



2023 IMPACT STATEMENT

Science in Australia Gender Equity (SAGE)

Chair's message



Libby Lyons
SAGE Chair

I am proud to present this impact statement sharing the achievements of SAGE and our network of participating institutions.

With SAGE's support, our subscribers have gathered steam and have begun to see concrete outcomes and positive impacts in their workplaces. Most are now setting the Australian benchmark for successful action on equity, diversity and inclusion, and two—the University of Newcastle and Edith Cowan University—are on track to apply for Athena Swan Silver accreditation in 2024.

Through the recently established Athena Swan Australia Advisory Committee, participating institutions now have a stronger voice in guiding SAGE's future path.

I extend my heartfelt appreciation to those whose unwavering commitment make our work possible: our participating institutions—especially their SAGE implementation teams, our dedicated staff, and my fellow Board members.

I also offer my sincere thanks to two departing SAGE leaders: Board member Dr James A. Angus AO FAA, whose infinite wisdom and insight has guided SAGE's growth since 2020, and SAGE co-founder Professor Brian Schmidt, who through his extraordinary intuition brought the Athena Swan framework to Australia. SAGE owes much to Brian's vision and generosity. I wish James and Brian well in their future endeavours.

Thank you all for your continued support of our organisation as we embark on another year of building a more equitable and inclusive higher education and research sector.

CEO's message



Dr Janin Bredehoeft
SAGE CEO

Looking back on my first year as SAGE CEO, my lasting observation is our participating organisations' determination to deeply embed equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in the sector.

This period of learning saw me make many visits to our subscribers to learn about their ambitious initiatives. I am grateful to all who hosted my team and me as we connected with the outstanding individuals and teams leading change in their institutions.

Our network is, I believe, at a point of EDI maturation. This year we celebrated two new Bronze Awardees, and many subscribers received SAGE Cygnet Awards for the progress, outcomes and impact they achieved following their Athena Swan Bronze Awards. The University of Newcastle became the first organisation to earn all five Cygnet Awards. Through the Cygnet Awards, our communities of practice shared evidence of emerging best practices from which other organisations can learn and emulate.

We continue to build and amplify the voice of EDI in the higher education and research sector. This year, SAGE has made a significant impact on shaping national policy through our submissions to eight inquiries and reviews. These submissions serve as a robust foundation for evidence-based change, influencing policymakers to adopt measures that foster a more inclusive environment in our sector.

I am so excited to be working with the higher education and research sector as it leads cutting-edge systemic change to EDI in Australia. This report outlines some of the changes that we are making together to build and maintain workplaces in which everyone can thrive.

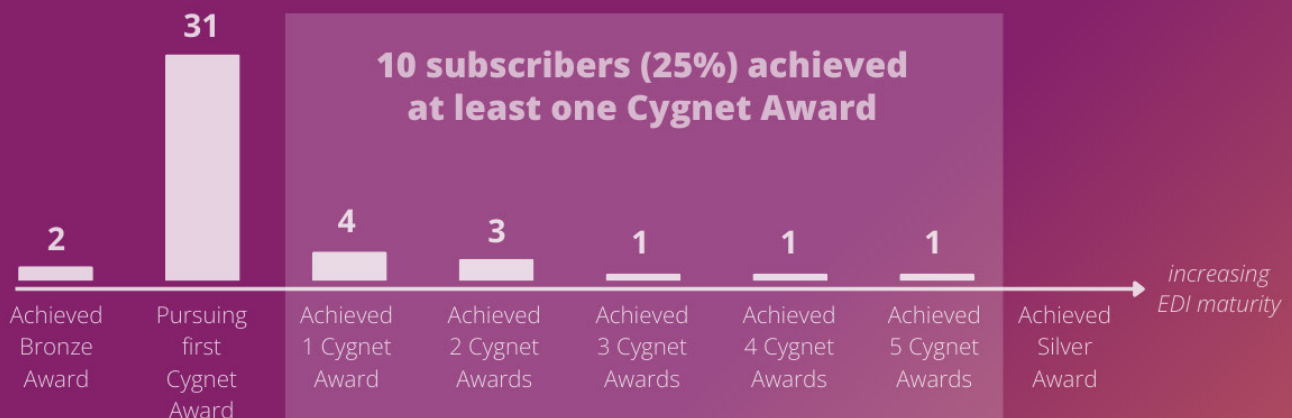
2023 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

We celebrated the progress and success our subscribers achieved

20 ^{▲17}
from 2022
successful
Cygnet Awards

2 ^{▲2}
from 2022
Athena Swan
Bronze Awards

Most of our 43 subscribers have progressed to evaluating the outcomes and impact from their Bronze Award action plan, in preparation for their first Cygnet Award.



