

## SAGE Cygnet Award Application Form



## SAGE Cygnet Award Application

<b>Name of institution</b>	University of Newcastle
<b>Date of application</b>	31 October 2022
<b>Award Level</b>	Cygnet
<b>Date joined Athena SWAN</b>	Cohort One – January 2016
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<b>UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE: SAGE CYGNET 3</b>		
	<b>Current Cygnet</b>	<b>Barrier</b>
Mandatory Institution-wide barrier	➡	Career development support
[Mandatory] Sub-group barrier		
[Please select] Institution-wide/Sub-group barrier		
[Please select] Institution-wide/Sub-group barrier		

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## ACRONYMS

Acronym	Meaning
ARC	Australian Research Council
APP	Academic Planning and Performance
AMP	Academic Mentoring Program
ASBA	Athena Swan Bronze Award
ASBAP	Athena Swan Bronze Action Plan
ASWG	Athena Swan Working Group
CAD	Capability and Development Team
CESE	College of Engineering, Science and Environment
CHMW	College of Health, Medicine and Wellbeing
CHSF	College of Human and Social Futures
CPCO	Chief People and Culture Officer
DVC-RI	Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research and Innovation)
ECR	Early Career Researcher
FEBE	Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment
GEI	Gender Equity Indicator
HDR	Higher Degrees by Research
HEW	High Education Worker
HR	Human Resources
HRIS	Human Resources Information Services
MRFF	Medical Research Future Funds
NHMRC	National Health and Medical Research Council
PALS	Pathways and Academic Learning Support
PRD	Performance Review and Development
PVC	Pro Vice Chancellor
PVC-AE	Pro Vice Chancellor (Academic Excellence)
RA	Research Advantage
SAGE	Science in Australia Gender Equity
SABE	School of Architecture and Built Environment
SIPS	School of Information and Physical Sciences
STEMM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine
VCD	Vice Chancellor's Division
WIL	Women in Leadership
WIR	Women in Research
WPN	Women's Professoriate Network

## KEY BARRIER

The University of Newcastle recognises support for career advancement to be crucial for the progression and retention of all staff. At the time of Athena Swan Bronze Award (ASBA), the University had limited programs to support career development. Performance development reviews were optional and managed inconsistently at the local level. Because the established processes were not considered to be responsive to a university context, the procedures were often treated as box-ticking exercises, or not completed at all. The Athena Swan Working Group (ASWG) found that the lack of dedicated career conversations with supervisors, mentoring, and leadership development disproportionately hindered academic women’s readiness for promotion and professional women’s identification of career progression pathways.

The University therefore identified inadequate **career development support** as a key barrier for women, who face gender-specific challenges to career progression that effective mentoring can serve to reduce (Ovseiko, 2017). Between 2020 and 2022, the University put renewed emphasis on reducing this barrier, recognising the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women (Hansen, 2020) and the value of mentors in guiding women through the new and unprecedented challenges they confront (Kramer, 2021).

As key initiatives of the University’s Athena Swan Bronze Action Plan (ASBAP), the University established targeted programs to support both academic and professional women (Table 1). Tailored content and support mechanisms aim to enable women to navigate gender-specific challenges and overcome barriers to career progression. Taking an intersectional approach, the University identified the need for additional targeted career development opportunities for Indigenous staff and developed new initiatives, post-Bronze, to address this need.

**Table 1.** Programs developed to address the Key Barrier

Program Name	Targeted cohorts	ASBAP Action #
The University-wide Academic Mentoring Program	Academic staff at levels A to C	3.8
Local mentoring and sponsorship opportunities	New Academic Staff, Junior Staff, and Female and Indigenous Early and Mid-Career	3.9
Women’s Professoriate Network (WPN) Program	Academic women at levels D and E	3.10
Promotion Information Sessions for Academic Women	Academic women	3.3
Women in Research (WIR) Fellowship program	Academic women at levels C and above	3.6
Women in Leadership (WIL) program	Academic women levels C-E and professional women HEW 8 and above	3.7
Mandatory Performance and Planning	All staff	3.4
Supervisors Training on career development discussions as an integral part of PRD.	Supervisors	3.5
The Indigenous HDR Network	Indigenous HDR students	N/A

## EVIDENCE OF BARRIER

To understand the impact of the University's career development programs in relation to three Gender Equity Indicators (GEIs), the ASWG collected data from university records to track progress from 2018-2022, and undertook a multi-method (quantitative and qualitative) evaluation in 2022. Data sources included workforce representation by gender and classification (academic and professional), academic promotion records, research metrics and records of research productivity, program information and participation rates, presentations, surveys, and interviews with program participants.

### GEI 1. Mentoring programs to support women in advancing their careers

At the time of ASBA in 2018, the University did not have institution-wide formal academic mentoring and/or networking programs to support, guide, and/or coach women. Research Advantage (RA), a unit within the Research and Innovation Division, piloted bespoke training materials to support the delivery of mentoring and sponsorship, with the intention of building off this platform for further initiatives on an annualised basis. The ASBAP developed three actions to address GEI 1 (Table 2).

**Table 2.** ASBAP actions related to GEI 1

Action	Description of Action	Justification	Target Date	Success Measure
3.8	Continue to deliver mentoring and sponsorship coaching through online and face to face education and training through RA.	Localised mentoring and sponsorship opportunities required to supplement central programs.	Annual	30 women taking part per year.
3.9	Develop local (Faculty) mentoring and sponsorship opportunities and information sessions to support women in STEM.	Localised mentoring and sponsorship opportunities required to supplement central programs.	July 2019	Local mentoring and sponsorship program in place for each STEM Faculty by 2019.
3.10	Deliver Women's Professoriate Networking Program.	Senior academic women require opportunity to network. Senior leaders also required to mentor others. Extended in 2018 to Level Bs and Cs due to successful mentoring outcomes in 2017.	Annual	Five sessions delivered annually.

### GEI 2. Equal representation of women at senior levels

At the time of ASBA, a low proportion of academic women (30%) held senior positions (Level E) across the University, with the lowest proportion in College of Engineering, Science and

Environment (CESE) (16%). In addition, there was a low proportion (42%) of women in senior professional roles (HEW 10 and above). There were also low rates of women applying for promotion to senior academic levels. For example, in 2018 only 39% of the total promotion applications for Level D to E were from women. Although academic women have strong promotion success rates, an increase in the number of women applying (in comparison to men) is required to achieve gender parity at senior levels. The ASBAP therefore developed three actions to address GEI2 (Table 3).

**Table 3.** ASBAP actions related to GEI 2

Action	Description of Action	Justification	Target Date	Success Measure
3.3	Continue yearly practice of dedicated information session for Academic Women for Promotions.	Female candidates may undersell their achievements potentially jeopardizing chance for promotion.	Annually	Minimum of 30 women attending session and positive feedback received.
3.6	Roll out “Accelerate” Pilot for Level D Women (based on success of 2017 Pilot) to encourage women to apply for promotion within the next one to three years.  <i>Replaced by Women in Research</i>	Academic women can delay applying for promotion despite meeting or close to meeting targets.	Annually  (WIR run annually 2018-2022)	80% of participants apply for promotion within one to three years and are successful.
3.7	Deliver “Ignite” – a Women in Leadership program targeted at Level C & D women in 2018 and subsequent years. Program includes leadership skills, sponsorship, coaching and peer networking.	Provide opportunity to build leadership capability due to unique challenges that exist for women aspiring to senior/ leadership roles in Academia	Annually	Minimum 15 women (Level C&D) attending each year with at least 50% being successful for promotion within 3 years.

