RMIT Athena SWAN
Annual Report
2020

RMIT UNIVERSITY

Foreword

Inevitably, every 2020 Annual Report Foreword must begin by reflecting on the huge challenges we have faced together this year. Adversity often amplifies disadvantage, and this year has witnessed the emergence of many and varied gendered impacts of the pandemic on women in STEMM. For example, impacts on research opportunities for women in STEMM have included well-documented bottlenecks in submissions of women's research publications and research proposals.

Happily, though, the story of 2020 for gender equity and Athena SWAN at RMIT University is not only about that pandemic. As this Annual Report underlines, 2020 has been a year of quiet achievement, advancing the foundations laid out in our Athena SWAN Action Plan. While events this year may have overshadowed the *profile* of gender equity in STEMM, its *priority* remained undiminished.

Kay Latham, Victoria's first Dean of STEMM Diversity and Inclusion, accepting the Athena SWAN Institutional Bronze Award on behalf of RMIT on 20th February 2020.

Hence, in this Annual Report we look back on a wealth of activities and milestones achieved in 2020. These outcomes range from piloting new approaches to achievement relative to opportunity (ARtO) and new special measures for recruitment; establishing new tools and teams for informing policy and driving action on gender equity across every level of the University; and delivering new forums for communication and outreach, including the *Women in STEMM* website, the *Women in Vocational Education Conference*, and the *Women at NASA* event.

So, our story of 2020 is really about the establishment of a solid basis for advancing gender equity in STEMM at RMIT University into 2021 and beyond. Achieving the tangible outcomes set out in our Athena SWAN Action Plan — both in terms of quantitative data and the lived experience of women in STEMM — that underpin our work towards Athena SWAN Silver accreditation. Emphasising the importance of strategic planning, this Annual Report highlights and summarises these 2020 outcomes, with reference to the seven themes identified in the Athena SWAN Action Plan.

Professor Madhu Bhaskaran, Edwina Oostergetel, and Professor Kay Latham representing RMIT at the 2020 SAGE Awards Dinner.

Looking back over my short time as Acting Dean STEMM Diversity and Inclusion, I have found the energy and ambition, initiative and expertise, passion and compassion of the whole Athena SWAN team to be nothing less than inspirational. I would like to take this opportunity to express my personal gratitude for the incredible support and encouragement I have received from everyone involved in Athena SWAN at RMIT, most especially from Maddy Yewers, Amy Heritage, and of course Kay Latham. It has been my immense privilege to be a small part of this team for the past few months and it's an experience I will always treasure. And I am looking forward to supporting Kay and her amazing team in every way I can when we welcome her back to the helm in February 2021.

Matt Duckham, Jan 2021

2020 Highlights

800 Expressions of Interest

Almost 800 applicants, with 170 strong matches, have been engaged through our quarterly newsletter and invited expressions of interest since the *Always On Women in STEMM Recruitment* campaign commenced in October 2019.

40 Senior Leaders

40 leaders, 156 peers, and 123 direct reports were involved in the *Inclusive Leadership Capability Program*, with 360 assessments, collaborative workshops, and individual debriefs and action plans.

Special Measures

Special Measures was applied to advertised academic roles in the STEM College for disciplines and levels where female representation is currently less than 40%.

Bronze Award

RMIT received our SAGE Athena SWAN Bronze Award at a national ceremony in February 2020, marking the beginning of work towards Silver accreditation.

Inspiring Young Women

200 participants, more than 80 questions, in our *Open Day Panel*, and more than 400 participants, 231 questions, in our *Women at NASA* international seminar.

Dean STEMM Diversity & Inclusion

In a Victorian first, RMIT appointed Prof Kay Latham to the role of Dean of STEMM Diversity and Inclusion, leading RMIT's Athena SWAN project and the STEM College's diversity action plans.

9 Data Dashboards

STEMM data dashboards have been developed for the 8 STEMM Schools and the VE College, containing School-specific data on staff and student diversity indicators and trends for 2017 onwards.

