



S A G E

SCIENCE IN AUSTRALIA
GENDER EQUITY

SAGE Impact Statement

1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022

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Overview

Science in Australia Gender Equity (SAGE) is the only transformational gender equity, diversity and inclusion program of its kind in Australia.

Our mission is to embed genuine and sustainable gender equity, diversity and inclusion across the Australian tertiary education and research sector.

We do so through our accreditation and capacity building program, coupled with sector-wide advocacy and collaborations to inform national policy and create tools to help our subscribers achieve gender equity, diversity and inclusion.

Our support enabled SAGE subscribers to make substantial progress towards gender equity, diversity and inclusion in 2022. The outcomes and impact achieved by our subscribers, illustrated by the case studies in this report, are strong indicators that the SAGE program is achieving its mission. SAGE subscribers met regularly to learn from and support their peers, while they continued to implement their action plans for gender equity, diversity and inclusion. Their commitment to transparency and accountability is evident in their readiness to share learnings and progress updates through SAGE communications channels, particularly through their published Cygnet Award applications.

In 2022, SAGE:

- Welcomed the first nine Cygnet Award applications from subscribers progressing towards Silver Award, and conferred three Cygnet Awards
- Revamped the SAGE website, improving accessibility and engagement
- Delivered the online conference *Diversity Interventions 2022 SAGE: Systemic approaches that work*, bringing together 237 participants from 8 countries
- Held the first two Heads of Institutions Forums to drive collaboration
- Launched the Intersectionality Series to help subscribers improve their intersectional approach to gender equity work
- Conducted eight Intersectionality Walks (IW) to raise awareness and understanding of intersectionality
- Delivered three IW Facilitator Training Sessions
- Provided advice to the Attorney General's Department on the legislative recommendations of the Respect@Work report
- Generated 92 mentions in online news, and 1129 social media mentions
- Gained 527 new followers on Twitter and LinkedIn (↑ 6.4%), and 136 newsletter subscribers (↑ 23%)

Message from the Chair, Libby Lyons



This past year has been yet another of strong engagement and collaboration, and I am proud of SAGE's continued commitment to enabling and supporting our subscriber organisations to deliver sustainable, transformative change.

Importantly, 2022 showcased the power of community spirit – by working together, we are stronger together. Supporting each other and working together, our subscribers overcame many of the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, to drive improvements and positive outcomes in gender equity, diversity and inclusion.

We achieved a lot throughout 2022, completing many significant priorities from each of the three pillars of our Strategic Plan.

Most exciting of all was the implementation of an Australian pathway from the Athena Swan Bronze to Silver Award. The newly designed Cygnet Awards provide a pathway that incorporates significant [improvements and reforms](#) to peer review. These include a redefined resubmission process and on-demand reviewer training materials. We know that the new Cygnet Awards will provide institutions with the structure, incentive and encouragement to continue to drive change as they work towards a Silver Award.

A highlight of the year was the *Diversity Interventions 2022 SAGE* virtual conference held over two days in April. The conference provided a space for practitioners, researchers and policymakers to share knowledge and evidence-based research, and to showcase equity, diversity and inclusion practices that really work. It proved point perfect that in developing strategic partnerships and collaborations, SAGE has strengthened the sector's capacity for transformational change by delivering value beyond accreditation.

Our Inaugural Heads of Institutions Forum provided the opportunity to bring together SAGE and the leaders from SAGE subscriber institutions to connect. Ideas were shared with discussions centred on how SAGE can best continue to work constructively with the sector to develop and deliver the priorities that are critical for success in gender equity, diversity and inclusion.

In 2023, we will continue to build and develop our partnerships and collaborations with our subscriber base. We must ensure we give you what you need to succeed. We will also continue our important work with the government and the broader SAGE community to ensure gender equity, diversity and inclusion continues to be a policy priority and, in tandem, will increase our advocacy for meaningful change to build a diverse and inclusive skilled workforce for the future.

Thank you for your ongoing support of SAGE throughout 2022. The engagement and involvement of all our subscribers, partners and

stakeholders holds us to account so that we can provide an offering that is appropriate, meaningful, but most importantly works and drives better outcomes for all.

I would also like to thank the hardworking, dedicated and loyal staff at SAGE. They are a small but very effective and agile team. The board and I are indebted to their professionalism, innovation and diligence.