### GEI 3. Robust performance and development review processes

Academic Planning and Performance (APP) and Professional Performance Review and Development (PRD) are annual processes in which staff engage in career planning and goal setting, assessment of achievements, and meaningful conversations with their supervisor. In 2018, only 57% of academic women and 48% of professional women undertook a performance development review and, in some areas, these rates were much lower. This indicates that many women are missing opportunities for dedicated career development discussions and planning, which workplace research has found to be facilitators of career progression and retention of

women (Klein and Cappelli, 2007). ASBAP actions to address this indicator are displayed in Table 4.

**Table 4. ASBAP actions related to GEI 3**

Action	Description of action	Justification	Target date	Success measure
3.4	Introduce mandatory PRD for all women and men (fixed and ongoing) in STEMM and explicit career/promotion planning through PRD discussions.  Increase reporting and monitoring of participation of women in PRD in STEMM.	Limited PRD and career planning conversations between staff and supervisors taking place, with academic women on fixed-term and/or research roles	December 2019	80% completion of PRD by 2021.  Auditing reports available for review by January 2019.
3.5	Roll-out training for Supervisors on career development discussions as integral part of PRD.	Increased focus on career discussion required as integral conversation for promotion planning.	Annually	Four face-to-face training sessions held annually for Supervisors.

## ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

To address the key barrier, the University has undertaken a suite of initiatives to support staff career development and progression, with a specific focus on outcomes for women. These are based on the actions developed for the ASBAP. Some of these were modified to be more inclusive post-Bronze: expanding beyond STEMM to include all disciplines; incorporating professional *and* academic women; developing new programs for Indigenous students and staff.

### 1. Women in Research Fellowship program – GEI 1 and GEI 2

The Women in Research Fellowship program (WIR) was piloted in 2018 (Figure 1) and embedded on an annual basis from 2019 onwards as targeted support for the career development of academic women at levels C and D.



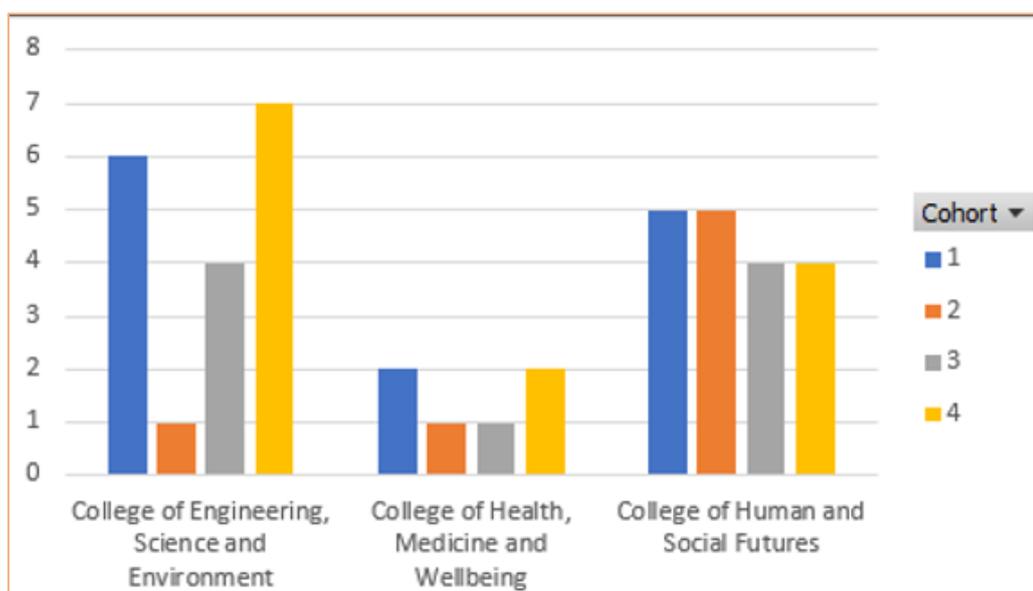
**Figure 1. 2018 WIR Fellows**

WIR is a multi-component 12-month program focused on offering dedicated mentoring and structured support (Table 5) with the aim to support and fast-track the careers of early and mid-career researchers.

**Table 5.** WIR Program Components

<b>Research funds</b>	\$30,000 in funding that enables Fellows to develop a bespoke research plan inclusive of support training, placement, and/or travel opportunities.
<b>Networking/collaboration</b>	Targeted network and collaboration events to facilitate sponsorship and networking opportunities
<b>Focused career development support</b>	Provision of assistance with career development planning to support goal setting and prioritisation as well as academic promotion (e.g., information sessions, ‘shut up and write’ workshops dedicated to promotion application, external review of promotion applications, and mock interviews)
<b>Mentorship</b>	Access to a Mentor/ Sponsor to facilitate career development and national/international engagement opportunities. Specifically, each Fellow is mentored by a Senior academic from within the University in addition to an external. This mentor relationship often continues after program completion.

The institution-wide program currently has 29 alumni, divided across three cohorts, and the most recent (fourth) cohort of 13 fellows is currently engaged in the 2022 program (Figure 2). WIR replaced the “Accelerate” program to provide more direct and funded support for women's research development. The **target success measure** of 80% of participants applying for promotion within one to three years has been met, with 79% of WIR participants successfully applying for promotion within two years (**ASBAP Actions 3.6**)



**Figure 2.** WIR cohorts

## 2. Women in Leadership – GEI 1 and GEI 2

The Women in Leadership program (WIL) was established in 2018 as part of ASBAP (retitled from Ignite). It is a multi-component, annual program that runs across four months. WIL targets academic women at levels B, C, D, and E and was expanded in 2020 to include professional staff at HEW levels 9 and above (expanded again in 2022 to include HEW level 8).



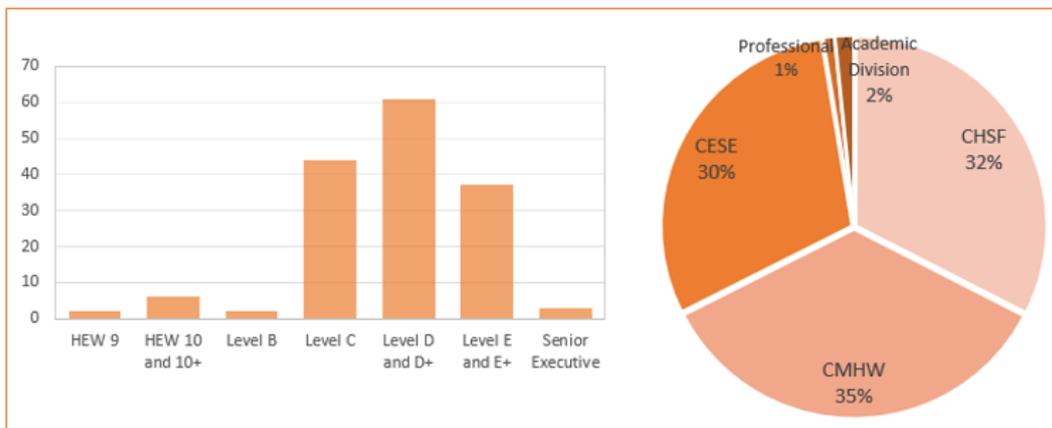
Figure 3. WIL participants when the program was delivered virtually during COVID.

