SAGE Cygnet Award

Institutional Context

Name of Institution	Flinders University
Date of Application	31 October 2023
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY
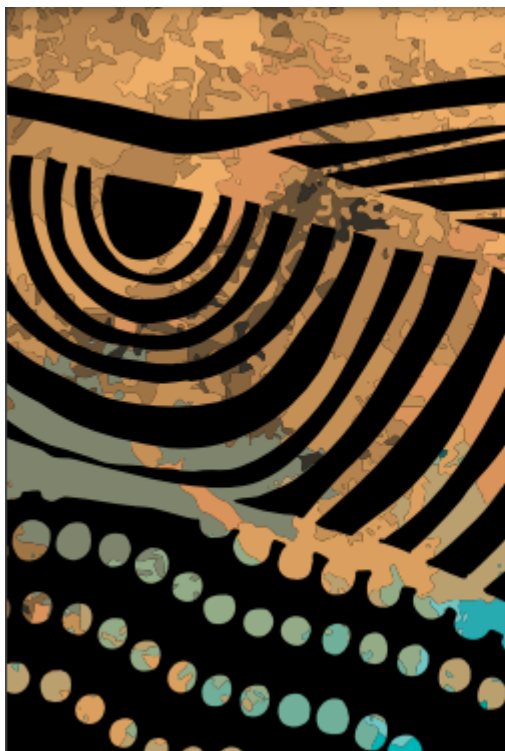
Flinders University acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands on which its campuses are located, these are the Traditional Lands of the Arrernte, Dagoman, First Nations of the Southeast, First Peoples of the River Murray and Mallee region, Jawoyn, Kaurna, Larrakia, Ngadjuri, Ngarrindjeri, Ramindjeri, Warumungu, Wardaman and Yolngu people. We honour their Elders and Custodians past, present and emerging.

We also acknowledge and pay respect to the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander nations from which our students, staff and community are from.

Artwork credit

Elizabeth Yanyi Close
Pitjantjatjara/Yankunytjatjara, 2020

The artwork both explores Connection to Country and speaks to the Landscape around Flinders University, but it also deeply explores and speaks to the concept of many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people travelling to undertake their studies bringing with them knowledge, wisdom and understanding of their own Language Groups and standing together as one.

Flinders University uses the term 'Indigenous' when referring to programs and strategies and 'Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander' when referring to peoples. For the purpose of this report, 'Indigenous will also be used to mean Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples.

INSTITUTIONAL OVERVIEW

Established in 1966, Flinders University is today a leading international university with a strong commitment and record of excellence in the innovation of teaching and research, and delivery of exceptional student experience. Flinders mission is to change lives, change the world through world leading research and innovative contemporary education, and be a source of Australia's most enterprising graduates. Flinders is a research-intensive university, and in the last five years, has seen research income grow by more than 140%.

In recent times, Flinders has commenced development on several large infrastructure projects, including the new City Campus opening in 2024, the Health and Medical Research Building, providing opportunities for collaboration and further research growth, and Flinders Village, a vibrant urban centre to support our future focussed vision to become one of the most innovative, creative, and vibrant campuses in the world.

Currently one of three South Australian Public universities, our main campus is located on the lands of the Kaurna nation in Bedford Park, a suburb south of the Adelaide City Centre. Flinders geographical footprint extends across metropolitan, regional, interstate, international and satellite campuses, in addition to delivering teaching and research programs in Victoria, Northern Territory (NT), and off-shore within the Asia-Pacific region.
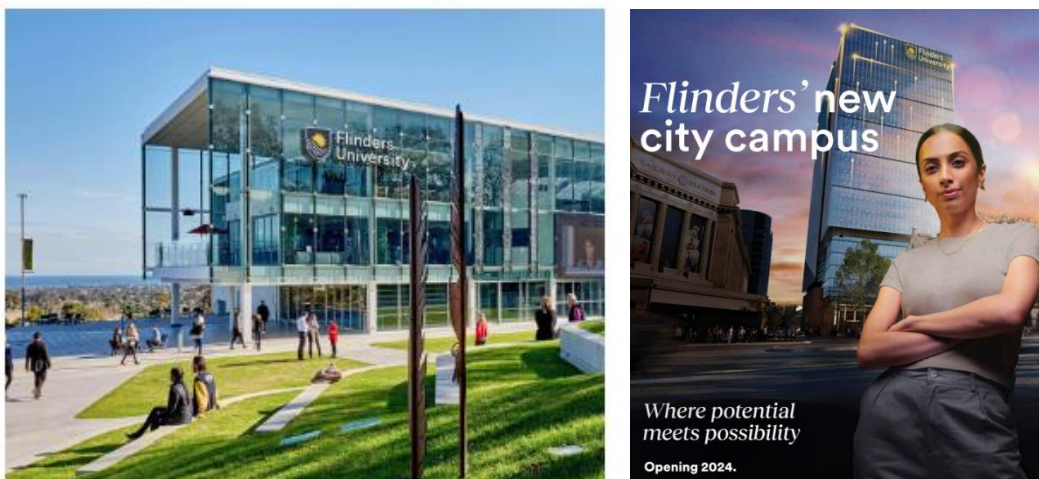

Image 1: Images of Flinders Bedford Park campus and City campus

Image 2: Artist's impressions of Flinders Health and Medical Research Building and Flinders Village

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

Flinders organisational structure (Image 3) holds up the four pillars of our strategic plan, and our academic and administrative structures facilitate the achievement of our vision, mission, and strategic objectives.