In recognising the team, I must acknowledge the outgoing CEO of SAGE, Dr Wafa El-Adhami. Wafa has been involved in SAGE since its inception. She has overseen the organisation as it grew from a pilot program to the ever-developing organisation it is today. Wafa's huge contribution, through her vision, commitment, energy and sheer hard work has, in my opinion, been the key to SAGE's incremental achievements. Sadly, Wafa has decided to leave. We will miss her greatly, but I know you join me in wishing her every success in her next endeavours. Whatever Wafa does next, I know she will apply the same professionalism, dedication and vitality as she has at SAGE.

Lastly, I must thank the Board of SAGE. All our directors are volunteers. In 2022, as their term expired, we said goodbye and thank you to Dr Rosalind Dubs and Dr Bruce Godfrey. We also welcomed and then sadly had to farewell Dr Katherine Woodthorpe. Katherine had to resign from the Board because of her election as the President of Academy of Technology Science and Engineering (ATSE): the first woman to hold this prestigious office in the history of ATSE – congratulations Katherine. So, to all our directors, serving and past, thank you for your service to SAGE. SAGE would be a far lesser organisation without you volunteering your precious time and making my job much easier.

Message from outgoing SAGE CEO, Dr Wafa El-Adhami



Despite ongoing challenges and continued uncertainty driven by COVID-19, 2022 was a rewarding year for SAGE, with many great milestones achieved and several Strategic Plan priority actions completed.

A special thanks to the SAGE community for their continued engagement throughout the year. I extend my gratitude to our dedicated Working and Special Interest Group members and program contributors, Cygnet Award working group members, peer reviewers and webinar presenters. Thank you for sharing your valuable time and expertise throughout the year.

It's been pleasing to witness SAGE subscribers continue to take actions to address inequities in their organisations over the past year. Together, we made great progress in advancing our shared mission to embed genuine and sustainable gender equity, diversity and inclusion across Australia's higher education and research sector. The launch of the new SAGE website also helped us better showcase our subscribers' achievements to the world.

We hosted a range of events and forums to provide subscribers with more opportunities to share learnings and helped foster new collaborations. In the first quarter of 2022, we held the inaugural Heads of Institutions Forum and an international conference. Special thanks to our conference speakers, panellists and presenters for generously dedicating their time and expertise to the *Diversity Interventions 2022 SAGE* virtual conference, as well as all conference delegates for their participation and engagement.

It was also my privilege to continue to share SAGE experience and learnings with our international partners and work more closely with our UK partners as a member of the Advance HE Australasian Strategic Advisory Board (ASAB). As an international forum, ASAB advises Advance HE on its international strategic priorities, including to guide the implementation of Athena Swan and grow collaborations across our region to improve gender equity and diversity in higher education.

After six incredible years at SAGE, it is with great pride that I hand over leadership to Dr Janin Bredehoeft as CEO of SAGE. Dr Bredehoeft is a well-respected and influential leader who will bring a wealth of experience and strategic capabilities in gender equity policy, research and education to the organisation.

It's been an absolute pleasure leading SAGE over the last six years. Credit for SAGE's phenomenal success goes to our hardworking team, subscribers and supporters, and our esteemed Board of Directors and Chair Libby Lyons; I can't wait to see what they accomplish next.

SAGE year in review: Delivering on our strategic plan

SAGE's mission is to embed genuine and sustainable gender equity, diversity and inclusion across the Australian tertiary education and research sector. Our work is guided by the [SAGE 2021–24 Strategic Plan](#), which outlines three overarching objectives or “pillars” for how we will achieve this mission. In 2022 we made strong progress against each pillar, bringing us closer to our goal.

Pillar 1: Deliver a fit-for-purpose and sustainable accreditation model

SAGE accreditation framework is driving change

Informed by our stakeholders' feedback, SAGE continuously improves our program to ensure it remains effective for driving systemic change in gender equity, diversity and inclusion.

In 2022, we commissioned an independent evaluation of the SAGE accreditation framework to assure its fitness for purpose and sustainability. This involved an initial survey and one-on-one consultation with heads of SAGE subscriber institutions. The key findings confirm that the SAGE accreditation framework is effective and fit for purpose. A few enhancements were proposed to enable its uptake by the research sector, extend collaborative efforts to develop resources, facilitate sharing of effective practices and strengthen SAGE advocacy.

