



Australian Government
Geoscience Australia



S A G E

SCIENCE IN AUSTRALIA
GENDER EQUITY

SAGE Cygnet Award Application

<i>Name of Institution</i>	Geoscience Australia
<i>Date of Application</i>	17/01/2025
<i>Contact for Application</i>	Charlie Middleton
<i>Email</i>	charlie.middleton@ga.gov.au
<i>Telephone No.</i>	+61 2 6249 9006

Geoscience Australia: SAGE CYGNET #4



Australian Government

Geoscience Australia

Key Barrier: Other (please describe in Barrier description below)

Barrier type:

- Institution-wide Barrier ⁱ
- Sub-group specific Barrier ⁱ

Barrier description: Supporting gender equity through improved talent attraction

Contents

Program logic model and targets	4
Key barrier	5
Evidence of barrier	5
Progress (actions and outputs)	6
Outcomes	8
Impact	14
Further action	22

Program logic model and targets¹

● Not achieving ● Working towards ● Achieving

Key barrier	Sub barriers	Progress (actions and outputs)	Target outcome	Target impact
Talent attraction and recruitment of women in STEM	1.1: Visibility and talent attraction. A lack of visible female role models in STEM and leadership negatively impacts on attracting women.	Increase the visibility of women working at Geoscience Australia to an external audience, in line with our 40:40:20 gender ratio target. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social media, website, and corporate publications Industry events and public talks Public spaces Employee Value Proposition 	Increased visibility of women working in STEM and leadership at Geoscience Australia. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 1. 40:40:20 gender representation in images on Facebook page, website, annual report.² ● 2. 40:40:20 gender representation in delegates to major conferences and events. ● 3. 40:40:20 gender representation in Distinguished Geoscience Australia Lecture Series. ● 4. 40:40:20 gender representation in applications to STEM roles. 	Geoscience Australia is a more attractive place for women to apply to work. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 1. Female employees agree women are increasingly visible in external communications and events, and there is support and opportunities to represent their work externally. ● 2. Female employees would recommend Geoscience Australia as a place to work for women interested in a career in STEM or leadership. ● 3. New female employees agree that the visibility of women working at Geoscience Australia attracted them to apply.
	1.2: Equitable and inclusive recruitment processes. Unconscious bias in recruitment processes, impacting how women and people from other minorities apply for, are evaluated, and selected for roles or promotions.	Introduce resources and policies to facilitate a more equitable and inclusive recruitment process, aiming for new employees to reflect a gender ratio of 40:40:20 by 2025. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender Decoder Hewlett-Packard statement 40:40:20 gender balance on selection panels Diversity and inclusion training 	Recruitment processes at Geoscience Australia are more equitable and inclusive. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 1. Selection panels have 40:40:20 gender representation. ● 2. Employees of all genders are equally likely to agree that they have the same access to opportunities. ● 3. 40:40:20 gender representation for new employees by 2025. ● 4. 40:40:20 gender representation for the Geoscience Australia workforce overall, STEM divisions, and senior executive in STEM divisions.³ 	Recruitment processes at Geoscience Australia support the success of diverse, meritorious candidates. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 1. Staff on selection panels found the new resources and policies accessible and easy to use. ● 2. Staff on selection panels identify that the recruitment process has supported the success of meritorious female candidates.

¹ The 40:40:20 targets mean a minimum of 40% women and 40% men, with the remaining 20% made up of either women, men and / or people of other genders.

² Images on the website are currently 12% women, 50% multiple people of different genders, 46% men

³ Women currently make up 39% of employees in STEM divisions.

Key barrier

Key barrier: Talent attraction and recruitment of women in STEM

Sub barrier 1.1: Visibility and talent attraction

Sub barrier 1.2: Equitable and inclusive recruitment processes

Evidence of barrier

Visibility and talent attraction

In 2019 (Bronze application), our organisation was 38% women. Only 31% of STEM roles and 25% of senior leadership positions were occupied by women. Our Bronze application identified low application rates as key to these low employment rates. Despite women comprising 52% of natural and physical science graduates since 2015,⁴ only 32% of applications to STEM roles at Geoscience Australia in 2015-2017 were from women.

Our Bronze application also highlighted gender imbalance in our external media. For example, only 12% (n=2/17) of our Distinguished Geoscience Australia Lecture Series (DGALS) presenters were women between 2014-2017.⁵ We identified a need to increase the visibility of women in STEM at Geoscience Australia to attract more female applicants.

Equitable and inclusive recruitment processes

Improving our recruitment processes is crucial to increase gender equity in our organisation, particularly because all Australian Public Service (APS) promotion occurs through formal recruitment. Addressing bias in recruitment can facilitate successful applications from meritorious women and other minorities.⁶

Figure 1 provides baseline data on the representation of women in roles and applications to work at Geoscience Australia, demonstrating the need to attract and recruit more women including in STEM and leadership roles.⁷

⁴ Leigh, K., Helsing, A., Smith, P., Josifovski, N., Johnston, E., & Legget, P. (2020). Australia's STEM workforce: science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Australian Government. Retrieved from https://www.chiefscientist.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-07/australias_stem_workforce_-_final.pdf

⁵ The Distinguished Geoscience Australia Lecture series (DGALS) program provides opportunities for staff to present their work to audiences comprised of internal staff and external visitors. DGALS presenters are selected by their peers, and their presentations posted to Geoscience Australia's YouTube channel.

⁶ Foley, M., Cooper, R., & Mosseri, S. (2019). Gender equitable recruitment and promotion: Leading practice guide (WGEA Commissioned Research Paper). The Australian Women's Working Futures (AWWF) Project, University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia. Retrieved from: https://ses.library.usyd.edu.au/bitstream/handle/2123/21261/Recruitment_and_Promotion_0.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y

⁷ A note on the quantitative data provided throughout this application: We have used baseline data from the earliest possible sources, prioritising data from our 2018 Bronze application where possible. We have endeavoured to include all complete yearly data that is available to demonstrate trends over time, until March 2024. Data tables and footnotes provide specific information on available data for each indicator. When applying for a role at Geoscience Australia, candidates are asked to specify their gender (which is currently shown as Male, Female, or X) in their application form. If the candidate is successful, they are then onboarded, and this information is added to their profile. For this reason, the use of the terms 'man/men' and 'woman/women' are used throughout. We acknowledge that this does not reflect the difference between gender and biological sex; and presents limitations to the data provided herein. People identifying as a gender other than 'man' or 'woman' have not been included in the analysis presented here where there are fewer than 6 people, to preserve anonymity. '*STEM roles*' and '*STEM divisions*' refers to all roles within the non-Corporate teams of the organisation (see organisational chart in the Institutional Context document).

Cygnets Award Application #4: Supporting gender equity through improved talent attraction

Figure 1: Representation of women in roles and applications to work at Geoscience Australia⁸.