SAGE continues to be an authoritative voice on EDI issues

8
submissions to
policy reviews

600+
new followers on social
media (LinkedIn and X)

8
speaking
engagements

380 ^{▲300%}
from 2022
media mentions

We supported sector-wide collaboration and knowledge-sharing

7
capacity building
webinars

34
regional and
national network
meetings

Worked with influential partners such as

Australia's Women in STEM Ambassador
Australian Government Office for Women
Association of Australian Medical Research Institutes (AAMRI)
Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering (ATSE)
Advancing Women in Healthcare Leadership
Australian Council of Learned Academies (ACOLA)
National Women's Safety Alliance

SAGE accreditation drives real outcomes

Applying for an Athena Swan Bronze Award equips organisations with a deep understanding of their key EDI challenges and a targeted action plan to address them. This foundation—coupled with long-term commitment and a data-driven approach—is our recipe for success. Subscribers who have progressed to Cygnet Award accreditation [report positive changes](#) in their workforce diversity and organisational culture.

Nicole Harvey

Manager Organisational
Development, Australian
Catholic University

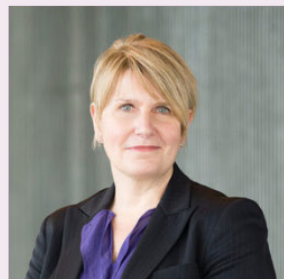


As later adopters, we have benefited from the learnings of our predecessors and the extensive resources SAGE made available to inform the application process. We were proud to recently receive the Bronze Award accreditation and acknowledge the assistance provided by the SAGE team, particularly Tamzen Armer whose support and expertise was invaluable. We are confident the comprehensive analysis that informed our seven-year action plan will enable institutional change and enhance gender equality, diversity and inclusion outcomes at ACU.



68% (▲18 pp) of parents at Western Sydney University agree that flexible work is equally available to all staff.

RMIT University increased the number of women appointed to STEMM roles by **36%**.



Professor Kay Latham

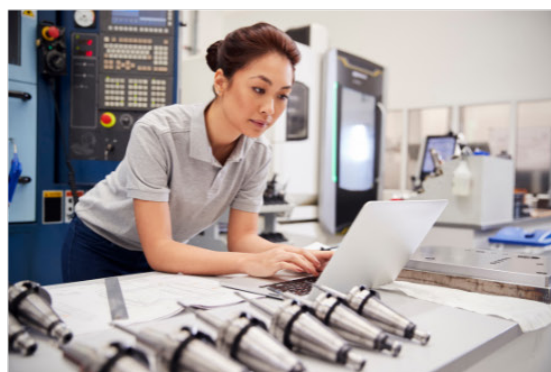
Dean – STEMM Diversity &
Inclusion, RMIT University

The SAGE framework has had a direct, extensive and ongoing impact on our work to reduce barriers to participation, progression and retention. Policies have changed, recruitment and promotion practices have been re-designed, working cultures have been improved, and new more practical supports are in place to assist our staff in managing life's challenges alongside their careers.



Professor Jennifer Milam
Pro Vice-Chancellor Academic
Excellence, University of Newcastle

The Cygnets have supported our efforts to hold ourselves accountable to our Bronze Action Plan. We have advanced work and tracked the progress of 78 out of 88 initiatives, which reduce barriers for women and other under-represented cohorts at the University of Newcastle. There is more work to do, but using the Silver application structure, the Cygnets have encouraged us to maintain momentum within the institution.



At Edith Cowan University, the proportion of female academic staff in the School of Engineering rose by **12%**.



The number of Indigenous staff at the University of Newcastle increased by **21%**, bringing Indigenous staff representation close to population parity.



Professor Cobie Rudd
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Regional
Futures) and Vice-President,
Edith Cowan University

Working with SAGE has given us the tools we need to sustain a workplace that truly progresses gender diversity. The SAGE framework ensures we always stay alert, constantly questioning how we can do things better where it matters most.



Geoscience Australia achieved **gender parity** in their senior leadership team, up from 25% women.



80% (▲11 pp) of LGBTIQ+ staff at Griffith University would recommend it as a good place to work.



CSIRO improved the way gender diverse, LGBTIQ+ and Indigenous staff and staff with disability perceive the organisation's culture.



Dr James Johnson
CEO, Geoscience Australia

I am very proud of my team for making our organisation a place where employees from all backgrounds can feel like they belong; we know that this gives us an advantage in attraction and retention of talent. We look forward to continuing to drive change by working towards our remaining Cygnet Awards to achieve an Athena Swan Silver Award.