The broadening of the program to include professional staff was in response for the need to support and increase the number of senior professional women (in alignment with a University KPI), as well as to optimize the benefits of shared learnings between professional and academic women. The program focuses on developing talented women leaders across the University (Figure 3) through the components described in Table 6.

Table 6. WIL program components

<b>Leadership skills</b>	Eight, full-day in-person interactive workshops. Topics include foundations of women in leadership, self-systems awareness, adaptive communications, and thriving complexity.
<b>Mentorship</b>	One-on-one coaching sessions with an experienced executive coach.
<b>Networking</b>	Networking opportunities with colleagues and WIL alumni.
<b>Peer support</b>	Peer support learning and reflections.
<b>Leadership concepts</b>	Articles and readings discussing key leadership concepts and application roles.

WIL has 194 alumni, of which 185 are academic staff and nine professional staff (lower professional staff numbers reflect their inclusion in later years). Figure 4 shows the proportion of participants from each College and Academic Division. The **target success measure** of 15 participants per year has been exceeded (**ASBAP Actions 3.7**).



**Figure 4.** (Left) A histogram of the level of WIL participants; (Right) Women participants by area

### 3. Promotion Information Sessions for Academic Women – GEI 2

In addition to the scheduled promotion sessions available to both men and women, the University recognized the value of introducing complementary sessions targeted towards women (Table 7) to ensure a greater number of women apply. These sessions addressed a range of issues such as relative to opportunity considerations, how to know when you are ready to apply, and selecting mentors for review of application. In 2022, in response to suggestions for more inclusive sessions, the scope was broadened to be open to all genders with a focus on equity considerations more generally. The **target success measure** of 30 annual participants has been met, although it has been noted that when the sessions opened to all genders and renamed ‘Equity Considerations Session’, participant numbers fell. The University will continue to evaluate this change over the coming year, with the potential reversion to women-only information sessions (**ASBAP Action 3.3**).

**Table 7.** Promotion Information Sessions (2018 – 2022)

Promotion Year	Promotion Session	Number of participants
2018	Information Session for Women	38
2019	Information Session for Women	35
2020	Information Session for Women	31
2021	Information Session for Women	33
2022	Equity Considerations Session	26

In addition to centralised promotion sessions, two of the three Colleges ran mock promotion sessions to further assist women applying for promotion. Table 8 shows the number of women who attended the sessions and the outcome of their promotion applications.

**Table 8.** CHMW and CESE – Mock Promotions Participation and Success rate

Year	CHMW		CESE	
	# Female	Success Rate	# Female	Success Rate
2018	10	80%		
2019	16	88%	3	100%
2020	12	100%	1	100%
2021	15	87%	2	50%
2022	11	tbc	6	tbc

#### 4. Women’s Professoriate Network - GEI 1 and GEI 2

As part of the ASBAP, the Women’s Professional Network (WPN) was delivered annually from 2018 onwards, following a pilot in 2017, to provide peer-to-peer support for academic women at levels D and E, prompting them to connect, collaborate, and mentor junior colleagues from the WIR cohort. Participants meet up to five times each year. All eligible women are invited to participate in the program (72 Associate Professors and 58 Professors). The average number of participants at most meetings is 50 women. Topics covered during the meetings are presented in Table 9. The **target success measure** of five sessions delivered annually has been met. **(ASBAP Actions 3.10)**

**Table 9.** Topics presented at WPN meetings

Year	Meetings per year	Topics
2017 est.	5	Mentorship vs sponsorship; the gender gap in STEMM; gender in STEMM realignment through Athena SWAN. Introduce 2018 WIR Recipient Cohort.
2018	5	Service vs leadership; responding to conflict and how to negotiate; SAGE Athena SWAN Action plan briefing and implementation; gender equity; University of Newcastle pledge, University Australia Executive Women application, FEBE Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee and HunterWISE year in review. Introduce 2019 WIR Recipient Cohort.
2019	5	Verity Leadership (mentoring workshop); Verity Leadership Difficult conversation; Empowering people through dynamic leadership and translating goals into action; ‘Flash’ mentoring circle; NUW Alliance roundtable (working together smarter). Introduce 2020/21 WIR Recipient Cohort.
2020	<i>Did not progress as a response to COVID-19</i>	
2021	4	Reconnections and Focus groups to listen to one another and form an impression of the WPN view on the recent past period at our University; What is important to women academics; Reframing success from a gender perspective. Introduce 2022 WIR Recipient Cohort.
2022	4	Update on the SAGE Athena Swan and our progress toward Silver status Identification of Cygnets and conversation groups; Academic Promotion (AP) (Review and feedback – AP draft applications, Mock interviews, share experiences College AP Committees, continue to mentor and sponsor EMCR Academics); Introduce (to be confirmed) 2023 WIR Recipient Cohort followed by Focus groups.

In addition to peer-to-peer support, the mentoring and sponsoring of junior colleagues by WPN members occurred via many channels. See Table 10 for the 2022 WPN involvement.

**Table 10.** 2022 WPN participated in activities

Program/Panel	WPN responsibility	Meeting Frequency
Expert Mentee cohort for the WIR Fellowship Internal mentor program	10 WPN members currently mentoring ten (10) 2022 WIR Fellows	At least 3 times
Expert Academic Promotions application review and feedback	6 WPN members providing comprehensive review and feedback to six (6) WIR Fellows and Alumni	Throughout August
Expert Academic Promotions Mock Interview Panel Members	Eleven WPN members providing real-time mock interview experience to six (6) WIR Fellows and Alumni in preparation for College and University Academic Promotion Committee Meetings	September
Expert external & prestigious Scholarship application review and feedback	9 WPN members providing comprehensive review and feedback to seven (7) junior Academics	September and October
Expert external & prestigious Scholarship Mock Interview Panel Members	8 WPN members providing real-time mock interview experience to 7 junior Academics in preparation for external & prestigious Scholarship State and National Interview Panels	September and October
Ad hoc mentorship and sponsorship	This is an action theme for the network. One of the meetings in 2022 was dedicated to the discussion and identifying practicable ways WPN members could support junior colleagues in their Schools and Colleges when preparing for Academic Promotion	Throughout the year
University wide Academic Mentoring Program	Many WPN members are Expert Mentors participating in the University wide Academic Mentoring Program providing advice and support to junior Academics	Throughout the year