14 Women

Our *Women in STEMM Gallery* showcases 14 inspirational researchers as visible role models at: https://www.rmit.edu.au/staff/our-rmit/diversity-and-inclusion/gender-equality/women-in-stemm

VE Conference

The College of Vocational Education hosted the inaugural *Virtual Women in Vocational Education Conference*, with 13 high profile female leaders from industry and within RMIT sharing their strategies for success.

47 Matches

47 HDR women from the STEM College were mentored by an academic outside of their discipline as part of the HDR Women in STEMM Mentoring Program, developed in consultation with WRN, SGR and College leaders.

1,171 Visitors

Our new *Women in STEMM* website, created for external and high school audiences as well as to showcase industry partnerships, attracted 1,171 visitors within its first three months of operation from June 2020: http://www.rmit.edu.au/womeninstemm

WGEA EOCGE

RMIT received the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) Employer of Choice for Gender Equality (EOCGE) citation for the third consecutive year.

Career Reignite Launch

28 participants in the Career Reignite Coaching Panel service to assist with the development of research career transition plans

WRN statement

The RMIT Women Researchers' Network (WRN) developed a formal statement highlighting concerns and impacts of the pandemic for women academics.

Achievement Relative to Opportunity

Significant progress was made in developing ARtO (Achievement Relative to Opportunity) Guidelines for incorporation throughout the HR policy suite and the talent acquisition processes, including a pilot for new hires to The ARC Centre of Excellence for Transformative Meta-Optical Systems (TMOS) led by Prof Madhu Baskaran.

8 + 1 Schools

STEMM Diversity and Inclusion Advocates are identified for 8 STEMM Schools and the VE College to drive actions at a local level.

Leading local action

Leading transformation to support female careers in STEMM

Diversity and Inclusion Advocates

A critical first step in implementing the RMIT Athena SWAN Action Plan in 2020 has been to establish the Diversity and Inclusion Advocates Group (DIAG). DIAG is charged with identifying and addressing barriers to inclusion and progression for women in STEMM, as well as for diverse-gendered staff and students and for other minority groups at the University. DIAG provides the bridge between College and University level Athena SWAN activities and coordination, and local actions to effect change at the School level. Chaired by Kay Latham, Dean STEMM Diversity and Inclusion, DIAG has nine Diversity and Inclusion Advocate members, one from each of the STEMM Schools across the University plus one from the College of Vocational Education. DIAG will meet formally five times in 2021, helping to drive a wide range of activities at the local level. The Diversity and Inclusion Advocates are:

·   Professor Vanessa Cooper (School of Accounting, Information Systems & Supply Chain)
·   Professor Mark Easton (School of Engineering)
·   Dr Ricarda Bigolin (School of Fashion and Textiles)
·   Associate Professor Anthony Jaworowski (School of Health and Biomedical Sciences)
·   Dr Nicola Willand and Dr Rebecca Leshinsky (School of Property, Construction and Project Management)
·   Professor Matt Duckham (School of Science)
·   Paula McKenry (College of Vocational Education)

Paula McKenry, Dr Rebecca Leshinsky, Dr Ricarda Bigolin, Prof. Mark Easton, Prof. Vanessa Cooper, Prof. Matt Duckham, Prof. Anthony Jaworowski, Dr Nicola Willand

The Diversity and Inclusion Advocates from the new School of Computing Technologies and the School of Architecture & Urban Design will be confirmed early 2021.

STEMM Data Dashboards

To support informed decision-making at the local level, as well as greater transparency and accountability in diversity and inclusion policy creation, new data dashboards were created for all the STEMM Schools. The dashboards allow real-time visual representation and analysis of workforce and student profiles. The aim of the dashboards is to assist leaders to more effectively consider diversity and inclusion in their decision making. Each dashboard has been developed in consultation with School leaders and adapted for School-specific functionality.