“ *Athena Swan is one of best frameworks for GE and organisational change. The framework provides flexibility to tailor to priority strategic areas – other frameworks often involve 'tick box' exercises.* ”

“ *SAGE program offers a strong network of GEDI practitioners to support and assist our efforts. These networks [are] very important to driving institutional frameworks and sharing ideas.* ”

Cygnets Awards as a pathway to Athena Swan Silver Awards

The [Cygnets Awards](#) are one of SAGE's key innovations to the Athena Swan framework, forming a uniquely Australian pathway from an Athena Swan Bronze to Silver Award. Compared to the original Athena Swan awards pathway, the Cygnets Awards are less administratively burdensome and help organisations focus on what matters most: evaluating the outcomes and impact of their Bronze Award action plans. The Cygnets Awards also encourage institutions to share and learn from actions that did not produce the desired outcomes. The national recognition bestowed by a Cygnets Award adds a strong incentive for institutions to continue driving change as they work towards gender equity, diversity and inclusion.

Having finalised the Cygnets Award assessment framework in December 2021, SAGE started 2022 ready to welcome applications for Cygnets Awards from our Bronze Award holders. Despite its relatively recent introduction, we received nine applications for Cygnets Awards throughout the year, signalling our subscribers' determination to progress towards their Silver Awards and achieve systemic change. Three Cygnets Awards were conferred to Edith Cowan University, Geoscience Australia and RMIT University, with the remainder progressing through review and expected to be announced early in 2023.

Pillar 2: Build capacity and enable transformational change in SAGE subscriber institutions

Improving subscriber support

SAGE continued to build capacity to improve gender equity, diversity and inclusion in the Australian tertiary education and research sector, and more broadly within the community.

Throughout the year, we produced 11 [on-demand learning videos](#) to support applicants and reviewers for SAGE Athena Swan Awards. These videos were viewed 241 times.

The SAGE data analytics tool, designed to simplify the collection and analysis of organisational gender equity data, continues to be a popular product with our subscribers.

SAGE delivered sector-led webinars that attracted real-time participation and were accessed on demand. The webinars '[Supporting trans and gender diverse employees](#)' and '[What is intersectionality?](#)' were particularly well-received. Combined, both webinars garnered over 300 attendees and recording views, and 94% of attendees surveyed said they found the intersectionality webinar "useful" or "very useful".

SAGE continued to deliver regular and targeted one-on-one advisory services to help subscribers align their gender equity work with the Athena Swan framework and prepare their applications for SAGE accreditation. The advisory team met with subscribers 75 times throughout 2022. Our subscribers especially valued these sessions for guidance around the SAGE accreditation pathway, data analysis, and prioritising or governing their gender equity work:

“ *Thanks again for coming along and giving that presentation. The feedback was great – one participant said that it had made her excited to know more about Athena Swan. It was a great intro for the group and really sets the scene for us as we start to think together about the work that needs to be done and prioritising.* ”

“ *Thank you for taking the time to join us at our SAGE [steering committee] this week to walk us through the SAGE Cygnet Awards. Very useful and much appreciated.* ”

“ *Thank you so much for your close attention to the document, it's lovely of you to give it so much care. I've taken on almost all of your suggestions, which were very helpful indeed.* ”

We also conducted eight [Intersectionality Walks \(IW\)](#) and three IW Facilitator Training Sessions, with eight participating organisations. The IW and training sessions are powerful ways for participants to visualise and understand how intersectionality plays out in real-life situations.

Our new, user-friendly website was launched in 2022. The new website, with its expanded resource offerings, provides users with better navigation and access to tools and resources.

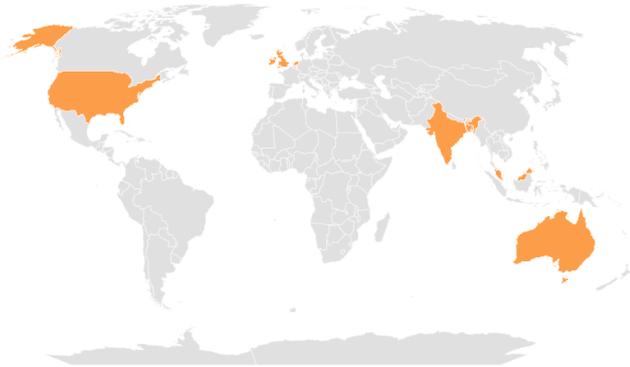
Building communities of practice and supporting sector-wide collaboration

Over 200 individuals joined us for our two-day virtual conference *Diversity Interventions 2022 SAGE: Systemic approaches that work*, which included a [keynote](#) on embracing intersectionality. The conference was held in partnership with Advance HE UK and Oxford University. With more than 60 speakers and over 40 sessions across two days, this international event highlighted equity, diversity and inclusion practices that translate into outcomes.

