



Australian Government
Department of Defence

shape,
innovate,
deliver.

SAGE Cygnet

Defence Science and Technology Group
Institutional Context

June 2024



Background

The Defence Science and Technology Group (DSTG) is the Australian government's lead agency responsible for applying science and technology to safeguard Australia and its national interests.

DSTG works closely with industry, universities and the scientific community to enhance our combined ability to support Australia's defence and national security capabilities and to contribute to national wealth.

DSTG operates within the governance framework of the Department of Defence. Defence is extraordinarily complex, given its size (over 123,000 employees), profile (armed forces and civilians) and unique security constraints.

DSTG employs over 2,200 staff and contractors, predominantly scientists, engineers, IT specialists and technicians and has a presence in nearly every state and territory in Australia. The national headquarters is in Canberra, and research facilities are located in Melbourne, Edinburgh (in the northern suburbs of Adelaide), Canberra, Brisbane, Sydney, HMAS Stirling at Rockingham (near Perth), Scottsdale in Tasmania, and Innisfail in Northern Queensland.

Women are underrepresented in STEM workforces across Australia and globally. Lack of gender diversity in STEM poses a risk to diversity of thought and furthering innovation. Yet STEM research organisations continue to contend with cultural and structural barriers to women's attraction, retention and career progression. DSTG identified this challenge within its own organisation, noting that since 2016, despite an increased focus on cultural change to support diversity and inclusion, progress has been slow and demographic statistics continue to reflect a large gender imbalance in its Science and Technology (S&T) workforce.

Enhancing gender equity, diversity and inclusion is central to DSTG's continued effectiveness and ability to deliver value to Defence. DSTG provides specialist advice on technology solutions for Defence to reduce and mitigate risks in an increasingly challenging strategic and operational landscape. The recent Defence Strategic Review highlighted DSTG's central role in accelerating technology research and innovation to enhance Defence's capability edge.

To deliver on this, DSTG continues to address the cultural, structural and systemic barriers to women employees' full participation in all areas of its workforce, including at senior levels.

Governance

As an Australian Public Service (APS) organisation, Defence is required to operate within Commonwealth employment legislation, frameworks and policies when implementing any workforce initiatives. These include the following:

- Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)
- Public Service Act 1999 (PS Act) and subordinate legislation
- Maternity Leave (Commonwealth Employees) Act 1973
- Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013
- Commonwealth Procurement Rules
- APS Bargaining Framework.

Our workplace Diversity and Inclusion Strategy also expresses our ongoing commitment to the APS Employment Principles and ensuring we have a workplace that is diverse and free from discrimination pursuant to section 18 of the PS Act.