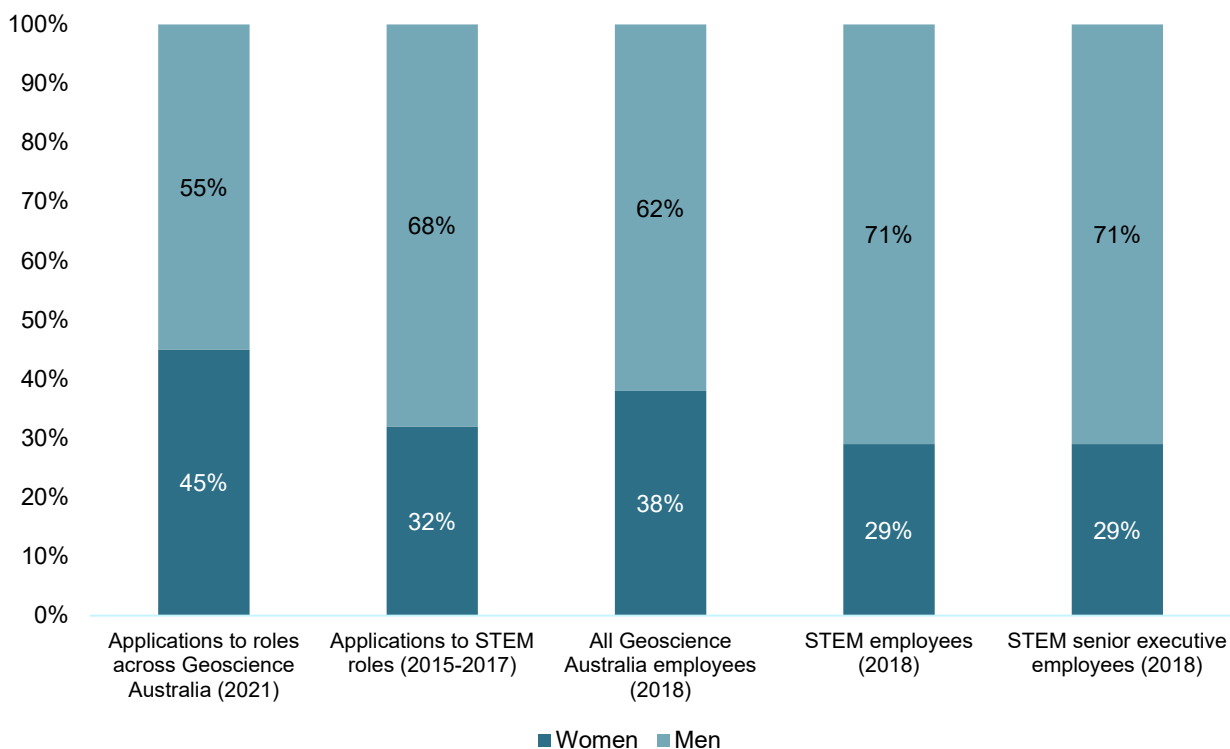


Table 1: Representation of women in roles and applications to work at Geoscience Australia.

Gender	Applications to roles across Geoscience Australia (2021)		Applications to STEM roles (from Bronze application: 2015-2017)		All Geoscience Australia employees (Bronze application: 2018)		STEM employees (Bronze application: 2018)		STEM senior executive employees (Bronze application: 2018)	
	Number	% (n=664)	Number	% (n=1972)	Number	% (n=608)	Number	% (n=471)	Number	% (n=17)
Women	300	45%	631	32%	229	38%	137	29%	5	29%
Men	364	55%	1341	68%	379	62%	334	71%	12	71%

Progress (actions and outputs)

Visibility and talent attraction

We aimed to increase our women's visibility to an external audience to demonstrate the opportunities for women to contribute to and lead interesting and impactful work. As articulated in our Diversity and Inclusion Strategy Implementation Plan, we aim for a 40:40:20 ratio of women:men:either or other genders. In 2018, 38% of our workforce were women, making this an achievable target. Teams across the organisation were responsible for implementing this action, including our media, events, and communications staff across different divisions. We did not have a set timeframe to implement this goal, it is an ongoing organisational activity.

⁸ Baseline data extracted from Bronze application where possible (2018 and 2015-2017 data). The earliest data available for applications to roles across Geoscience Australia was 2021.

Cygnets Award Application #4: Supporting gender equity through improved talent attraction

Specific actions included:

- increasing the visibility of women on our social media, website and corporate publications
- increasing the representation of women at industry events and public talks by adding questions about gender diversity of speakers to our event proposal template, along with a 2022 Gender Equity Network GA (GENGA) led campaign to proactively seek nominations from diverse presenters for our DGALS
- an inaugural Employee Value Proposition (EVP) demonstrating the varied career pathways available and highlighting the tangible and intangible benefits available to women including through a video of women discussing their experiences working at Geoscience Australia

To date our efforts have not specifically focused on increasing the visibility of intersectionality diversity among employees. We know anecdotally that the visibility of culturally and linguistically diverse employees is lower than it should be. In 2024 we are focused on activities addressing barriers to participation and progression for culturally and linguistically diverse staff, the subject of our Cygnets 5 application.

A key challenge in increasing the visibility of women in our public and education spaces are the delays to finalising a new Public Spaces Framework. The Geoscience Australia Public Spaces Framework outlines the target audiences for our public spaces and the key messages we wish to share with our visitors. The framework provides guidance and a vision for upgrades to our public spaces. This will modernise and diversify our public spaces to allow them to meet the objectives outlined in the Public Space Engagement Strategy. This has limited opportunities for significant changes to our displays. In the interim we are adding some profiles of female employees (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Example of a SheMaps profile of a Geoscience Australia female employee

Geospatial Scientist

"There is always a **'where'** component, and that information can help us **secure a safer future.**"

YUKIE NIP

Favourite Project: Modelling arid soil organic carbon with multispectral drone imagery and infrared spectrometry. Modelling Bushfires at Smiths Lake. Modelling COVID-19 hotspots.

Favourite Subjects at School: Music, Physics, Maths (geometry, statistics)

Tertiary Study Completed: Bachelor of Advanced Science (Honours), Major in Geography (GIS, Remote Sensing, Soil Science), Minor in Physics (Astrophysics)

Your Favourite Tools: Drones, satellites (Sentinel 1A, Sentinel 2A-B, EnMAP), GIS, Compass

© Copyright | She Maps | www.shemaps.com

MAPPING **GIS** **COMPUTER**

BUILDINGS **SATELLITE** **DRONE WORK**

COMPASS **PLANTS** **She Maps**

Cygnets Award Application #4: Supporting gender equity through improved talent attraction

Equitable and inclusive recruitment processes

We introduced resources and policies for a more equitable and inclusive recruitment process, including a:

- gender decoder tool, analysing role descriptions to identify gendered language
- paragraph automatically added to role advertisements identifying that, based on a Hewlett-Packard study, women and people from diverse backgrounds are more reluctant than men to apply for roles where they do not meet all the selection criteria (the Hewlett-Packard statement)⁹
- expectation of 50:50 gender mixes on all selection panels, to increase diversity and reduce bias in selection decisions¹⁰

The soon to be refreshed Recruitment Policy and Guidelines will address bias towards other marginalised groups. This has been less of an organisational focus to date.

We offer diversity and inclusion training to staff through our internal learning platform.¹¹ This can support staff in understanding and addressing their biases in the recruitment process. However, uptake of the training has been low, with only 14% (n=9/64) of people involved in recruitment completing the training in 2024. Increasing uptake of the training is a future focus.

Outcomes

Visibility and talent attraction

Target outcome 1: 40:40:20 gender representation in images on Facebook page, website, and annual report. (working towards)

For this Cygnets application, we manually reviewed photos on our social media, website and annual report.¹² We have continued to meet a 40:40:20 target on our Facebook page since the Bronze application, with women appearing in 72% of images in 2023. We have also met this target in our annual report.¹³ However, we have identified the need to review our website for gender balance (Table 2).^{14,15}

⁹ The statement reads: "Are you unsure about applying? Did you know that a Hewlett Packard internal report found that men apply for jobs when they meet an average of 60 per cent of the job requirements? Women and other people from diverse backgrounds tend to only apply when they check every box. If you think you have what it takes, but don't necessarily meet every single point on what we are looking for, please still apply or get in touch with the contact officer to learn more about the role."

