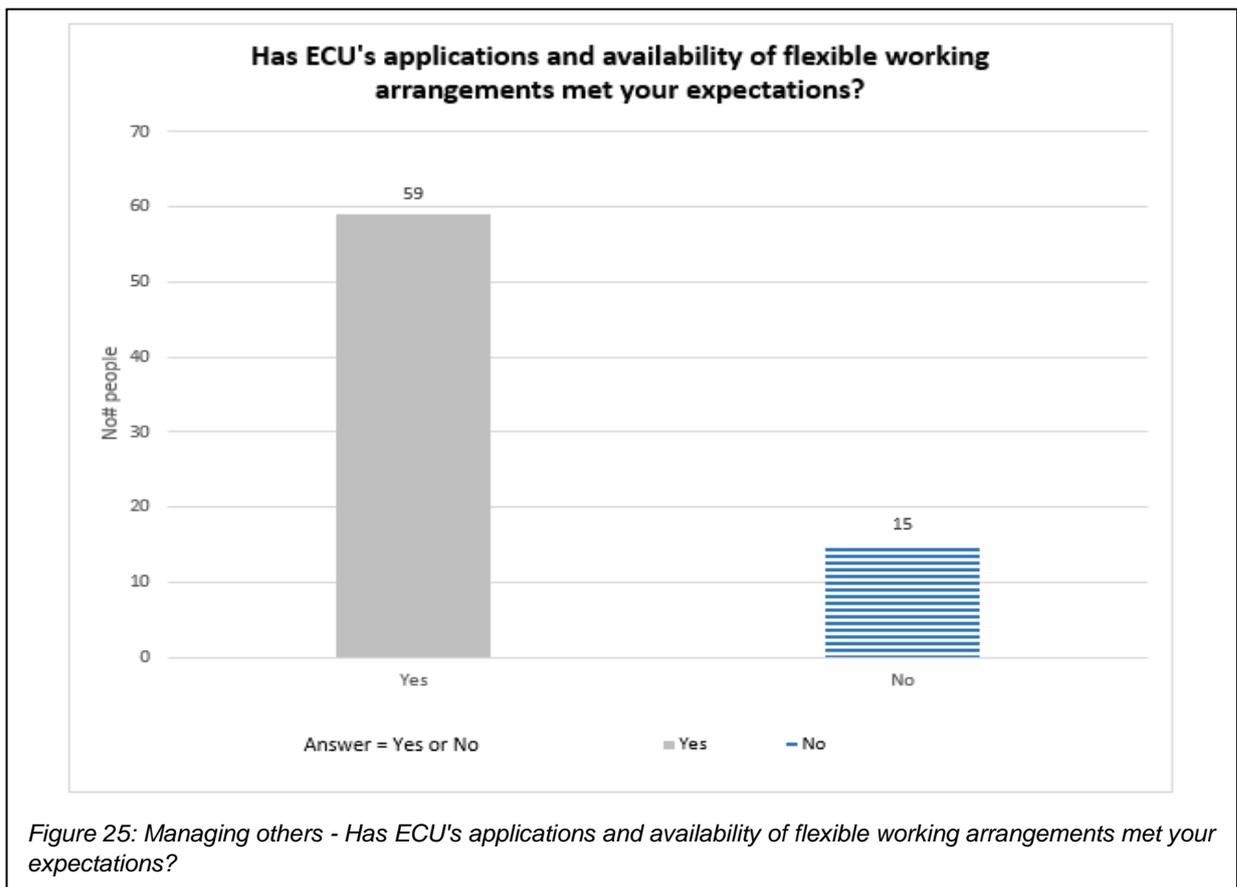
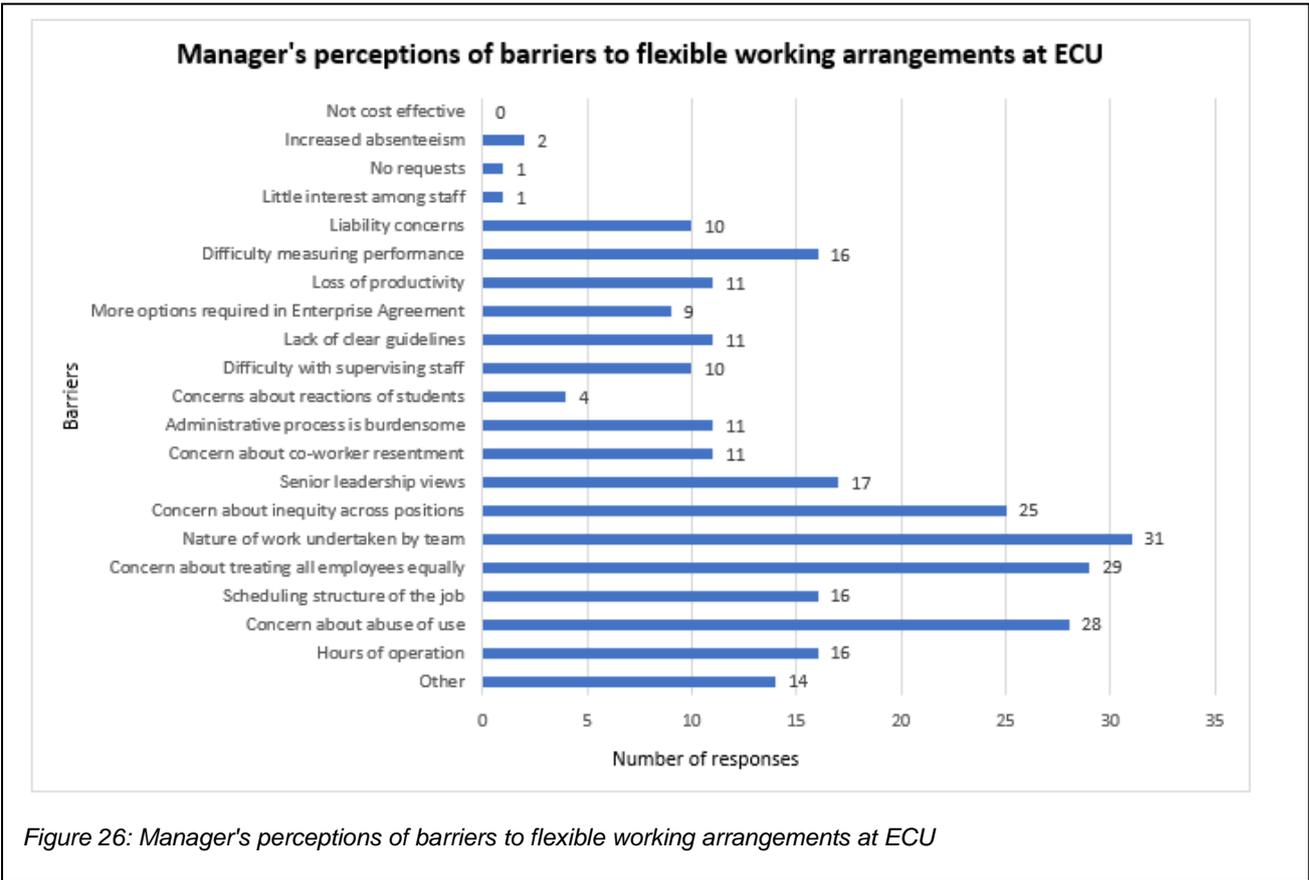
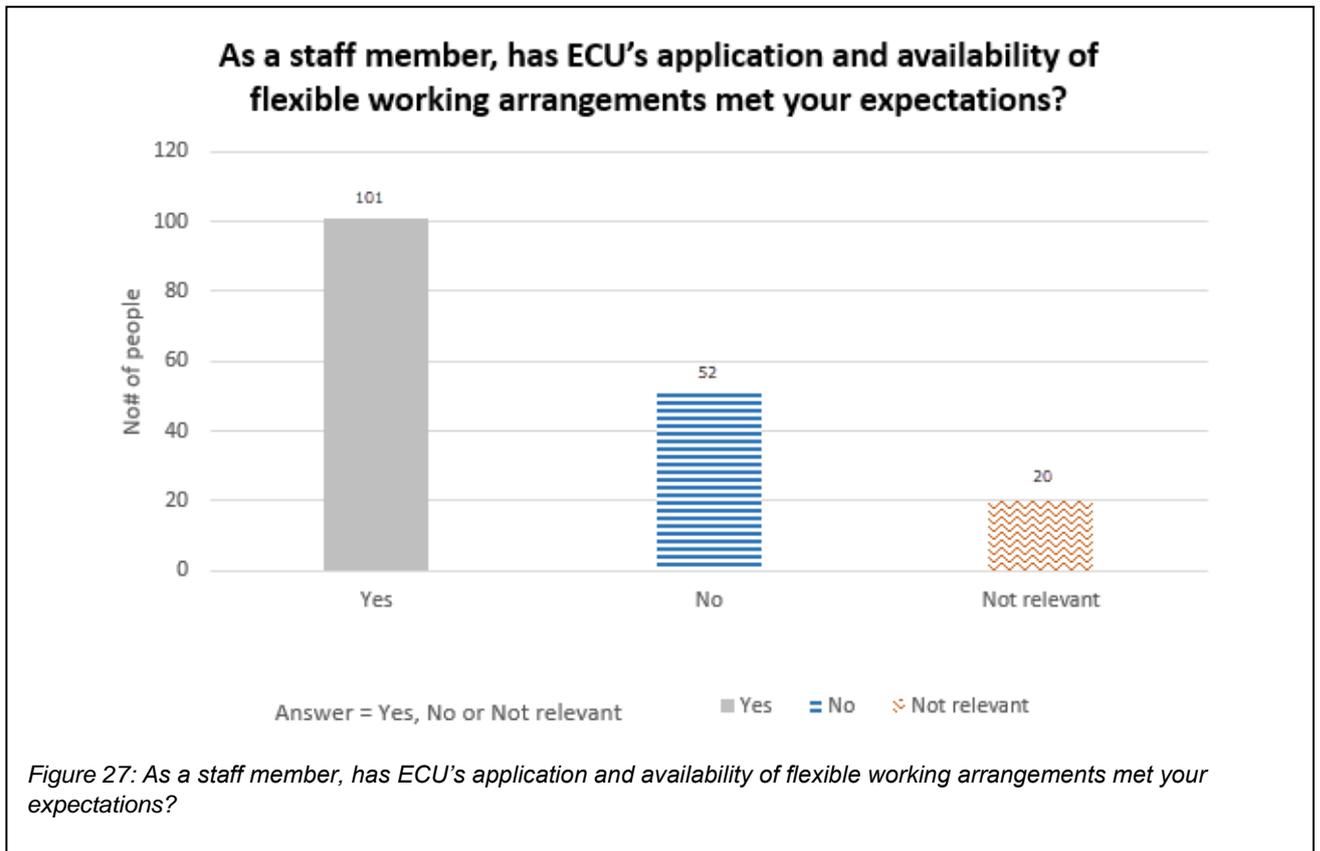


Figure 25: Managing others - Has ECU's applications and availability of flexible working arrangements met your expectations?