The President and Vice-Chancellor is Flinders Chief Executive and is supported by the Senior Executive Team, comprising Deputy and Pro Vice-Chancellors, Vice-Presidents and Executive Deans, who operate within 6 colleges and 6 portfolios.

Organisational *structure*

Flinders University Council
Mr Stephen Gerlach AM, Chancellor

President and Vice-Chancellor
Professor Colin Stirling

Portfolios

Colleges

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)
Professor Robert Saint AM
- Office of Graduate Research
- Research Development and Support
- Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research Impact)

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Students)
Professor Romy Lawson
- Office of Indigenous Strategy and Engagement
- Curriculum Impact
- Centre for Innovation in Learning and Teaching
- Academic Quality and Enhancement
- Student Administration Services, Experience, Recruitment, Services
- New Venture Institute
- Marketing

Vice-President and Pro Vice-Chancellor (International)
Mr Sebastian Raneskold
- Flinders International

Vice-President (Corporate Services)
Mr Mark Gregory
- Property, Facilities and Development
- Finance and Procurement Services
- Flinders Living
- Information and Digital Services
- Library
- People and Culture

Chief Financial Officer
Mr Richard Porter

General Counsel and University Secretary
Mr Marc Davies
- Office of the Chancellor
- Governance, Legal and Risk

Chief of Staff
Ms Jayne Flaherty
- Office of the Vice-Chancellor
- Alumni Relations and Advancement
- Media and Communications
- Government and External Relations

Vice-President and Executive Dean College of Business, Government and Law
Professor Michael Gilding

Vice-President and Executive Dean College of Education, Psychology and Social Work
Professor Deborah West

Vice-President and Executive Dean College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences
Professor Peter Monteath

Vice-President and Executive Dean College of Nursing and Health Sciences
Professor Alison Kitson

Vice-President and Executive Dean College of Medicine and Public Heath
Professor Jonathan Craig

Vice-President and Executive Dean College of Science and Engineering
Professor Alistair Rendell

***Image 3:** Flinders University Organisational Structure*

STRATEGIC PLAN

Flinders University's overarching Strategic Plan, *Making a Difference – the 2025 Agenda,* outlines the University's vision and mission. With progress reported through Flinders Annual Planning and Accountability (APAC) cycle (Image 4), the 2025 agenda is built on the four pillars below:

- ➢ People and Culture
- ➢ Research
- ➢ Education
- ➢ Engagement and Impact

Image 4: The Strategic Plan Architecture, Flinders University – extracted from The 2025 Agenda

The 2025 Agenda prioritises our people, and an inclusive, values-based community where diversity is celebrated and equity, inclusion and social responsibility is promoted. Our commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion is further imbedded under our 'People and Culture' pillar (Image 5), our Values and Ethos[1] (Image 6), and in our Code of Conduct,[2] (Image 7).

Flinders University will:

- Promote an agile, enterprising and accountable culture in which staff and students are committed to excellence and determined to make a difference

- Engage students as partners in the co-creation of a learning experience that inspires achievement

- Champion diversity and create a vibrant, inclusive and values-based community that makes Flinders the destination of choice for students and staff

Image 5: The Flinders University Making a Difference_2025 Agenda: People and Culture Pillar

Our Values and Ethos

Our core values and ethos will be the foundation for our success.

The values of *Integrity, Courage, Innovation and Excellence*, along with the underlying ethos of being *Student Centred*, will together underpin our decision-making and culture.

STUDENT CENTRED
- Focus on student success
- Empower students as partners
- Encourage the student voice
- Provide timely and meaningful feedback
- Celebrate student achievement

INTEGRITY
- Maintain the highest professional and ethical standards at all times
- Be accountable for our actions and follow through on our commitments
- Embrace diversity and promote equity, inclusion and social responsibility
- Treat others with courtesy and respect
- Foster a safe and healthy environment for work and study

COURAGE
- Trust and empower
- Seize opportunities and embrace change
- Learn from experience
- Be open and transparent in our communications
- Pursue critical and open inquiry

INNOVATION
- Solve problems by "thinking outside the box"
- Promote personal enterprise and creativity
- Encourage teamwork and collaboration
- Be responsive and innovative when faced with new challenges
- Actively engage with business and industry

EXCELLENCE
- Strive for excellence in every endeavour
- Commit to quality and continuous improvement
- Celebrate our achievements
- Deliver exceptional levels of service
- Develop future leaders