Chief Defence Scientist

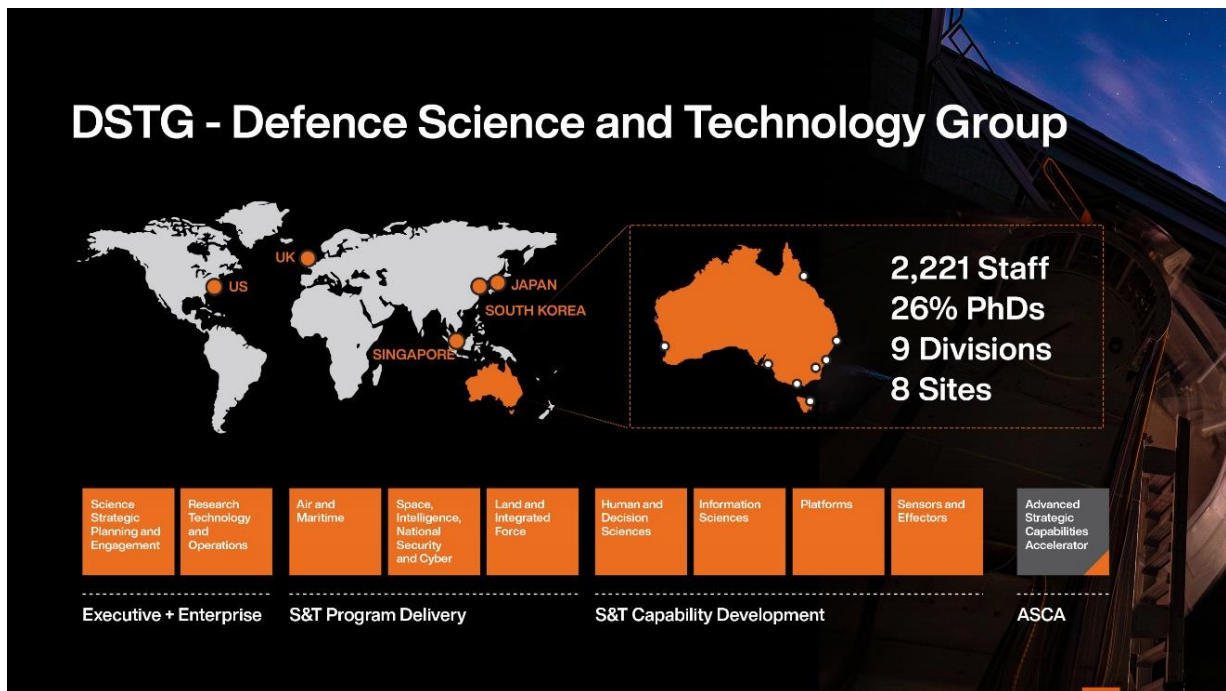
The Chief Defence Scientist, Professor Tanya Monro is the head of DSTG and is the Capability Manager for Innovation, Science and Technology within the Department of Defence. Professor Monro is the executive accountable to the Minister for Defence through the Secretary of the Department of Defence for delivering the Innovation, Science and Technology (S&T) program of the Defence portfolio. In delivering this program, the Chief Defence Scientist is responsive to the priorities of the Secretary of Defence, Chief of the Defence Force, Service Chiefs and other Group Heads within the Department.

Size and structure

DSTG delivers across eight sites throughout Australia and globally, working across three program delivery areas, four capability development areas and two executive and enterprise divisions. The Advanced Strategic Capabilities Accelerator (ASCA), established in July 2023 also sits within the CDS portfolio. ASCA was developed and designed to translate asymmetric technologies into defence capability, in response to the Defence Strategic Review (Figure 1).

The DSTG workforce is predominantly located in Australia, with 51% based in South Australia, and 30% in Victoria and smaller numbers in Australian Capital Territory (9%), New South Wales (4%), Queensland (3%), Western Australia (2%) and Tasmania (0.3%).

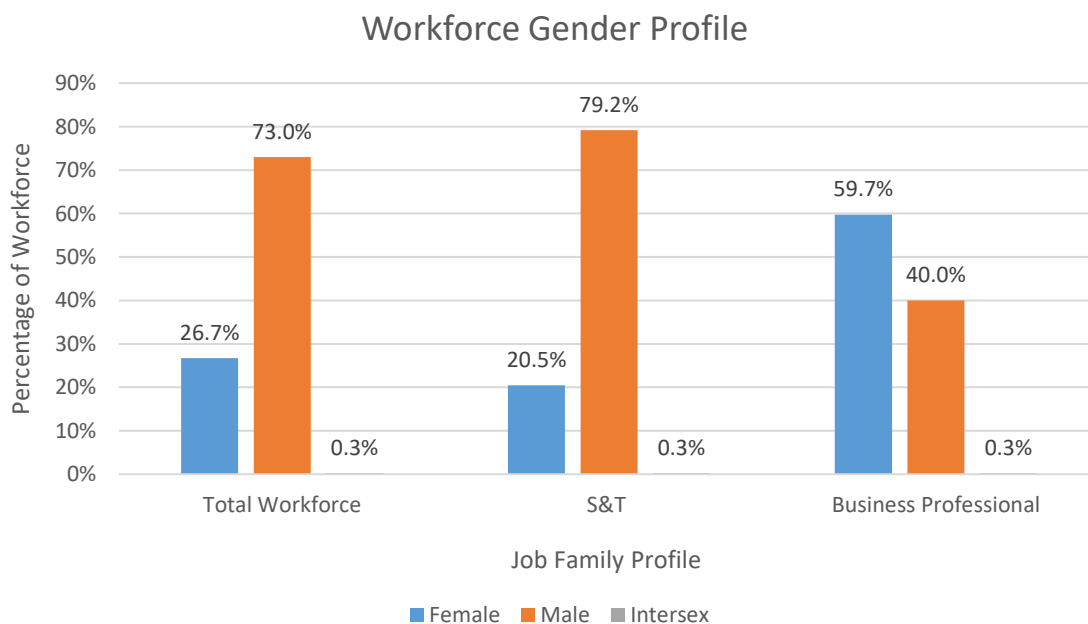
Figure 1. DSTG Locations across Australia and International