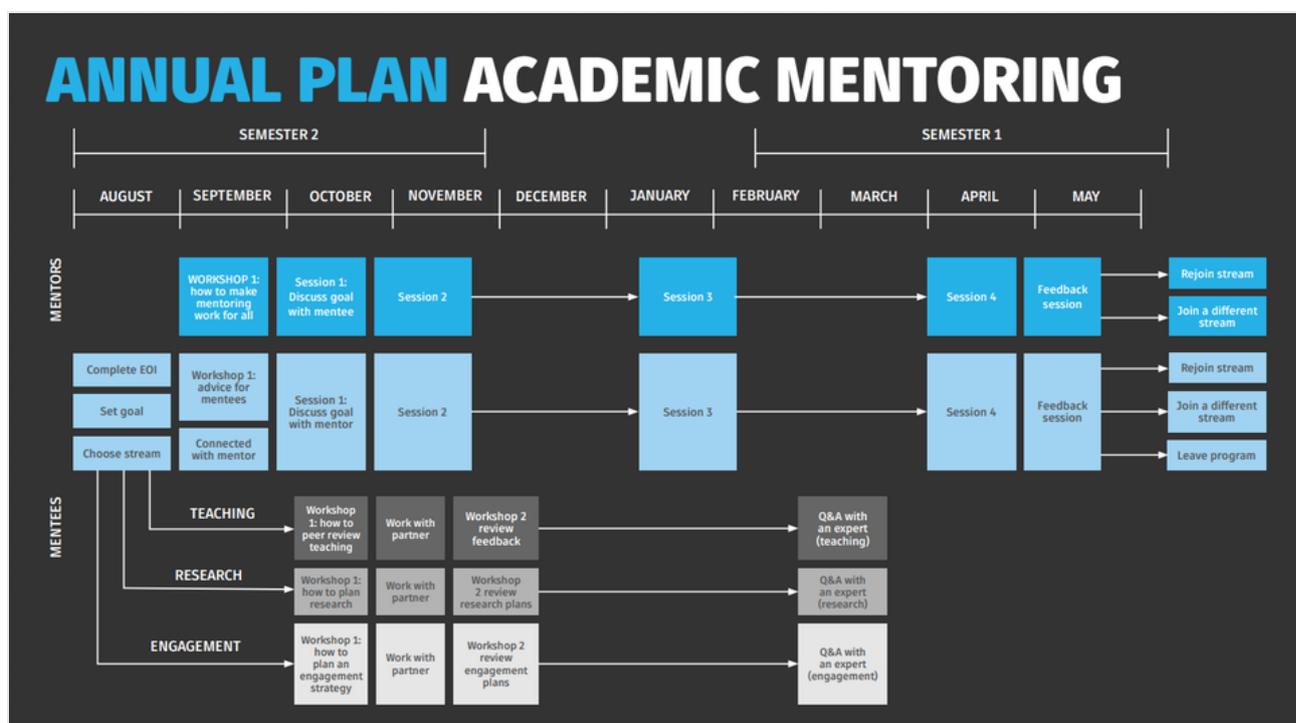
### 5. University-wide Academic Mentoring Program – GEI 1

The Academic Mentoring Program (AMP) was piloted in 2021 and launched as an annual university program in 2022. AMP aims to empower staff to become outstanding leaders in a high-performing institution. It supports career development in research, teaching, and engagement. Mentee positions in the program were offered to academics of level A-C from across the University and mentors were sought from academics of level D or above. Although originally open to approximately 30 staff mentees, the pilot program was expanded to accommodate for increased interest when 47 mentees applied for the program (several mentors agreed to support two mentees). In 2021, 47 mentees were matched to 32 mentors and in 2022, 51 mentees were matched to 40 mentors (Table 11). Figure 5 shows the activities involved in the year. The AMP built off the online and face-to-face training provided by RA and has exceeded the **target success measure** of 30 women taking part per year in 2021 and 2022. **(ASBAP Actions 3.8)**

**Table 11:** Characteristics of mentors and mentees in the AMP

		Male	Female	CHSF	CHMW	CESE	PALS	VCD	Total
2021	Mentors	12 (38%)	20 (63%)	12	7	12	0	1	32
	Mentees	10 (21%)	37 (79%)	14	18	13	2	0	47
2022	Mentors	23 (55%)	19 (45%)	9	7	24	1	-	42
	Mentees	7 (14%)	44 (86%)	10	25	12	-	4	51

Success with the Academic Mentoring program has led to the commitment to develop a parallel Professional Mentoring program in 2023, modelled on the Annual Plan in Figure 5 (see below, Further Actions).



**Figure 5.** Annual plan AMP September 2021- May 2022

### 6. Local mentoring and sponsorship opportunities - GEI 1

Table 12 describes several local mentorship and sponsorship programs at the University. In brief, CHMW established a sponsorship program to provide female and Indigenous early and mid-career academics with support in career development and progression. In CESE, the School of Information and Physical Sciences (SIPS) and the School of Architecture and the Built Environment (SABE) established programs to provide mentorship in fulfilling academic responsibilities for junior staff and new recruits.

The **target success measure** of having local mentoring programs in each STEMM college (formerly, faculties) has been met, although the aim to embed annually was disrupted by COVID. **(ASBAP Action 3.9)**

**Table 12.** Local mentoring and sponsorship opportunities

Mentoring Program	Description	Participants	Output
ThinkWell Female and Indigenous Early and Mid-Career Development.	Established by the College of Health Medicine & Wellbeing in 2018. It aims to develop skills, knowledge, and plans to help women and Indigenous academics (Early and Mid-Career) to progress to the next level.	2018: n=15 2019: n=12  COVID disruption to the scheme 2020-2022	Delivered various in-person workshops, coaching sessions, and professional networking opportunities. Participants also had access to a range of online tools
SABE mentoring program	Established by the School of Architecture and Built Environment in 2018 to support junior staff at the school.	2018 to 2022: n=36 staff members (18 females)	Senior staff arranged meetings with mentees and guided them in their roles. Discussed strategies to fulfill their duties as academic staff and challenges they face at work and how to solve them
SIPS mentoring program	Established by the School of Information and Physical Sciences in 2022; targeting new academic staff.	2022: n=3 staff (2 females)	Senior staff helped mentees (new recruits) through regular check-ins to ensure that they had everything they needed. Senior staff were the “go-to” for teaching advice and provided guidance on career development including building a CV conducive to attaining an ongoing role or promotion.

### 7. Support for Indigenous HDR Students – GEI 1

The University established an Indigenous HDR network in 2020 coordinated through a partnership between the University’s Graduate Research Office and the Wollotuka Institute. The network provides a culturally safe and supportive space to share HDR experiences and opportunities for academic skill development focused on: Indigenous research methodologies, effective community engagement with research, critical reading skills, and academic writing skills. In 2020, 37 students (21 female) joined the network and there are currently 47 students (31 female). To provide further support, in July 2020 the University established the [Indigenous Priority Scheme](#) scholarships for Indigenous HDR students. To-date the scholarship has supported nine students (six females). Indigenous professional and academic staff are connected and supported through the Indigenous Employment Network with guest speakers presenting on a range of topics such as research excellence for academic staff.

### 8. Performance development reviews for all staff – GEI 3

From 2022, undertaking performance development reviews (Performance Review and Development [PRD] for professional staff and Academic Planning and Performance [APP] for academic staff were made mandatory as a new policy. Participation rates increased as a result (Table 13); however, the **target success measure** of 80% completion by 2021 was not met. As a result of the policy change, completion rates are now rising (**ASBAP Actions 3.4**).

