SAGE Cygnet Awards

for the SAGE Athena Swan
Accreditation Pathway

RMIT UNIVERSITY

RMIT University Institutional Context

SAGE Cygnet Award Institutional Context

Name of Institution	RMIT University
Date of Application	21 October 2022
Contact for Application	Professor Kay Latham
Email	kay.latham@rmit.edu.au
Telephone No.	W: 03 9925 2004 / M: 0429 988 018

RMIT
UNIVERSITY

SAGE Athena SWAN

Cygnet Awards

Institutional

Context

Acknowledgement of Country

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

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

Artwork 'Luwaytini' by Mark Cleaver, Palawa

RMIT
UNIVERSITY

Contents

Word limit and actual word count

	Word limit	Actual word count
Institutional context	2000	1900

Index of Figures

Index of Tables

Overview of RMIT and its governance

Founded in 1887, RMIT is a dual-sector (Vocational Education/Higher Education) university, and member of the Australian Technology Network (ATN).

RMIT's three Melbourne campuses – Melbourne City, Brunswick, and Bundoora (Figure 1) – are located on the unceded lands of the Woi Wurrung and Boon Wurrung language groups of the Eastern Kulin Nation. Our Flight Schools in Point Cook and Bendigo are on the unceded lands of the Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung peoples. As a global University, RMIT has two campuses and a language centre in Vietnam, and a research and industry collaboration centre in Spain.
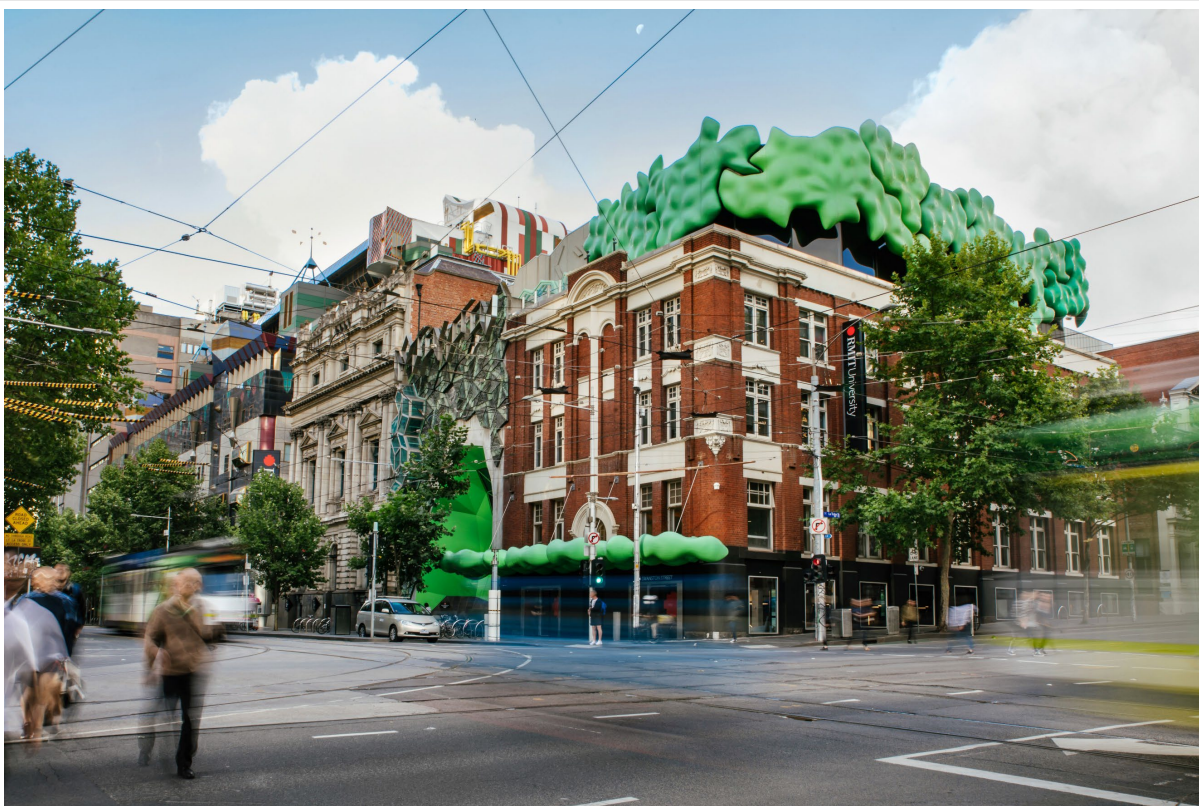
Figure 1: City campus (top); Bundoora campus (bottom left); Brunswick campus (bottom right)

Led by Chancellor and Chair of RMIT Council Peggy O'Neal AO, Vice-Chancellor and President, Professor Alec Cameron, and Head of Academic Board, Dr Sharon Andrews (Figure 2), RMIT Australia comprises 4 Colleges, 16 Schools and 5 Organisational Portfolios (Figure 3; Table 1). STEMM disciplines (Figure 3) span all academic Colleges and are defined based on Field of Research (FOR) codes (1-12). Professional units are classified as STEMM based on their technical focus.

Figure 2: The governance structure at RMIT, showing the relationship between the three components (Academic Governance, Corporate Governance and Executive Management)

STEM College — 44%
- Engineering — 23%
- Health and Biomedical Sciences — 61%
- Science — 44%
- Computing Technologies — 32%
- Science, Engineering and Technology (Vietnam) — 24%

College of Business and Law — 57%
- Accounting, Information Systems and Supply Chain Business IT and Logistics — 44%
- Economics, Finance and Marketing
- Graduate School of Business and Law
- Management
- Business and Management (Vietnam)

College of Vocational Education
- Built Environment and Sustainability
- Business and Enterprise
- Creative Industries
- Future Technologies
- Social Care and Health

College of Design and Social Context — 58%
- Architecture and Urban Design — 43%
- Art
- Design
- Education
- Fashion and Textiles — 70%
- Global, Urban and Social Studies
- Media and Communication
- Property, Construction and Project Management — 44%
- School of Communication and Design (Vietnam)

Education — 68%
- Academic Programs and Student Experience
- Academic Registrar's Group
- Centre for Education, Innovation and Development
- Centre for Academic Quality and Enhancement
- University Library and Student Success
- Students Group
- RMIT Vietnam's Student and Academic Group

Global — 60%
- Global Partnerships
- Global Operations
- Global Markets
- Global Commercial Strategy
- RMIT Europe
- RMIT Vietnam

Research and Innovation — 69%
- Research Innovation and Capability
- Research Partnerships and Translation
- Research Strategy and Services
- School of Graduate Research

Finance and Governance — 47%
- Strategic Finance
- Central Finance Operations
- Risk, Audit and Compliance
- Data and Analytics — 37%
- Legal, Governance and Contracts