Image 6: *Flinders University Values and Ethos*

All those to whom this Code of Conduct applies are required to:

1. Uphold the ethos and values of the University
2. Conduct all their work-related activities safely and in accordance with all applicable laws
3. Understand and comply with all applicable University statutes, policies and procedures
4. Respect and uphold the principles of equity, inclusivity and diversity to ensure a workplace that is free from discrimination and harassment
5. Promote and maintain Flinders University as an environment where there is no place for bullying, sexual harassment or sexual assault
6. Maintain the highest standards of academic integrity
7. Value and uphold the freedom of speech and academic freedom
8. Avoid or disclose and manage all actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest
9. Protect the University's confidential information and intellectual property
10. Use the University's funds, property and other resources responsibly and for the benefit of the University
11. Act in the interests of the University and uphold its reputation.

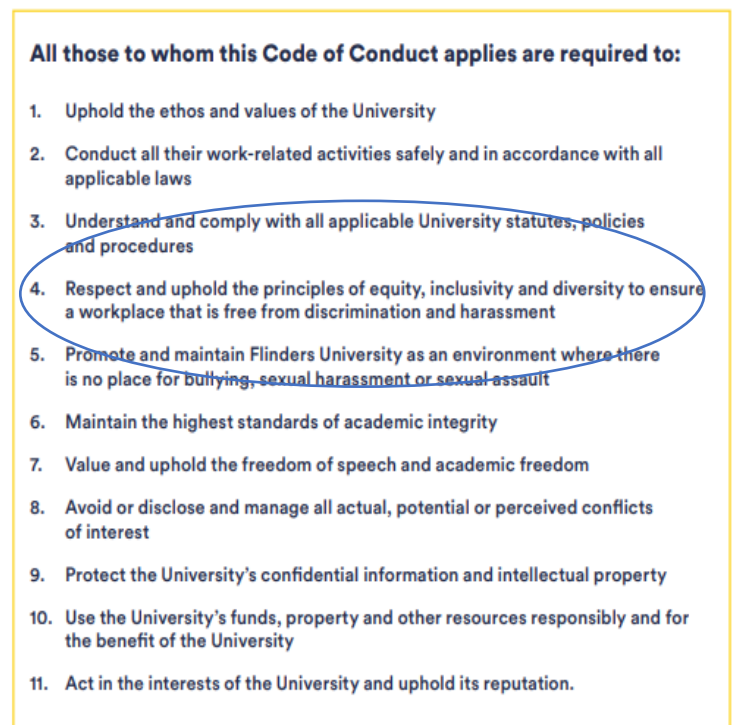**Image 7:** *Flinders University Code of Conduct*

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1 Values and Ethos underpin all decision-making and culture
2 Code of conduct sets out behavioural standards

GOVERNANCE

Council

University Council is the governing, principal policy and decision-making body of the university. Council is responsible for the strategic direction, general oversight and performance of the university and attainment of its objectives. Duties and responsibilities of Council are derived from the Flinders University Act 1966 (SA) (the "Act"), including adherence to principles of equal opportunity, access, equity and social justice. (Image. 8)

> (3a) Where a person is appointed to the Council, the appointing authority must recognise that the Council is, as far as practicable, to be constituted of equal numbers of men and women who—
>
> (a) have a commitment to education and, in particular, to higher education; and
>
> (b) have an understanding of, and commitment to, the principles of equal opportunity and social justice and, in particular, to access and equity in education.

Image 8: *Flinders University Act 1966 -extract*

Council Membership by Gender

Council has 15 members, and whilst not currently gender balanced this will adjust once vacancies are filled (Table 1)[3]

	Female	Male	Non-binary	Vacancy
Chair	0	1	0	
Members	54% (n=7)	38% (n= 5)	8% (n=1)	(n=2)

Table 1: *Council membership by gender*

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[3].40/40/20

Council Standing Committees

Five standing Committees provide Council with advice and assistance in relation to the performance of its responsibilities. (Diagram 1).

Diagram 1: *Council and Standing Committees*

Diversity and Inclusion Committee

Flinders overarching Diversity and Inclusion Committee (D&IC) acts as an advisory committee to the Vice-Chancellor. It is responsible for the development and strategic oversight of the University's D&I agenda, and alignment with broader University strategy including:

- monitoring performance on a range of D&I measures,
- acting as a reference group,
- making recommendations, and
- convening sub-committees and working groups to progress University priorities.

Whilst some D&IC roles are determined through elections others are ex-officio.   This presents challenges in achieving gender balance.[4]

Colleges and Portfolios have various Gender, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (GEDI) Committees, working groups, and local level operational plans which support the advancement of university strategic plans. Each Committee in the diagram below contains senior representation from Colleges and Portfolios.

To facilitate recognition of achievement and modulation against broader university GEDI strategy, all represented groups and committees in Diagram 3 below, contribute updates which inform D&IC bi-annual reports to the VC.