Comparatively, employees had a 58% response rate to the survey when asked if FWA met their expectations (Figure 27). As detailed in Figure 28, 71 employees or 40% of respondents indicated they continued to face barriers when considering or accessing FWA.



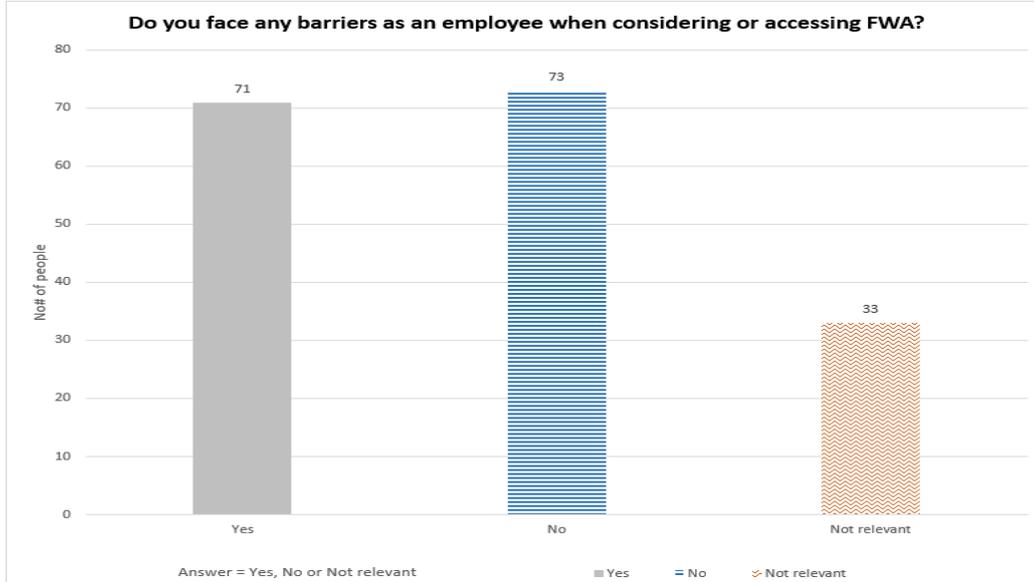


Figure 28: Do you face any barriers as an employee when considering or accessing FWA?

### Limitations

ECU identified that the **Delegations Policy** and **Flexibility Policy** required amendment to allow for escalation of approval to a higher managerial level when a flexible working request was refused (**Action 4.1**). To date, this has not been actioned due to the complexity of the circumstances in which staff requests are denied. Additionally, the functionality requirements for automated escalation are not currently available within internal University systems. This is an opportunity for improvement, and a new approach is required to address this challenge.

Additionally, further FWA training (**Action 4.1b**) is needed for staff and managers through integrated workshops and is still a work-in-progress. Responses indicated that out of 252 respondents, 199 people believe training would be required for either themselves, teams, or managers (see Figure 29) and there is an interest in staff testimonials as exemplars (Figure 30).

Action 1.4	Develop an ECU suite of leading practice including initiatives and testimonials that relate to FWA, to a higher education setting.
Action 2.2	Develop an approach to FWA, endorsed by the executive and senior leadership, that can be personalised to each school and centre to inform related processes on an as-needed basis.

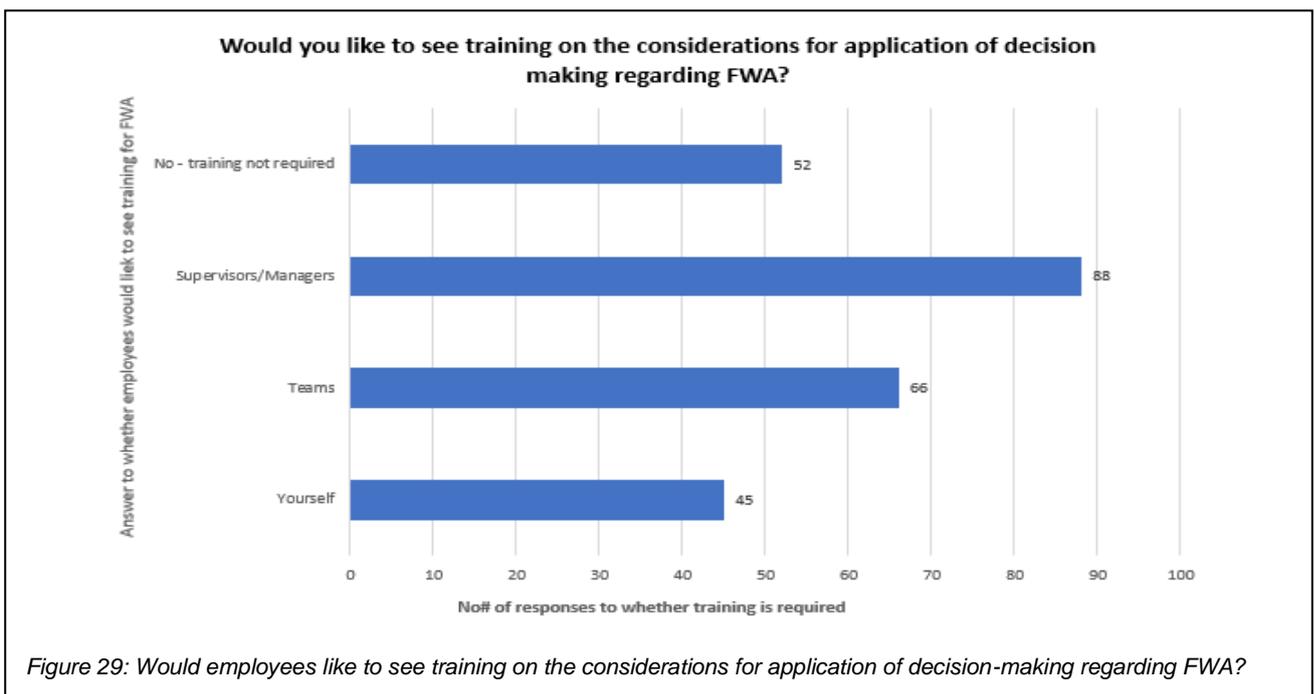
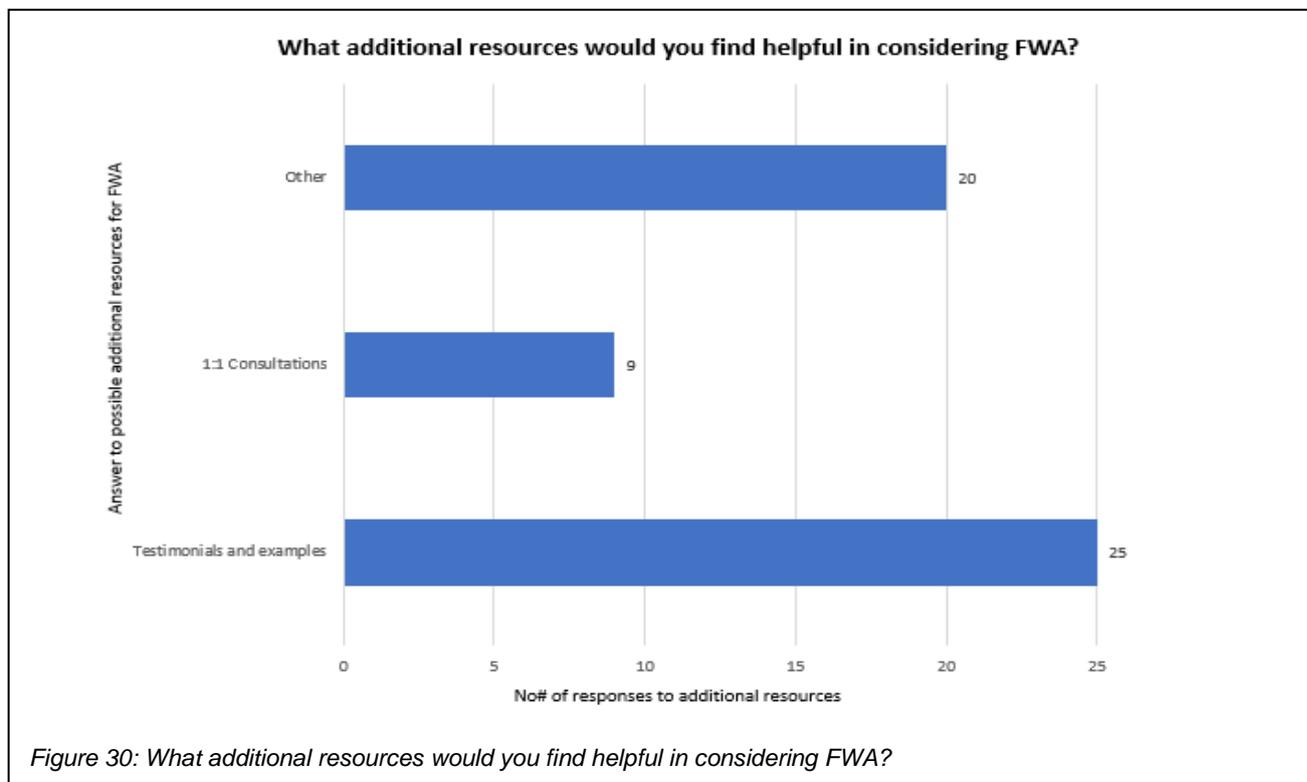


Figure 29: Would employees like to see training on the considerations for application of decision-making regarding FWA?