Operations — 59%
- Enterprise Projects and Business Performance
- Global Marketing, Digital and Student Recruitment
- Human Resources
- Information Technology Services — 26%
- Property Services and Procurement
- University Communications
- Operations (Vietnam)

Policy, Strategy and Impact — 72%
- Public Policy and Government Relations
- Development of University Strategy
- Applied Innovation
- Business Development and Partnerships (incl Philanthropy)
- Indigenous Education and Engagement
- Vietnam Growth Strategy

Figure 3: RMIT organisational chart, STEMM in red, shows % female staff (excluding casuals) by College, Portfolio, School, and Department (February 2022). Academic STEMM is defined based on Field of Research (FOR) codes (1-12) for research outputs. Professional units are classified as STEMM based on their technical focus.
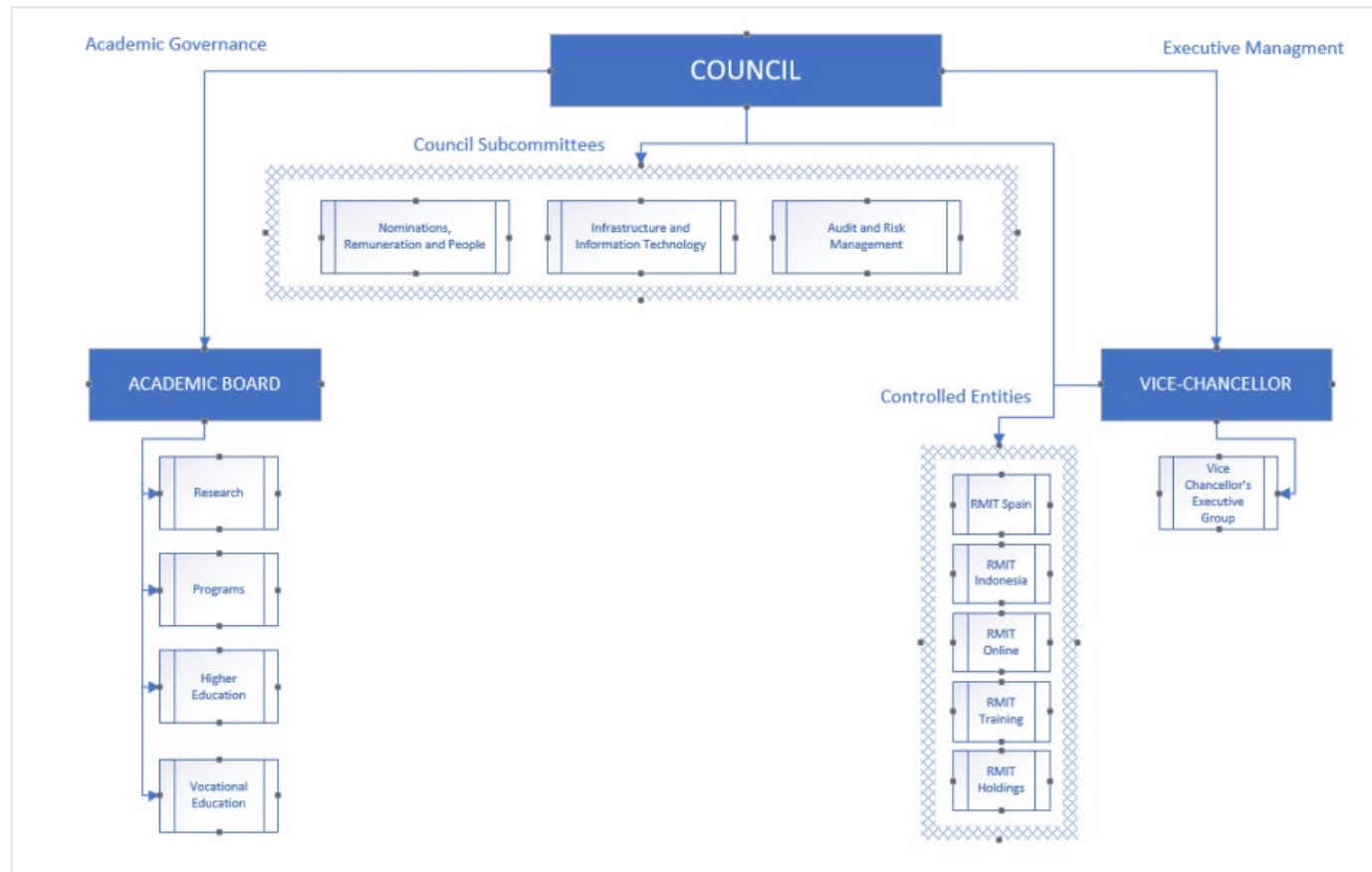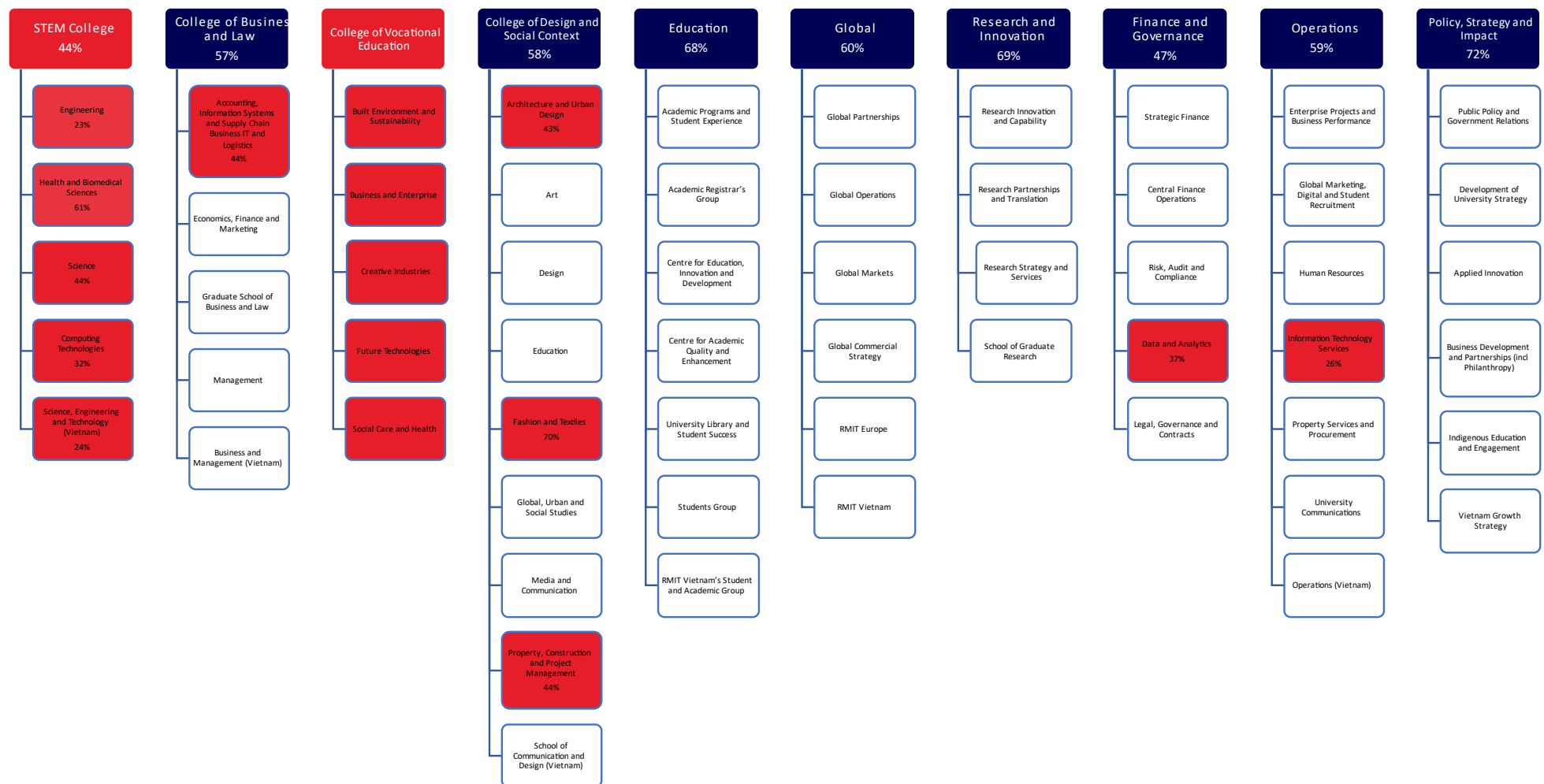
Table 1: Number of employees in RMIT Colleges/Portfolios and % female by College/Portfolio and in STEMM Schools