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[4] current membership as at 11.10.23 (10 female and 4 male). Work continues in this space to achieve gender balance in accordance with our policies and action 5.4v ASBAP. Indigenous representation is ensured through ex-officio membership (Pro-Vice chancellor Indigenous).
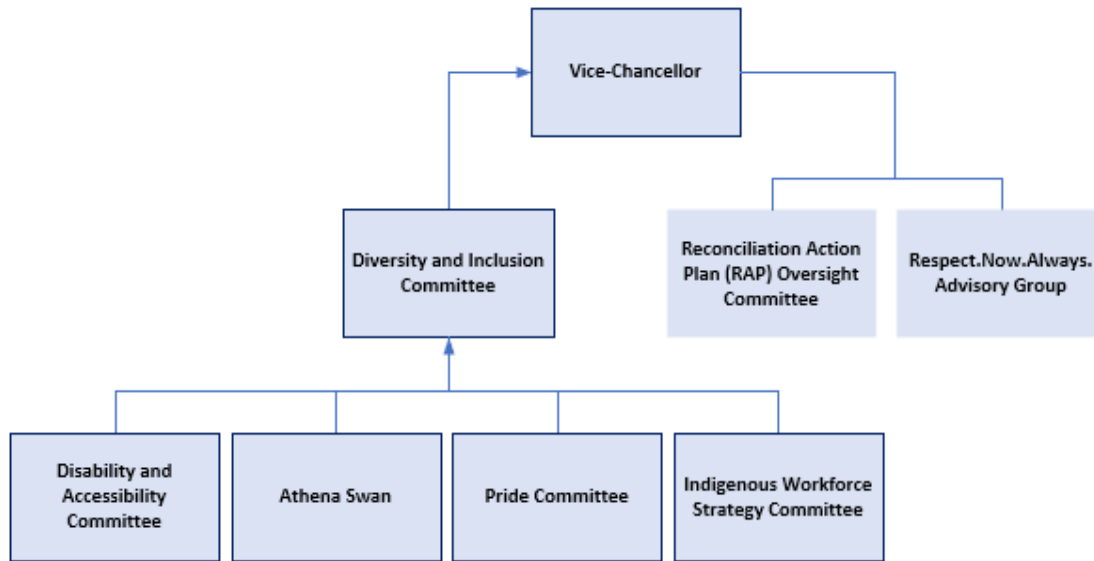
Diagram 2: University D&I reporting structure

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Staff

Flinders employees are classified as either Academic or Professional. Classification descriptors[5] and academic profiles[6] identify the appropriate qualification and/or experience required for staff[7].

There are 5 Academic levels (A-E) and 4 relevant Job Families: Teaching and Research; Research or Teaching only and Administrative. Casual Academic staff are remunerated in accordance with casual rates and descriptors[8].

In 2023 Flinders employed 2,583 continuing and fixed-term staff (headcount), comprising 45% (n=1,1157) academic and 55% (n = 1,426) professional staff. 66% of staff were females and 34% male. composition by gender is further detailed against each College in Table 2 below. Casual staff by full-time equivalent (FTE) numbered 230, comprising 133 academics and 96 professional staff.[9]

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[5]Professional staff

[6]Academic staff

[7] fixed-term and continuing

[8] 10 Professional Staff Classifications (Higher Education Officer Level 1-10) apply to both casual and non-casual staff as detailed in Flinders University Enterprise Agreement 2023 - 2026

[9] As at 1.10.23 – casual staff have not been disaggregated by gender as this detail will be provided in Cygnets where required.

Table 2: *Academic and Professional Staff (continuing & fixed-term only) by College/Portfolio, Job Family Group and Gender - 2023*

Primary Academic Unit	Job Family Group	Total Headcount	Female Headcount	Male Headcount	% Female	% Male
College BGL	Academic	95	46	49	48%	52%
	Professional	14	7	7	50%	50%
	Total	**109**	**53**	**56**	**49%**	**51%**
College EPSW	Academic	123	84	39	68%	32%
	Professional	6	3	2	50%	33%
	Total	**129**	**87**	**41**	**67%**	**32%**
College HASS	Academic	98	48	50	49%	51%
	Professional	10	7	3	70%	30%
	Total	**108**	**55**	**53**	**51%**	**49%**
College MPH	Academic	351	213	137	61%	39%
	Professional	220	178	42	81%	19%
	Total	**571**	**391**	**179**	**68%**	**31%**
College NHS	Academic	271	231	39	85%	14%
	Professional	54	50	4	93%	7%
	Total	**325**	**281**	**43**	**86%**	**13%**
College SE	Academic	201	70	131	35%	65%
	Professional	45	24	21	53%	47%
	Total	**246**	**94**	**152**	**38%**	**62%**
Portfolios	Academic	18	12	6	67%	33%
	Professional	1,077	728	348	68%	32%
	Total	**1,095**	**740**	**354**	**68%**	**32%**
Total		**2,583**	**1,701**	**878**	**66%**	**34%**

Source: Planning & Analytical Services | Workday Model | Data as at 1/10/2023
**** data representative of non-binary or other are not included as ≤6