All talks and presentations from *Diversity Interventions 2022 SAGE* are publicly available on the SAGE website, ensuring that everyone can benefit from these evidence-based practices for driving change.

Snapshot of Diversity Interventions 2022 SAGE

- Over 230 conference participants from 8 countries



- 88% of attendees were satisfied or very satisfied with the event overall
- 3,579 event page views
- 52.8k LinkedIn ad impressions
- 43.5k organic Twitter impressions
- 143 Twitter mentions
- What our attendees said they loved about the conference:



During the first quarter of 2022, we launched the inaugural Heads of Institution Forum to strengthen engagement with subscribers and inform SAGE's future strategic decisions. This platform encouraged leaders from SAGE subscriber institutions to engage and collaborate on their shared sector priorities and mission to address inequity. Moving forward, the Forum will play a pivotal role in shaping SAGE advocacy for sector-wide issues in gender equity, diversity and inclusion, in line with the findings of the recent evaluation.

The SAGE regional and national networks continued to meet, with 27 meetings convened by SAGE across Australia. These events bring together SAGE organisations and communities providing space to exchange good practice and plan collaborations. They also enable discussions and solutions for common challenges in gender equity, diversity and inclusion, such as backlash.

In addition, we continued to support the SAGE Workload Allocation Special Interest Group (SIG) as it progressed the development of, and consultation on the [Workload Allocation Principles Matrix](#). This Matrix was co-developed to address issues related to workload allocation amongst groups of employees, notably women. The SIG was formed in response to this issue, recognising the need for

fair, equitable models for managing workload allocation across the sector to challenge and address such inequities, contribute to post-COVID-19 recovery, and empower institutions to drive change in this space.

We also developed the [Intersectionality Series](#) in collaboration with the SAGE Special Interest Group established for this purpose. We delivered a series of expert webinars and peer support sessions, introducing the concept of intersectionality and how it can be applied in collecting diversity data. The series provides practical support to institutions with taking an ethical, intersectional approach to their gender equity, diversity and inclusion work.

Pillar 3: Collaborate and build enduring partnerships

SAGE continued to collaborate with state, territory and federal governments, advocacy groups and non-government organisations in Australia and internationally to support gender equity, diversity and inclusion.

These include the National Women's Safety Alliance, Advance HE UK, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada's Dimensions program, the American Association for the Advancement of Science's SEA Change initiative, the Victorian Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector, Advancing Women in Healthcare Leadership, the Australian Association of Medical Research Institutes (AAMRI) and the Women in Science Parkville Precinct (WiSSP).

SAGE contributed knowledge and expertise as a member of the advisory group for the Respect in Research project delivered by AAMRI and WiSPP. This project involved the development of sector-specific recommendations to enable health and medical research organisations to effectively prevent and respond to sexual harassment.