Workforce profile

Whilst DSTG's overall workforce female representation is 26.7%, this varies by job family. The larger component (at 84%) is the S&T/STEM component with a lower female representation at 20.5% compared to the Business Professional workforce where females comprise almost 60% (Figure 2).

Figure 2. DSTG Workforce Gender Profile (April 2024)



Figures 3 and 4 provide a gender breakdown by classification for the S&T Job Family (Figure 3) and Business Professional workforce (Figure 4). Whilst the Business Professional Workforce is majority female in most classifications, within the S&T family females are underrepresented at all classifications. However regardless of job family, female representation at senior levels declines.

Figure 3. DSTG S&T workforce gender profile by classification (April 2024)

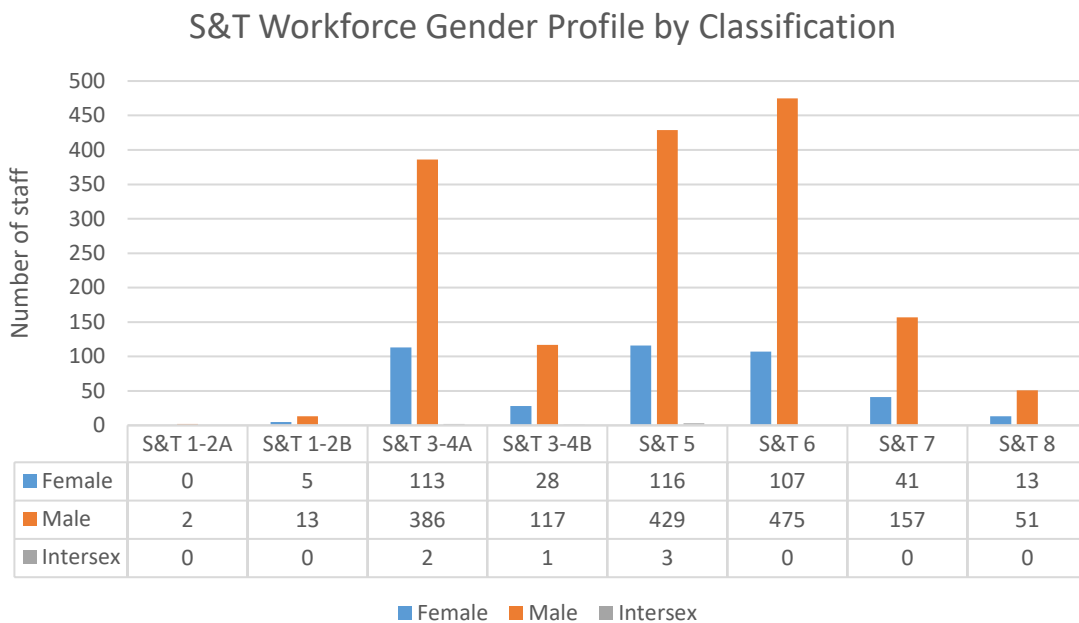
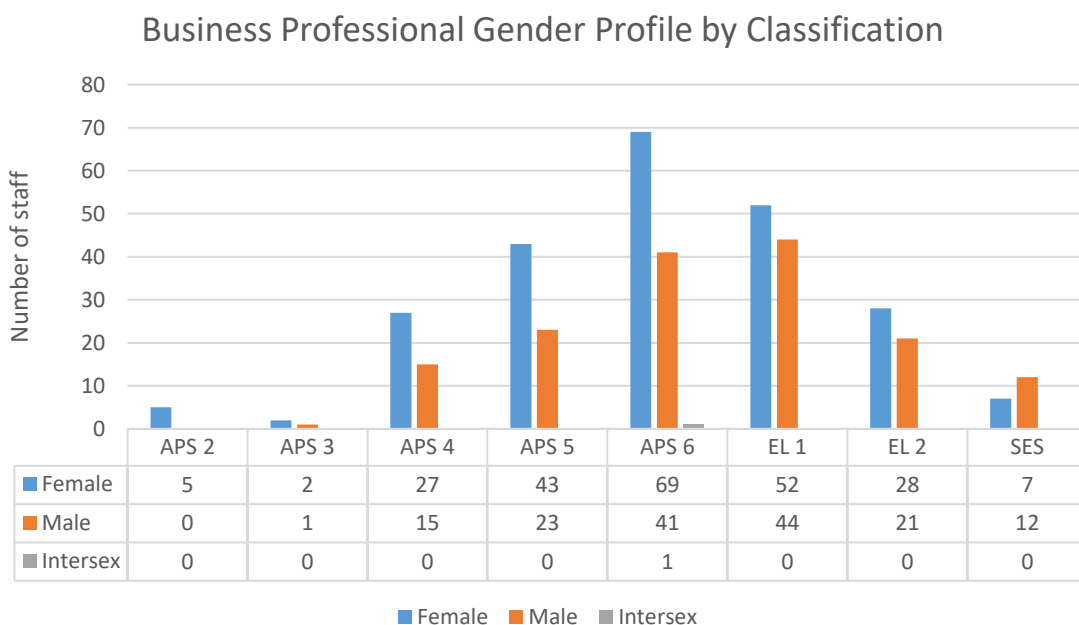