¹⁰ The current recruitment approaches requires a 50:50 women:male ratio for selection panels, this has been updated to a more inclusive 40:40:20 target which will be reflected in the refreshed Recruitment Policy and Guidelines.

¹¹ Training focuses on general diversity and inclusion training. Examples of training include 'Disability Confident Workforces', 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural appreciation' and 'Diversity and Inclusion'. Trainings are available on our internal learning platform Learn@GA as well as opportunities sourced through our memberships to PRIDE, SAGE, Diversity Council of Australia etc. Opportunities are communicated every other week through our routine internal communications.

¹² This process was highly resource intensive and therefore we have not reviewed images from previous years.

¹³ Due to changing requirements, Geoscience Australia has only published an Annual Report in 2021/22 and 2022/23 therefore there is no baseline data for this indicator. The 2021/22 Annual Report only has one photo of people, with one man and one woman appearing.

¹⁴ Baseline data was not available for this indicator.

¹⁵ For this analysis, external researchers assumed gender based on presentation and pronouns and names used in captions. There is a risk that this may not accurately reflect individuals' self-identified genders.

Cygnets Award Application #4: Supporting gender equity through improved talent attraction

Table 2: Proportion of images featuring women on our social media, website, and annual report.

Gender	Geoscience Australia Facebook page (Bronze application: 2018)		Geoscience Australia Facebook page (March 2023-March 2024)		Geoscience Australia website (at March 2024)		Annual report 2022-23	
	Number	% (n=83)	Number	% (n=84)	Number	% (n=122)	Number	% (n=8)
Women	34	40%	24	29%	15	12%	3	37.5%
Men	42	50%	24	29%	56	46%	3	37.5%
Mixed gender¹⁶	8	10%	36	43%	61	50%	2	25%

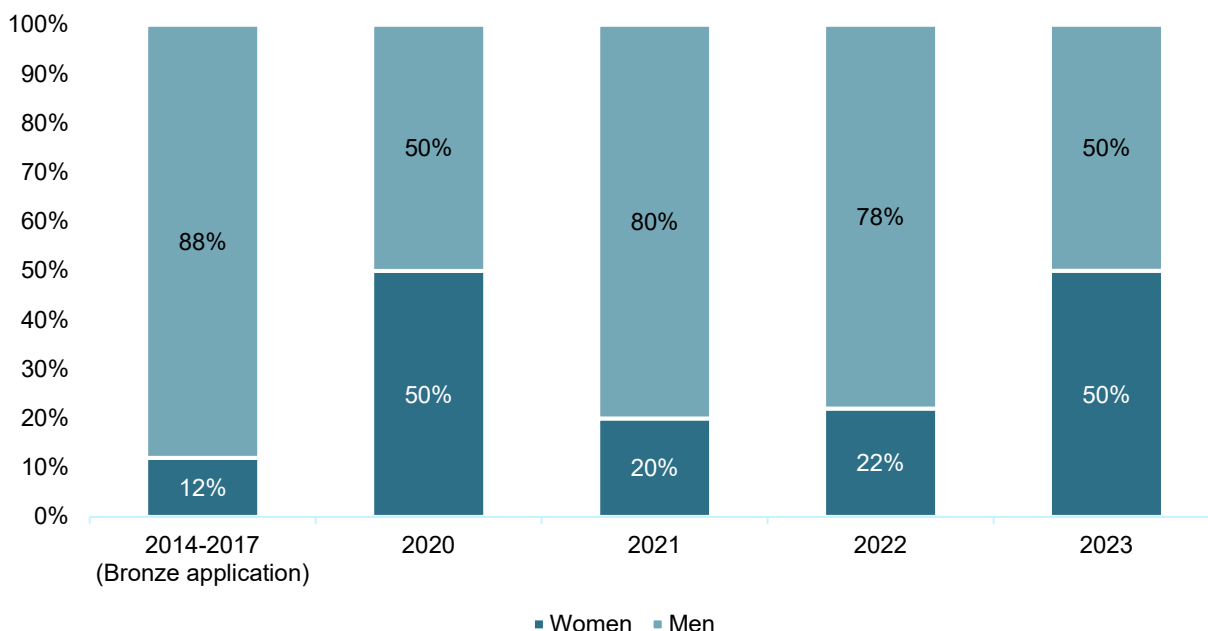
Target outcome 2: 40:40:20 gender representation in delegates to major conferences/events (achieving)

Over the 12 months to March 2024, 45% of our delegates to major conferences and events were women, aligning with our 40:40:20 target.¹⁷ This includes people who presented, and represented us internationally, at inter-departmental committees, program boards, and other high-level events. These are key opportunities to increase the visibility of women working with us, and the impactful work that they are doing.

Target outcome 3: 40:40:20 representation in DGALS speakers (achieving)

Women made up only 12% of DGALS speakers from 2014-2017 (Figure 3). This increased to 31% from 2020-2023. In 2023, 50% of speakers were women. This suggests the 2022 GENGA nominations campaign was successful in boosting gender equity for 2023 and highlights the importance of ongoing action in this area.

Figure 3: Proportion of the DGALS presenters that are women¹⁸



¹⁶ Mixed gender refers to photos of multiple people with more than one gender represented.

¹⁷ Baseline data was not available for this indicator. This data was resource intensive to extract and therefore we have included only the past 12 months leading up to this application (March 2023 – March 2024).

¹⁸ Data was only available from 2020 onwards.

Cygnets Award Application #4: Supporting gender equity through improved talent attraction

Table 3: Proportion of individual presenters of the DGALS that are women, in 2014-2017 compared with years 2020 to 2023.

Gender	2014-2017 (from Bronze application)		2020		2021		2022		2023	
	Number	% (n=17)	Number	% (n=8)	Number	% (n=5)	Number	% (n=23)	Number	% (n=6)
Women	2	12%	4	50%	1	20%	5	22%	3	50%
Men	15	88%	4	50%	4	80%	18	78%	3	50%

Target outcome 4: 40:40:20 gender representation in applicants for STEM roles (working towards)

We aimed to attract more female applicants by increasing the visibility of female role models. In 2015-2017, only 32% of applications to roles in STEM divisions were from women. We reached our 40:40:20 target in 2021 and 2022 and reached 38% in 2023 (Figure 4). Women have made up 52% (n=44/84) of applications to STEM roles in the first three months of 2024. In 2023, 42% (n=683/1636) of applications across the organisation were from women, a slight decrease compared to 45% (n=300/664) in 2021.

Figure 4: Gender breakdown of applicants to advertised roles in STEM divisions.