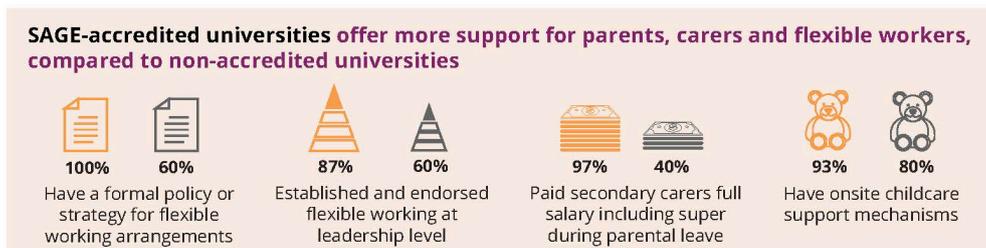
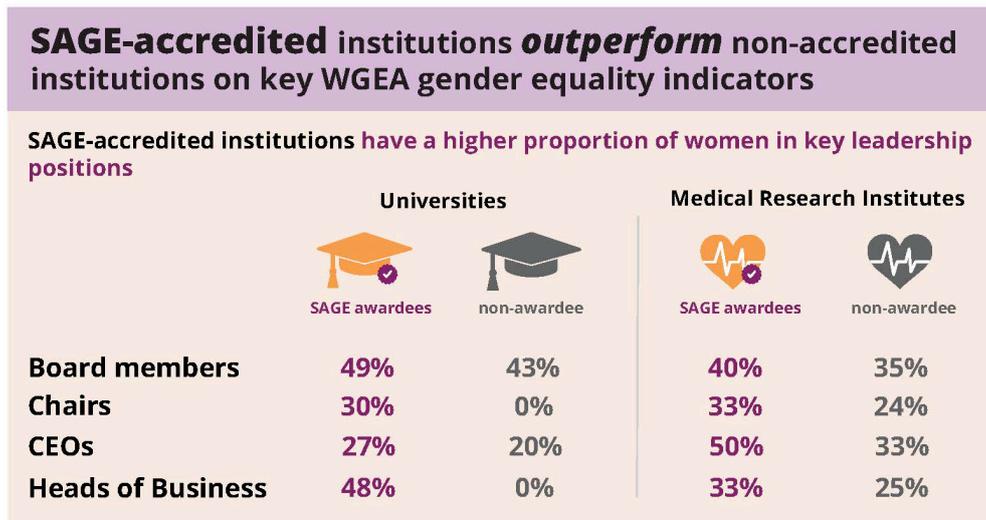
In April 2022, we hosted a film screening of *The Leadership* followed by a panel discussion in collaboration with RMIT and the 50:50 Equality Project with the support of ABC News, and the Burnet Institute. The panel explored the media's influence and role in promoting gender equity and diversity, and how this relates to the actions being progressed by Bronze-accredited institutions. This fantastic networking event allowed attendees to connect with professionals and individuals interested in gender equity.

SAGE subscribers and their achievements

Our impact is most evident from SAGE subscribers' incredible progress towards gender equity, diversity and inclusion, driven by their participation in the SAGE program.

Outperforming on national gender equality indicators

In 2022, SAGE conducted research using FY20–21 gender equality reporting data from the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA). We found that SAGE subscribers outperformed non-SAGE subscribers in the education and research sector on key metrics for gender equity.



*Data analysed is Workplace Gender Equality Agency 2020/21 publicly available data for universities and Medical Research Institutions (MRI's). SAGE Awardees comprise 30 universities and 6 MRI's holding SAGE Athena Swan Bronze Awards, non-SAGE Awardees comprise 5 universities and 10 MRI's which have not participated in SAGE or were awarded the Athena Swan Bronze Award.

This data indicates that gender equality reporting is important, however is not the lever to drive change towards gender equity, diversity and inclusion. SAGE subscribers are not only collecting data and establishing policies; they are taking action.

These findings reinforce the value of the SAGE accreditation and awards framework in driving sustainable action, and incentivising organisations to continue prioritising gender equity, diversity and inclusion.

International recognition

SAGE subscribers' achievements in gender equity, diversity and inclusion have also attracted praise for being world-leading. Six of our subscribers were named in the top 30 of the [Times Higher Education Impact Rankings 2022 for gender equality](#), a global ranking of universities' performance against the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 5: gender equality. The ranking takes into account each university's research on the study of gender equality, their policies on gender equality, and their commitment to recruiting and promoting women.¹

These are:

- Western Sydney University
- La Trobe University
- University of Canberra
- University of Newcastle
- Charles Sturt University
- Murdoch University

Spotlight on actions and initiatives

Here are some selected examples of the great work in gender equity, diversity and inclusion our subscribers undertook during the year:

[Walter and Eliza Hall Institute adopts a team-based approach to workplace flexibility](#)

As demand for flexibility increases, the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute (WEHI) knew they needed to update the way teams accommodate everyone's preferred way of working while staying productive.

With more people working flexibly, it was no longer feasible for supervisors to create individual work plans for each team member. A better solution, WEHI found, was for teams to agree on how, when and where everyone would work together.

As part of the newly launched Flex @ WEHI program, WEHI delivered training to help teams develop hybrid working protocols that suit their individual and group circumstances.

¹ To learn how Times Higher Education determines these rankings, see [Impact Rankings 2022: gender equality \(SDG 5\) methodology](#).

The University of Wollongong normalises sharing pronouns and name pronunciations

Using someone's preferred pronouns and pronouncing their name correctly is a fundamental sign of respect. Yet, many people are not sure how to share or ask for this information and end up relying on (sometimes mistaken) assumptions.

