GENDER EQUITY: CURRENT ISSUES, BEST PRACTICE AND NEW IDEAS

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SUMMARY

If we are to make use of the talents of women in the scientific and technological workforce, actions that encourage gender equity are required now. This document puts forward a platform of initiatives which have been used in universities, research institutes and laboratories. The initiatives accommodate for all choices and styles of work, regardless of gender or circumstance. They are designed to play to the strengths and needs of every individual, are consistent with family needs as well as other carer roles, and work well in a value-based workforce where judgments are based on merit.

FOREWORD

Thirty years ago, overt discrimination against women who aspired to academic posts occurred frequently in Australia. Whether in the CSIRO (where women had to retire when they had children), universities (where women were asked if they intended to start a family at interview, with a “yes” answer essentially guaranteeing exclusion), or in industry – gender discrimination was common. The great majority of women (and most men) just accepted this situation. Despite this culture, a few excellent female researchers, through talent, diligence, astuteness, and luck, were promoted to the top.

Today, the world and its culture have changed significantly. Overt sexism is no longer tolerated in the work setting, during job interviews or promotion application. There are legal safeguards that protect women from gender discrimination in the workplace. As a result, women comprise about 50% of PhD students and post-docs in many scientific research fields. However, in spite of this improved environment, there are still remarkably few women who achieve promotion to the highest ranks of leadership, whether in universities, research institutes (including CSIRO and DSTO), or industry. In 2009 there were still fewer than 10% women in the most senior (professorial) categories in science and engineering, in CSIRO, as Federation Fellows, or as Fellows of the Australian Academy of Science or the Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering.

Should the absence of women at senior levels worry us? Women tend to be less aggressive than men, and don’t promote themselves to the same extent (and are often viewed negatively if they do). There is the possibility that the pressures of raising a family while pursuing a demanding research career could lead to attrition or reduced promotion. Some women also make a conscious decision to leave the insecurity of a research career for a more secure career.

The Forum believes that the glass ceiling preventing many women from securing positions at the highest level in research is damaging our research endeavour as a nation. Gender equity will increase our research productivity and competitiveness. Indeed, there are proven steps that can be taken to help achieve gender equity, some of which are **simple** and **inexpensive**. Most importantly, strategies need to focus on early- and mid-career researchers (EMCRs). This is typically the child-rearing phase, which leads to high attrition rates and a lack of promotion for primary carers.

In this best practices document, we describe the current issues and present several of the latest initiatives that aim to address gender inequity. We also propose further suggestions from the coal face: women in research at an early- or mid-career stage. We hope readers will commit to ensuring that these steps are implemented in every Australian research environment, and represent the new **minimum standard** on offer in the future.

1. THE CURRENT ISSUES

The recent 'Women in Science in Australia' report (WSA report) assessed the gender equity problems in the Australian science, technology and engineering workforce (Bell, 2009). This report articulated many of the hurdles faced by female early- and mid-career researchers (EMCRs).

This report aims to highlight issues that affect EMCRs in particular. The same topics were raised multiple times at the *Science Pathways* meeting organised by the EMCR Forum (October, 2012).

In essence, the WSA report identifies two separate but often compounding issues:

- Fewer women hold senior leadership roles than men
- Women leave technical and scientific positions at a greater rate than men (either for other sectors, or to leave the workplace entirely)

Two striking themes emerge from the study of women in research:

1. The difference in styles of working, where women tend to be more collaborative and less self-promoting, and;
2. The challenges of balancing a career in science with motherhood/primary carer role.

Furthermore, a study by Moss-Racusin and colleagues researched the gender bias of faculty members in the USA. This study shows in a randomised, double blind study that faculty members were more likely to favour giving a laboratory job to a male rather than a female, despite identical applications (Moss-Racusin, 2012). The assigned starting salaries were also higher for male applicants compared to female applicants. Surprisingly, results showed that female faculty members were equally likely to discriminate against female applicants. This clearly demonstrates an overarching ingrained bias against women in the research workforce in the United States; it is not clear if similar bias exists in Australia.

Remaining controversies

On some issues, there are varied opinions amongst those who are committed to gender equity. Two notable issues are:

1. The differences in "work style" between men and women (where women are perceived as less aggressive than men) and whether these style differences matter.

2. Whether it is possible and/or desirable for a carer of young children (usually the mother) to move from full-time to part-time work, and whether working part time is a sustainable approach in an inherently competitive workforce.

These issues are not discussed in this paper since the practical steps we advocate to promote gender equity and retain women in senior posts in the research workforce apply whatever one's view may be about either issue.