Staff who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples

Post Bronze accreditation our indigenous workforce grew from 0.7% to 2.47% (Image 9).
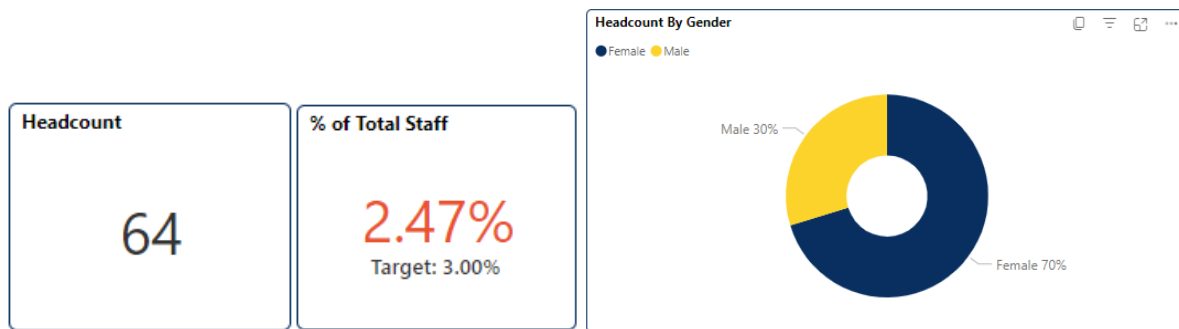
Image 9: Source: Planning and Analytical Service dashboard/ fixed-term and continuing staff (headcount) who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait islander Peoples/Data as at 9.10.23.

Gender distribution

At Flinders, 66% of staff are female, and 34% are male. 55% [10] of staff are employed in professional positions, with the distribution of females in comparison to males disproportionately higher in professional roles. (Image 10).
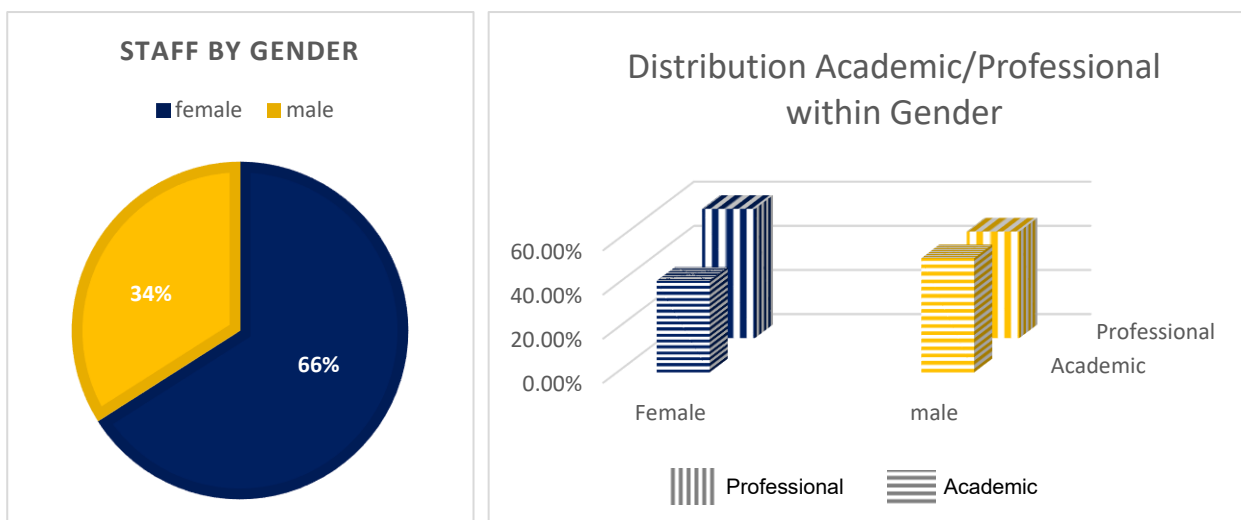
Image 10: Source: Planning and Analytical Services/Professional and academic, fixed-term and continuing staff (headcount) by gender all staff and disaggregation by academic/professional as at 6.7.23

Female staff are underrepresented[11] both at Academic, and Professional senior levels[12] (Image 11).

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[10] by headcount, fixed-term and continuing.
[11] again proportionate to the overall female employment ratio (66%)
[12] Academic Level D/E and HEO9 and above)