| College/Portfolio	% Female	Number of employees
STEM College	44	2143
School of Computing Technologies	32	
School of Engineering	23	
School of Health & Biomedical Sciences	61	
School of Science	44	
School of Science, Engineering & Technology (Vietnam)	24	
College of Business and Law	57	1136
School of Accounting, Information Systems & Supply Chain	44	
College of Vocational Education	58	1025
College of Design and Social Context	58	2155
School of Architecture & Urban Design	43	
School of Fashion & Textiles	70	
School of Property, Construction & Project Management	44	
Education	68	780
Global	60	25
Research and Innovation	69	210
Finance and Governance	47	542
Operations	59	898
Policy, Strategy, and Impact	72	222
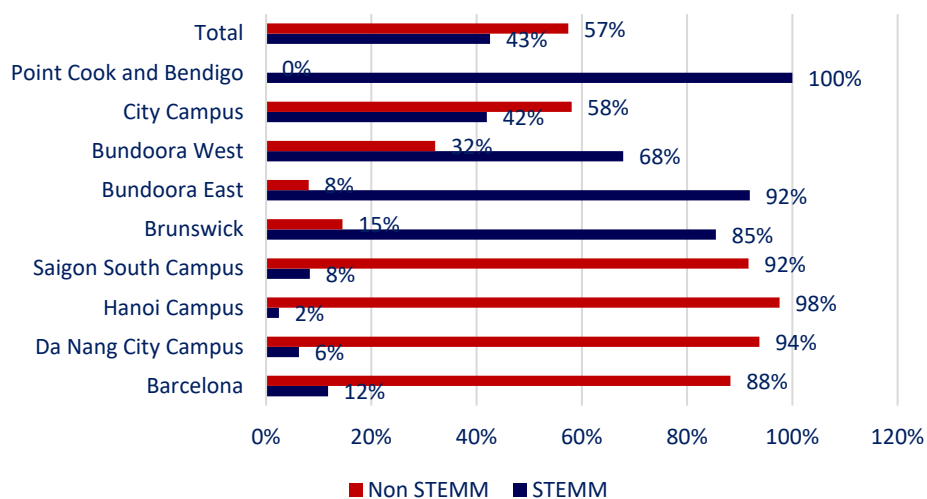
Figure 4: Staff - % female of RMIT total workforce including casuals – STEMM/non-STEMM by campus – RMIT Global (February 2022)

There are 10,112 employees (57% female) at RMIT University Global; RMIT Australia has 9153 employees. (Figure 4).

RMIT Students

In 2021, RMIT globally had almost 93,000 students from over 200 countries (Figure 5; Table 2), 94% of whom were enrolled with RMIT Australia (6% RMIT Vietnam). 17% of the cohort were international students.

Legend:
- Africa
- Americas
- Antartic
- Australia
- Central Asia
- Europe
- Middle East
- North East Asia
- Oceania
- South East Asia
- Southern Asia
- Unknown

Pie chart labels:
- Unknown 0.5%
- Africa 1.8%
- Southern Asia 6.8%
- Americas 1.1%
- South East Asia 24.7%
- Antartic 0.0%
- Australia 44.8%
- Oceania 1.1%
- North East Asia 13.9%
- Central Asia 0.5%
- Middle East 2.6%
- Europe 2.2%
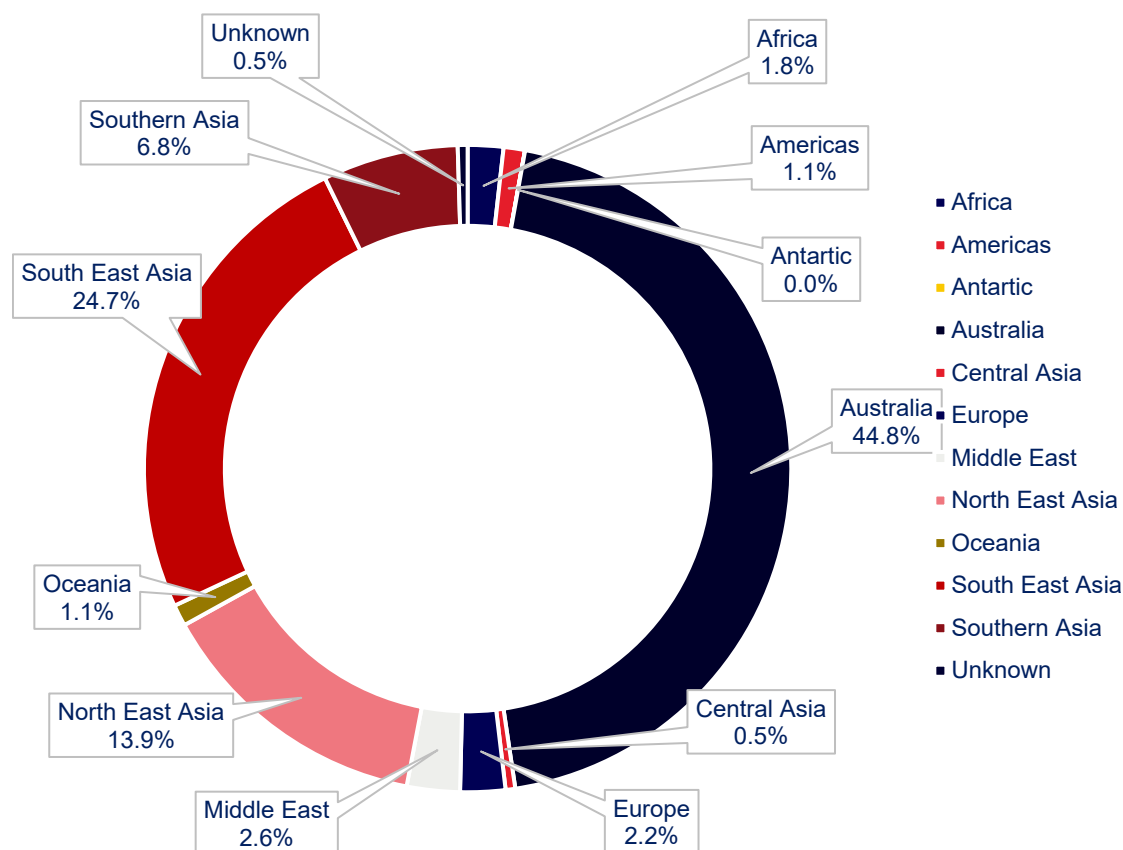
Figure 5: All students (RMIT Global) - Region of Birth