## COVID-19 pandemic impacts

ECU has always focused on supporting FWA, however, the need to work from home during the COVID-19 outbreak in Mar/Apr 2020 contributed to an increased staff interest and requests to HRSC in understanding what FWA were available. COVID-19 did have a significant effect as a driver for staff seeking information on FWA and this has led to ECU needing to redress what information the University provides, and how it's communicated.



### Impact on resourcing during the COVID-19 pandemic and contingency planning to ensure continuity of core services

As evidenced below in Table 18, with several staff being taken off business-as-usual tasks to work on projects/initiatives that supported the University's journey through the COVID-19 pandemic, the impacted resource allocation of support services resulted in leaner teams operating on core business. This was further exasperated by recruitment activity freezes.

Disruptions of the pandemic response impacted the progression of FWA-related Athena Swan action items due to the redirecting of support services and resources. By way of example, key members of the HRSC were assigned to significant work relating to staffing measures aligned to mitigating the financial impact of COVID-19. This had an impact on Athena Swan-related activities given the nature of staff-based data informing several Athena Swan outcome and impact measures. Potential enhancements to ECU's Athena SWAN Tableau Dashboard while forecasted for the future, were postponed due to technical and resourcing requirements. HRSC continues to engage with individual schools and service centres to provide education and support to increase the uptake of flexible work arrangements, however the reallocation of resources in managing the impacts of the pandemic coupled with the transition of staff to WFH and remotely has delayed targeted FWA-related training.

One positive from the pandemic setbacks has been the greater emphasis on use of Microsoft TEAMS for remote work alongside other virtual technology applications. The definition of 'child-friendly' environments has significantly evolved since the development of the original Athena SWAN Action Plan (pre-COVID) and introduction of technological solutions has provided opportunities for the live streaming of events and the increased use of alternative communication platforms. This has allowed for wider participation of both academic and professional staff in flexible work settings, paving the way for FWA culture at ECU considerably.

Figure 31: Impact on resourcing during the COVID-19 pandemic and contingency planning to ensure continuity of core services

During the COVID-19 pandemic, ECU made the following changes, necessary to accommodate its workforce:

<b>Restrictions/Challenges</b>	<b>Strategies to manage impact</b>
<b>Mental Health and Wellbeing</b> <b>Addressing impact of isolation and working from home</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ECU Lecture Series with events relating to mental health during the pandemic;</li> <li>• Regular StaffPLUS updates focused on wellbeing with the context of the pandemic;</li> <li>• Health and wellbeing program including a hub for COVID-19 online resources and self-paced lifestyle activities;</li> <li>• Access to free confidential counselling via an Employee Assistance Program; and</li> <li>• Ask-Us-Anything TEAMS live sessions and COVID-19 enquiries inbox.</li> </ul>
<b>Communications</b> <b>Regular and transparent messaging to the ECU community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistent and regular global emails including COVID-19 updates;</li> <li>• Direct messages and You tube video from the VC;</li> <li>• Comprehensive ECU COVID-19 website easily accessible to staff containing remote working and self-support resources for both managers and employees as well as FAQs; and</li> <li>• Regular fortnightly ECU@Large newsletter providing helpful advice, inspiration and humour to support staff through the challenges of this period in 2020.</li> </ul>
<b>Leave provisions for staff</b> <b>Supporting staff who have COVID-19 or need to care for immediate family members</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ECU University Executive approved 'COVID Leave' until the end of 2022 (or when the pandemic status ends);</li> <li>• This leave category is currently available on a pro-rata basis for ongoing, contract, and casual staff ;</li> <li>• Includes up to 75 hours of additional leave on a pro-rata basis once accrued personal leave (including sick and carers leave) is exhausted; and</li> <li>• Provisions support both staff and their immediate family members who have COVID-19.</li> </ul>
<b>Learning and Teaching Response</b> <b>Significant shifting of teaching delivery on campus to online capacity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revised academic calendar and assessment plans. This included designing alternative assessments suitable for online learning, including those to replace central examinations;</li> <li>• Shifting all courses and classes to online and provision of virtual peer support service for students; and</li> <li>• Targeted guidance developed by the Centre for Learning and Teaching on making variations to assessment to support transitions to online learning.</li> </ul>
<b>Mitigation of financial impacts</b> <b>Developing cost saving strategies to redress shortfalls in revenue (i.e., reduction in international students)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ECU managed the financial impacts and revenue shortfalls of COVID-19 through multiple cost-saving measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Expenditure review;</li> <li>○ Temporary freeze on staff recruitment (and introduction of a decision-making recruitment panel);</li> <li>○ Active management of staff leave; and</li> <li>○ Targeted staffing measures for academic and professional staff members.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

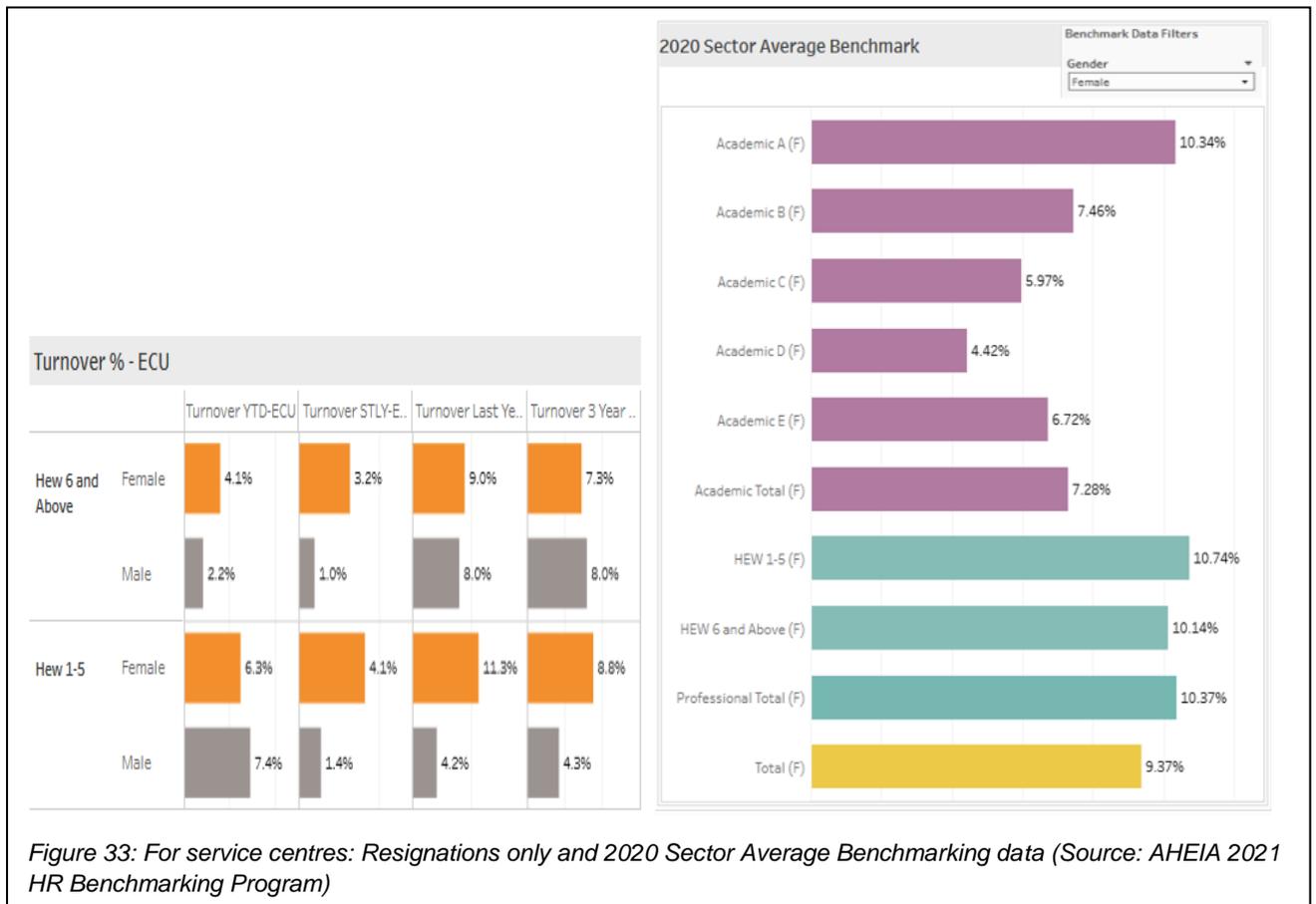
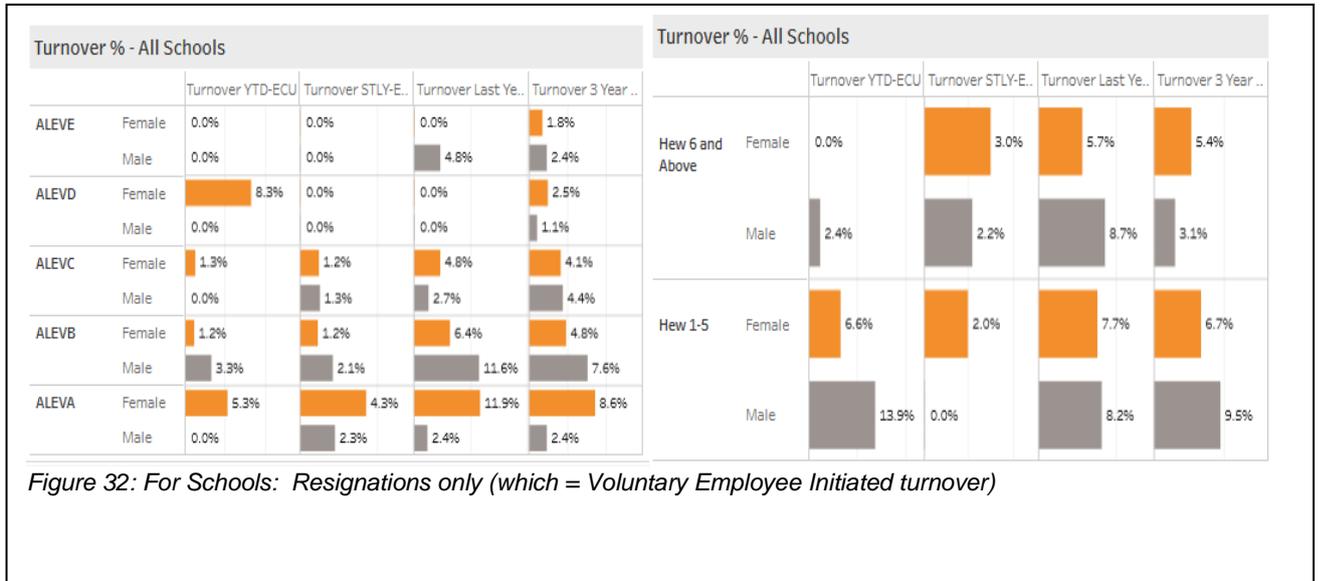
*Table 18: Restrictions and challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic at ECU*