To disrupt the culture of making assumptions, the University of Wollongong created options for staff to add this information to their faculty profiles. This was accompanied by an awareness campaign about the importance of using preferred pronouns. Many Senior Executives, including the Vice-Chancellor, showed their support by incorporating pronouns into their email signatures.

In the pilot within the Faculty of Business and Law, approximately 20% of staff members volunteered to add their pronouns and/or name pronunciation to the faculty staff listings. Many staff also began display these details in their email signatures, Zoom, Webex, Scholar page and other platforms.

Murdoch University wins over top talent with an inclusion-first recruitment strategy

Murdoch University seized the opportunity to trial a new hiring process when they recruited a Pride and Respect Officer last year.

First, they tailored the advertising strategy to the role. The candidate pack included photos from recent Pride events at Murdoch, and the job was posted on platforms like Ethical Jobs, which target people looking for careers in social justice. The latter proved particularly fruitful, with 20% of applications coming via Ethical Jobs.

They also used a three-tiered interview process that involved a pre-prepared presentation, 2–3 questions with time for candidates to plan their answers, and 1–2 impromptu questions. Because candidates were told what to expect a week before the interview, each candidate arrived calm and relaxed, allowing them to showcase their strengths more fully.

The revised approach made the process more enjoyable for everyone involved. Eager to replicate this success, Murdoch plans to expand this approach to other areas of the University.

DSTG NAVIGATE program

Cutting-edge research organisations like the Defence Science and Technology Group (DSTG) need creative thinkers and diverse perspectives from all genders, at all levels, to solve highly complex Defence challenges.

Through their self-assessment process for a Bronze Award, they learned that the low numbers of women at mid-career/senior levels meant that their pool of women for senior executive positions was very limited, as those positions usually required a prior Defence background.

They identified priority actions to set gender targets at all levels, further investigate barriers to the retention and progression of mid-career women at DSTG, and increase the number of women at senior levels. NAVIGATE, a new program for recruiting mid-career STEM professionals with pre-defined gender targets, is one of those actions.

More initiatives were presented at *Diversity Interventions 2022 SAGE*:

RMIT University applies achievement-relative-to-opportunity (ARTO) principles in recruitment

RMIT began applying ARTO principles to recruitment campaigns for excellence in research, levelling the playing field for women, trans and gender diverse, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants, whose career journeys tend to be disproportionately impacted by family and cultural commitments as well as societal biases. This drove positive outcomes, with a third of shortlisted applicants and 41% of successful hires asking for ARTO considerations. As a result, RMIT achieved greater gender diversity in applicants than in previous years, with as many as 76% identifying as women.

Western Sydney University Vice Chancellor's Gender Equity Fund

After joining SAGE, Western Sydney University established the Vice-Chancellor's Gender Equity Fund. The Vice-Chancellor's Gender Equity Fund (the Fund) offers professional and academic staff the opportunity to apply for support in facilitating gender equity initiatives and promoting workplace inclusion at Western Sydney University.

To date, the Fund has provided over \$200,000 in grants to gender equity research and initiatives that benefit the University community. As a direct result of funded projects, evidence-informed improvements have been made to University breastfeeding facilities, academic promotions processes, targeted support for parents and carers, and staff and student training on gender equity and diversity.

Advocacy

As a leader in the gender equity space, SAGE regularly contributes our expertise to informing national reforms and initiatives. In 2022, we provided advice to the Attorney General's Department on the legislative recommendations of the Respect@Work report and contributed to the National Women's Safety Alliance's response to the Respect@Work amendment bill.

Our people

SAGE is fortunate to have a committed and energetic team to deliver our world-class program, support and initiatives. The leadership and influential profile of the SAGE board and Chair were also crucial to the strength and success of SAGE's relationships with our sector and stakeholders.

Throughout the year, our organisation continued to embrace flexible working arrangements, promoting work-life balance, health and well-being.

SAGE empowers our team to continue driving systemic change through ongoing training and professional development, strategic review workshops and conference presentations.