Of the RMIT Melbourne cohort, 47.9% identify as female, 51.6% as male, and 0.5% as X (indeterminate/diverse-gendered/intersex or unspecified). 7.5% of students registered a disability, mental health and/or medical condition.

Female students are under-represented in STEMM (40% global; 41% Melbourne), compared with non-STEMM (57%/60%), though this has improved since our Bronze submission in 2018 (STEMM females: 34% global; 33% Melbourne).

Table 2: Student headcount by study level and STEMM category for RMIT Global - all campuses

Study Level	Non-STEMM	STEMM	Grand Total
Postgraduate by Coursework	7,997	8,386	16,383
Undergraduate	27,833	27,350	55,183
Sub Degree – Associate Degree	28	4,623	4,651
PhD/MSc by Research	755	1,690	2,445
Vocational	296	13,850	14,146
Grand Total	36,909	55,899	92,808

Figure 6 illustrates cultural richness, in terms of country of birth (>55% born overseas). 0.3% students are First Nations Australians.

RMIT's School Network Access Program (SNAP) offers priority entry to students from regional, Indigenous and disadvantaged backgrounds from 225 Victorian secondary schools. 3,751 students received SNAP offers in 2020. SNAP students are represented across 88% of RMIT programs.

Figure 6: Cultural diversity in student groups
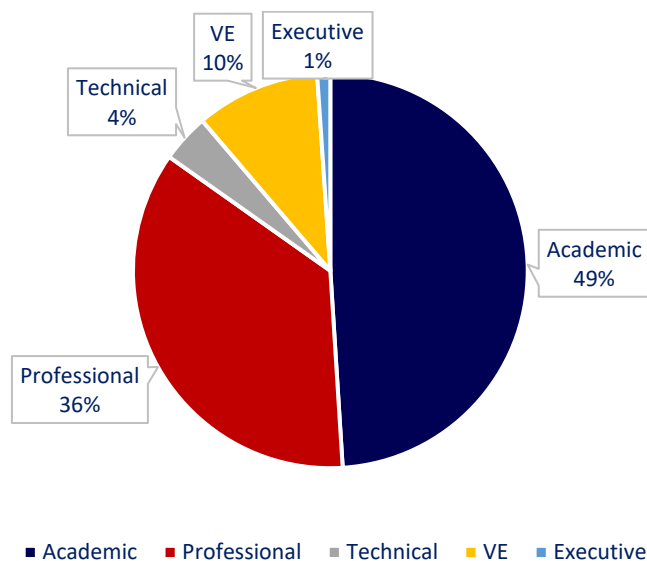
RMIT's workforce demographic profile

Figure 7: Workforce Breakdown by Staff Category - % Professional/Academic/Vocational (VE)/ Technical/and Executive for RMIT Australia (Feb. 2022)

The distribution of staff by contract (STEMM/non-STEMM) is shown in Figure 8. Of the continuing and fixed-term workforce, 47% are full-time and 53% part-time. The workforce breakdown by staff category is shown in Figure 7. Gender and age profiles are shown in Figure 9 and Figure 10.

0.6% of staff identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander or both. Of this 0.6%, 52.5% are female, 45.8% are male and 1.7% are trans/gender-diverse.
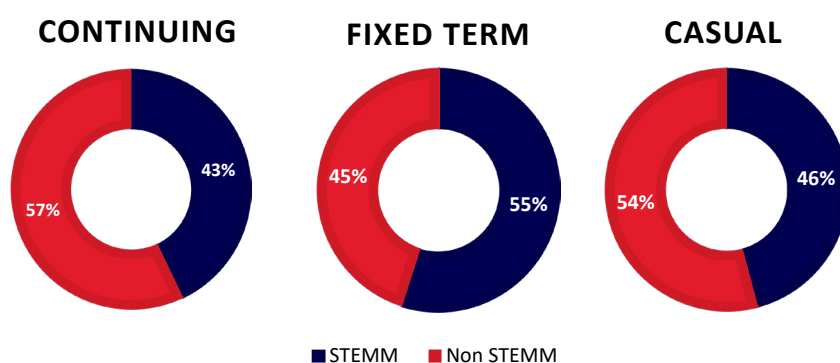
Figure 8: Staff by Contract Type (continuing Fixed-Term/ Casual) and STEMM/non-STEMM (Feb. 2022)

By end of 2021, female-identifying staff continue to dominate the professional staff cohort at 66%, while all other staff categories (all sub 50% in 2015) have increased in their female representation (Figure 11). The greatest increases were observed for executive (+24%) and technical (+15%) staff compared to 2015. Modest rises of (+6%) academic and (+9%) vocational were also observed, taking these cohorts closer to parity. Further analysis of the demographics of STEMM Schools can be seen in Figure 11 on Page 34 of the Recruitment Cygnet Award Application.