Action 3.1	Establish the 'Fresh Perspectives on Flexible Working Program' and strategy.
Action 2.2	Develop an approach to FWA, endorsed by the executive and senior leadership, that can be personalised to each school and centre to inform related processes on an as-needed basis.

## IMPACT

In conjunction with the ASSSFWA (2016 V 2021) and the SES, ECU analyses staff voluntary separation rates (staff turnover) to determine the impact on ECU staff. Staff Separations (voluntary) are monitored in the Athena Swan Data Dashboard (Figure 32 and 33).

ECU has a relatively stable workforce in comparison to the Australian University sector with a 5-year Total Turnover average of 11.6%pa compared to a sector 5-year average of 16.1%. Voluntary Employee initiated turnover in 2020 was 6.3% compared to the sector average of 7.2% (Source: AHEIA 2021 HR Benchmarking Program).



As noted, a key measure of impact is staff perceptions around flexible working in the biennial SES. In April/May 2020, ECU also conducted a COVID-19 Pulse Survey (see below). These data points allowed ECU to compare the outcomes and impacts over a longer period-of-time, specifically, responses provided to the SES 2016-2020 to select questions on flexibility and work-life balance

Through retrospective analysis of data collected in 2016 and in 2021 respectively, ECU determined that levels of awareness of and engagement with FWA has improved and there are positive perceptions of the work ECU had done in this space through Athena Swan.

In assessing evolving staff attitudes towards FWA, ECU revisited levels of awareness over multiple checkpoints spanning 5 years. This was done through the two Athena Swan-based staff surveys:

- 2016 Athena SWAN Staff Survey
- 2021 Athena Swan Staff Survey for Flexible Work Arrangements (ASSSFWA).

In 2016, the existing FWA-related resources were in numerous formats (in excess of 10 documents) with a predominate focus on home-based work. As part of the Athena Swan Bronze Award journey, the 2016 Athena Swan Staff Survey was circulated to all staff alongside other forms of data collection and FWA action items were embedded in ECU's Bronze Action Plan 2018-2023.

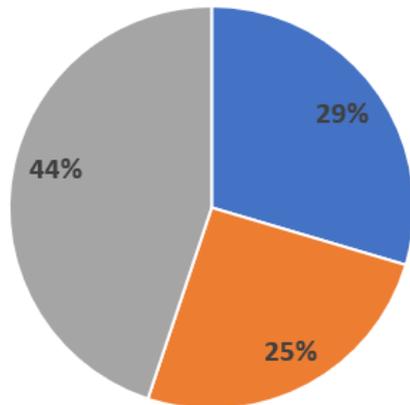
2019 and 2020 saw the implementation of numerous FWA resources including revised guidelines and checklists (see Page 27). In 2021, the ASSSFWA was released, again circulated to all staff. There was a notable improvement in maturity of responses and awareness of the FWA resources which now includes specific support and checklists for managers and teams.

Two 'baseline' questions were placed in the 2016 Athena Swan Staff Survey, and then to determine the impact of ECU's actions across an extended time-period, these questions were purposefully included to revisit staff perceptions in the 2021 ASSSFWA. To enhance the granularity and depth of responses (which would also enrich the quality of benchmarking data for the future), 2016 questions were enhanced in the 2021 ASSSFWA and staff were asked specifically if they had asked for FWA and if so, which approaches they had used (this also facilitated the capture of *ad-hoc*/informal arrangements). Furthermore, to consolidate on this, a new question in the 2021 ASSSFWA directly asks staff about their perception of change over the 5-year period.

<b>Comparative Analysis of Results - Summary</b>	
<p>Clear evolution in staff attitudes and perceptions were observed across the 2016 and 2021 Athena Swan Staff Surveys as evidenced in the following columns across two baseline questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>"How do you think ECU policies and processes presently encourage and support gender equality? If possible, please identify directions for improvement."</i></li> <li>• <i>"Have you sought to access flexible working arrangements including working from home and negotiated start and end times? If so, how have you been supported to access and perform within such arrangements?"</i></li> </ul> <p>Increased participation and engagement in surveys was evidenced in 58 respondents in 2016 increasing to 272 respondents in 2021. The improved response rate and participation in these surveys is indicative that staff perceive ECU's Athena Swan initiative as an effective mechanism by which to voice attitudes toward FWA. There were substantially high levels of opportunities for improvement noted by staff despite generally positive attitudes and perceptions across both surveys. It remains apparent there is still a lot of work to be done to further progress and mature ECU's flexible working culture. This has formed a critical basis and rationale for the Cygnet.</p> <p>In alignment, a thematic analysis was undertaken to responses for the 2021 ASSSFWA question:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>"If you have worked at ECU in the last 5 years, have you observed any marked changes or improvements to ECU's flexible work culture?"</i></li> </ul>	
<b>Question #1 (Included in both 2016 and 2021 Athena Swan Surveys)</b>	
<i>How do you think ECU policies and processes presently encourage and support gender equality? If possible, please identify directions for improvement.</i>	
<p><b>2016 Athena Swan Staff Survey</b></p> <p><i>A 'free text' box was provided to staff to allow maximum qualitative data to be gathered</i></p>	<p><b>2021 Athena Swan Staff Survey for Flexible Work Arrangements</b></p> <p><i>To enhance quality and depth of response, a Likert Scale was provided to staff to assess if they felt ECU's policies support gender equality, followed by a 'free text' box to identify directions for improvement.</i></p>

- Positive and negative responses were relatively balanced (29% positive vs 25% negative), however 44% noted opportunities for improvement. 3 responses specifically referred to FWA.

**How do you think ECU policies and processes presently encourage and support gender equality? If possible, please identify directions for improvement (2016)**



- Positive responses
- Negative responses
- Noted opportunities for improvement

**Quotes extracted from 2016 Survey – Staff identifying directions for improvement**

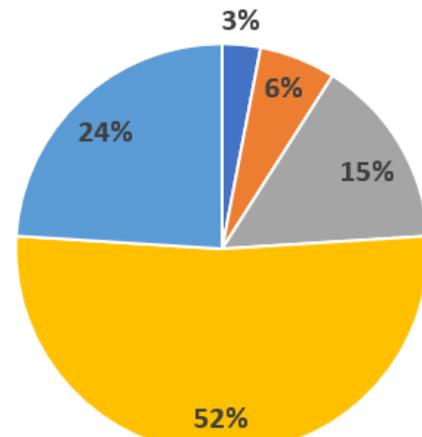
*I think the flexible work arrangements need review, guidelines for Managers and Supervisors as to when and how to apply the arrangements. Education for Managers/Supervisors as to the appropriate questions in interviews (are you able to work flexible hours/do you have young children? etc).*

*There is a large amount of support for pregnant women and those on maternity leave but not so much for women with young school age children. Some areas do have flexible working hours but not all. The health and wellness and staff benefits program does assist women with knowledge and training and should be continued.*

*Yes from a flexible work arrangements perspective although not as many options for job sharing past Senior (HEW 8) level. In a previous private organisation I worked for there were members of the Senior Leadership team (Director and above) who undertook a successful job sharing arrangement. This shows commitment to enabling women to balance both career progression and family commitments.*

- 76% of staff responded with agreement (24% of which were in strong agreement). Only 9% disagreed or strongly disagreed.
- Increased positive responses coupled with staff again provided high levels of opportunities for improvement.

**Do you think ECU policies and processes presently encourage and support gender equality (2021)**



- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

**Quotes extracted from 2021 Survey – Staff identifying directions for improvement**

*I agree that Athena Swan Committee and several Executive are very passionate about this but in reality as a front line employee, trying to negotiate 'flexibility' is exceptionally hard and is firmly discouraged. I believe there needs to be some form of 'checking' that needs to be carried out to ensure the hard work of Athena Swan Committee, the Vice Chancellor and some Exec in terms of workplace flexibility to those with caring responsibilities filters down through to general staff. There is a huge amount of frustration in our team that ECU promotes gender equality, flexibility and so forth but we never have access to this. There seems to be a lack of trust that staff can be awarded flexibility and still undertake their roles.*

*Current ECU policies promote and support gender equality, but I don't believe the processes are aligned with the policies. A lot of the process requirement goes through the Manager which means if the Manager is not supportive of flexible working or the employee does not feel comfortable discussing flexible working/parental leave with their manager, there is a barrier.*

*The policies and processes are there, however there is still a culture shift to occur in relation to attitudes of some people in the organisation. At times an underlying tone of 'women always needing flexibility' and 'time in the office = time working' from some people is still present. Not sure how to shift this traditional attitude apart from empowering more people to speak up when these comments are made.*

*I appreciate that there are programs and initiative to advance gender equality at ECU. At the organisational level, I think the support that is offered (e.g. parental parking, support for PD for those with care duties) is good, but broad and not without its limitations. In my opinion, our informal support systems (great exec deans, exec leadership, good line managers) provides more targeted support for gender equality.*

**Actions to date – Addressing 2021 ASSFWA feedback**

Analysis of survey feedback coincides with the ongoing work of HRSC in the FWA space, who in turn have consulted with the relevant expertise available within ECU’s schools. Moving forward, focus will initially be placed on the senior leadership’s commitment to flexible working and the defining of clear principles for ECU followed by consultation with broader staffing groups.