SAGE media highlights

Total media coverage

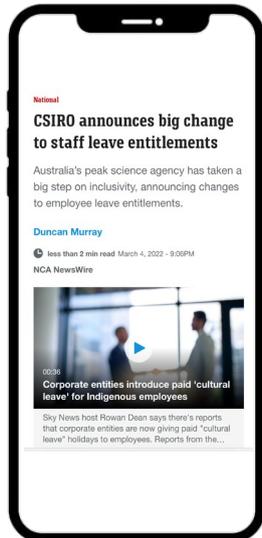


Here are some highlights of SAGE media coverage during this reporting period:

An [article](#) in The Australian featured SAGE's research on women's representation in the science industry. The article recognised that the three most senior public posts for science in the country were held by women, the most influence women have had in the industry than ever before. SAGE's research in the higher education sector supported discussion on difficulties women face rising to senior roles.



One of our subscribers, CSIRO, received press coverage in the [Herald Sun](#) and [Pedestrian TV](#) for their efforts towards creating a more inclusive workplace, including their leave entitlements for staff. SAGE was mentioned as one of the organisations helping them drive change. SAGE was also cited as a key initiative in [Swinburne University](#) and [Western Sydney University](#)'s gender equity and inclusivity efforts, particularly within employment within their STEM faculties.



Email newsletters

39 email campaigns were distributed throughout the reporting period, with an average open rate of 36.4% and a 7.8% click-through rate. Our subscriber base grew by 23% during this period.

Social media

SAGE remained highly active on social media to engage with our community, particularly utilising the platforms of LinkedIn and Twitter. Using content created in-house, as well as championing our SAGE subscribers by reposting and resharing their content, our social media presence broadly communicates our vision and mission, as well as our everyday action, impact and outcomes.



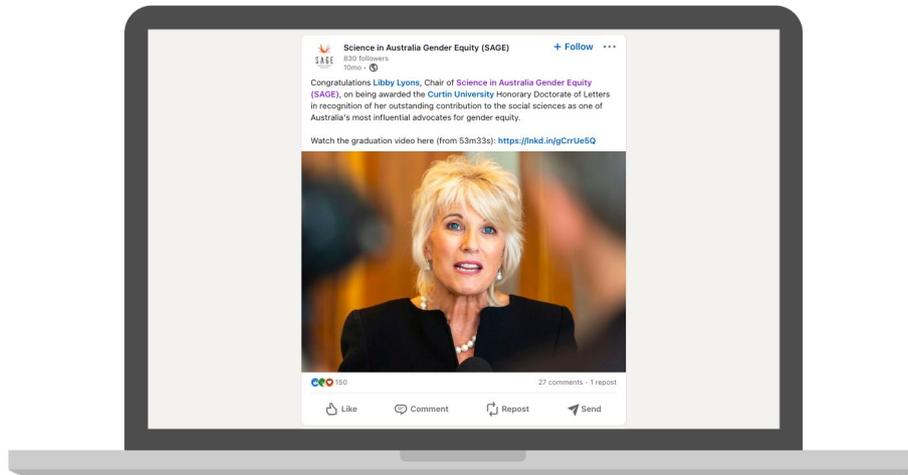
On Twitter, SAGE gained 172 new followers, finishing the period with 7.9k followers (↑ 2.2%). 229 posts were published, averaging 19 each month. With 1023 likes and 488 retweets, we achieved an average engagement rate of 2%.

On LinkedIn, SAGE gained 355 new followers, finishing the period with 857 followers (↑ 73%). 171 posts were published, averaging 14 posts per month. With 950 reactions and 48 comments, there were 998 total engagements.



Social media highlights

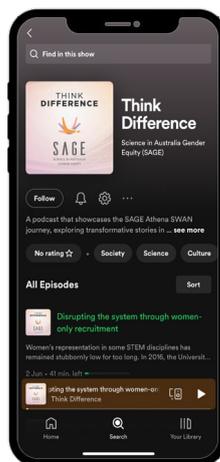
One of our most loved posts by our community this period (February 2022) was SAGE's congratulations to our Chair, Libby Lyons, on being awarded the Curtin University Honorary Doctorate of Letters in recognition of her outstanding contribution to the social sciences, as a driving force and one of the nation's most influential advocates for gender equity.



Our social media community often engages highly with our informative and educational content, distributing industry updates, statistics and relevant news stories that support SAGE's mission and the importance of our work.

Podcast: Think Difference

SAGE's podcast, *Think Difference*, had 776 downloads over the reporting period. One episode was published, titled "[Disrupting the system through women-only recruitment](#)".



Financial statement FY21–22

A financial report for the year ending 30 June 2022 is publicly available from the [Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission \(ACNC\) website](#).