Figure 9: All Staff by Gender (%) (Feb. 2022)

Figure 10: Percentage staff distribution by age range (Feb 2022)

Figure 11: Percentage female staff by staff category 2015 – 2021

Embedding Athena SWAN in RMIT's governance and community

RMIT became a SAGE Pilot Member in 2015, was awarded Athena SWAN Bronze accreditation in February 2020 (Cohort 2) and continues to be led by the Dean STEMM Diversity and Inclusion. A timeline (Figure 12) of key Athena SWAN and gender equity and diversity and inclusion (GEDI) activities show the breadth of work since Bronze submission (Figure 13).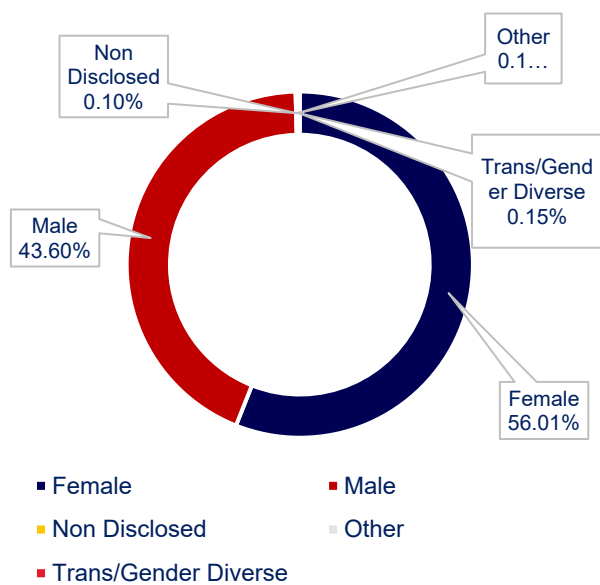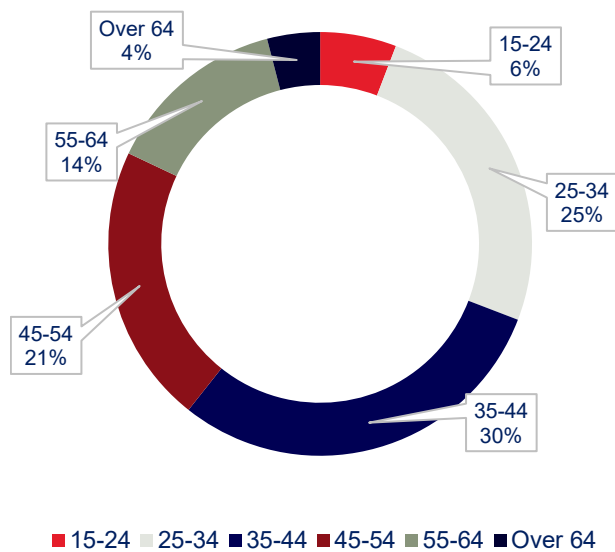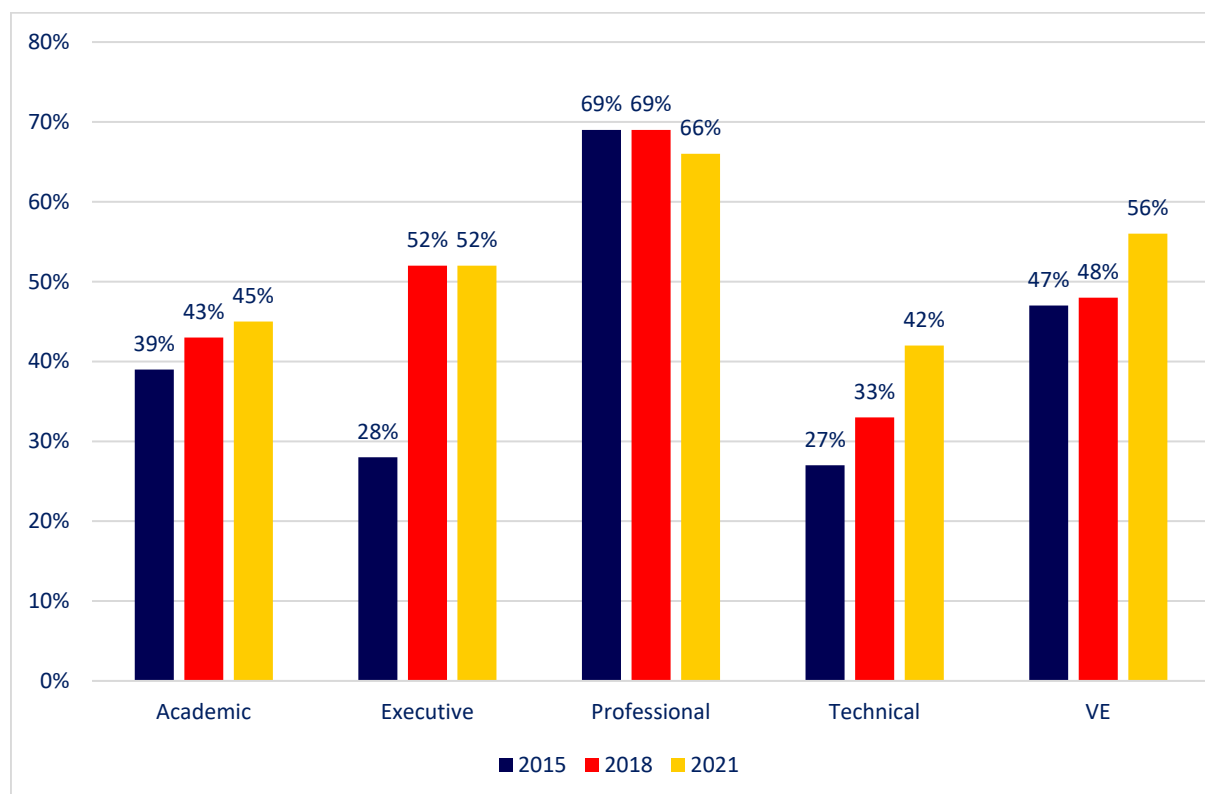 RMIT's strategy to 2031 – *Knowledge with Action*, prioritises the empowerment of people and communities to adapt and thrive. Gender Equality and Reconciliation are enduring themes of RMIT's Annual Operating Plans.

The Bronze Action Plan has 115 actions across 7 themes:

1. *Leading Local Action*
2. *Building the Pipeline*
3. *Fulfilment & Progression*
4. *Engaging Moments of Transition*
5. *Culture & Wellbeing*
6. *Supporting our Intersectional Communities*
7. *Strengthening Foundations*

Of these actions, 61% are institution-wide and 39% are STEMM-specific: a requirement at time of submission.

As of August 2022, progress against these actions is estimated as: 35% Sustained; 20% Complete; 45% In-progress (early to well). The top three themes in terms of progression (sustained, completed, and mid- to well-progressed) are: *Strengthening Foundations, Supporting our Intersectional Communities*, and *Building the Pipeline*.

Four of five Cygnet areas have been identified to date (Table 3). This application is for our first Cygnet – addressing barriers to attracting female-identifying staff in STEMM to the University, which at 18% (average 2015–2017) was significantly lower than the STEMM, tertiary-qualified female population (34%). This Cygnet aligns closely with Theme 2: Building the Pipeline, but also intersects with Themes 1, 6 and 7.