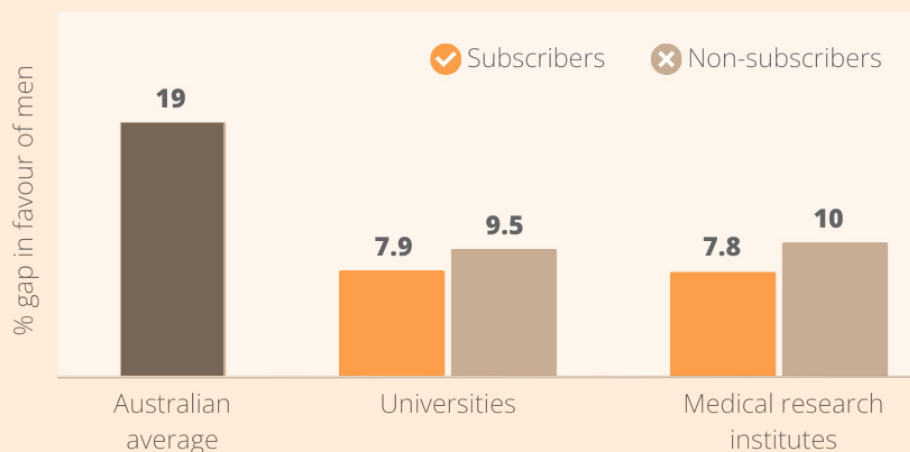


Dr Doug Hilton
Chief Executive, CSIRO

SAGE has set the benchmark for the design, implementation, evaluation and ongoing review of our efforts and enables us to track our progress and continually refine our efforts and actions. Looking forward, we will continue to look to SAGE to help guide our actions and give us the tools to achieve direct and effective cultural and systemic change across the organisation – nothing is more important.

SAGE institutions have lower gender pay gaps

According to new data from the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA), SAGE subscribers have a smaller median gender pay gap than their non-subscriber counterparts.



Between 2021/22 to 2022/23, SAGE subscribers were also more likely to have increased the proportion of **women in senior leadership roles** in their organisation.

68%
of SAGE subscribers



32%
of non-subscribers

* Chart based on [2022/23 Workplace Gender Equality Agency employer results data](#) for **median total remuneration pay gap**. Only SAGE subscribers who reported to WGEA in the 2022/23 financial year (31 universities and 7 medical research institutes) were included in the pay gap analysis. Non-subscribers comprised 8 universities and 18 medical research institutes. Only organisations that reported to WGEA in both financial years were included in the comparison of **women's representation in senior leadership**. Senior leadership figures for the University of South Australia were not publicly available at time of writing and thus could not be included. SAGE subscribers comprised 30 universities and 7 medical research institutes, while non-subscribers comprised 8 universities and 11 medical research institutes.

Supporting the SAGE network

In 2023, many SAGE subscribers received personalised attention and support with their accreditation journey. Subscriber voice continued to play an important part in shaping the SAGE program, ensuring that it remained fit-for-purpose and responsive to their needs.



Visited **26**
subscriber
institutions
across the
country



Delivered **116**
one-on-one
advisory
sessions



Reviewed **30+**
draft award
applications



Established the **Athena
Swan Australia Advisory
Committee** to provide
guidance on the high-level
strategy and operation of
Athena Swan in Australia



Created the **SAGE Data
Working Group** to develop
best-practice equity, diversity
and inclusion metrics for the
higher education and
research sector



From left: Head of DSTG and Chief Defence Scientist Professor Tanya Monro and SAGE CEO Dr Janin Bredehoeft.



Australian Institute of Marine Science CEO Dr Paul Hardisty and SAGE CEO Dr Janin Bredehoeft (middle) with AIMS Equity, Diversity and Gender Working Group members.



From left: SAGE CEO Dr Janin Bredehoeft, SAGE Athena Swan Lead Tamzen Armer and James Cook University Human Resources Director Dave Waters.



From left: Telethon Kids Institute Executive Director Professor Jonathan Carapetis, SAGE CEO Dr Janin Bredehoeft, TKI Deputy Director Professor Catherine Elliott, SAGE Athena Swan Lead Tamzen Armer.



From left: SAGE CEO Dr Janin Bredehoeft, University of Western Australia Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor Professor Tim Colmer and SAGE Athena Swan Lead Tamzen Armer.



From left: SAGE CEO Dr Janin Bredehoeft and ANSTO CEO Shaun Jenkinson.



SAGE CEO Dr Janin Bredehoeft and the Murdoch University team, including Vice Chancellor Professor Andrew Deeks (fourth from left).

Financial statement

A [financial report](#) for the year ending 30 June 2023 is available from the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) website.