An example of a new STEMM data dashboard with live data about gender diversity across staff and students

STEMM Schools include all those with STEMM Field of Research/Education codes:

·   School of Computing Technologies
·   School of Engineering
·   School of Health & Biomedical Sciences
·   School of Science
·   School of Accounting, Information Systems & Supply Chain Management
·   School of Fashion and Textiles
·   School of Architecture & Urban Design
·   School of Property, Construction & Project Management
·   College of Vocational Education

Pipeline

Inspiring and attracting future female talent

Women in STEMM Recruitment Campaign

The *Always On Women in STEMM Recruitment* campaign commenced in October 2019. Since then we have gathered almost 800 applicants, with 170 strong matches. A quarterly newsletter is sent to the segmented talent pool to keep applicants engaged and to invite expressions of interest.

Student Pipeline

RMIT's range of activities to support young women students in STEMM had to adapt rapidly to the COVID-19 public health response. New online platforms allowed RMIT to connect with far-reaching audiences to inspire young women in STEMM in collaboration with RMIT's I Belong Team, Student Recruitment and Global Marketing, SEH STEM Engagement and academic staff, external industry partners and Victoria's Lead Scientist.

Events included:

- Open Day panel (200 participants; 80 questions)
- Women at NASA virtual event (400 RMIT & high school women from 63 high schools; 231 questions posed)
- Girls in CSIT online workshops for SNAP school students (22 students each attended 3 workshops to learn to build their own website led by RMIT students and industry professionals)

International Day of Women and Girls in Science Event in collaboration with Victoria's Lead Scientist Dr Amanda Caples

- VCE subject selection videos (5 produced videos and accompanied live events featuring RMIT students and Industry professionals)
- In-person event for International Day of Women and Girls in Science
- AusGP women in STEMM welcome team at the RMIT Innovation & Tech Hub
- I Belong in STEM workshops in Space Science, CSIT and Biotechnology

"I found this program extremely helpful in both narrowing down my career choices and in giving me a good idea of what courses to take and different, more specific, occupations to consider."
        - Year 10 participant in the Girls in IT workshops

Special Measures

Approval has been sought and granted for Special Measures advertising in external recruitment for Engineering and Science disciplines with low female representation. In 2020, Special Measures was applied to externally advertised academic roles in the STEM College for disciplines and levels where female representation is currently less than 40%. Use of Special Measures was also expanded to explicitly be inclusive of women, of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait people(s) (men or women), and of transgender and gender diverse people.

HDR Mentoring Program

The HDR mentoring program was developed in consultation with the Women Researchers' Network (WRN), the School of Graduate Research (SGR) and STEM College leaders and implemented whilst RMIT was operating remotely. 47 women higher degree researchers from the STEM College were mentored by an academic outside of their discipline. Pre-training and on-going support was available for mentors and mentees to facilitate productive partnerships.

"It was a valuable opportunity and I learned a lot, meeting my mentor was really great, I now feel I have support out of my supervisory team and discussed different issues from other disciplines' viewpoints."

        -HDR student mentee

Fulfilment and progression

Nurturing female talents in STEMM

Academic Promotions

For the first time in 2019 and 2020, female academic promotion application rates were close to or exceeded ATN standards. This milestone aligns with the implementation of the new academic promotions framework. The framework was designed with improved support for diversity, inclusion and flexible academic careers as a key aim. In addition to explicit recognition of Achievement Relative to Opportunity (ARtO, see below), the framework introduced domain choice, where applicants can choose to apply under the domains Engagement and Education, Engagement and Research, or all three, providing equal access to promotion for all academics whether their careers are teaching or research focused.

Another other key enabler of equity and diversity in promotion is the governance of promotion committees. The 2020 promotion committees included at least 40% male and 40% female members and was representative of CALD-identified colleagues. While application and success rates in 2020 continued the longer-term trend towards supporting the pipeline, compared with 2019 it is clear that 2020 has been a particularly challenging year. In the context of COVID-19, some colleagues may have felt they should apply this year in case there was no promotion round on offer in 2021 (so may not have been sufficiently 'ready' this year). Some others withdrew after the Intent to Apply stage, perhaps fearing they had limited capacity to do justice to a full application, with priorities redirected to online teaching responsibilities.

2019 Academic Promotion Celebration Event

Achievement Relative to Opportunity (ARtO)

Achievement Relative to Opportunity (ARtO) is a framework for acknowledging what an individual has achieved in their career, in the context of the opportunities available to them.