Figure 4. DSTG Business Professional workforce gender profile by classification (April 2024)



DSTG has low workforce representation of females and employees who identify as First Nations, having a disability and of ethnicity other than Australian as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: DSTG workforce diversity dashboard (April 2024)

Total Female	Female Leaders	Indigenous	Disability	CALD ¹
27%	24%	1%	2%	21%

Tables 2 and 3 described the intersectionality profile of the S&T and Business Professional workforce, respectively, highlighting less diversity in our STEM (S&T) versus the Business Professional workforce. The exception is a strong CALD representation in the S&T workforce (22% compared to 16% of Business Professionals). Within the S&T workforce, CALD representation peaks at mid-career levels (S&T 5, 6) for males and is still observed at senior levels (S&T 7, 8). In contrast, CALD representation in the female S&T workforce remains low at all levels. The Business Professional workforce has a greater representation of people with a disability (3% Business Professional compared to 1.3% S&T) and First Nations employees (4% compared with 0.3% within S&T). First Nation females outnumber males, and their representation continues from junior to senior levels within the Business Professional workforce.

Table 2. Intersectionality profile of S&T employees by classification (# of employees, 2024)

Science and Technology		First Nations	CALD	Disability
Female	S&T 1-2 A	0	0	0
	S&T 1-2 B	0	0	0
	S&T 3-4 A	0	27	1
	S&T 3-4 B	2	5	0
	S&T 5	1	31	2
	S&T 6	0	23	3
	S&T 7	0	14	0
	S&T 8	0	4	0
Male	S&T 1-2 A	0	0	0
	S&T 1-2 B	0	1	0
	S&T 3-4 A	1	76	0
	S&T 3-4 B	1	21	1
	S&T 5	1	100	10
	S&T 6	1	108	4
	S&T 7	0	29	3
	S&T 8	0	9	1
Intersex	S&T 1-2 A	0	0	0
	S&T 1-2 B	0	0	0
	S&T 3-4 A	0	0	0
	S&T 3-4 B	0	0	0
	S&T 5	0	1	1
	S&T 6	0	0	0
	S&T 7	0	0	0
	S&T 8	0	0	0

¹ CALD- Identified ethnicity as other than Australian, did not answer or First Nations.