Continuing and Fixed-Term Academic and Professional Staff by Level and Gender
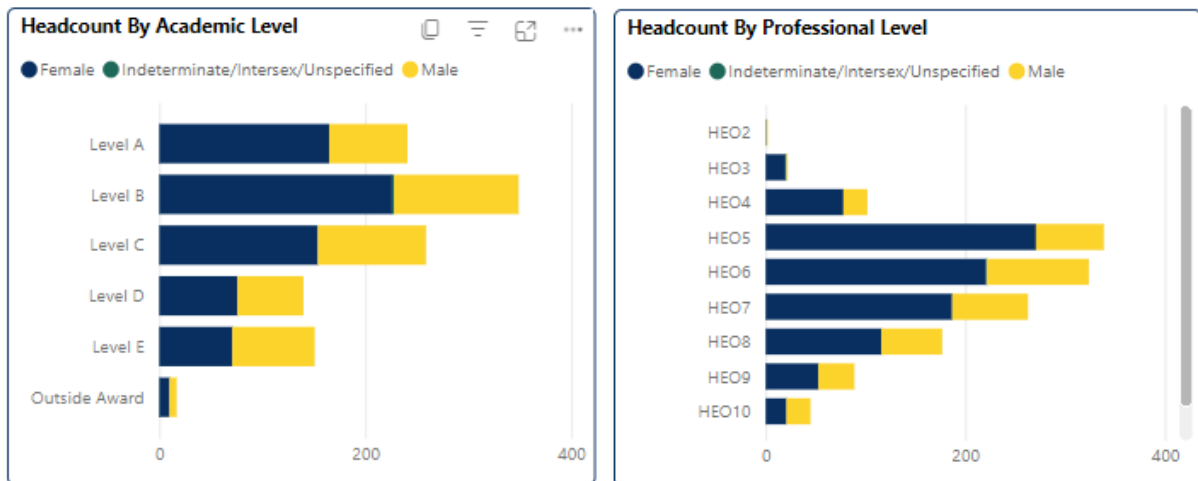
Image 11: Source: Planning and Analytical Services/FLIP Athen SWAN Report/Headcount by Academic and Professional level by gender as at 11.9.23

Across the institution, females are more highly represented in Teaching Specialist positions. (Image 12).

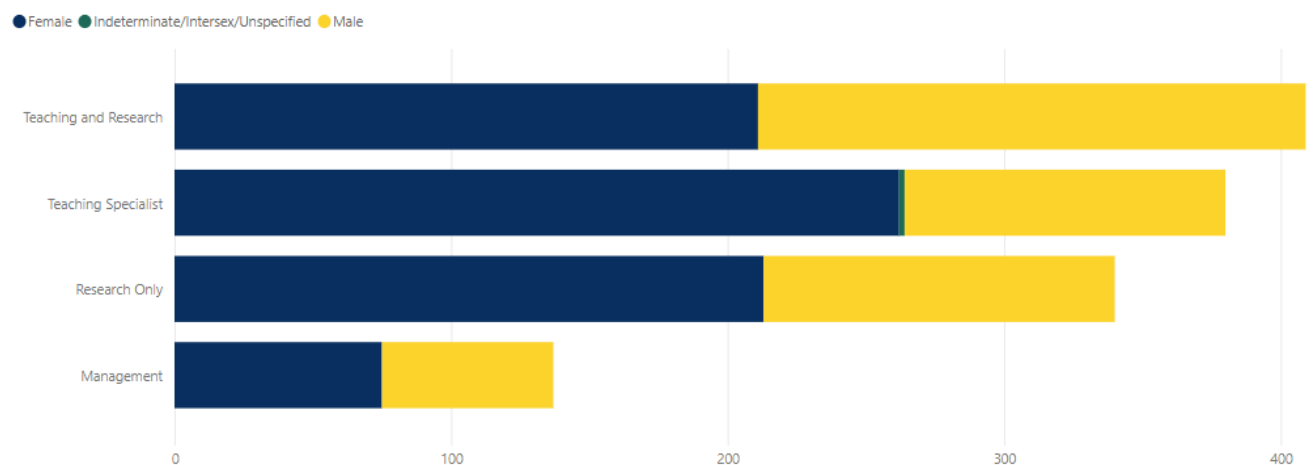## Continuing and Fixed-Term Academic Staff by Job Family and Gender

Image 12: Source: Planning and Analytical Services/FLIP data/staffing report/Continuing and Fixed-Term staff (headcount) by job family and gender as at 25.9.23

Students

Our student body is diverse, with more than 2,500 students coming from regional and remote areas. We have a strong presence along the rural corridor spanning SA and the NT and provide community-engaged inter-professional training with recognition of Indigenous knowledge for medical, nursing, and allied health students.[13] Flinders actively champions diversity and access, with a high proportion of students being first in family to attend university, and the highest proportion of female students in the state at 64%.

In 2023, 27,117 students enrolled at Flinders in undergraduate, postgraduate, and higher degree research courses. Gender disaggregation was consistent at approximately 60/40 across all levels of enrolment (Table 3).