Initial observations from the 2021 ASSFWA included:

- Increased awareness of policy in driving gender equality at the University, however remaining lack of uniformity in application predominately due to inconsistency across managerial approaches and attitudes.
- Formal policy and process must be coupled with informal support from leaders and managers to truly cultivate genuine cultural shift.

Specific actions in progress as per this Cygnet’s Action Plan (references as below):

- Development of a 'Fresh Perspectives on Flexible Working Program' and strategy.
  - A reference group will co-design the approach and principles, and this will be endorsed and visibly promoted by senior leadership; and
  - A University-wide communication plan will be rolled out to all staff.
- Development of an approach towards better flexible working at ECU, which can be applied and personalised across individual schools and centres, aligned to flexible working principles:
  - 'The 'Way We Work' approach will be applied across schools and centres with potential to be linked to school and centre workforce plans for 2023 onwards.
  - This will be followed up with an adoption review at the end of year to identify schools and centres where FWA uptake remains low.

Action 2.2	Develop an approach to FWA, endorsed by the executive and senior leadership, that can be personalised to each school and centre to inform related processes on an as-needed basis.
Action 3.1	Establish the 'Fresh Perspectives on Flexible Working Program' and strategy.

**Question #2 (Included in both 2016 and 2021 Athena Swan Staff Surveys)**

*Have you sought to access flexible working arrangements including working from home and negotiated start and end times? If so, how have you been supported to access and perform within such arrangements?*

**2016 Athena Swan Staff Survey**  
*A free text box was provided to staff to allow maximum qualitative data to be gathered.*

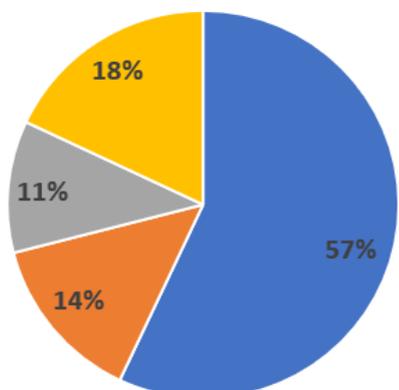
**2021 Athena Swan Staff FWA Survey**  
*To enhance quality and depth of response, a 'Yes/No' response was provided to establish the percentage of staff respondents using a FWA in the last 24 months. This was followed by a tick-box to indicate the types taken (multiple options could be selected and an optional 'free text'.*

- 57% of staff responses were generally positive, 14% being negative and 11% noting opportunities for improvement.

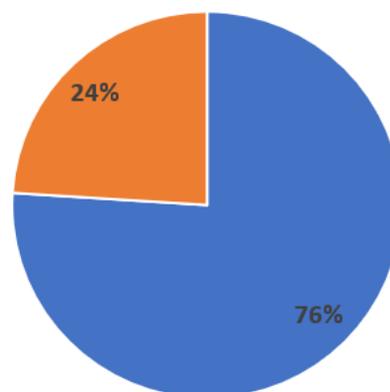
- 76% of respondents indicated they had requested a FWA while 24% had not.

**Have you sought access to access flexible working arrangements including working from home and negotiated start and end times? If so, how have you been supported to access and perform within such arrangements? (2016)**

**In the last 24 months, have you sought access to access flexible working arrangements including working from home and negotiated start and end times? This intended to extend beyond temporary accommodations that were a response to COVID-19 (2021)**



- Positive responses
- Negative responses
- Noted opportunities for improvement
- Stated not applicable

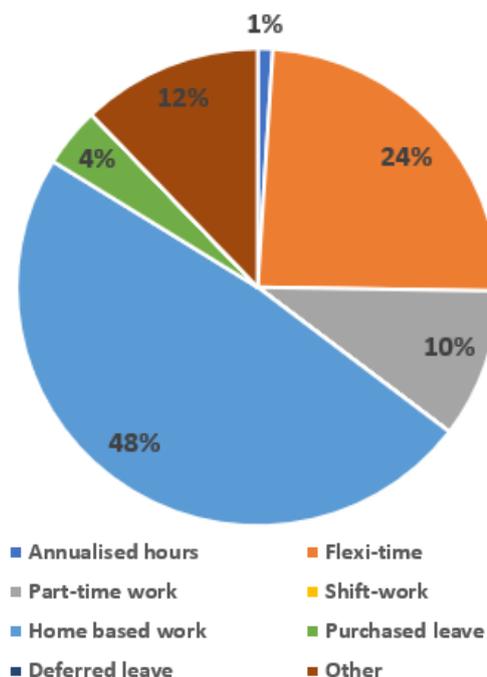


- Yes
- No

<b>Quotes extracted from 2016 Survey - How staff felt they were supported to access and perform within such arrangements</b>	
<b>Facilitating</b>	<b>Inhibiting</b>
<i>I have been able to enjoy a high degree of flexibility with start and end times which enabled me to attend to my child's needs when he was in school. It has been fabulous. I am aware however, that this is not the same everywhere in the University.</i>	<i>I have not, as not required, however I have noticed the practice varies somewhat across the University. This has been through my conversations with staff from different areas based on the working cultures within those immediate areas. I think the head of the area has an influential part in this and consider if a more unified policy or process should be considered so it is not at the discretion of the area?</i>
<i>Yes. This is the most supportive organisation I have worked for in terms of flexibility. I work part-time in a job sharing arrangement which is strongly supported. Where I have a sick child or need to attend eg a sports carnival/assembly, changing work start/end times to accommodate has been strongly encouraged.</i>	<i>Yes, I have requested flexible start and end times to attend study (on campus) and been declined, when female colleagues with children have been approved. Also, I have been expected to be flexible to cover for colleagues who have children and are unable to be flexible.</i>
<i>I have been able to work at home and this is invaluable in finding the balance between work and family, especially in the holidays when there are no classes.</i>	<i>No I have not but as indicated previously this has not been very welcomed and the paperwork associated with setting this up can sometimes be a deterrent too.</i>

- The top 3 forms of FWA taken by respondents were home based work (48%), flexi-time (24%) and part-time work (10%).

**Describe what the flexible arrangements you have taken are and the support you had to access these.** This can include informal, formal and *ad-hoc* arrangements. Tick those that apply. (2021)



<b>Quotes extracted from 2021 Survey - How staff felt they were supported to access and perform within such arrangements</b>	
<b>Facilitating</b>	<b>Inhibiting</b>
<i>Excellent support from line manager for both.</i>	<i>Request to work from home 1 day a fortnight. This was strongly denied with no valid reason.</i>
<i>I do an informal flexi-time system. My manager is really great and understands I will always be here full-time and generally the same hours. Sometimes I have worked from home if needed. If my child has been sick or if i've had to come in late i may do an hour or so at night time when it suits me.</i>	<i>Flexi-time has been implemented across our team. I have also purchased leave and found there were no formal process or instructions on how to apply. In our team we also need to demonstrate exceptional circumstances when applying for the leave in order for it to be approved.</i>
<i>Occasionally ad hoc arrangements have been reached to allow me to attend medical appointments with my child and make up the time later.</i>	<i>....I jumped through a number of hoops and really had to fight my corner to eventually have 1 day a fortnight WHF agreed to.</i>

As detailed above, to further assess the direct impact of Athena Swan action items on the nature of staff experiences, an additional question in the 2021 Survey directly asks staff about the perception of change over the last 5 years (if they had been present over this time).

Analysis showed a significantly prevalent perception that the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated uptake of and accessibility to FWA at ECU. While Athena Swan has been seen as a driver of change for the University in this space, an ongoing challenge remains the inconsistent culture at the local level through different management practices.

**New Question (only included in the 2021 ASSSFWA)**

*If you have worked at ECU in the last 5 years, have you observed any marked changes or improvements to ECU's flexible work culture? These can be positive or negative changes. Please refer to your current standard practices of work, not including temporary accommodations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.*

A 'free text' box was provided to staff to allow maximum qualitative data to be gathered

**If you have worked at ECU in the last 5 years, have you observed any marked changes or improvements to ECU's flexible work culture?**

These can be positive or negative changes. Please refer to your current standard practices of work, not including temporary accommodations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

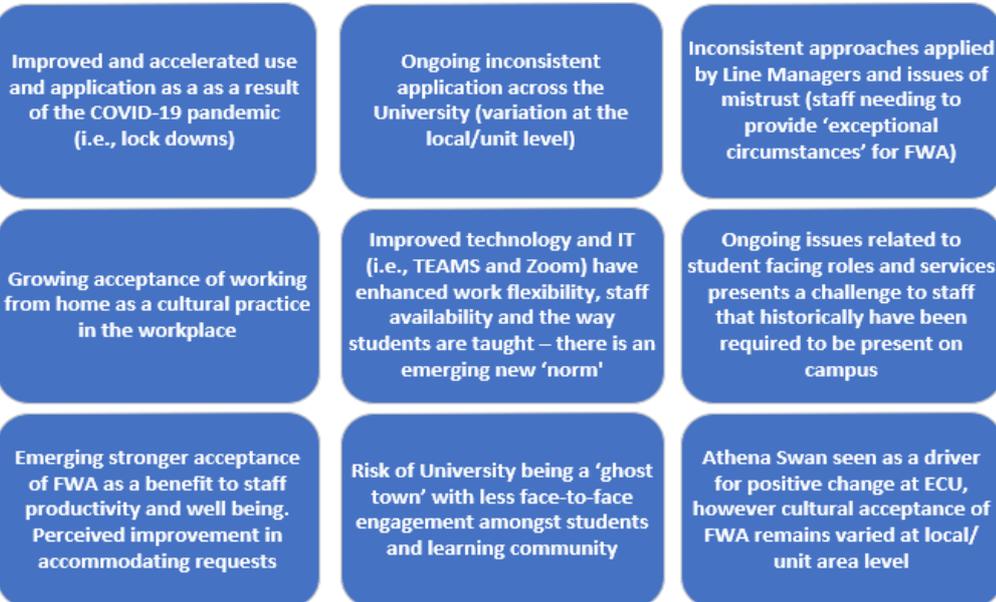


Table 19: Staff awareness of and engagement with FWA

Staff responses indicated an improved awareness of and engagement with FWA at the University. A thematic analysis showing key staff perceptions is shown in Table 19 (above). There is a growing positive outlook towards FWA, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic (including reference to technology-led enhancements) and Athena Swan-led activities.