ARtO is used for the purposes of employment-related decisions such as recruitment, performance review and talent review, career planning, and academic promotion.

Whilst ARtO benefits everyone, and much has been done on gender equality in the workplace, it remains the case that women's careers are far more likely than men's to be adversely affected by such circumstances. The efficacy of ARtO has been well documented in the 2014 Gender Transformation in the Academy paper. The paper argues that the principle of ARtO needs to be built into all decision-making connected to the assessments of merit, so that the productivity of staff with nonlinear careers is assessed fairly and to allow the positioning of staff to maximise their career potential.

2020 saw significant progress in a major project to incorporate ARtO Guidelines throughout the HR policy suite and the talent acquisition processes. These processes and policies include training for panels and hiring managers, providing an integrated approach alongside special measures, inclusive language analysis, and flexible work arrangements.

The new ARtO processes have been piloted in 2020 for new hires to The ARC Centre of Excellence for Transformative Meta-Optical Systems (TMOS) led by Prof Madhu Baskaran.
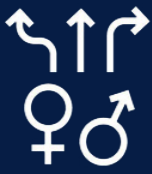
Engaging moments of transition

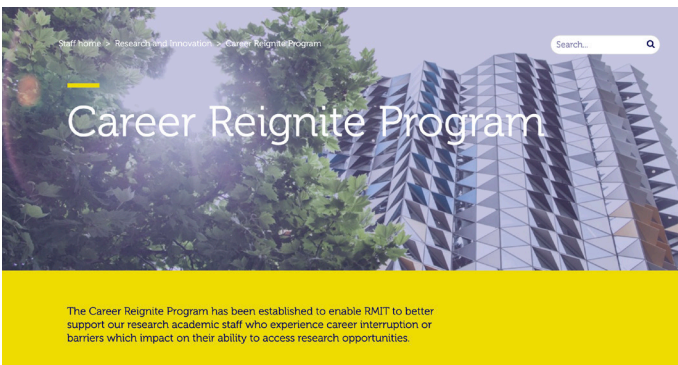In-time and flexible support mechanisms

Career Reignite

The Career Reignite Pilot Program is designed to better support our research academic staff who experience career interruption/s that impact on their ability to access research opportunities.

A key element of the Career Reignite Program is the access to a Career Coaching Panel for eligible research academic staff who have experienced (or anticipate) career interruption or barriers that have impacted on their ability to access research opportunities to assist them in developing their research career transition plans.

The Career Coaching Panel was approved in August this year and consists of 5 accredited external coaches who deploy tools and techniques to ensure participants in the Career Reignite Program get maximum benefit from the coaching arrangement and development of research career transition plans. A briefing session was held for the coaching panel in September.

For this first round, three College Associate DVCs R&I worked with senior School leaders to nominate eligible academic staff to participate in the Career Reignite coaching service.

The Career Reignite Program has been established to enable RMIT to better support our research academic staff who experience career interruption or barriers which impact on their ability to access research opportunities.

To date, there have been 53 nominations received, 28 have accepted the invitation to participate, and 20 have commenced their coaching sessions in 2020.

Support for Parents and Carers

For many parents and carers, remote working in 2020 has posed additional complexities and work/life imbalances. With schools and childcare closed during the lockdown periods, parents, grandparents and carers of elderly relatives or people with disability all had increased personal responsibilities, in addition to working remotely. RMIT recognised that additional support would be needed to ensure staff were able to manage this time.

The supports implemented in 2020 included:

- Establishing the COVID-19 Support for Parents and Carers webpage
- Holding a series of 6 group resilience coaching sessions for carers, reaching 200+ attendees at RMIT Australia, Vietnam and Barcelona
- Engaging with all staff approaching, currently on, or returning from parental leave to offer individual support
- Collaborating with the School of Education to design resources for parents managing online learning
- Promoting community engagement in the Parents and Carers Yammer channel, currently with 450+ members.

Culture and Wellbeing

An inclusive, respectful and compassionate workplace

Change the Course – Respect. Now. Always.