Table 3: Student Course Enrolments by Course Level and Gender - 2023

Primary Academic Unit	Total Headcount	Female Headcount	Male Headcount	Non-binary / Other (X) / Not Entered Headcount	% Female	% Male	% Non-binary / Other (X)
Undergraduate	**15,591**	9,933	5,615	43	64%	36%	<0.5%
Postgraduate Coursework	**9,342**	6,008	3,327	7	64%	36%	<0.5%
Higher Degree Research	**1,073**	635	432	6	59%	40%	<1.0%
Other[1]	**1,111**	628	475	8	57%	43%	<1.0%
Total	**27,117**	**17,204**	**9,849**	**64**	**63%**	**36%**	<0.5%

Source: Planning & Analytical Services | Student Study Model | Data as at 5/9/2023
Note:

1. Other is an amalgamation of Enabling, Exchange, Non Award and Cross Institutional studies.

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[13] through Flinders Rural and Remote Health South Australia, Centre for Remote Health, and Northern Territory Medical Program delivery

Student composition by gender is further detailed in the table below (Table4).

Table 4: Student Course Enrolments by Course College and Gender - 2023

Primary Academic Unit	Total Course Enrolments	Female Headcount	Male Headcount	Non-binary / Other (X) / Not Entered Headcount	% Female	% Male	% Non-binary / Other (X)
College BGL	**3,980**	2,247	1,725	8	56%	43%	<0.5%
College EPSW	**5,506**	4,059	1,439	8	74%	26%	<0.5%
College HASS	**2,407**	1,484	905	18	62%	38%	<1.0%
College MPH	**2,965**	1,838	1,122	5	62%	38%	<0.5%
College NHS	**6,556**	5,231	1,319	6	80%	20%	<0.5%
College SE	**4,480**	1,655	2,815	10	37%	63%	<0.5%
Other[1]	**1,234**	696	529	9	56%	43%	<1.0%
Total[2]	**27,117**	**17,204**	**9,849**	**64**	**63%**	**36%**	**<0.5%**

Source: *Planning & Analytical Services | Student Study Model | Data as at 5/9/2023*

Note: 1. Other is an amalgamation of Enabling, Exchange, Non Award and Cross Institutional studies.
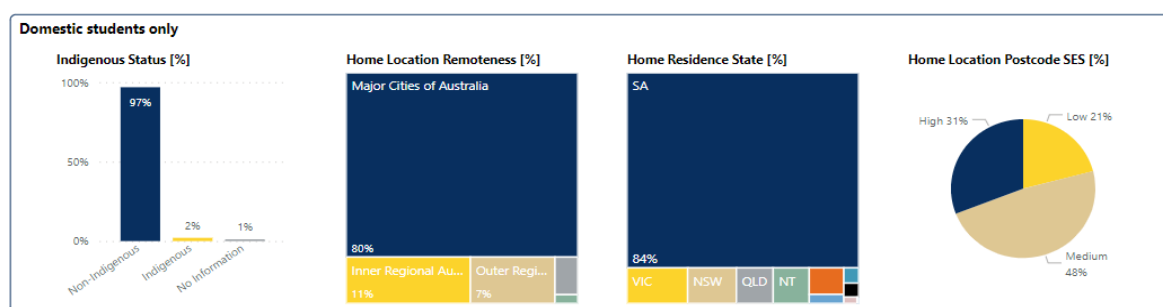

Image 13: Source: *Planning and Analytical Services/FLIP dashboard/ Student Course Demographics – as at 25.9.23.*

Course enrolment numbers in image 13 differ from table 3 due to reporting date differences.

Onshore and offshore, we teach approximately 6,900 international students from 90 countries and 2.04% of our total domestic student enrolments identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (Image 13).

SAGE JOURNEY

Flinders joined the SAGE pilot in 2016 (second cohort), applied for Bronze accreditation in the first half of 2019, and received accreditation in September 2019.

Several transformational strategic initiatives have been developed following Bronze accreditation to support the progression of GEDI for both staff and students at Flinders, some of which are listed in diagram 3 below.

In 2021 a review of the D&IC was undertaken to ensure focus and alignment with other Committees and working groups including Athena Swan.

In 2023 the following two important appointments were made to support and advance key GEDI strategies:

- **Senior Diversity and Inclusion Consultant**: support Flinders GEDI strategic agenda and re-invigorate both the Athena Swan Agenda, and ASBAP[14].
- **Indigenous Employment Coordinator**: support employment, development, and retention of Indigenous people.

Diagram 3: *Examples of Flinders GEDI Strategic Initiatives post Athena Swan*

Disability Action Plan (undergoing consultation, expected release December 2023)

Respect. Now. Always Action Plan (2023)

Athena Swan Bronze Action Plan

Reconciliation Action Plan (June 2023 – June 2025)

Indigenous Workforce Strategy (2022 – 2025)

Indigenous Student Success Targets (2022 – 2025)

Indigenous Procurement Strategy (2023 – 2025)

Best Practice Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace accredited (attained 2022)

Your Voice Survey Action Plan (2022 – 2024)

PRIDE Strategy (2023 -2026)

College of Medicine and Public Health Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy (2022 – 2025)

KEY BARRIERS AND FINDINGS

To progress and implement actions within the Bronze Action Plan, Flinders' Athena Swan Governance Group initially shaped the 77 actions into five Key Priority Areas.