**Quotes extracted from 2021 Survey**

- "Improved; much better understanding of R2O, flexible work. Athena SWAN a real driver for positive change."
- "I have seen a huge amount of work from the Athena Swan Committee - AMAZING work and it is so frustrating to see that it is not being accepted in my work environment."
- "ECU seems to be very understanding in this regard."
- "It's definitely much better than it was 5 years ago, it makes life so much easier and manageable, makes coming to work a guilt free and less anxious experience after taking flexi."
- "Huge change for the positive. Five years ago, a flexible work culture was not embraced by some of the leadership team as there was the view if you can't 'see them' they're not working/ not accessible. It's been a significant shift in right direction."
- "Yes. There has been a transparent and obvious move to support flexible working across the University."
- "Yes - we are getting better at giving trust first, and moving away from a 9-5 in the office culture. This is a boost for productivity, wellbeing and energy efficiency."
- "Yes, more flexibility to work from home"
- "Yes, there is much more acceptance of flexible working arrangements within my work units. This includes acceptance of reasons other than traditional caring roles. I have been fortunate to work in units supportive of such arrangements, however, I am aware of other units where this is not always the case."

Table 20: Quotes extracted from 2021 Survey

The ASSSFWA has provided an opportunity to engage with the ECU community on their personal lived experiences of FWA in the workplace. A range of facilitating and inhibiting indicators were collated from staff responses (Table 21-25) to identify the five emerging themes (Figure 24).

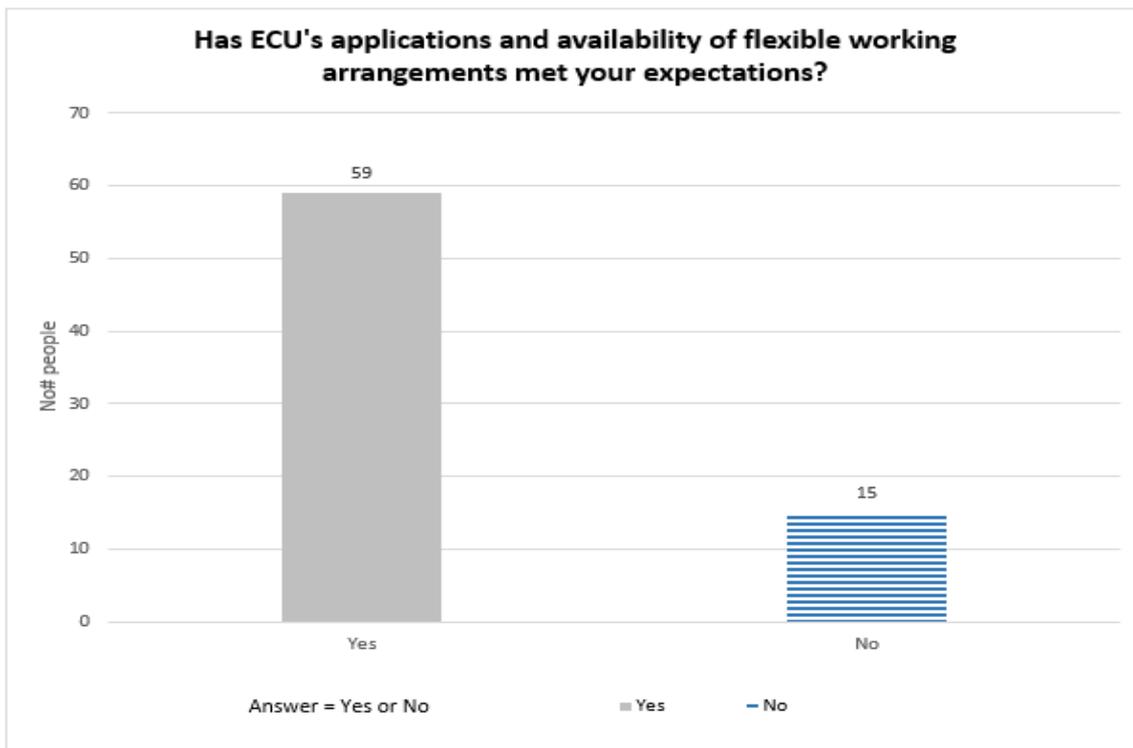


Figure 25: ECU emerging themes from the 2021 ASSSFWA

## 1. Enhancements to policy, procedure, and process

Quotes – Facilitating	Quotes – Inhibiting
<i>This approach is <b>excellent to attract and retain staff</b> and demonstrates a conscious effort by ECU to <b>acknowledge diversity and the commitments that many people have and the challenges they face.</b></i>	<i>A lot of the process requirement goes through the Manager which means <b>if the Manager is not supportive of flexible working or the employee does not feel comfortable discussing flexible working/parental leave with their manager, there is a barrier.</b></i>
<i>I am incredibly grateful to ECU for supporting these arrangements, and for me personally these types of arrangements are certainly <b>a high priority when considering any role I might undertake in future, even more so than salary.</b></i>	<i>The process is <b>overly complex</b>, it should be integrated into a single online form for staff to complete and submit to their line manager for approval. This could then be used again later to resubmit annually/periodically and save a few trees.</i>
<i>With some personal/family issues lately, I have been given the flexibility to work from home while supporting elderly/terminally ill parents and caring for my children. <b>This flexibility of work is the main reason I stay at ECU.</b></i>	<i>Putting the onus on staff to individually approach their manager for permission to WFH or negotiate different hours is <b>ripe for unequal access and application of rules across teams and within teams.</b> Would prefer it to be a flat policy offered to all transparently, based on the requirements of their specific service area or school.</i>

Table 22. Enhancements to policy, procedure, and process

## 2. Inconsistency in application of flexible work

Quotes – Facilitating	Quotes – Inhibiting
<i>As far corporate structures go, <b>I think ECU is performing adequately.</b> I think that cultural change in different work areas will be slower to follow.</i>	<i>Flexible work practices vary across teams and within teams. <b>Senior management have different views on whether flexible work is acceptable or needed and this flows down through teams.</b></i>
<i>I feel more supported in my current team, hence I am in this team over ten years and <b>really value the flexibility I've been given of late.</b></i>	<i><b>Inconsistency in directives regarding working from home, across staff within the same team with similar or the same roles.</b></i>
<i>It would <b>be great to see working home arrangements made available to all ECU staff</b> rather than just some areas.</i>	<i>Yes, <b>Manager supports my request. However, the Director does not support the request.</b></i>

Table 23. Inconsistency in application of flexible work

### 3. Career development and progression

Quotes – Facilitating	Quotes – Inhibiting
<i>I am a single mother and to have a flexible work arrangement means I can remain in employment and still develop my career.</i>	<i>Each time I have made a request, it has resulted in veiled threats (such as no promotions, not considered for opportunities, being called unreliable etc).</i>
<i>It provides parents with opportunities to maintain careers so they are able to financially support their families while maintaining their other parental responsibilities.</i>	<i>No, it is very uncomfortable and a drawn-out experience made incredibly difficult to even continue in flexible arrangements you are already doing. At one point I was even made to feel that if I don't give up all flexibility I will need to quit.</i>
<i>It has been so important for me as a mother and someone who is working in a regional area of WA. To be able to work from home, continue my career and in alignment with my qualifications feels really special. I also am incredibly supported by my managers and am grateful that they have been so incredibly flexible.</i>	<i>Growing workload means that people with caring responsibilities get sidelined for promotion as they tend to go part time.</i>

Table 24. Career development and progression

### 4. Mental health and wellness

Quotes – Facilitating	Quotes – Inhibiting
<i>Being able to work flexibly is critical to both wellbeing and performance outcomes and is a truly inclusive way of working that meets individual needs regardless of their identified diversity dimensions.</i>	<i>It's not very accessible and can cause anxiety and stress for employees that may already be experiencing stress from juggling work and home commitments and a lack of support from their leaders.</i>
<i>Work flexibility means mentally healthier staff and more productive teams. In particular, home-based work (moving toward permanent hybrid models for all ECU teams) will be a massive mental health break for staff.</i>	<i>I had no avenue of appeal or escalation. It led to increased anxiety, and meant I had to access higher levels of personal leave (sick, carers and annual leave) to cover early morning and/or afternoon appointments for my dependents, leaving little available leave for me for my own sick leave, or for a genuine holiday break.</i>
<i>I like that now I can work from home if need and that I don't feel guilty! Guilty in the sense that there is trust and technical devices to ensure I can carry out my tasks - laptop, Teams, cameras, etc.</i>	<i>It's not very accessible and can cause anxiety and stress for employees that may already be experiencing stress from juggling work and home commitments and a lack of support from their leaders.</i>

Table 25. Mental health awareness and wellness

### 5. Managerial practices and associated culture

Quotes – Facilitating	Quotes – Inhibiting
<i>I have been fortunate enough to have a number of managers who have been happy to work with me in relation to flexible working arrangements. This has allowed me to provide the care I have needed to for my children and family member with a disability, and i believe it has contributed greatly to me remaining at ECU for 20 years.</i>	<i>Some managers may technically apply the policies and processes, however, if this is done without true empathy and understanding then staff are reluctant to seek flexible working arrangements. Employee feels guilty for seeking flexible arrangements, leading to stress and tension within the work unit.</i>
<i>As a manager responsible for recruitment, not offering the option of specifically working from home hybrid options will affect our ability to attract and retain qualified and exceptional employees.</i>	<i>There needs to be a serious, university-wide commitment made by line managers that they will support reasonable requests for flexible work arrangements, in discussion with the staff members of a work unit and any support people or other representatives the staff may nominate.</i>
<i>Flexibility signals to me that my manager trusts me to get my work done irrespective of where and when I'm doing my job.</i>	<i>That Managers and leaders be trained in the benefits of flexible arrangements rather than having set old ideas and attitudes about "skiving" when working from home.</i>