2019
- Australian Network on Disability Access and Inclusion Index Top Performer, 1st in Australia
- Submission of Athena SWAN Bronze Application
- Commencement of Athena SWAN Steering Group
- Appointment of Athena SWAN Senior Project Officer
- Appointment of Women in STEMM Student Engagement Coordinator
- Appointment of STEMM Employer Branding Specialist
- Appointment of Athena SWAN Data Analyst
- Employer of Choice for Gender Equality 2019-2021
- Pride in Diversity Employer of the Year, Trans/Gender Diverse Inclusion

2020
- **February** — Received the Athena SWAN Bronze Award
- **March** — Australian Network on Disability Access and Inclusion Index Top Performer, 2nd in Australia
- **April** — Pride in Diversity Employer of the Year, Employee Network of the Year, Trans/Gender Diverse Inclusion
- **August** — STEMM definition expanded to include Fashion & Textiles
- **October**
  - Appointment of Dean, STEMM Diversity & Inclusion – newly created role
  - Diversity and Inclusion Advocacy Group established
- **November** — SEH to STEM College Restructure

2021
- **February** — Employer of Choice for Gender Equality 2021-3
- **March** — Recruitment Cygnet (start)
- **April** — Pride in Diversity Platinum Projects Award
- **May** — Australian Network on Disability's Disability Confident Recruiter Accreditation
- **September** — VIC Gender Equality Act 2020 – gender impact assessment and Gender Equality Action Plan work commenced
- **October**
  - STEM College Athena SWAN Excellence Award
  - Parental Leave Entitlement Changes
- **November** — First Nations Reconciliation Advisors appointed

2022
- Gender Equality Action Plan Launched
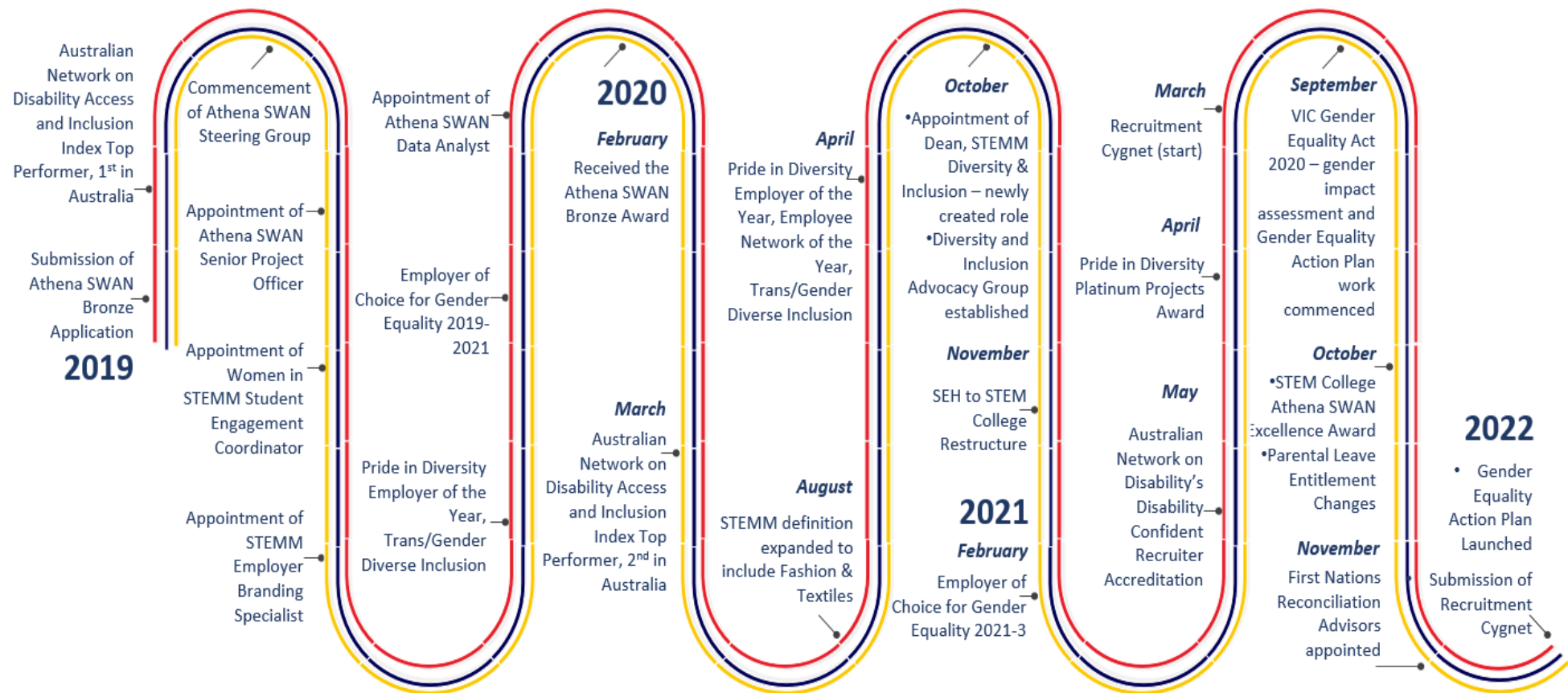- Submission of Recruitment Cygnet