In 2023, following disruptions associated with Covid, staff movements, and the appointment of dedicated resourcing, a review of the identified priorities was undertaken. During this process consideration was given to the large number of actions included in the Bronze Action Plan, resources available, progress made to date, and relevant alignment with Flinders overarching D&I strategy. As a result, the 5 key priorities were reset (Diagram 6).

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[14] As per ASBAP. **Action 3.C**
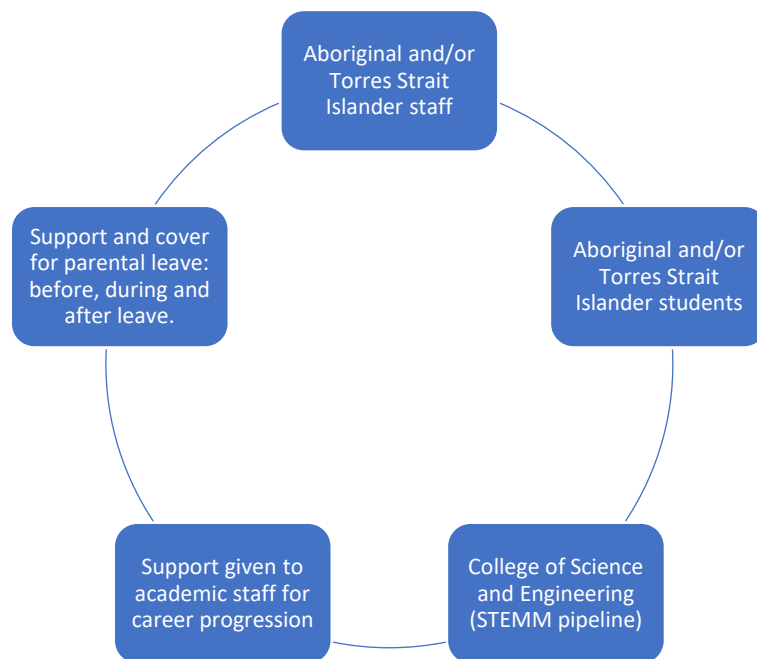
5 KEY PRIORITIES (RESET)

Diagram 4: *Flinders Athena Swan Bronze 5 key Priority areas (reset)*

Through the prioritisation of relationships, respect, governance and opportunity, significant progress has been made in relation to the university's commitment to address barriers experienced by both Indigenous staff and students. This has included the release of our second innovate RAP, a refresh of Indigenous Student Success Program (ISSP) targets and IWS, and engagement of a dedicated resource to support implementation. Therefore, our first and second Cygnet will be reflective of this.

Lower numbers of women staff and students within CSE was an area identified within our Bronze application. The focus for CSE continues to be addressing the STEMM pipeline that contributes to the recruitment and retention of female staff and students in STEMM. This remains a key priority.

Through our Bronze accreditation process, data revealed that whilst women made up 67% of our workforce, they were underrepresented at senior leadership levels, in particular at Level D and E. Progress has been made to address this and work continues in this space. As such, another Cygnet will discuss actions associated with promotions and the initiatives being undertaken in this area more broadly.

Flinders has made significant progress towards increasing and improving access to support and information for staff before, during and after parental leave. Therefore, the focus of the remaining Cygnet will reflect on this journey.

IMPACTING FACTORS

Restructuring of processes, systems and staffing profiles have been a feature of both the 2015-2017 period of self-assessment and subsequent implementation period. This has impacted both resourcing availability and data collection.

In 2020 Flinders introduced Workday, a comprehensive Human Capital Management System, to manage and improve key HR processes, data collection and reporting. Significant issues with the collection, reporting and transfer of data, and compatibility with existing systems was experienced post implementation. Whilst data capture and reporting improvements have been made, some difficulties associated with gathering historical data remain. Continual improvement for both quantitative and qualitative data collection and reporting is both a current and future area of focus for the university.

The majority of operational functions associated with Athena Swan occur within P&C. A restructure of P&C in 2021 resulted in several vacancies, at a time when the job market was very tight. This impacted channelling, reporting and collation of achievements and progress through relevant, governance, communication, and feedback channels.

Flinders University was able to maintain resourcing levels during COVID, however higher than usual employee turnover, illness, tight job markets and Visa processing challenges led to resourcing gaps. As a result, resourcing was redirected to other areas during this time, subsequently impacting Athena Swan progression.

Following the restructure, an Organisation Development and Diversity area was introduced to focus on the creation of University wide frameworks and programs for succession and talent management, diversity and inclusion, performance and development, and leadership capability. Overall, the new P&C structure has assisted in the progress of remediating P&C process and data integration issues. Re-invigoration of the channelling, reporting and collation of Athena Swan achievements is now progressing and is a strategic focus of the Senior D&I Consultant role.

Our Challenge for the future is to ensure:

- we build into our initiatives the ability to effectively capture qualitative feedback from those groups the initiatives are designed to impact,
- we have the relevant tools to make reporting more efficient.

This will in turn increase the ease with which the university can review impact, identify areas for improvement, and enable us to capitalise further on areas where positive gains are being made.