**Table 13.** Female staff who participated in a performance review (2018 and 2022)

<b>APP</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2022</b>
Number of female academic staff	<b>348</b>	<b>474</b>
Percentage of the total female academic staff population that participated	<b>57%</b>	<b>70%</b>
<b>PRD</b>		
Number of female professional staff	<b>634</b>	<b>819</b>
Percentage of the total female academic staff population that participated	<b>48%</b>	<b>61%</b>

Three APP eLearning modules were developed in 2022 for APP advisors, Heads of School, and academics which outline the APP program and how to work within the program. In addition, a Managing for Performance program, consisting of an eLearning module and two in person workshops, was rolled out to Heads of School, advisors, and managers (24 participants) in the second half of 2022. This workshop complemented two sessions run for 16 Heads of School. Further, the EDI unit at the University developed an EDI guide for supervisors to ensure that gender-considerations were included during performance and career conversations.<sup>1</sup> The **target success measure** of four annual face-to-face training sessions was met in 2022, with new eLearning modules introduced to expand the reach to greater numbers. **(ASBAP Actions 3.5).**

## OUTCOMES

The actions and outputs have contributed to the reduction of the key barrier. Although some programs and activities were delayed or adapted (e.g. online delivery) due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, improvements were observed in relation to the indicators stated under the ‘Evidence of Barrier’ section. Most of the ASBAP **target success measures** have been met with outcomes that demonstrate improvement by reducing sub-barriers. Table 14 details the contributions of each program in lowering the key barrier through the provision of tailored career development support programs for women across the University.

**Table 14.** Outcomes of career development programs and initiatives

<b>Outcome 1: Promotion success</b>	<b>Fifty percent (50%)</b> of women attending targeted programs (WIR, WIL, WPN and promotion sessions for academic women) were promoted within three years of their program participation.
<b>Outcome 2: Mentoring</b>	More than <b>100</b> women participating in the WPN and AMP mentoring programs and reported support for career planning by mentees.
<b>Outcome 3: External boards</b>	<b>Fifteen percent (15%)</b> of women attending targeted programs (WIR, WIL, WPN) hold senior roles or sit on a board or advisory Committee within three years of their program participation.

<sup>1</sup> [EquityDiversityfor-SupervisorsManagers.pdf \(newcastle.edu.au\)](#).

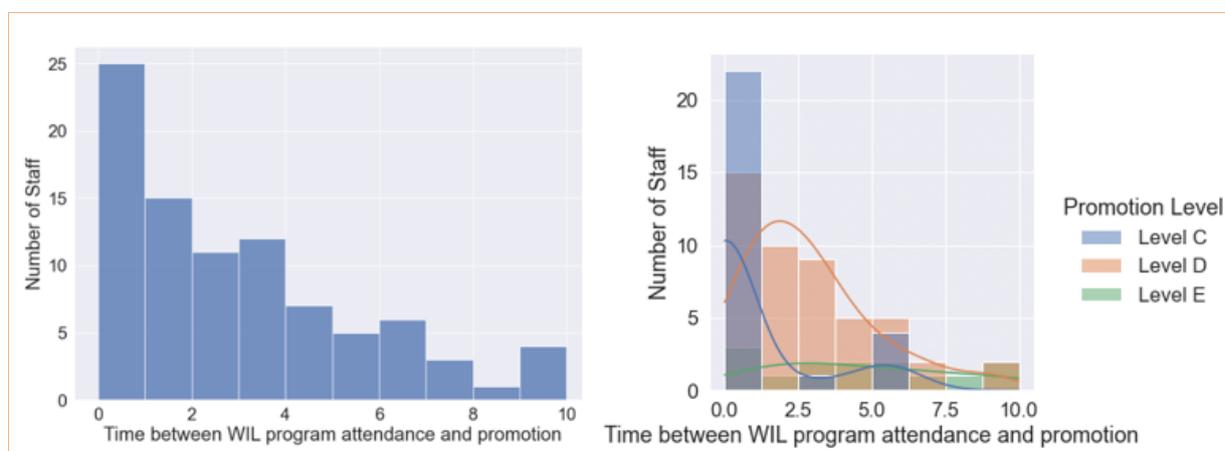
<b>Outcome 4: Career planning</b>	<b>Thirteen percent (13%)</b> increase in the proportion of women who participated in performance and development reviews by 2022.
<b>Outcome 5: Indigenous HDR pipeline</b>	<b>Five percent (5%)</b> increase in the retention rates of Indigenous HDR students by the year 2022.
<b>Outcome 6: Promotion applications</b>	<b>Eight percent (8%)</b> increase in the application rate of women applying for promotion overall between 2018 and 2021
<b>Outcome 7: Representation in academic senior roles</b>	<b>Five percent (5%)</b> increase in representation of senior academic women (currently 35%) between 2018 and 2022.
<b>Outcome 8: Representation in professional senior roles</b>	<b>Seven percent (7%)</b> increase in the representation of senior professional women (currently 49%) between 2018 and 2022.

### 1. Women in Research program – GEI 1 and GEI 2

Twenty-three out of 29 WIR alumni (79%) who responded to a WIR follow-up survey were promoted either in the fellowship year or the following year (**Outcome 1**). Also 84% were currently sitting on a board or advisory committee and reported that their performance as a leader had improved (**Outcome 3**).

### 2. Women in Leadership – GEI 2

Of a sample of 113 women who participated in the WIL program, 89 have received a promotion (78%). The histogram on the left in Figure 6 shows the time between WIL program attendance and subsequent promotion. A total of 25/113 participants received a promotion in the same year as attending WIL, suggesting that the program enhanced and supported their application. Moreover, the histogram on the right in Figure 6 shows that the majority of participants at level C applied for promotion soon after WIL (**Outcome 1**).



**Figure 6.** WIL attendance and being promoted

### 3. University-wide Academic Mentoring Program GEI 1

Preliminary outcomes showed high numbers of academic women engaging with the program: 79% and 86% of the mentees were female in 2021 and 2022, respectively. Figure 7 displays how mentees perceptions of how the program assisted with their academic career development. Based on the success of the 2021 pilot, it is now an annual program with an equivalent for professional staff to be rolled out in 2023 (**Outcome 2**).



**Figure 7.** University-wide Academic Mentoring Program (AMP) impact

### 4. Local Mentoring and Sponsorship GEI 1

The outcomes of local mentoring programs in SIPS and SABE have not been tracked beyond participation rates. In CHMW, however, ThinkWell have tracked research outcomes. An integral part of the program was for participants to develop a plan to achieve a career development goal with the overall aim of career progression and retention. The individual goals were focused on the requirements for academic promotion such as increased competitive research grants and research outputs. As displayed in Table 15, there were research and promotion outcomes for participants of both cohorts (**Outcome 1**).