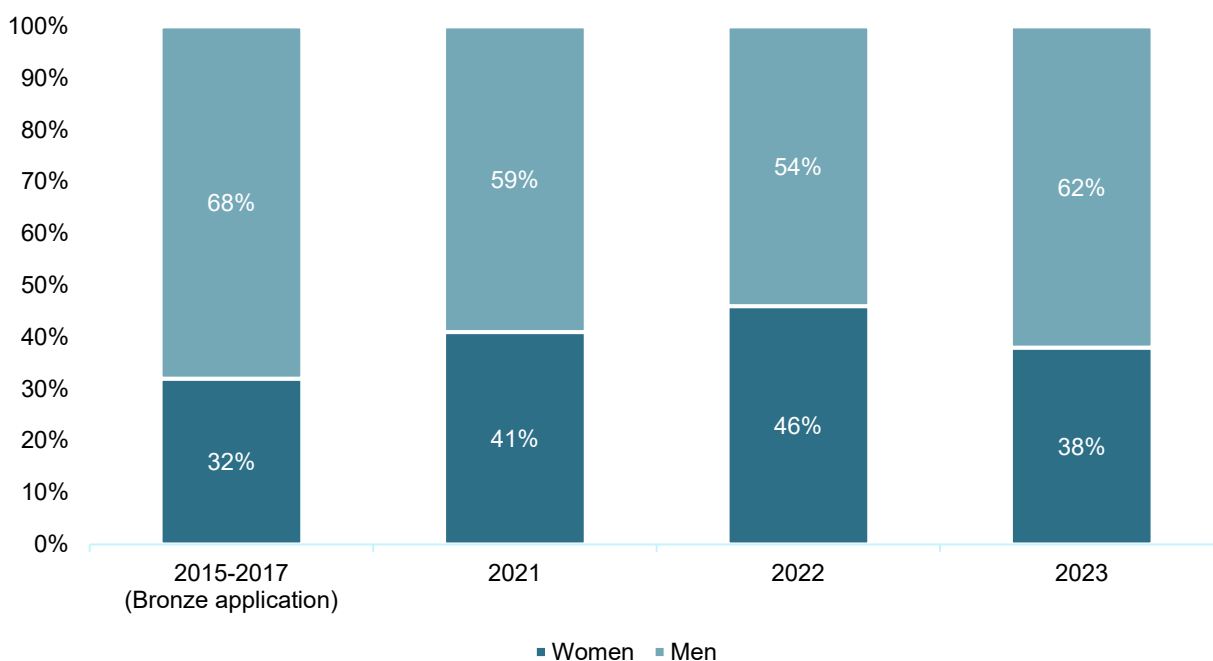


Table 4: Proportion of applications from women to roles in STEM divisions.¹⁹

Gender	2015-2017 (from Bronze application)		2021		2022		2023	
	Number	% (n=1972)	Number	% (n=329)	Number	% (n=502)	Number	% (n=726)
Women	631	32%	136	41%	230	46%	276	38%
Men	1341	68%	193	59%	272	54%	450	62%

¹⁹ Applicants are not required to include their gender in their application, this table and graph provides data only for people who have included their gender (96% of total applications).

Equitable and inclusive recruitment processes

Target outcome 5: All selection panels have 40:40:20 gender representation (working towards)

In 2021, 74% (n=67/90) of panels met this target, dropping to 67% (n=117/175) in 2023. An almost doubling in recruitment activities may be making this target harder to achieve, particularly given the need to balance the additional workload for women to participate on recruitment panels. This target also requires 4 people to be on an interview panel.²⁰ When panels with three people are included, 95% (n=20/21) in 2023 have 33:33:33 gender representation.

Target outcome 6: Employees of all genders are equally likely to agree that they have the same access to opportunities (achieving)

Our 2023 APS employee census showed no gender difference in perceived fairness of opportunity (Table 5).²¹ This reflects some success in addressing unconscious bias in recruitment processes. However, less than half of employees who spoke a Southeast Asian language at home (n=21) agreed that they had the same access to opportunities (48%), highlighting the need to address racial bias.

Table 5: Proportion of employees that agree with the statement “I feel I have the same opportunities as anyone else of my ability or experience”.

Category	2022			2023		
	Number of 'Agree' and 'Strongly Agree' responses	Total number of respondents	%	Number of 'Agree' and 'Strongly Agree' responses	Total number of respondents	%
APS overall	80,844	120,662	67%	82,833	127,436	65%
Geoscience Australia overall	359	536	67%	373	556	67%
Women at Geoscience Australia	141	213	66%	151	226	67%

Target outcome 7: 40:40:20 gender representation for all new employees by 2025 (achieving)

With more applications from women, we also have more female employees. Since 2021, women have comprised at least 49% of new hires overall and 51% in STEM roles, reaching our target. This compares to 38% of new employees in STEM roles in 2015-2018 (Figure 5).²² In 2023, the success rate for female applicants was 12% (n=53/445) and 7% (n=45/662) for male applicants.

²⁰ Based on the current 50:50 men:women requirement in the existing recruitment approach.

²¹ This is a new question in the APS Census and has only been asked in 2022 and 2023.

²² Baseline data extracted from the Bronze application.

Cygnets Award Application #4: Supporting gender equity through improved talent attraction

Figure 5: Gender breakdown of new employees across the organisation and in STEM divisions.

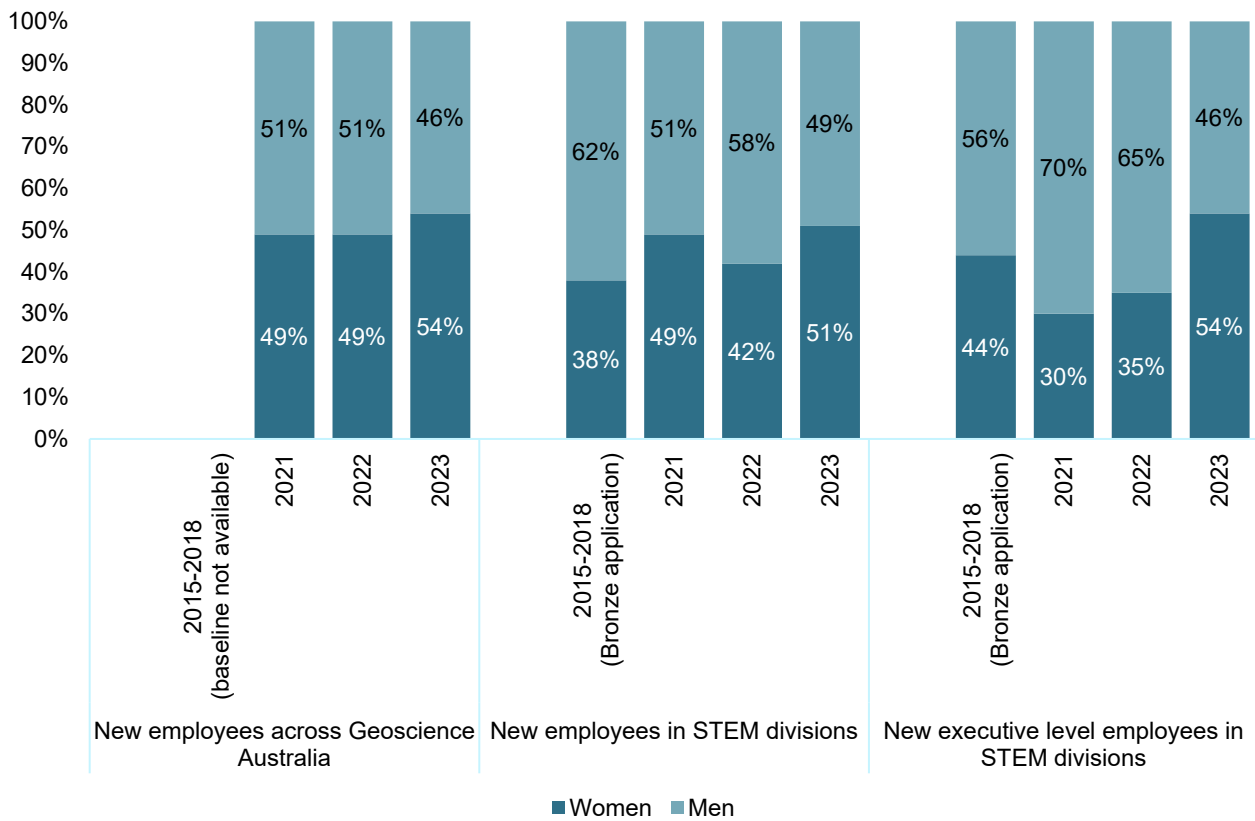


Table 6: Proportion of new female employees across the organisation and in STEM divisions.