Table 3. Intersectionality profile of Business Professional employees by classification (# of employees, 2024)

Business Professionals		First Nations	CALD	Disability
Female	APS 2	0	1	0
	APS 3	0	0	0
	APS 4	4	4	1
	APS 5	3	2	3
	APS 6	2	11	5
	EL 1	4	13	2
	EL 2	0	4	3
Male	APS 2	0	0	0
	APS 3	0	0	0
	APS 4	1	3	1
	APS 5	0	3	1
	APS 6	2	5	14
	EL 1	0	9	10
	EL 2	0	3	8
Intersex	APS 2	0	0	0
	APS 3	0	0	0
	APS 4	0	0	0
	APS 5	0	0	0
	APS 6	0	1	0
	EL 1	0	0	0
	EL 2	0	0	0



Photo: Staff celebrating at DSTG Edinburgh's International Women's Day event, 2024.

Diversity and inclusion

The DSTG Inclusion Steering Committee has responsibility for governance and oversight of Diversity and Inclusion. This committee which meets quarterly, comprises Chiefs of Divisions who represent the key diversity areas: Gender; First Nations; LGBTI; CALD; Neurodiversity and Mental Health, as Senior Champions.

The Diversity and Inclusion placemat in Figure 5, provides an overview of the scope of work which supports DSTG's effort to develop a collaborative culture that values diversity, equity and inclusion.

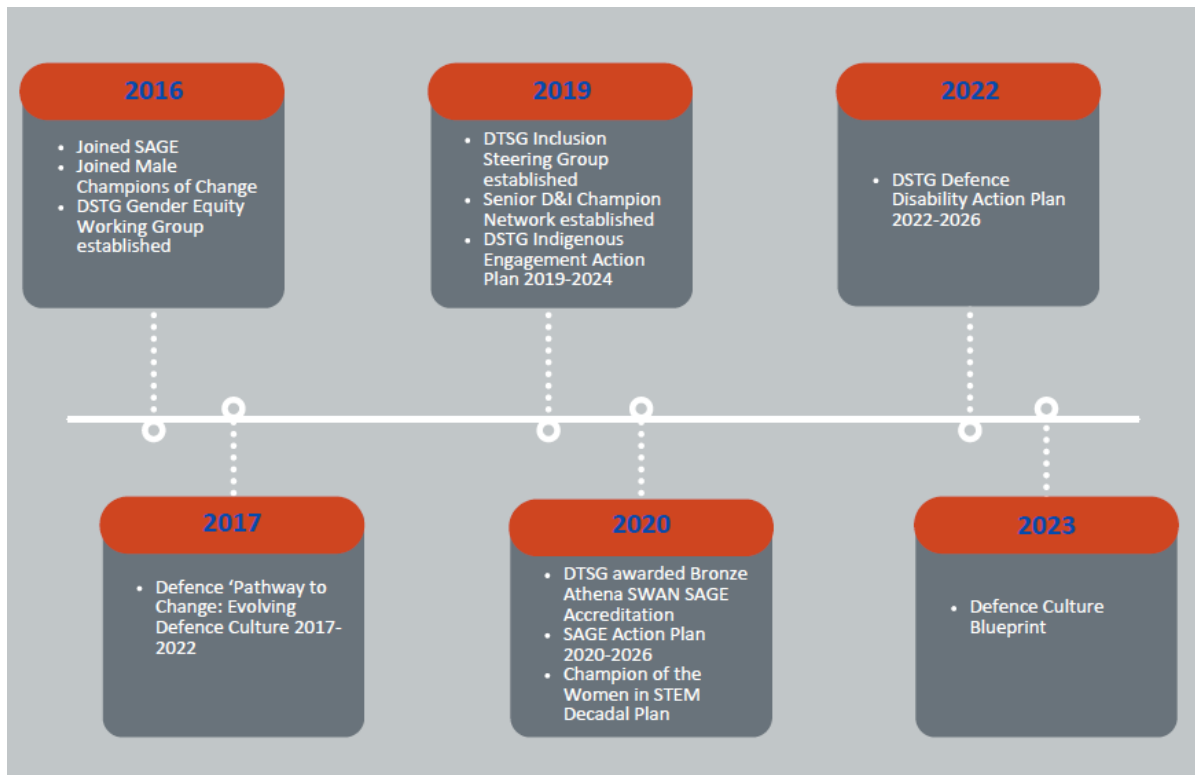
Figure 5. Fostering Diversity and Inclusion at DSTG