We have continued our work to create a culture of inclusion and respect at RMIT, where every member of the community is safe and free from sexual harm.

Guided by our three-year 'Changing the Course' framework, we have continued to implement initiatives that focus on prevention and response.

Through Respectful Research Training, 138 staff have been trained to support a safe and inclusive research environment. Training included building student and staff awareness of the inherent power imbalance in research relationships and identifying strategies to mitigate risks and call out inappropriate behaviour.

Remote support was provided to students experiencing gender-based violence during COVID-19 remote learning arrangements. Overall 618 students and student leaders have attended bystander intervention workshops since 2018.

Flexible Working

COVID-19 has amplified the fact that the capacity for all staff to work flexibly is critical to business continuity, occupational health safety and wellbeing, workforce planning and risk management.

There is now an opportunity to fully embrace flexible ways of working as a business priority, and a critical leadership and organisational capability. To achieve this, RMIT will continue to work to give people choice and agency in the form/s of flexibility that might best suit them, recognising that flexibility still needs to be balanced with the specific requirements of each role and the needs of the organisation.

During 2020, RMIT staff have implemented flexible working at higher levels than previous years. 73% of parents and carers were utilising some form of flexibility, compared to 68% of the general population.

Women in STEMM Gallery and Events

In March 2020, we created a digital RMIT Women in STEMM gallery profiling 14 inspirational female researchers, a mix of emerging and established women. It's all about demonstrating the incredible work our women in STEMM do and inspiring others to do the same. We wanted to highlight the message that you "bring your whole self to work" and illustrate that we are not just our work or research. The gallery was one of the first Athena SWAN Action Plan initiatives to be rolled out, and we were excited to share the level and range of our female research talent. Since launching, the Women in STEMM Gallery has had close to 600 visits, with images being used for WorkLife articles, Yammer conversations, RMIT LinkedIn and external RMIT web page for Women in STEMM encouraging young females to study STEMM at RMIT. Images have also been used for the researchers' external article features and profiles. In 2021 Athena SWAN will be showcasing another 10 talented STEMM women at RMIT in different STEMM areas.

On International Day for Women and Girls in Science, the School of Science hosted morning teas at the Bundoora and City Campuses. The event provided an excellent opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate the successes of our staff and students.

International Day for Women and Girls in Science at Bundoora Campus

The inaugural Virtual Women in Vocational Education Conference was attended by 100 students and staff where they heard from industry speakers from across the globe as well as The Hon. Gayle Tierney, Victorian Minister for Training and Skills and Minister for Higher Education.

Supporting and encouraging our intersectional communities

Diverse Gender Sexes and Sexualities

In 2020, RMIT was awarded the Employer of the Year for LGBTQ+ Inclusion for the second consecutive year – demonstrating our continuous effort in building a culture of inclusion and respect for staff and students of the DGSS community. In addition, RMIT was awarded the Trans and Gender Diverse Inclusion Award and the Employee Network of the Year Award in recognition of the Staff DGSS and RMIT Ally Networks.

We reached 400 RMIT trained staff Allies in 2020 with representation across all STEMM areas.16 different events were attended by over 150 staff, students and the public virtually during RMIT Pride Week. This included an event held in collaboration with Queers in Science to discuss creating an inclusive space in STEMM.

A dedicated website was launched to support the trans and gender diverse student and staff community, including a new provision of support for chosen name for students in RMIT systems such as Canvas and O365. We also launched the RMIT DGSS Research Network and delivered 3 online events for Wear it Purple in collaboration with 8 other Victorian universities.

Cultural and Linguistic Diversity

RMIT celebrated Diwali this year by holding a virtual event, where Vice-Chancellor Martin Bean CBE was joined by colleagues, partners and students from Melbourne to Mumbai. This year's event was hosted by Distinguished Professor Suresh Bhargava, Dean, Research and Innovation (India) in the College of Science, Engineering and Health. Read more here.

Alongside a VC message supporting justice, equality and respect in the context of 'Black Lives Matter', a communications campaign encouraged students and staff to improve their awareness and commitment to 'Take a stand against Racism' with a personal pledge of action.