Gender	2015-2018 (from Bronze application)		2021		2022		2023	
	Number	%	Number	% (n=80)	Number	% (n=97)	Number	% (n=98)
Women across Geoscience Australia	N/A		39	49%	48	49%	53	54%
Men across Geoscience Australia	N/A		41	51%	49	51%	45	46%
	Number	% (n=231)	Number	% (n=51)	Number	% (n=48)	Number	% (n=52)
Women in STEM	88	38%	25	49%	20	42%	26	51%
Men in STEM	143	62%	26	51%	28	58%	25	49%
	Number	% (n=101)	Number	% (n=27)	Number	% (n=20)	Number	% (n=28)
Women in STEM (executive level 1 and 2 roles)	44	44%	8	30%	7	35%	15	54%
Men in STEM (executive level 1 and 2 roles)	57	56%	19	70%	13	65%	13	46%

Cygnets Award Application #4: Supporting gender equity through improved talent attraction

Target outcome 8: 40:40:20 gender representation in our workforce overall, STEM divisions and senior executive in STEM divisions. (achieving)

Women now make up 44% of our workforce, 39% of people in STEM roles, and 64% of our senior executive are in STEM divisions (Figure 6). This is an important increase compared to our baseline data, showing improvement in our talent attraction and recruitment of women.

Figure 6: Representation of women at Geoscience Australia.

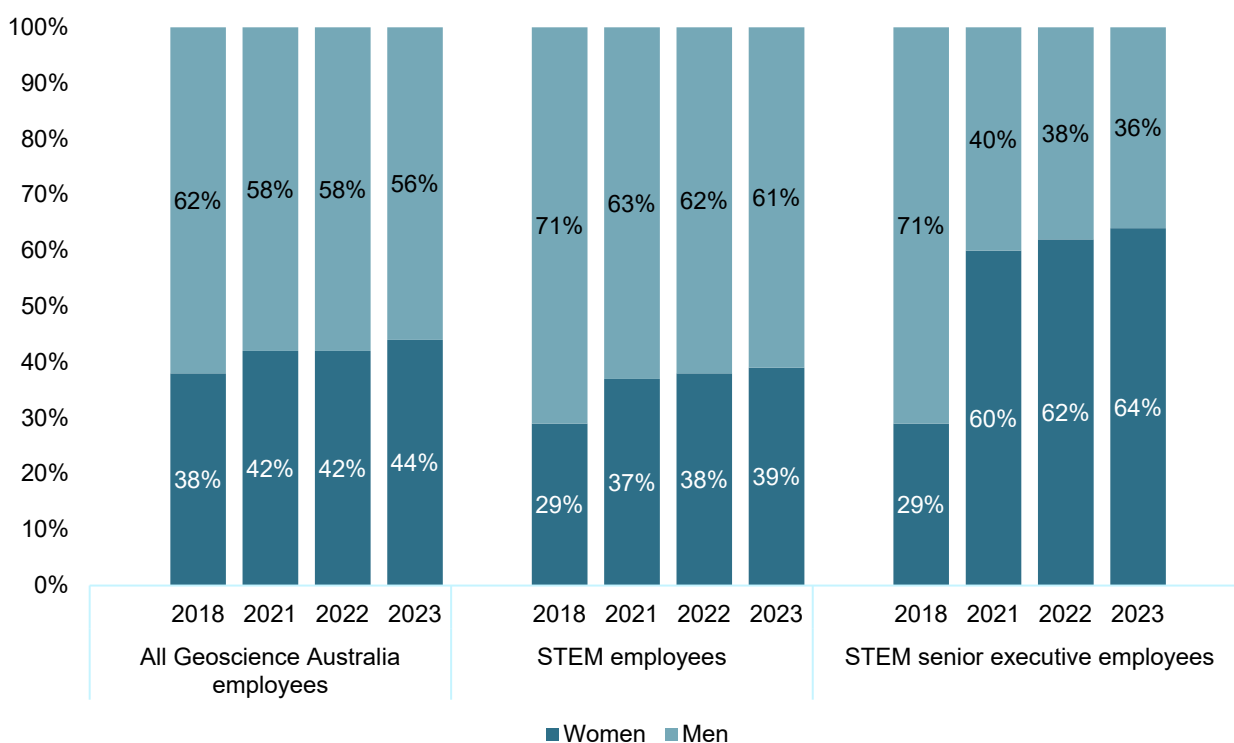


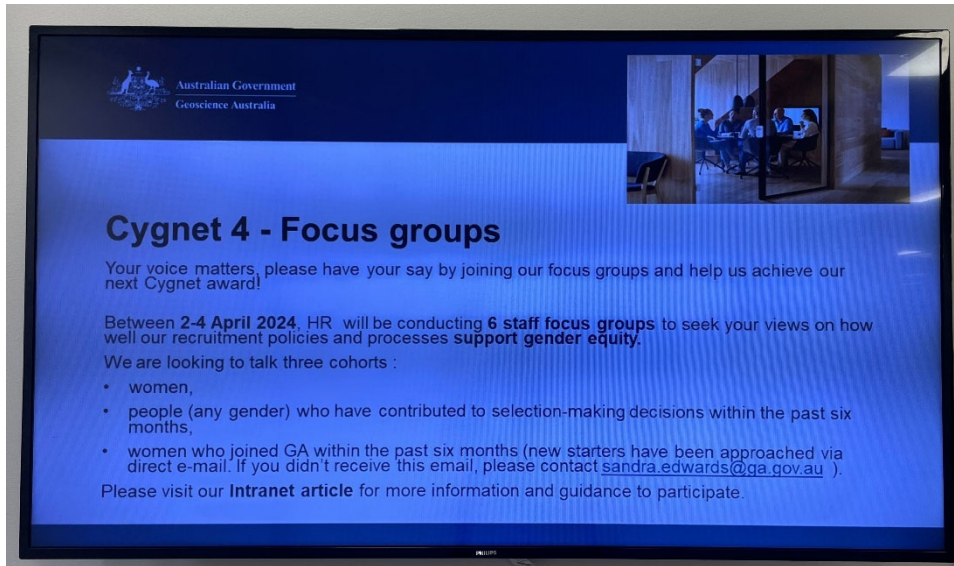
Table 7: Representation of women at Geoscience Australia.

Gender	All Geoscience Australia employees							
	2018 (from Bronze application)		2021		2022		2023	
	Number	% (n=608)	Number	% (n=625)	Number	% (n=638)	Number	% (n=689)
Women	229	38%	260	42%	266	42%	303	44%
Men	379	62%	365	58%	372	58%	386	56%
Gender	STEM employees							
	2018 (from Bronze application)		2021		2022		2023	
	Number	% (n=471)	Number	% (n=457)	Number	% (n=448)	Number	% (n=480)
Women	137	29%	167	37%	171	38%	189	39%
Men	334	71%	290	63%	277	62%	291	61%
Gender	STEM senior executive employees							
	2018 (from Bronze application)		2021		2022		2023	
	Number	% (n=17)	Number	% (n=10)	Number	% (n=13)	Number	% (n=11)
Women	5	29%	6	60%	8	62%	7	64%
Men	12	71%	4	40%	5	38%	4	36%

Impact

To understand the impact of our actions on the lived experience of people working at Geoscience Australia, we undertook interviews and focus groups in early 2024.²³

Figure 7: Photo of focus groups advertised on TV screens in our offices.



