

Athena Swan Australia Advisory Committee

Meeting 4 Notes

Monday 3rd March 2025 | 2:00-3:30pm (AEDT) | via MS Teams

ATTENDEES	APOLOGIES
Gail Crimmins (Chair) <i>University of the Sunshine Coast</i> Cobie Rudd <i>Edith Cowan University</i> Andrew Deeks <i>Murdoch University</i> Zlatko Skrbis <i>Australian Catholic University</i> Kay Latham <i>RMIT</i> Edwin Hawkins <i>WEHI</i> Andrew Heap <i>Geoscience Australia</i> Fiona Stapleton <i>UNSW</i> Kate Huppatz <i>WSU</i> Mel Fuller <i>DSTG</i> Janin Bredehoeft <i>CEO SAGE</i> Tamzen Armer <i>Director, Programs SAGE</i>	Kumi de Silva <i>UTS</i> Jessica Buck <i>The Kids Institute</i>

#	Item & Notes
1	WELCOME, APOLOGIES AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY
2	SAGE UPDATE Committee membership Prof Catherine Elliott has left The Kids Institute, and the sector, and so has stepped down from the Advisory Committee Chair role. The SAGE Board will select a new Chair and also a new member to replace Catherine on the committee from the EOI's initially received for the Advisory Committee. SAGE Conference To be held on 25-27 Aug 2025 in Sydney.

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The [Call for Abstracts](#) is live. Please share with your colleagues and networks.

Invitations to present keynote presentations have been sent to leaders in GEDI, including to Prof Michelle Ryan (GiWL) who has been leading the evaluation of SAGE Athena Swan and Giridharan Sivaraman, the Race Discrimination Commissioner, who could present their research into the [prevalence and impact of racism in Australian universities](#).

We have shared the [partnership prospectus](#) widely but securing sponsorship is challenging in the current financial climate. The lack of sponsorship has limited our potential to invite international keynote speakers.

2024 Impact statement

In December we released the SAGE 2024 [Impact Statement](#), sharing our achievements of SAGE and those of our network of participating institutions.

Department of Industry, Science and Resources (DISR) funding

The SAGE contract with DISR is now signed and we're starting/progressing work on:

Ensuring SAGE Athena Swan remains fit-for-purpose

Developing a program to support leaders in 'What you need to know to take effective action on gender equity, diversity and inclusion'. This work is being conducted in conjunction with researchers at RMIT University and builds on the pilot we ran last year. We'll also be partnering with Murdoch University on developing a specific program to build leaders' Indigenous cultural competencies.

Expanding the SAGE framework into the VET sector. Our initial phase will specifically focus on TAFEs, and we're currently in the discovery phase of the project. We've made some good connections, including [TAFE Directors Australia](#) and [Jobs & Skills Australia](#).

Expanding support for MRIs, including collaborating with the Association of Australian Medical Research Institutes and the Australian Academy of Health and Medical Science.

Community of Practice on Preventing and Responding to Gender-based Violence

SAGE has established a new Community of Practice to support organisations with their work in the prevention of and response to Gender-based Violence. The work of the group will centre around the (proposed) [National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence](#), but will have relevance to all subscriber organisation types.

Plans for state visits in 2025

We're starting to plan visits to subscribing institutions.

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	<p>Advocacy</p> <p>SAGE made a submission on the Workplace Gender Equality Amendment (Setting Gender Equality Targets) Bill 2024 and were invited to the associated Senate Committee hearing. The Bill passed on the last sitting day.</p> <p>Universities Australia (UA) Conference</p> <p>SAGE attended the Universities Australia Conference and shared an Exhibitor Booth with the Wattle program. It was wonderful to engage with leaders from across the network (and beyond), to share the achievements of SAGE organisations, and to be a visible model of collaboration.</p>
3	<p>INTERSECTIONALITY IN SAGE ATHENA SWAN</p> <p>*This item connects to the following one</p> <p>The Committee advised that SAGE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clearly define the core purpose, objectives and core values of SAGE Athena Swan program.• Use the findings and recommendations of the evaluation currently underway, as well as consultation with the sector, to shape the program into the future.• Identify opportunities for alignment with current/proposed legislation (e.g. National Higher Education Code to prevent and respond to GBV, the National Anti-Racism Framework, etc.) to allow GEDI work to progress cohesively with subscriber organisations on areas that both align with the key principles and priorities of SAGE and emerging national policy directives to which subscriber institutions must comply.• Not be distracted by language or threat of international policy frameworks at the expense of supporting organisations to achieve their objectives in GEDI.• Support organisations in their GEDI work, noting that institutions are at different levels of maturity, particularly noting the current anti-GEDI climate, and avoid inflaming detractors. <p>To strengthen collaboration, the Committee would be pleased to invite members of the SAGE Board to attend the next Advisory Committee meeting and engage in a shared discussion on current priorities and opportunities.</p> <p>The Committee requested to receive a paper on the risks and opportunities of SAGE maintaining a focus on intersectionality within its key values and awards evaluation.</p>

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4	<p>CURRENT POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT AND EQUITY DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (EDI) CHALLENGES</p> <p>The Committee advised that SAGE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be alert to current international policies and rhetoric but avoid reactive response - Australia has strong legislation relating to GEDI. • Stay on message: Continue to use the GEDI acronym and centre our work around GEDI imperatives, and support subscribing institutions in doing likewise. • Be aware that some subscribers are being significantly impacted by the Trump Administration's Executive Order 14151 because of the work they do with the US (this is particularly the case for the Publicly Funded Research Agencies (PFRAs)).
5	<p>QUESTIONS, IDEAS AND COMMENTS FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS</p> <p>Gender Pay Gap A question was asked about the pending release of the Gender Pay Gap data by WGEA. Pleasingly, when the data was released, we note that <u>SAGE institutions are acting faster to reduce pay gap than their peers.</u></p> <p>SAGE Athena Swan Gold Organisations, particularly those who now hold SAGE Athena Swan Silver Awards, are keen for SAGE and the sector to shape the pathway to Gold Awards. This will be part of the suite of work to be undertaken, subsequent to the review of findings/recommendations from the evaluation of the SAGE Athena Swan program being undertaken by the Global Institute for Women's Leadership (GIWL).</p>
6	<p>NEXT STEPS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions arising (see table below) • Date/Time of next meeting TBD

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Actions Arising & Next Steps

Action	Who	Complete
Paper on the risks and opportunities of SAGE maintaining a focus on intersectionality within its key values and awards evaluation.	SAGE	
SAGE Board Chair and/or members to be invited to the next Advisory Committee meeting	SAGE CEO	
Appoint a new Chair of the Advisory Committee	SAGE Board	
Appoint a new member of the Advisory Committee	SAGE Board	