**Table 15.** ThinkWell program outcomes in CHMW

2018 Cohort (15 participants) Female Early & Mid-Career	2019 Cohort (12 Participants) Female & Indigenous Early & Mid-Career
1 x MRFF ovarian cancer program grant	1 x EL1 MRFF Investigator Grant
2 x Heart Foundation Fellowships	1 x NHMRC Partnership project grant
1 x UON Women in Research Fellowship	1 x MRFF bushfire impact grant
2 x Women in STEMM ECR PhD Scholarships	1 x Heart Foundation Fellowship
100% retention in 2019-2020	2 x New Columbo Plan Projects
2 x 2019 Academic Promotions to Level C	2 x 2019 Academic Promotions to Level C
Abbreviations: MRFF (Medical Research Future funds); ECR (Early Career Researcher); NHMRC (National Health & Medical Research Council)	

### 5. Indigenous support for HDR Students – GEI 1

Ten HDR students (eight female) have completed their studies from the initial group of 37 that took part in the HDR networking program in 2020. Outcomes from the program include

increased engagement between Indigenous HDR students and greater awareness of the support available. An indicator of program success, although preliminary, is the increase in both enrolment and retention rates for Indigenous HDR students since the program began (Table 16). In addition, the *Indigenous Priority Scheme* scholarships for HDR students has supported nine students (six females) since it was established in July 2020 (**Outcome 5**).

**Table 16.** Indigenous HDR enrolment and retention

Academic year	Enrolment – n	Retention – n (%)
2020	34	29 (85%)
2021 (year-to-date 2.10.2022)	40	36 (90%)
2022	45	NA*
*Lag indicator		

### 6. Academic Planning and Performance and Performance Review & Development – GEI 3

The number of academic and professional women engaged in performance reviews has increased. In the period of four years (2018-2022), there has been an increase of 13% for women who participated in both APP and PRD. See Table 17 (**Outcome 4**).

**Table 17.** Women who participated in APP/PRD in 2018 - 2022

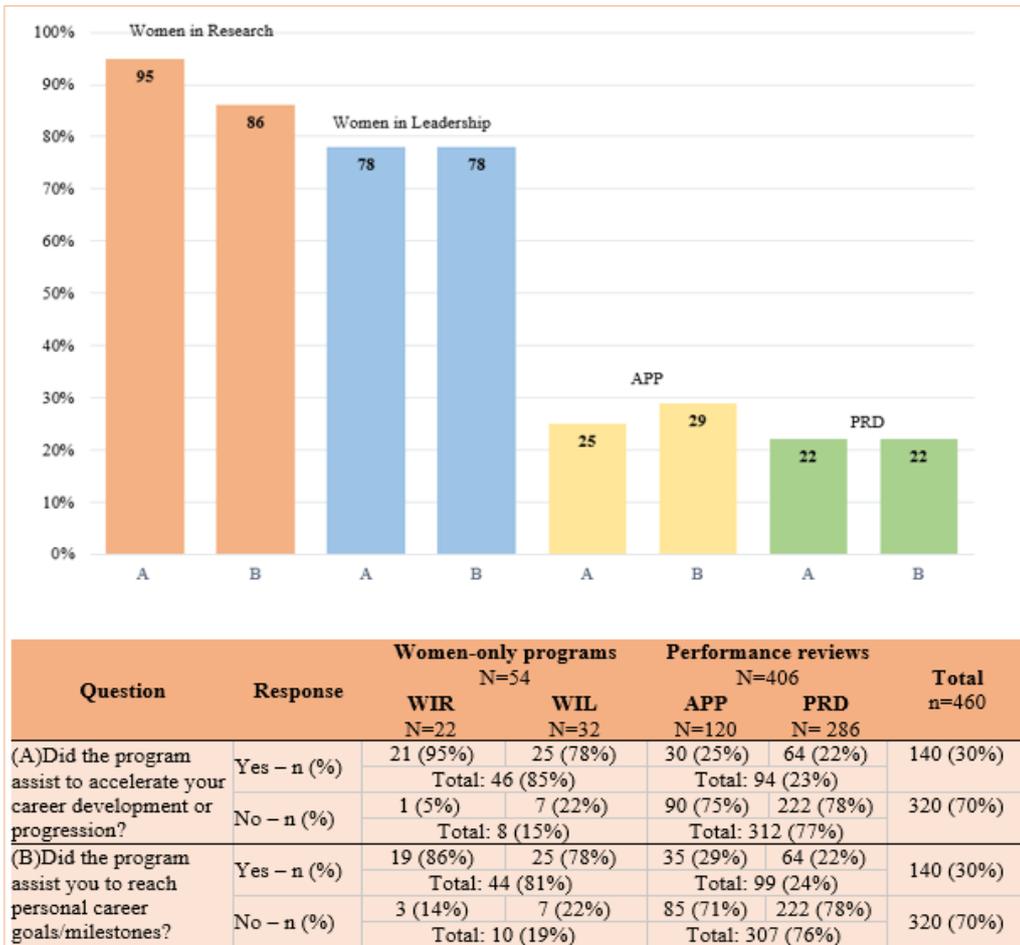
Year	APP		PRD	
	N	%*	N	%*
2018	348	57%	634	48%
2019	290	43%	620	45%
2020	379	55%	657	46%
2021	306	45%	522	38%
2022	474	70%	819	61%
*Percent calculated from the total eligible female cohort in that year				

## IMPACT

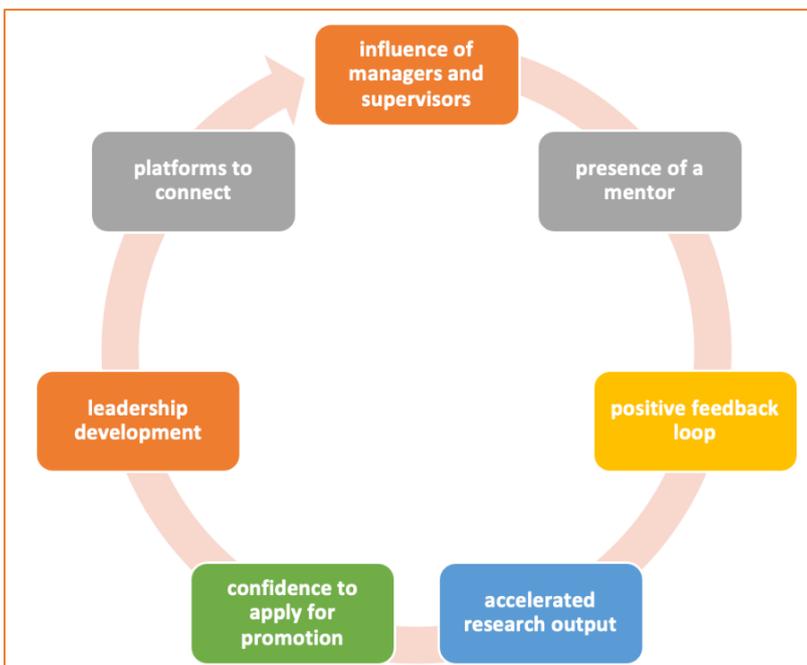
In October 2022, surveys were completed by 445 participants across the four programs (APP=116, PRD=276, WIR=21, and WIL=32); and qualitative interviews were conducted with 11 participants (APP=3, PRD=3, WIR=2, WIL=3).