We aimed for a target of 6-12 employees in each group: general employees; people who have been involved in a recruitment process in the past six months, and women that joined the organisation in the past six months.²⁴ We recruited participants of diverse genders, backgrounds, levels, and work areas to ensure representation of a range of views (Table 8).

²³ Promotion of the consultation included promotion on tv screens around the physical office, an intranet article, presentation at team meetings, directly reaching out to people who meet the specific criteria for each group or had been at the organisation for a long time. Staff could participate in an online or face to face focus group or interview or send feedback via a direct email. The consultation was conducted by external consultants, and it was made clear that identified feedback would not be shared directly with Geoscience Australia, providing staff the opportunity to be frank and forthcoming with their experiences.

²⁴ Guest, G., E. Namey and M. Chen (2020). 'A simple method to assess and report thematic saturation in qualitative research'. PLoS ONE, 15:5.

Cygnets Award Application #4: Supporting gender equity through improved talent attraction

Table 8: Participation in qualitative data collection²⁵

	General employees	Recent recruiters	Women that joined the organisation in the past six months	Total
Total	15	10	10	26
Women	10	5	9	21
Men			n/a	4
People of other genders				*
STEM divisions	7	4	4	15
• Minerals, Energy and Groundwater	3	3	0	6
• Place and Communities			3	4
• Space	2			4
• Office of the Chief Scientist				1
Corporate	4	2	5	11
Formal leadership responsibilities	6	5	4	15
Less than 1 year at Geoscience Australia			9	10
1 to <5 years at Geoscience Australia	7	0	0	7
5 to <10 years at Geoscience Australia		3		4
10+ years at Geoscience Australia		3		5
Caring responsibilities	2	6	4	12
CALD (self-identified)				*
First Nations (self-identified)				*
Disability (self-identified)				*
LGBTQIA+ (self-identified)				4
20 to 39 years old	2	2	7	11
40 to 59 years old	9	4	2	15
60+ years old	0	0	0	0
APS level 1-6			6	9
Executive level 1 and 2	5	5	3	13
Senior executive	4	n/a	n/a	4

Visibility and talent attraction

Target impact 1: Female employees agree women are increasingly visible in external communications and events, and there is support and opportunities to represent their work externally (achieving)

Participants acknowledged organisational efforts to enhance women's visibility in external communications and events. They identified the need for a self-sustaining approach to this, creating an automatic process that does not rely on individual advocacy.

"[I think] women are visible in our media and our visual photos, representation at important forums for networking opportunities. Not just in science but also corporate work. We are doing

²⁵ Demographic data was not available for all participants. For example, some participants chose not to provide some information. Some data has not been included to maintain privacy (greyed out). Demographics that were represented in the consultation are marked with an asterisk.

Cygnets Award Application #4: Supporting gender equity through improved talent attraction

much better for things like pronouns on emails and LinkedIn. These are unconscious cues to people that it is an inclusive, accommodating workplace.” – Female employee

“Someone will come up with a draft of something that’s externally facing, then someone will point out that there’s no females in there. We shouldn’t have to fix it, there should be a desire to do it right from the beginning. It has to get pointed out still, far too often.” – Female employee

Most women in the focus groups identified extensive support and opportunities to represent their work and/or Geoscience Australia externally, in conferences, events, education tours, speaking engagements, information booths, stakeholder engagement, media and other opportunities.

“The media team love it if you’ve got something that can be released. I did the media training –they said, if you’ve got anything, let us know so we can try and get you on the news.” – Female employee

“I’ve had every opportunity in the short time I’ve been here to [represent Geoscience Australia]. I’ve co-done a few papers this year.” – Female employee

Women felt when they represented Geoscience Australia on high-profile projects, groups, and committees, they demonstrated opportunities for women to do impactful work. The 121 women at a leadership level currently represent us on 101 high-profile activities including 31 international projects, 26 high level projects, 19 interdepartmental committees and 15 external boards.²⁶

Some staff identified external representation opportunities can be dependent on their supervisor or the nature of their role. Women in non-science roles, including engineers, technologists and corporate staff, and women working on longer-term and less public projects, identified limited opportunities.

“There are opportunities to present your work, you just need to know how to find them. It depends on what kind of work you’re doing.” – Female employee

“I’m in Corporate so opportunities to present my work at conferences is limited.” – Female employee

“If your Director is great, it’s really easy and lots of scope for them to support you. Otherwise, [speaking opportunities] might just sit in their inbox for a time.” – Female employee

Target impact 2: Female employees would recommend Geoscience Australia as a place to work for women interested in a career in STEM or leadership (achieving)

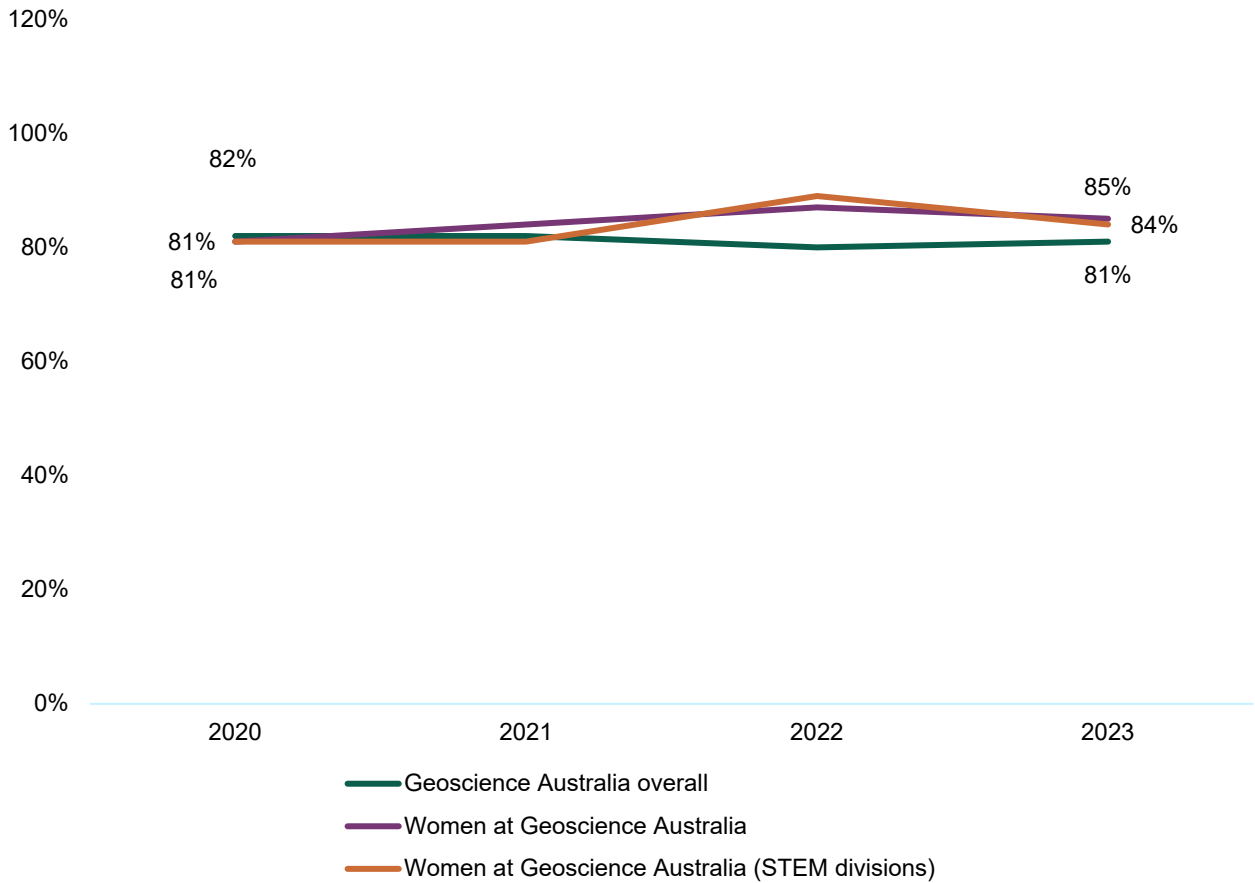
Workplace reputation is key to talent attraction. When women and people from diverse backgrounds recommend Geoscience Australia as a workplace, it is more likely to attract diverse applicants. Since 2020 there has been a moderate increase in the percentage of women, and women in STEM, who would recommend Geoscience