Figure 12: Timeline of Significant Athena SWAN Activities in RMIT's SAGE journey to date as well as GEDI Benchmarks 2019-2021
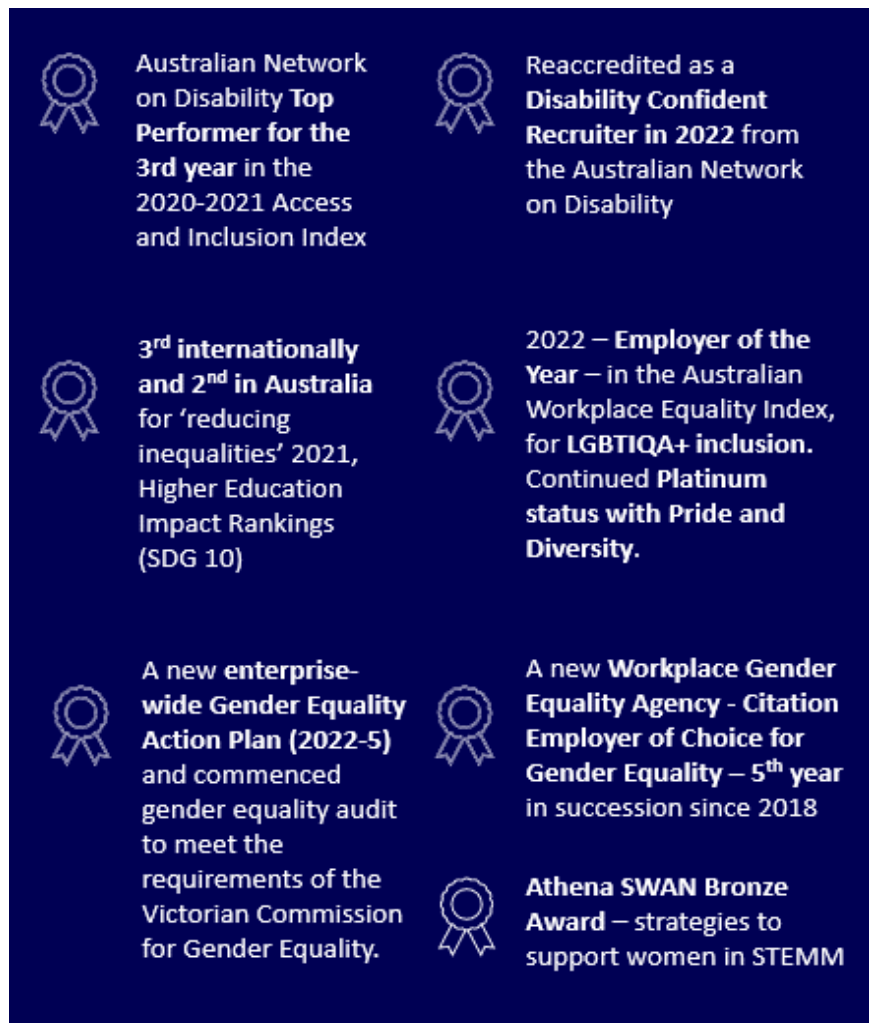
17

Figure 13: 2021-22 Diversity and Inclusion External Awards

Four groups work towards the Athena SWAN Bronze Award Action Plan:

Athena SWAN Project Team
Led by the Dean of STEMM Diversity and Inclusion, the project team comprises a senior project coordinator, senior project officer and data analyst. The project team manages all Athena SWAN operations, governance, reporting and submissions.

Athena SWAN Steering Group (ASSG)
This group provides governance and oversees the implementation of RMIT's Athena SWAN Action Plan. It challenges and questions the project delivery team and stakeholders to ensure initiatives are strategically, financially, and operationally appropriate. This group meets at least 5 times a year, and reports to the University's central Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Group.

Athena SWAN Implementation Group
This group progresses actions from the Athena SWAN Action Plan and works towards the Cygnet Reports and the SAGE Athena SWAN Silver Award. The Implementation Group comprises representatives from the Athena SWAN project team, Communications, Student Equity, College of Vocational Education, and Diversity and Inclusion, Organisational Development and Recruitment in the People Team.

The Advocates are practising academics, teachers or leaders working in each of the STEMM Schools or Colleges who provide informed advice and direction to their respective College Leadership Groups. They also provide discipline context to progress GEDI initiatives in their local area and act as a conduit for staff opinion and feedback. The DIAG identify and address the remaining barriers to inclusion and progression for women, diverse-gendered staff and students, and those from other minority groups at the University, and keep the Athena SWAN Action Plan current and relevant.

Reporting structures are in place to support the governance and leadership of Athena SWAN and to embed its functions at an institution-wide level (Figure 2).

Vice-Chancellor's Executive (VCE) Group

This group provides strategic advice to support the Vice-Chancellor in the management of the University. The VCE is made up of the University's senior executive team and chaired by the Vice-Chancellor.

Nominations, Remuneration and People Committee (NRPC)

The NRPC is one of three Standing Committees that support the University Council with discharging the University's statutory functions and responsibilities. This includes monitoring progress and execution of RMIT's People Strategy in developing leadership excellence and capability, attracting and retaining staff, and supporting career growth. It also reviews and monitors RMIT's diversity and inclusion strategies and outcomes.

Athena SWAN is an annual standing item at VCE and NRPC, and other papers are presented as required. Bi-monthly reports are presented to the STEM College Executive.

We communicate our achievements in Athena SWAN as well as news and developments in the gender equity and diversity and inclusion spaces to the broader RMIT community and public using a variety of platforms:

Website Presence
RMIT has two websites dedicated to women in STEMM.

Empowering Women in STEMM, https://www.rmit.edu.au/careers/empowering-women-in-stemm, is designed to attract women to pursue STEMM careers with RMIT. It features RMIT women in STEMM researchers sharing their experiences. It details the various ways we support women in areas of wellbeing and inclusion, and career progression and development. The page also links to current employment opportunities at RMIT.

RMIT's Women in STEMM website, https://www.rmit.edu.au/about/our-values/diversity-and-inclusion/gender-equality/women-in-stemm, features support for current and future female-identifying RMIT STEMM students. The website provides links to workshops and events, and information around scholarships, access cadetships, and industry partnerships.

Figure 14: Cover of the 2021 Athena SWAN Annual Report featuring Dr. Wenyue Zou, Research Fellow.

<u>Athena SWAN Annual Report</u>
The inaugural Athena SWAN Annual Report was released publicly in December 2020, capturing the achievements made in progressing the Athena SWAN action plan and, more broadly, advancing gender equity functions at RMIT. The 2021 Athena SWAN Annual Report was published in March 2022.

<u>E-Newsletters</u>
The Bevy is a quarterly e-newsletter to STEMM staff which communicates updates on the progress of the Athena SWAN Action Plan and showcases achievements in diversity and inclusion across STEMM. It also invites reader comment and participation.

RMIT Life is a weekly news bulletin to all RMIT staff and has featured regular updates and achievements in the Athena SWAN and GEDI spaces, including the release of the Athena SWAN Annual Reports, and spotlights on RMIT's Women in Physics and Athena SWAN representatives.

Figure 15: Women in Physics featuring (clockwise) Blanca del Rosal Rabes (Vice Chancellor's Postdoctoral Fellow), Saffron Bryant (Research Fellow), Tamar Greaves (Associate Professor), Valentina Baccetti (Vice Chancellor's Research Fellow)

Bronze Award self-assessment process key findings and their relationship to the key barriers being addressed in the SAGE Cygnet Awards

Four Cygnet areas, all institution-wide barriers, relating to RMIT's Bronze submission and Action Plan have been identified (Table 3). This application focuses on Cygnet 1 (light blue). The remaining sub-issues corresponding to the key barriers in Cygnets 2 to 4 – Parental & Carer Support, Career Advancement and Respectful Cultures and Behaviours –have been proposed as areas of development and will be progressed during the Cygnet Awards journey.

Table 3: Relationship of key findings/sub-issues identified in RMIT's Bronze submission to proposed Cygnets 1-4.