Respondents' perceptions of whether undertaking the respective program had accelerated their career development and/or progression and helped them to reach their personal goals was positive for women-only programs (WIR/WIL), while there appeared to be room for improvement for performance development reviews (APP/PRD). See Figure 8 for details.

Themes from the qualitative interviews provide evidence of impact from the lived experience of participants across the four programs (Figure 9).



**Figure 8.** Proportion of survey participants who perceived the program had: (A) assisted to accelerate their career development or progression and (B) assisted them to reach personal career goals



**Figure 9.** High-level themes of impact derived from thematic analysis of qualitative interviews

Across all datasets, a prominent finding was the **profound influence of managers and supervisors on participant's career development and progression**. This positions them as key influential actors for the career development and progression of women at the University and underscores the importance of equipping them with effective managerial skills and resources (Table 18).

**Table 18.** Qualitative theme: Importance of support from supervisor

Participant ID	Experience
APP-Par06	<i>I think in terms of creating productivity and a sense of commitment to the institution, proper performance management processes are what is needed to ensure people are productive, happy, and committed to their work... I really think support for women depends on the manager. In my experience, there's no uniform policies and attitudes; I think it all really comes back to the manager and their sensitivity to the needs of what women who work for them want.</i>
WIL- Par05	<i>To have the attention and someone [supervisor] actually taking you seriously for that long is probably very important... and say, "look, maybe should be doing this. Oh yeah, I think what you're doing is really great. I think you're really competitive", whatever it is. To be able to get that feedback's important. I think it was much more about providing positive feedback for people... to be able to apply fairly clear trajectories for where they could actually take their research or the teaching or whatever it is that they're interested in developing.</i>
APP-818315	<i>It is encouraging and affirming to receive feedback from my APP supervisor.</i>

The **presence of a mentor superseded that of a supervisor** (regardless of effective or ineffective) when it came to impact on women's career development and progression. Related, WIR participants emphasized the importance of the mentor component of the program (Table 19).

**Table 19.** Qualitative theme: Profound influence from a mentor

Participant ID	Experience
WIR-Par09	<i>For me, it was very hard to overcome the barrier of going for promotion, I didn't think myself ready. But I had a mentor provided by Women in Research that was focused just on promotion... and was encouraged to put it [application] in, and I got promoted. So that was huge, because I'd waited ages. Like a lot of women, I was stuck on level C for, I've forgotten how many years, maybe eight years. A long time, seven or eight years.</i>
WIR-Par09	<i>... having women as mentors was crucial because you so badly need role models, and to hear from women who've had to navigate some of the difficulties that still exist.</i>
WIR-Par09	<i>Then just watching them [role model] in action, like [name of Leader], just watching her in action, a different style of leadership than they've had before... She's very impressive... She's feisty.</i>

WIL- Par11	<i>one of the key pieces of that was the one-on-one mentoring that the main facilitator did... it was really an opportunity for me to sit down and talk with her... just having those really honest discussions with her, she wasn't coming at it from an academic background, so to speak... it made me just think differently and approach that and be happier in where I was... So just those skills which are, more of those interpersonal type things and self-evaluation, which again is just not something that I'd had much exposure to previously in any of the other types of training that I've done.</i>
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The findings indicated that it may also be important that staff are exposed to effective managers/supervisors due to a **positive feedback loop** whereby a staff member's own positive experience(s) with a supervisor or mentor inspired them to become a positive influence for someone else when they later entered a supervisory role themselves (Table 20).

**Table 20.** Qualitative theme: Effective supervisors inspired future leaders

Participant ID	Experience
APP-Par06	<i>Once you've been the recipient of a really positive working relationship, you want to be that relationship for other people... Once you know the value of it for yourself, you just want to be the best you can for other people.</i>
WIL-Par07	<i>I'd applied for something and had interviews and stuff and I was talking to her [past manager] about the job, and I was like, "yeah, I can do all that, but I can't do that part." And she's like, "Yeah, just think a man. How hard can it be?" ... Think like a man, how hard can it be? I can do this job.</i>
WIR-Par09	<i>Also, now that I feel like I have had some success, and I have some experience now, I try to be more encouraging for others, and tell them how well they're going or, "Great that you got that thing," and, "What's next?" Or, just try to change the culture, really.</i>

Participants from women-only programs (WIR and WIL) acknowledged that the **programs accelerated their research output** and gave them the **confidence to apply for promotion** see Table 21.

**Table 21.** Qualitative theme: Program facilitated research development and promotion

Participant ID	Experience
WIR-4809033	<i>The WIR fellowship allowed me to believe that my research could be taken seriously by others and that it was worth developing further.</i>
WIR-4799269	<i>The funding facilitated attendance at a conference which resulted in the success of several initiatives that would otherwise not have happened including a publication and the founding of a new conference series.</i>
WIR-4798776	<i>It enhanced my research productivity and profile (I was able to conduct research and travel that would have otherwise not been possible with a toddler). I was successful in my subsequent promotion application...</i>

WIR-4807402	<i>Dedicated time to focus on research and mentoring were really helpful to fast track career and regain research strength.</i>
WIR-4801784	<i>The WIRF was awarded during the year I returned to full time work after a number of years at 0.6 FTE [part-time] while taking care of my young children. My goal was to re-establish and fast track the research component of my academic position. In particular I wanted to pivot my research to encompass a new line of research that had interested me for many years and I felt would increase grant success as it opened up new avenues to apply for grants. The WIRF allowed me to buy out a large portion of my teaching for a year so that I could put more energy and time into getting this new research area off the ground. This included travelling to [European country] for training and developing new collaborations. This has proven to be a successful strategy.</i>
WIL-Par05	<i>When I went into Women in Leadership, I think I was quite sceptical about it... I was swept away by it, actually. It was really, really positive. And I think it gave me the confidence to actually apply for a promotion. So not only did it give me confidence, it gave me a lot of the skills that I needed to get through that process.</i>

Free text responses from surveys and quotes from interviews suggested that the women-only **programs supported leadership development** and influenced participants to pursue a leadership role at the university (Table 22).

**Table 22.** Qualitative theme: Leadership development

<b>Participant ID</b>	<b>Experience</b>
WIL-4799949	<i>This program gave me the confidence that I could be an effective leader and helped me to put my hand up to step into more senior leadership roles within the University.</i>
WIL-4798453	<i>The program gave me the confidence that I needed at the right time. Being an ECR [early career researcher] and then in some leadership roles during the 'enabling change' [restructuring] period was quite challenging for me... Confidence in myself was the best thing that I got out of this.</i>
WIR-4801869	<i>The program included many mentoring opportunities. In discussion with my mentors I was encouraged to be more proactive with my career goals. I discussed my aspirations with the PVC and he encouraged me to apply for a leadership role. This has led to career progression.</i>

Several participants reported that women-only programs served as **platforms to connect** with other women. This has assisted in the establishment of a supportive community at the University (Table 23).