²⁶ APS executive level 1, level 2, and senior executive roles. Note, baseline data is not available for this indicator. The number of individual staff working on these projects was not available. This is in addition to representation at conferences and events.

Cygnets Award Application #4: Supporting gender equity through improved talent attraction

Australia (Figure 7)²⁷. Interestingly, women at the executive level are less likely to recommend Geoscience Australia than non-executive and senior executive women (Figure 8). There is an opportunity to investigate further why this is the case.

Figure 8: Proportion of employees that agree with the statement "I would recommend my agency as a good place to work", APS census 2020-2023.



²⁷ Data is not available prior to 2020.

Cygnets Award Application #4: Supporting gender equity through improved talent attraction

Figure 9: Proportion of female employees that agree with the statement “I would recommend my agency as a good place to work”, disaggregated by level, APS census 2020-2023.

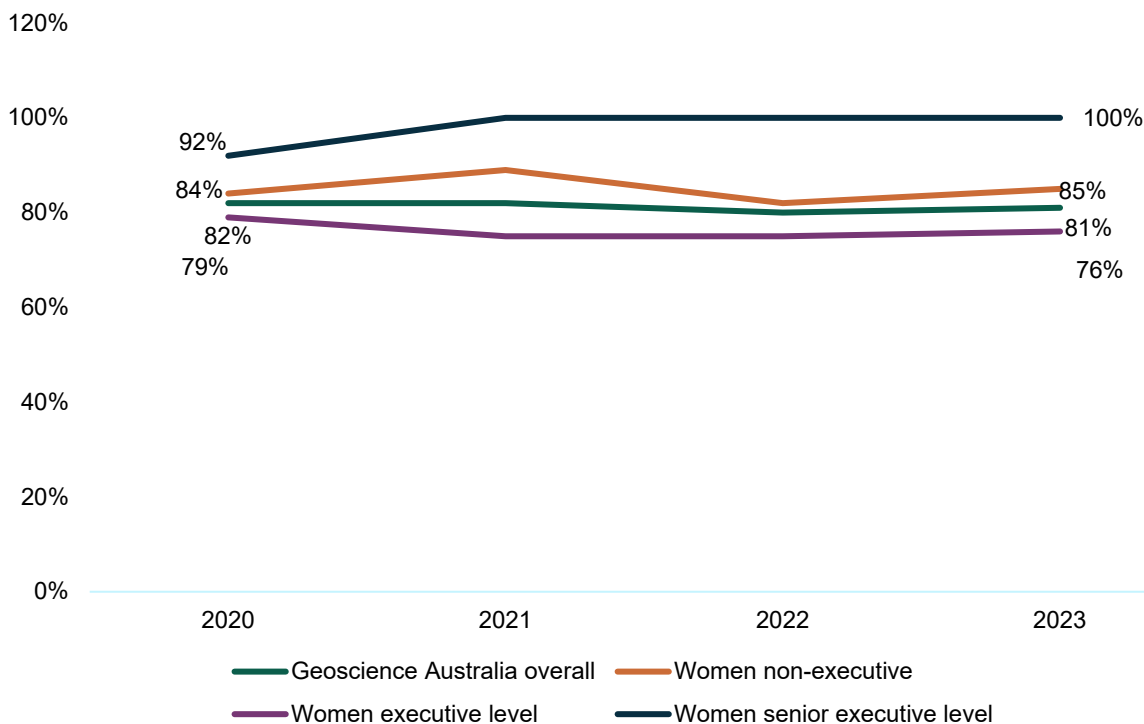


Table 9: Proportion of employees that ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ with the statement “I would recommend my agency as a good place to work”, APS census 2020-2023.

Category	2020			2021			2022			2023		
	Number	Total	%	Number	Total	%	Number	Total	%	Number	Total	%
APS overall	76,398	110,722	69%	74,485	109,537	68%	83,257	120,662	69%	86,665	127,436	68%
Geoscience Australia overall	406	495	82%	375	457	82%	429	536	80%	450	556	81%
Women at Geoscience Australia	158	195	81%	153	182	84%	185	213	87%	192	226	85%
Women in STEM divisions at Geoscience Australia	100	124	81%	100	123	81%	121	136	89%	125	149	84%
Women APS	187	222	84%	167	189	89%	192	233	82%	203	240	85%
Women executive level 1 or 2	188	238	79%	180	241	75%	213	277	77%	212	279	76%
Women senior executive level	12	13	92%	13	13	100%	14	14	100%	17	17	100%

Cygnets Award Application #4: Supporting gender equity through improved talent attraction

Table 10: Geoscience Australia APS employee census participant breakdown.

Category	2020	2021	2022	2023
Respondents	482	457	536	556
Man or male	259	248	298	301
Women or female	195	182	213	226
Gender 'X' or non-binary	1	1	5	3
Aboriginal and / or Torres Strait Islander	7	5	7	4
Ongoing disability	28	25	37	41
LGBTQIA+	18	25	31	41
Caring responsibilities	227	214	234	257
Born overseas	Not recorded	152	171	177

The majority of interview and focus group participants would recommend Geoscience Australia to women working in STEM or leadership roles. Some participants would not recommend 'pockets' of the organisation. Some noted limited progression opportunities.²⁸

"I came into Geoscience Australia having never worked in government. Here you get paid on your level. You are paid for what you do. I've never had as many thank yous and appreciation for my work. A lot of that comes from male employees. Gender doesn't seem to make any difference. People are equal and respect each other." – Female employee

"[I would recommend it because] we do lots of good work that is beneficial for all Australians." – Female employee

"Yes [I would recommend it]. It has come a long way since I joined. Not only recruitment practices and expectations, but also culture and increased flexibility has made it more attractive to work. The culture has really shifted in the last few years." – Female employee

"It depends on the role and the team – there might be some teams that I wouldn't recommend." – Female employee

"We feel like there's no progression because people stay so long. Grads can't really see the pathways for themselves. I wouldn't stay at Geoscience Australia if you wanted to progress." – Female employee

"I spruik Geoscience Australia big time... You have so many young people coming up and saying I want to do science when I grow up, I thought I had to go into mining. There are all sorts of things you can do, you don't have to sit on a drill rig." – Female employee

²⁸ Cygnets 5 will focus on career development for culturally and linguistically diverse people at Geoscience Australia, potentially with flow-on effects to the broader organisation.