SAGE journey

DSTG became a SAGE Athena Swan pilot member of the program in 2016, achieving Bronze accreditation in 2020 which continues to be integrated into our Diversity, Inclusion and Equity strategies and projects (Figure 6). DSTG's participation in the Athena Swan Accreditation Scheme runs in parallel with other National Equity, Diversity and Inclusion programs and initiatives.

Figure 6. SAGE Journey



Accountability for delivering our SAGE action plan is through DSTG's four SAGE Implementation Work Stream teams, who meet at least monthly. Implementation teams are supported by a full time SAGE Project Manager. The four work streams (refer Table 4), are each led by a Senior leader with a membership of approximately five to seven employees per team from across the workforce. At the beginning of each year Expressions of Interest (EOI) for the lead roles are invited from the Senior leadership team and applications are reviewed by the Gender Champion. Open nominations are accepted for team members. The SAGE Project Manager is responsible for ensuring diverse representation across, gender, location, division, seniority and cultural diversity.

The SAGE Action Plan contains 72 actions designed to drive systemic, long-term change at DSTG.

Through broad organisational engagement DSTG has made significant progress on these actions (Table 4) towards creating a diverse and inclusive working environment and delivering real impact through four work streams.

Table 4. The four SAGE work streams and key achievements from DSTG's Bronze Action Plan

SAGE Work Streams	Key Achievements
Establishing leadership and accountability for diversity and inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating governance and accountability processes for diversity and inclusion • Embedding diversity and inclusion into strategic planning • Greater access and utilisation of data for evidence based decision making • Analysis of gender pay equity across the organisation, including like for like pay and gender pay gaps by quartile.
Improving the talent pipeline of females	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing 50% female recruitment targets for our entry level STEM programs • Launching a mid-career STEM program, also with 50% female recruitment targets • Setting challenging targets to pursue an aggressive strategy to increase the recruitment, promotion and retention of females • Implementation of various strategies to remove unconscious bias from the recruitment process.
Improving our people systems and processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing to improve access to and utilisation of Flexible Work Arrangements for all • Addressing issues of isolation for remote workers • Improving retention levels through stay and exit interviews.
Creating a more inclusive culture and environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch of the DSTG Inclusion Ally Network in 2022 to improve inclusion • Active STEM outreach and engagement program • Launch of the inaugural Women Defence in STEM Ambassador roles • Establishment of a calendar of events including; International Women's Day; Harmony Week; Wear it Purple Day; International Day of People with a Disability; and NAIDOC week, to celebrate and recognise diversity and inclusion across the organisation.



Acknowledgement of country

Defence acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the Lands throughout Australia. Defence recognises their continuing connection to traditional lands and waters and would like to pay respect to their Elders both past and present. Defence would also like to pay respect to the First Nations peoples who have contributed to the defence of Australia in times of peace and war, and acknowledges them as our nation's first scientists, technologists and inventors.