In 2020, 41% of academic promotion applicants identified as culturally and linguistically diverse.

Staff and Students with a Disability

Ensuring RMIT is physically, technologically and culturally accessible for people with a disability remained a key area of focus in 2020.

RMIT was proud to be recognised as the leading organisation for accessibility in the Australian Network on Disability Access and Inclusion Index. RMIT was also the highest-ranked organisation for 'Products and Services' for our provisions for students with disability.

RMIT is proud to be a Disability Confident Recruiter with commitment to increase the support for people with a disability, so they have a fair and inclusive experience when applying for a position with us.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff and Students

The School of Science in collaboration with Ngarara Willim, hosted an event called Deadly STEM Experience. An immersive experience for young Indigenous students from Victoria and some in WA to remotely experience interactive STEM workshops in physics, microbiology and computer science and hear from current Indigenous students at RMIT cultural campus tours and Q&A sessions.

During Reconciliation week 27 May – 3 June, the STEM Ngulu Reconciliation committee worked with 15 STEM staff to produce a short 4min video on what Reconciliation means to them. Watch the video on Yammer.

Due to COVID-19, NAIDOC Week was postponed for 2020 to November 8–15. The STEM Ngulu Reconciliation committee celebrated the week with an interactive RMIT Indigenous Culture Tour for 50+ staff . We worked with RMIT student April Goldring who produced and guided the tour.

STEM Ngulu Reconciliation committee were also excited to collaborate with RMIT Teacher and Nurse Jason Coombes to create a video for Year of the Nurse and Midwife and Reconciliation Week 2020. Jason currently located in Oak Valley, SA, shares advice and impacts of COVID-19 on rural communities. Watch Jason here.

Strengthening foundations

Future proofing Athena Swan through good governance and leadership

Executive Leadership Capability Program

2020 saw the launch of a multi-touchpoint program to develop inclusive leadership for STEMM College leaders. Facilitated by the Symmetra, a leading Diversity and Inclusion consultancy founded in 2003, the program involved 40 leaders, 156 peers, 123 direct reports.

The program of activities included a 360 assessment, a collaborative leadership workshop, and individual leader debriefs and action plans.

The outcomes from this activity are feeding into on-going work in 2021, with a focus on psychological safety – where leaders create an environment where team members feel accepted, respected, and able to share their point of view without fear of negative consequences; and boundary spanning – where leaders create an environment for active seeking and sharing of information, bridging organisational boundaries and linking internal silos.

Dean, STEMM Diversity and Inclusion

Prof Kay Latham, Dean STEMM Diversity and Inclusion.

In a Victorian first, RMIT appointed Prof Kay Latham, Dean of STEMM Diversity and Inclusion. Along with leading RMIT's Athena SWAN project, Kay will also facilitate the College's progress in RMITs Reconciliation and Diverse Genders, Sexes and Sexualities (DGSS) action plans, along with accessibility, low socio-economic backgrounds and cultural inclusion initiatives.

Awards and Recognition

#1 University internationally for 'reducing inequalities' on the 2020 THE Rankings for UN Sustainable Development Goals; top ten across all SDGs

Gold Employer Status by the Australian Workplace Equality Index

EOCGE Employer of Choice for Gender Equality since 2018 by the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA)

#1 Australian organisation for accessibility and inclusion with the Australian Network on Disability, first University to become an accredited Disability Confident Recruiter

#1 Network of the Year Award for the advocacy from our DGSS Staff and RMIT Ally Networks

#1 Employer of the year for LGBTQ+ Inclusion in 2019 and 2020 and 2020 recipient of the Trans and Gender Diverse Inclusion Award

Acknowledgements

The text font used in this report is Mrs Eaves, designed by Zuzana Licko in 1996 as a reinterpretation of the 18th century types of John Baskerville. Quoting McNeil (2017), "Licko named her typeface in memory of Sarah Eaves, one of the forgotten female contributors to the history of typography. Mrs Eaves lived with John Baskerville as his housekeeper, marrying him after the death of her first husband. … She continued Baskerville's work after his death in 1775, maintaining his high production standards and advancing his reputation."