Cygnets Award Application #4: Supporting gender equity through improved talent attraction

Target impact 3: New female employees agree that the visibility of women working at Geoscience Australia attracted them to apply (working towards)

New female employees were attracted to Geoscience Australia for its reputation as an inclusive workplace and the opportunity to do impactful work.

"I needed flexible working arrangements and compassion that I'm a parent and I'm also committed to my career. In my experience, Geoscience Australia has a really good reputation." – New employee

"I talked to a few people when working [with another organisation] during a project and swapping stories and they ended up moving here. They wanted to get out but didn't think there were other technical positions in APS. Saw that this was a great place to work and moved over. I tell everyone about the work that I get to do – I love it. Never thought I would be genuinely excited to go to work, but I am. Love my team and the work." – Female employee

However, new employees reflected they did not have visibility of gender equity across Geoscience Australia when applying, including on the website. There is a clear opportunity to improve how we represent gender equity on our website.

"Is that [information about gender equity] on the website? Where would I go to find that? If it's not on the website, I'm not going to go looking much further...If you've got it, flaunt it. At the end of the day you're a workplace, sell it to me." – New employee

Equitable and inclusive recruitment processes

Target impact 4: Staff on selection panels found the new resources and policies accessible and easy to use (achieving); and

Target impact 5: Staff on selection panels identify that the recruitment process has supported the success of meritorious female candidates (achieving)

Recent recruiters commented that the Hewlett-Packard statement is easy to use because it is automatically applied to job advertisements. Some reflected that this statement prompted them to review applications with a similar lens. New employees said the Hewlett-Packard statement provided them additional confidence to apply and during the interview process. Recent recruiters reflected that women often called to enquire about roles, because of the Hewlett-Packard statement.

Most recruiters were aware of and using the Gender Decoder as part of the approval process for recruitment. It was seen as a useful tool for reflecting on biases, but it caused confusion when the tool marked technical role descriptions, such as 'examine' or 'analyse' as gendered language.

Recruiters valued panel diversity across genders and business areas, as it offered varied perspectives in applicant assessment. For example, exploring transferable skills, rather than an overreliance on technical or academic experience.

Recruiters suggested a fact sheet summarising recruitment processes and available tools, to support consistency of use. They also desired more training, including on unconscious bias. Despite availability on our internal platform, training uptake has been low. This is addressed in future actions.

Cygnnet Award Application #4: Supporting gender equity through improved talent attraction

“The resources are relatively easy to access via the intranet and templates, although I would like to see measures to support gender equity to be more formalised and clearer in the recruitment resources provided... The available resources have helped me to consider how I write role profiles in order to make them more accessible and inclusive.” – Recent recruiter

“I have previously used the gender decoder tool but have found the results to be misleading in some circumstances (i.e. a number of role requirements have been coded as masculine words).” – Recent recruiter

“The resources are easy to use because I do a lot of recruitment. If you were starting from scratch it might be difficult to find. We need more recent unconscious bias training – for everybody. There are microaggressions that men do that they don’t realise. Women feel that.” – Recent recruiter

“[The HP statement was] one of the things I remember about applying for the job. That just stands out as something that made me think, I don’t have all of these things but yeah why not maybe I’ll go for it. It definitely contributed to me applying for it. – New employee

While formal training is always useful, I have found the more informal conversations regarding gender equity to be more valuable. From my perspective, the frequent, low intensity (for lack of a better term) narrative of trying to achieve gender diversity, recognising unconscious bias, how to form a considered selection panel, etc. to be very influential to my own thinking. – Recent recruiter

Overall, recent recruiters and new employees reflected that the recruitment process is increasingly equitable and inclusive, and this has supported the success rate of meritorious female candidates, as well as candidates from diverse backgrounds.

“To me, [informal expectations and conversations about bias] have been influential in considering candidate’s qualifications and skills more holistically (ie. not just the science credentials). I think this reflects the broader commitment to an inclusive workplace culture (which itself is a resource)...This has helped to influence the outcome of [recruitment processes I have been part of].” – Recent recruiter

Further action

Action name or reference	Rationale/evidence	Actions and outputs (description)	Timeframe (start and end)	Person/group responsible for implementing the action	Senior leader accountable for action delivery	Desired outcomes, targets or success indicators
Cygnets 5: Career progression for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) staff	Identified need to increase focus on barriers facing people from CALD backgrounds.	Deliver activities to promote career progression for CALD staff, to be evaluated in Cygnets 5.	Mid 2024 – Dec 2026	Human Resources	Chief Human Resources Officer	Cygnets 5 focus on career progression for CALD staff.
Formalise 40:40:20 target for public spaces, website, social media, and corporate publications.	Identified need to increase representation on website and to embed 40:40:20 target as business as usual across social media, corporate publications and displays. Impacted by delays to Public Spaces Framework.	Review relevant policies and procedures and identify opportunities to refresh (e.g. Media Engagement and Public Comment Policy and Procedure; Brand Style Guide). Implementation of Public Spaces Framework	Mid 2024 – Dec 2025	Communications Human Resources Office of the Chief Scientist Relevant business areas Governance	Chief Corporate division	40:40:20 gender representation on website, social media platforms, public spaces, and corporate publications.
Maintain 40:40:20 representation of women in DGALS presentations	Identified need for ongoing action to maintain representation of women in DGALS.	Update Reward and Recognition Framework to reflect focus on DGALS on communication and achieving Geoscience Australia objectives, not just science. Identify other opportunities to encourage nomination of women.	Mid 2024 - Dec 2024 (and ongoing)	Human Resources	Chief Human Resources Officer	DGALS criteria support nominations for outstanding Technical, Mathematical, Engineering and Corporate contributions; communications. Maintain 40:40:20 gender representation in DGALS presenters.
Employee Value Proposition	Identified need to support talent attraction, including women and culturally diverse people, by	Publish videos on website of women and people from diverse backgrounds	July 2024 (and ongoing)	Human Resources	Chief Human Resources Officer	Maintain 40:40:20 gender representation in applications.

Cygnets Award Application #4: Supporting gender equity through improved talent attraction

	increasingly visibility of peers working on Geoscience Australia and inclusive culture on the website.	discussing their careers with us.				New employees say the website encouraged them to apply.
Internal opportunity promotion	Identified need to increase internal promotion of acting opportunities across Geoscience Australia.	Review process for promoting internal acting opportunities.	Mid 2024 – Dec 2024	Human Resources	Chief Human Resources Officer	Increase internal promotion of acting opportunities across Geoscience Australia
Recruitment Policy and Guidelines	Feedback from staff on opportunities to improve the recruitment process to increase talent attraction, reduce burden on selection panellists and increase access and use of relevant resources.	Update Recruitment Policy and Guidelines. Explore blind review of applications. Comprehensive fact sheet with all relevant resources to support recruiters. Interview question guidelines.	Current - Dec 2024	Human Resources	Chief Human Resources Officer	Meet target for gender representation on selection panels. Maintain 40:40:20 gender representation in new employees.
Unconscious bias training	Low uptake of existing unconscious bias and diversity and inclusion training.	Finding effective, low-cost training opportunities for all staff, including selection panellists. Communicating through culture content about unconscious bias. Additional training on how to process high volume applications efficiently, while mitigating bias.	Mid 2024 – Dec 2025	Human Resources	Chief of Divisions	Maintain 40:40:20 gender representation in applications. 100% of selection panellists have completed unconscious bias training.