**Table 23.** Qualitative theme: Established a supportive community of women

Participant ID	Experience
WIL-Par05	<i>There's a different atmosphere in a room when it's all women working together... there was a sense of it being supportive, people taking time to listen to other people's responses, people not being ashamed to get upset about things that you would in a mixed gender group... there was a lot of freedom to actually express things that you were thinking and feeling in that sort of environment without any feeling of stigma... The other women who were involved in it were really important...I've been able to build up really nice networks because of that group. Particularly as I was reasonably new at the university, that was very confidence-creating. And I still catch up with lots of people, and have formed some nice little research collaborations as well, which has been really useful to me...</i>
WIL-4798453	<i>This program gave me the opportunity to connect with other women who were going through similar [challenging] circumstances and that enabled me to find solutions for myself that worked for me.</i>
WIL-4802717	<i>A number of factors played into its value: networking – getting to know (quite intimately) many other women in the university such that new bonds were formed.</i>
WIR-4798488	<i>It created an additional network of women in the University that I can leverage for support.</i>
WIL- Par11	<i>And having those women, and having continued those relationships even now, and even if we don't see each other, it's like you have those contacts and that support and there's people to reach out to, which is another really valuable thing in an institution where sometimes you can feel quite isolated, I suppose</i>

A low proportion of APP and PRD participants acknowledged that the program accelerated career progression (PRD 22%; APP 25%) and agreed that the processes made them feel supported with their supervisor or manager (Table 24). While this positive experience is lower than desired, it is evidence that the sub-barrier initiatives around institution-wide **manager training and mandatory completions** of performance development reviews are helping to reduce the key barrier.

**Table 24.** Qualitative theme: Participants felt supported by Supervisor

Participant ID	Experience
APP-4798533	<i>In the process of APP I discussed with my supervisor the expectations for the next career step. This motivated me to put application for promotion in this year-round.</i>
APP-4798672	<i>Yes, because it provided me with an opportunity to communicate with my boss about how ambitious I am. It allowed me to get on my boss' radar as someone who has a rapidly rising trajectory which has, I believe, facilitated greater opportunities and support.</i>
PRD-Par03	<i>For my last role, I had a pretty good face to face PRD session with my supervisor at the time. And in that session, we had quite a good conversation about my next goals and things that I wanted to be a part of or that I wanted to achieve. And, he was very supportive with that. I wanted to join a particular committee and by doing so, that helped me get the role that I'm in now. It helped me get more experience and things like that. I found that to be very positive. I found that to be very helpful. But it was only through my conversation with him did that happen.</i>

The majority of participants who completed the performance review survey indicated that they took part in the process because it was mandatory (n=316; 81%). Correspondingly, the qualitative data revealed that APP and PRD were completed only as a ‘tick box’ exercise (Table 25). Another theme that emerged was the lack of clear implementation instructions for staff and/or managers. This indicates there is more work to be done to change the culture around performance development reviews (see below Further Actions, Table 26, Item 6).

**Table 25.** Qualitative theme: Performance reviews are a ‘tick box’ exercise

<b>Participant ID</b>	<b>Experience</b>
APP-4798587	<i>In my experience, the PRD has been used as a tick box, formulaic exercise by my supervisor</i>
APP-Par06	<i>I think that they've always been treated pretty much as tick box exercises. They're the things that you have to do in order to make sure that the system stops emailing you.</i>
PRD-Par02	<i>But they do prompt, and prompt, and prompt for you to do it... people are reluctant to do it. And because it is just seen as a ticker box exercise, it doesn't add any value to someone's career or pathway.</i>
PRD-4798441	<i>In the three teams I have worked in, the PRD process was treated purely as a box ticking exercise. The perception from supervisors was that it needed to be completed so they didn't get email reminders about staff not having entered goals but there were not meetings, check ins, or any sincere engagement with the process.</i>
APP-Par06	<i>I myself took on managerial roles, so I was in charge of other people's APP processes, which I think was pretty challenging. I don't think I, like most academics in management, had a lot of guidance about what those processes should be and what they should look like. [Managers] are often really time-poor and don't necessarily get the recognition or training that they need to acquit that process well.</i>
PRD-Par03	<i>Par03: ... it [PRD] wasn't really all that well explained to me. And I found the process to be pretty confusing. I just didn't have a very good grasp on it. And now in my current role, outside of my supervisor sitting down with me and walking me through the steps verbally, I wouldn't really understand it.</i>

## Further Actions

**Table 26.** Further actions derived from Cygnet findings

Ref.	Rationale/Evidence	Actions	Timeframe	Responsibility	Desired Outcomes/Targets
1	High numbers of academic women participating in mentoring program as mentees.	Monitor promotion success rate of women who undertake <b>Academic Mentoring Program</b>	Q1 2023 and annually thereafter	PVC-AE CPCO HR (CAD)	Participants are promoted and/or other success measures evident.
2	Lack of targeted mentoring programs for professional women to complement AMP	Pilot, review, and embed <b>Professional Mentoring Program</b>	Q1 2023 and annually thereafter	CPCO PVC-AE HR (CAD)	Participants have identified career pathways and are supported through facilitation of secondments, project opportunities etc. that contribute to job enrichment and progression
3	Development required for emerging or new leaders (HEW 6 or Level C and above)	Roll out <b>Live, Learn, Lead</b> program	Q1 2023 and annually thereafter	CPCO HR (CAD)	Emerging and new leaders confident to take on first leadership role
4	Targeted leadership skills required for progression and retention of senior women	Continue to track impact/success measures for <b>Women in Leadership</b> participants	Current and ongoing	CPCO PVC-AE HR (CAD & HRIS)	Participants are promoted and/or other success measures evident.
5	Fellowships required for women to address career breaks/part-time status and non-linear career paths.	Continue to track impact/success measures for <b>Women in Research</b> participants	Current and ongoing	DVC-RI Research Advantage	Participants are promoted and/or other success measures such as research metrics.
6	Career planning critical for progression and retention of women.	Ongoing evaluation of <b>PRD/APP</b> engagement through monthly monitoring and reporting of participation rates to HOS and Executive and tracking rates of training	Current and ongoing	CPCO PVC-AE HR (CAD)	Increased participation and positive feedback by staff regarding PRD/APP. Increased supervisor capability in conducting career conversations.

		participation for Supervisors.			
7	Expansion of School-based mentoring and sponsorship	Begin to track impact/success measures for participants in SIPS and SABE as pilot programs for <b>local mentoring</b>	2023	HoS	Additional local mentoring and sponsorship programs are developed in Schools to complement centralised mentoring programs
8	Greater numbers of women are required to apply for promotion to improve senior leadership representation	Ongoing provision and evaluation of <b>Equity Considerations promotion session and mock interviews</b>	Current and ongoing	HR and EDI AD EDI CHMW AD EDI ESE	Increased number of women and other equity groups applying for promotion
9	Significant outcomes from 2018 and 2019 program for women and Indigenous staff	Re-introduction of <b>ThinkWell</b> program to CHM&W	2023	PVC CHMW and AD EDI CHMW	Continued success measures such as research achievements achieved.
10	Greater retention of Indigenous research students with provision of networking and support.	Ongoing evaluation of <b>HDR networking program</b> for Indigenous HDR students	Current and ongoing	PVC-I Wollotuka SPP/Graduate Research Office	Increased participation enrolment and retention rates of Indigenous HDR students.

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