Table 26. Managerial practices and associated culture

As evidenced by examples of employees' lived experiences in the 2021 ASSSFWA, there are direct linkages to ECU's ASBAP. Feedback from target groups (employees and managers who have accessed the current FWA resources) suggests that:

- The creation of ECU's Flexible Working Strategy guided conversations with the Executive Team. Role modelling by senior leaders has led to staff feeling more supported when considering FWA.
- ECU's actions which aimed to improve staff awareness of FWA and accessibility to resources has shown demonstrated impact through staff:
  - Reporting that they are now able to access relevant FWA information with a higher degree of confidence in the documentation.
  - Feeling able to access and utilise FWA resources more confidently, hence encouraging consideration of FWA to accommodate work-life balance needs.
  - Feeling more inclined to stay at ECU as a result of how the University promotes and communicates its outlook and vision of flexible work.
  - Being aware of the University's progression towards building a more mature FWA culture through proactive changes to approach i.e., shifting toward hybrid working and remote work models.
  - Having a clearer understanding of the FWA process and procedures in place, driven by Athena Swan activities to date.
- There remains a significant number of staff comments calling for a simplification of the process. ECU is mindful that if FWA processes remain complicated for staff to understand and/or apply, further streamlining and enhancement are necessary (i.e., transferring FWA paper-based documentation onto online platforms).
- ECU's decision to create the "Parental Leave: A Guide for ECU Staff" and 'Returning for Parental Leave' booklets, has given staff members who are parents an increased understanding of how to approach parental leave and related career breaks. Feedback shows that parents (specifically mothers) appreciate the opportunity to undertake FWA when returning from parental leave. It has also given many women the opportunity to retain their employment while tending to childcare needs.
- ECU acknowledges that there were a significant number of comments reflecting that individual managers still did not understand FWA comprehensively, nor its benefits.
  - This indicates that the lack of manager-specific training has had a negative impact on FWA culture. It has been important to obtain senior leadership advocacy for the shift towards improving FWA visibility and accessibility at ECU to boost its profile and presence in ECU's workplace.
  - There are still clear inconsistencies in managerial understanding and approaches to FWA. This is highly evident in the mix of positive and negative staff feedback relating to managers in the 2021 ASSSFWA, reflecting the demand for greater University-wide support.

The information gathered during the ASSSFWA, will form a platform to further enhance already established processes. ECU is looking to explore opportunities across key areas of the organisation in generating cultural change and in the spirit of Athena Swan – continue building on activities that directly contribute to growing an inclusive workplace.

In remaining competitive with other institutions (not limited to the higher education sector) and retaining staff, ECU aims to utilise FWA in empowering its staff to work smarter and deliver more efficiently on services and outputs while staying adaptable to continuous and evolving changes (including the COVID-19 pandemic). There are numerous actions to be undertaken that will further improve ECU's FWA and further remove the barriers to GEDI for employees and managers. Figure 10 details potential areas of focus for action-setting and strategy development moving forward including an outline of key action areas for FWA which relate to the five emerging themes.

# FURTHER ACTION

## CYGNET ACTION PLAN

Ref.	Rationale/ Evidence	Actions and Outputs	Timeframe (start & end)	Person/Group responsible for implementing action	Senior Leader accountable for action delivery	Desired Outcomes/ Targets/ Success Indicators
1.	<p>In 2019, ECU provided an increased number of resources to support and facilitate FWA. HRSC developed guidelines and checklists for both individual staff, managers teams considering FWA.</p> <p>Subsequently, the <i>2021 Athena Swan Staff Survey</i> feedback provided a series of opportunities to 'review and improve' ECU's existing FWA policy content. This included a review of the new FWA resources, including the ease of access to FWA and online documentation.</p> <p>Going online will enable HRSC to capture data on the prevalence of flexible working across ECU by school/centre and by type of FWA. This data will assist in to identify future issues and trends. Online forms will also provide a mechanism in ECU responding in a timely manner to requests for FWA where the employee has a right to request flexible work under the Fair Work Act (i.e., employer must respond to request within 21 days)</p> <p>The ASSSFWA created new baseline questions that will be revisited for effective benchmarking. The questions will be reviewed to ensure staff members understand the relevance of FWA for all staff and to reduce responses of 'N/A and 'not relevant'. This allows an assessment of improvements in knowledge around FWA at ECU and the available resources Questions are (including response rates):</p> <p>a. <i>[As a staff member] / [Managing others] - Has ECU's application and availability of FWA met your expectations?</i></p>	<p><b>Actions</b></p> <p>1.1 Map <i>2021 Athena Swan Staff Survey</i> feedback (the identified key themes) against existing ECU policy framework and review ECU's FWA's webpage incl. relevant documents (checklists, forms, and guidelines).</p> <p>1.2 Examine opportunities to transfer paper-based processes to online forms (i.e., Staff Kiosk) and investigate the escalation process for rejected formal FWA requests.</p> <p>1.3 Specifically examine experiences of academic staff by benchmarking evidence across the higher education sector that can substantiate how FWA contributes to improving academic culture and outcomes.</p> <p>1.4 Develop an ECU suite of leading practice including initiatives and testimonials that relate to FWA, to a higher education setting.</p>	<p>Q4 2022 – Q4 2024</p> <p>Q4 2022 – Q4 2023</p> <p>Q1 2023 – Q1 2024</p> <p>Q1 2023 – Q3 2024 [ongoing]</p>	<p>ODVC RF – Athena Swan</p> <p>WSC Manager, HRSC</p> <p>ODVC RF – Athena Swan</p> <p>ODVC RF – Athena Swan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>DVC RF</u></li> <li>• <u>Director, HRSC</u></li> </ul>	<p>i. Subsequent FWA Staff Survey (to be conducted in Q4 2024) shows higher levels of staff satisfaction of process and improved awareness to improve 2021 baseline data:</p> <p>a. <i>[As a staff member] / [Managing others] - Has ECU's application and availability of FWA met your expectations?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ <i>Staff members: increase to 80% or above</i></li> <li>➢ <i>Managers: maintain at 80% and aim to increase.</i></li> </ul> <p>b. <i>Do you face any barriers as an employee when considering or accessing FWA?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ <i>Decrease 'Yes' response to 20%</i></li> <li>➢ <i>Decrease 'N/A' response to 10%</i></li> </ul> <p>c. <i>Are you aware of the online resources available at ECU to support the application of flexible work arrangements – for employees, managers, and teams?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ <i>Increase to 80% or above.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>*For all metrics, ECU will aspire to have no differences between responses of groups according to their gender, employment classification, level, and other captured demographics etc.</i></p> <p>ii. Improved awareness of <i>ad-hoc</i> and informal FWA arrangements are evidenced through the qualitative mechanisms in place (i.e., staff surveys, case studies and focus groups) with clear linkages to development of communities of best practice evidenced across both academic and professional staffing cohorts.</p>

Ref.	Rationale/ Evidence	Actions and Outputs	Timeframe (start & end)	Person/Group responsible for implementing action	Senior Leader accountable for action delivery	Desired Outcomes/ Targets/ Success Indicators
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Managers: Yes - 80% vs No - 20%</li> <li>Staff: Yes – 58% vs No – 30% (N/A – 12%)</li> </ul> <p>b. Do you face any barriers as an employee when considering or accessing FWA?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Yes – 40% vs No – 41% (Not relevant – 19%)</li> </ul> <p>c. Are you aware of the online resources available at ECU to support the application of flexible work arrangements – for employees, managers, and teams?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Yes – 63% vs No – 37%</li> </ul> <p>Many ECU staff currently have informal/ad-hoc FWA with their managers, therefore, there is an opportunity to develop a community of best practice and knowledge-share to those who may not be as engaged or aware. As well as uptake of FWA, it is important to focus on the cultural change and leadership development needs required to entrench flexible working across ECU.</p>	<p><b>Outputs</b></p> <p>a) <b>FWA requests to be processed through an online system</b> which allow for applications to be flagged or escalated on refusal through formal channels.</p> <p>b) <b>Compiled ECU suite of FWA best practices</b> for use within local areas (i.e., ECU schools and centres).</p> <p>c) <b>Updated ECU resources for FWA</b> addressing feedback from the 2021 Athena Swan Staff Survey.</p> <p>d) <b>Completed review and update of policies</b> (where required) that influence FWA at ECU (both directly and indirectly).</p> <p>e) Regular monitoring and tracking of website traffic to HRSC intranet webpages for FWA resources.</p>	<p>Q4 2023</p> <p>Q3 2024</p> <p>Q4 2024</p> <p>Q4 2024</p>	<p>WSC Manager, HRSC</p> <p>ODVC RF – Athena Swan</p> <p>WSC Manager, HRSC</p> <p>WSC Manager, HRSC</p> <p>WSC Manager, HRSC</p>		<p>iii. ECU will maintain and/or improve on the current levels of staff traffic accessing, benchmarked against a 2018 baseline for the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HRSC Intranet Page – Flexible Work Landing Page <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employee/Manager/ECU Teams Checklists</li> </ul> </li> <li>Working Parents HR Intranet Page <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working Parents at ECU</li> <li>Managers Guide to Parental Leave</li> <li>Managers Guide to Return form Parental Leave</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
2.	<p>Evidence from the 2016, 2018 and 2020 Staff Engagement Surveys and the 2019 COVID-19 Pulse Staff Engagement Survey showed varying levels of satisfaction with the ability to manage both work and home life.</p> <p>This was evidenced specifically in areas where there is a &lt;70% average satisfaction rating for work life balance/flexibility or a &gt;10% drop between the 2018 and 2020 surveys.</p>	<p><b>Actions</b></p> <p>2.1 Conduct targeted focus groups with specific areas of ECU where staff satisfaction levels for workplace flexibility is significantly high or low (as indicated in the Staff Engagement Surveys) to collate lessons learnt and best practice.</p>	<p>Q1 2024 – Q4 2024</p> <p>Q3 2022 – Q4 2025</p>	<p>WSC Manager, HRSC</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>DVC RF</u></li> <li><u>Director, HRSC</u></li> </ul>	<p>i.2024 Staff Engagement Surveys showing consistently high levels of staff satisfaction with flexibility measures:</p> <p>a. “I have the flexibility I need to manage my work &amp; caring responsibilities”</p> <p>c. Maintained at/above 80% (ECU overall) AND at/above 80% (school/centre level).</p> <p>b. “I maintain a good balance between work &amp; other aspects of my life”</p> <p>d. Increase to 70-75% by 2025 (ECU overall) AND at/above 70% (school/centre level).</p>