Key Barriers	CYGNET 1. – ATTRACTION - Recruitment of women and gender-diverse in STEMM fields (this submission)	PARTICIPATION – Parental & Carer Support (Q2 2023)	PROGRESSION – Career Advancement (2024/2025)	ALL – Respectful cultures and behaviours (2024/2025)
Key Findings/ Sub-Issues BRONZE Application	Low number of applications from women and gender-diverse people for STEMM open recruitment round (Action 1.2 a-e; 2.3a-h)	Low number of continuing STEMM staff taking up primary-carer leave (21% STEMM vs 79% non-STEMM) (Action 1.5, 4.1j and 4.2c) &/OR Higher uptake in partner leave vs primary carer leave in STEMM (Action 4.1i)	STEMM female promotion applications to Levels C to E are still comparatively low. (Action 1.4 and 3.1)	Female leaders under-represented (HOS, Deans, Execs and senior management committees) in STEMM vs non-STEMM (Actions 1.4 and 5.1)
	Low % of Senior Females (Academic D&E, Exec, HEW10, SE3), in particular SEH College (now STEM) Exec – 100% male (Action 1.2 a-e; 2.3a-h)	STEMM female academic staff are accessing only part of their parental leave and returning early as well as working while on leave. (Action 4.2)	Lower promotion success rates for CALD female academics compared to non-CALD female academics. (Actions 3.1 and 6.2)	Diversity ranked low with STEMM staff who preferred not to indicate their gender. (Actions 1.3 and 5.1)
	Level A and Level B in STEMM dominated by fixed term research-only contracts – more options/pathways for entry needed to enhance security of employment and prospects (Action 2.1a and 2.3)	Flexibility around work-time and conditions can be improved. (Actions 1.5 and 4.1)	Disproportionate research income from STEMM female academics as they either seek or are awarded less money for their grants. (Action 1.4e)	Interviews with Indigenous female STEMM students identified: lack of female role models in STEMM; need for more flexibility; need to include Indigenous science teaching and perspectives. (Action 1.2 e and 6.4d)

		Male staff (both STEMM and non-STEMM) indicated that the time off they are entitled to is insufficient. (Actions 1.5, 4.1 and 5.2)	Female STEMM staff attending leadership programs exceeds number of female STEMM leadership positions, signifying an appetite for leadership development opportunities (Action 3.1c)	2017 YourVoice survey indicated that experiences for staff with a disability/work-related adjustment had declined, concerningly in terms of respectful and inclusive treatment. (Action 1.2 e and 6.3a-b)
		Unmet demand for childcare, occasional care, school holiday programs. (Actions 4.1d to 4.1g)	Managers need to proactively support and sponsor career progression, identifying opportunities for development and supporting aspirations (Action 1.4)	2017 YourVoice Survey, only 43% of DGSS staff agreed *RMIT does a good job of promoting visibility and inclusion of LGBTIQ staff and students.* (Action 1.2 e and 6.1c-d)
		Low uptake of sabbaticals and research leave by carers (Action 4.2)		Need for central case management system for incidences of SASH. (Respect. Now. Always)
		Higher number of fixed term contracts in STEMM requires tailored advice when returning from parental/carers leave (Action 1.5)	Poor support of professional and vocational staff to progress their careers. (Action 2.2a, d, f and 3.2c)	
		Lack of support for staff returning from career breaks (introduction of Career ReIgnite) (Actions 1.5 and 4.2)		

Contextual factors substantially impacting the Bronze Action Plan activities, implementation and outcomes

The consolidated 2020 net operating result for RMIT University and its subsidiaries was a loss of 5%, reflecting the significant impact that the COVID pandemic had on the Group's revenue. The net operating result improved slightly in 2021, though international border closures continued to impact revenue. Continued growth of RMIT Vietnam and a reduction in University operating expenses resulting from the actions taken in 2020 (including sale of buildings, suspended Capital works, restructures and voluntary-/non-voluntary departures etc.) protected the University from the financial impacts of COVID, and offset to some extent the former impacts. Changes to the student profile 2019–2021 across HE and VE are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Number of enrolled students by cohort type across Higher Education (HE) and Vocational Education (VE) before and during the COVID-19 pandemic (2019-2021). Adapted from RMIT Annual Reports tabled in Victorian Parliament.

		Student Fee type Enrolments - Headcount (%)		
		2019	2020	2021
HE	Total	75,361	77,012	78,688
	Domestic	40,202 (53.3%)	42,649 (55.4%)	44,307 (56.3%)
	International Onshore	18,901 (25.2%)	16,884 (21.9%)	14,449 (18.4%)
	International Offshore	8,526 (11.3%)	8,134 (10.6%)	8,027 (10.2%)
	Vietnam	7,732 (10.2%)	9,345 (12.1%)	11,905 (15.1%)
VE	Total	15,750	14,558	14,416
	Domestic	13,857 (88.0%)	13,074 (89.8%)	13,370 (92.75%)
	International Onshore	1,797 (11.4%)	1,417 (9.7%)	1,024 (7.1%)
	International Offshore	96 (0.6%)	67 (0.5%)	22 (0.15%)

RMIT experienced significant changes in headcount across all employment types during 2020-2021 due to the pandemic and sector disruption.

The number of RMIT staff decreased from 8,691 in March 2020 to 7,696 in March 2021 during the height of the pandemic. Post-pandemic RMIT has re-established itself with head count at 8216 in March 2022.

Restructures occurred in the Colleges of STEM and CoBL, and a new College of Vocational Education (CoVE) was created. The Education, R&I, and Operations Portfolios also underwent significant change.

RMIT took a deliberate approach to considering gendered impact in workforce changes throughout the pre- and post-pandemic environment. Processes and data indicate that this has somewhat mitigated any disproportionate impacts the pandemic has had on gender equality (Table 5).

Table 5: Headcount of Executive and All Staff by Gender 2019–2021. As presented in RMIT Annual Reports tabled in Victorian Parliament.

		2019			
		All Headcount	On-going Full-time	Part-time	F/T & Casual
Executives	Female	60	13		47
	Male	56	14		42
All Staff	Female	6807	1914	448	4445
	Male	5630	1687	118	3825
	Self-described	30	7		23

		2020			
		All Headcount	On-going Full-time	Part-time	F/T & Casual
Executives	Female	54	15		39
	Male	50	13		37
All Staff	Female	5173	1795	393	2985
	Male	4319	1522	108	2689
	Self-described	18	4		14

		2021			
		All Headcount	On-going Full-time	Part-time	F/T & Casual
Executives	Female	77	18		59
	Male	70	13	2	55
All Staff	Female	5506	1830	403	3273
	Male	4367	1512	129	2726
	Self-described	52	10		42

The above changes impacted the budget, staffing and timing of the Bronze Action Plan implementation.

Changes Particular to this Cygnet Application – Barriers to Attraction: Recruitment

Recruitment was frozen for 9 months (commencing March 2020) due to the impact of COVID. During this time, only roles funded externally were able to be appointed to, for example, competitive research grants (ARC, NHMRC), and industry support.