Ref.	Rationale/ Evidence	Actions and Outputs	Timeframe (start & end)	Person/Group responsible for implementing action	Senior Leader accountable for action delivery	Desired Outcomes/ Targets/ Success Indicators
	<p>Flexible work-related questions included in the SES are responding favourable on the scale of - Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree (including response rates):</p> <p>a. <i>"I have the flexibility I need to manage my work &amp; caring responsibilities"</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ECU overall currently sits at 84%</li> <li>• Current range is 65-93% with an average of 81.5%.</li> <li>• 5 areas under 80%</li> </ul> <p>b. <i>"I maintain a good balance between work &amp; other aspects of my life".</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ECU overall currently sits at 66%.</li> <li>• Current range is 42% to 84% with an average 63.8%.</li> </ul> <p>This will need to be explored in greater depth due to the variability in staff satisfaction between local areas (across ECU schools and centres).</p> <p>ASSSFWA questions are: (including response rates):</p> <p>a. <i>[As a staff member] / [Managing others] - Has ECU's application and availability of FWA met your expectations?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Managers: Yes - 80% vs No - 20%</li> <li>• Staff: Yes – 58% vs No – 30% (N/A – 12%)</li> </ul> <p>b. <i>Are you aware of the online resources available at ECU to support the application of flexible work arrangements – for employees, managers and teams?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes – 63% vs No – 37%</li> </ul> <p>Exit Survey results for 2021 showed 42% of staff who left ECU in 2021 completed an Exit Survey and of that 13% of respondents selected 'To meet family and/or lifestyle needs' as one of the reasons for leaving. Demographic breakdown:</p>	<p>2.2 Develop an approach to FWA, endorsed by the executive and senior leadership, that can be personalised to each school and centre to inform related processes on an as-needed basis.</p> <p><b>Outputs</b></p> <p>a. <b>Conducted analysis of the 2022 Staff Engagement Survey</b> to confirm the trends observed in the 2018 and 2020 Staff Engagement Surveys relating to staff satisfaction areas for flexible work.</p> <p>b. <b>Conducted focus groups</b> with the top five identified areas at ECU (i.e., early career academics, local areas) representative of low and high staff satisfaction levels relating to FWA.</p> <p>c. <b>Completed implementation of 'The Way We Work' approach</b> for schools and centres. Launch and communicate the approach through HRBPS, ECU Social Channels and integrate into onboarding processes to enable localised operational and people planning from 2023 with</p>	<p>Q4 2024</p> <p>Q4 2024</p> <p>Q4 2025</p>	<p>WSC Manager, HRSC</p> <p>WSC Manager, HRSC</p> <p>WSC Manager, HRSC</p>		<p>ii. Subsequent ASSSFWA (to be conducted in Q4 2024) showing increased levels of positive feedback, particularly for the managerial cohort.</p> <p>a. <i>[As a staff member] / [Managing others] - Has ECU's application and availability of FWA met your expectations?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Staff members: increase to 80% or above</li> <li>➢ Managers: increase to 80% or above</li> </ul> <p>b. <i>Are you aware of the online resources available at ECU to support the application of flexible work arrangements – for employees, managers, and teams?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Increase to 80% or above.</li> </ul> <p>iii. Develop regular annual reporting of exit surveys. Monitor and track the incidents of people leaving 'to meet family and lifestyle needs' against different staff cohorts.</p> <p>c. <i>Reduce number of staff selecting 'To meet family and/or lifestyle needs' as one of the reasons for leaving to 10%</i></p> <p>d. <i>Reduce number of female academics selecting 'To meet family and/or lifestyle needs' as one of the reasons for leaving to at least 12%, preferably 10%</i></p> <p><i>*For all metrics, ECU will aspire to have no differences between responses of groups according to their gender, employment classification, level, and other captured demographics etc.</i></p>

Ref.	Rationale/ Evidence	Actions and Outputs	Timeframe (start & end)	Person/Group responsible for implementing action	Senior Leader accountable for action delivery	Desired Outcomes/ Targets/ Success Indicators
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 18% were female academics</li> <li>- 10.5% were male academics</li> <li>- 12% were female professional staff</li> <li>- 12% were male professional staff</li> </ul> <p><i>*ECU is aware and takes into consideration that there are other circumstances beyond access to flexible working that may prompt an employee to select 'to meet family and/or lifestyle needs' in the online Exit Survey.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Regional Futures) (DVC RF) – Athena Swan lead</li> <li>• WSC Manager, HRSC – Workforce Strategy and Capability Manager, HRSC lead</li> </ul>	100% uptake of the approach by 2025.			
3.	<p>Flexible work-related questions included in the SES are responding favourable on the scale of - Strongly Agree / Agree / Neutral / Disagree / Strongly disagree (including response rates):</p> <p>a. <i>"I have the flexibility I need to manage my work &amp; caring responsibilities"</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ECU overall currently sits at 84%</li> <li>• Current range is 65-93% with an average of 81.5%.</li> <li>• 5 areas under 80%</li> </ul> <p>b. <i>"I maintain a good balance between work &amp; other aspects of my life"</i>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ECU overall currently sits at 66%.</li> <li>• Current range is 42% to 84% with an average 63.8%.</li> </ul> <p>With the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on working culture through the increased use of working from home and virtual communication, institutions across the sector are examining the benefits of combining in-office and remote models of work. To remain competitive, it is important ECU explore the hybrid work model and its potential application at ECU to further evolve and embed more mature approaches to flexible working.</p> <p>ASSSFWA questions are: (including response rates):</p>	<p><b>Actions</b></p> <p>3.1 Establish the 'Fresh Perspectives on Flexible Working Program' and strategy.</p> <p>a. Analyse and identify themes and findings from the 2021 Athena Swan Staff Survey and Staff Engagement Surveys as well as other valuable feedback channels (i.e., Staff Exit Surveys).</p> <p>b. Form a reference group to co-design approach to program and strategy, that is endorsed and visibly promoted by senior leadership.</p> <p>c. Develop supporting information including guides and tools which have been identified through program formation.</p>	Q4 2022 – Q4 2024	WSC Manager, HRSC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Director, HRSC</u></li> <li>• <u>DVC RF</u></li> </ul>	<p>i. 2024 Staff Engagement Surveys showing consistently high levels of staff satisfaction with flexibility measures:</p> <p>a. <i>"I have the flexibility I need to manage my work &amp; caring responsibilities"</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintained at/above 80% (ECU overall) AND at/above 80% (school/centre level).</li> </ul> <p>b. <i>"I maintain a good balance between work &amp; other aspects of my life"</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase to 70-7% by 2025 (ECU overall) AND at/above 70% (school/centre level).</li> </ul> <p>ii. Subsequent FWA Staff Survey (to be conducted in Q4 2024) showing higher levels of staff satisfaction towards process and improved awareness.</p> <p>a. <i>Are you aware of the online resources available at ECU to support the application of flexible work arrangements – for employees, managers, and teams?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Increase to 80% or above</li> </ul> <p>b. <i>New Questions – Asking about implementation AND understanding of the Fresh Perspectives on Flexible Working Program.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Be at between 75% (ECU overall) AND at between 70% (school/centre level)</li> </ul> <p>iii. Develop regular annual reporting of exit surveys. Monitor and track the incidents of</p>

Ref.	Rationale/ Evidence	Actions and Outputs	Timeframe (start & end)	Person/Group responsible for implementing action	Senior Leader accountable for action delivery	Desired Outcomes/ Targets/ Success Indicators
	<p>a. <i>Are you aware of the online resources available at ECU to support the application of flexible work arrangements – for employees, managers, and teams?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes – 63% vs No – 37%</li> </ul> <p>Exit Survey results for 2021 showed 42% of staff who left ECU in 2021 completed an Exit Survey and of that 13% of respondents selected 'To meet family and/or lifestyle needs' as one of the reasons for leaving. Demographic breakdown:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 18% were female academics</li> <li>- 10.5% were male academics</li> <li>- 12% were female professional staff</li> <li>- 12% were male professional staff</li> </ul> <p><i>*ECU is aware and takes into consideration that there are other circumstances beyond access to flexible working that may prompt an employee to select 'to meet family and/or lifestyle needs' in the online Exit Survey.</i></p>	<p><b>Output</b></p> <p>a. <b>Completed 'Fresh Perspectives on Flexible Work Program'</b> including an accompanying strategy.</p> <p>b. <b>Completed ECU Flexible Working Principles</b> and university-wide communication plan for roll out of information to all staff.</p> <p>c. <b>Completed guidelines and supporting resources (with inclusion of examples for both academic and professional staff)</b> which will underpin and support the implementation of the Program and Principles.</p>	Q4 2024	<p>WSC Manager, HRSC</p> <p>WSC Manager, HRSC</p> <p>WSC Manager, HRSC</p>		<p>people leaving 'to meet family and lifestyle needs' against different staff cohorts.</p> <p>a. <i>Reduce number of staff selecting 'To meet family and/or lifestyle needs' as one of the reasons for leaving to 10%</i></p> <p>b. <i>Reduce number of female academics selecting 'To meet family and/or lifestyle needs' as one of the reasons for leaving to at least 12%, preferably 10%</i></p>