Converting "good practice" to "best practice"

We acknowledge and thank the many universities and institutes that have already started tackling gender equity issues, aim to redress gender stereotypes, and encourage women to reach their full potential as scientific researchers. The benefits of these initiatives are now emerging. We present some examples of good practice, based on initiatives from several employers in the sector, and particularly the policies of two high-profile organisations in the sector**:**

- The Walter and Eliza Hall Institute for Medical Research (WEHI): a large biomedical research institute with a research focus **(see Appendix 1 for policies and initiatives)**.
- Monash University: an environment where there is both undergraduate teaching as well as a wide range of research disciplines. Monash University is spread over six Australian and five International campuses **(see Appendix 2 for policies and initiatives)**.

Although both WEHI and Monash University have “good practice” gender equity schemes, the infancy of these schemes means it is unlikely either has yet achieved “best practice” status. However, both have implemented positive changes that can be used to tackle the problems and provide inspiration for other research workplaces. Moreover, Monash and the WEHI present two very different workplace environments where different issues may arise, requiring different strategies. We also mention initiatives from other universities and research institutes, and from the EMCRs at *Science Pathways*, who represent the “coal face” of research and who currently face gender equity and carer-related issues (http://science.org.au/ecr/emcr/).

The Forum argues that Australian research institutions need to implement change now to address the attrition of women from science and the paucity of female senior research leaders. To this effect, this document suggests low-cost and easily implemented schemes that will make a difference. We have separated suggestions for the workplace **(Sections 2 and 3)** and for national bodies **(Section 4)** and also provided ideas for supporting fathers **(Section 5)**. It is important to reiterate that all of these suggestions come from EMCRs who are currently working at the forefront of science and are keen to see “good practice” converted to “best practice”.

SECTION 2: SUGGESTED WORKPLACE INITIATIVES WITH GENERAL IMPACT

Many universities, institutes, research groups and industry research teams would like to implement policies that meet the needs of women researchers who wish to continue to contribute at a high level to the workplace, and to Australia's research effort. The important point about the following actions is that all of them are without a significant cost or time burden on the institution. Together, they can facilitate change for the better for all women in research. While we have discussed these initiatives with particular attention to the roles of women, many of them (such as the need for mentoring) apply to every researcher.

1. Gender Equity Committees. All research workplaces are urged to establish a Gender Equity Committee, with staff representatives from every level of the organisation, male and female. It is important to emphasise that gender equity should not be seen as primarily a "women's issue", but an issue of equal and critical importance to the whole of society. Until men and women believe equality remains a modern day issue that is of serious importance to all, it will be hard to make progress. The role of the Gender Equity Committee is to define whether problems exist in a department, institute or university (for which an anonymous survey may be the instrument of choice), to ensure a commitment from management and staff to "make things better", and to design a realistic approach to any issues in an achievable time frame.

2. "Women in Science" lectures and support for women to give major lectures. Female role models at the senior levels are not always available, but where they exist they can assist their younger counterparts in their professional development. Bringing women in science together and highlighting their contributions through lectures is a great way to expose women to more role models. If a woman member of staff is invited to give a lecture (e.g. at a national or international conference), and she has a baby or young child, an employer should offer to cover the cost of providing someone who can help with child care at the meeting, especially if this is the only way she can attend. This increases opportunities for women in science to present their research thereby being a role model to other women.

3. Advocacy and promotion. Increase women's representation at conferences by creating a register of potential female speakers and session chairs. This register could be coordinated through professional societies or through the host institute. Though it is important to select speakers for their achievements and leadership in a specific discipline, meeting organisers should avoid having only male speakers, or only male session chairs. It may even become policy that any sponsorship given towards a conference can only be given on the provision that there is strong female representation of invited speakers, working towards 50%. Although each field or discipline of research may have grounds to negotiate a different percentage of female speakers, it is critical to change the attitude so that equality is seen as a positive and achievable aspiration.

4. Mentoring. Mentoring is critical for men and women in science. Mentorship schemes can also facilitate advocacy. Mentoring schemes/programs can be run at very little cost but have significantly positive outcomes for both the individual and institute.

5. Academic promotion information for women. Presenting the facts of how the promotion panel assess promotion and how to best prepare one's CV for promotion.

6. Female representation on all committees. We urge all research organisations to ensure there are female representative(s) on all committees; especially promotion panels and committees that influence policy development. The contributions from women should be welcomed, and women and men should be assigned responsibilities of equal importance.

SECTION 3: SPECIFIC INITIATIVES RELATED TO WOMEN WITH YOUNG CHILDREN AND OTHER CARER ROLES

Women play an important role as primary carers for not only young children, but also elderly or disabled relatives. Female researchers tend to start a family at the early- to mid-career stage and therefore it is particularly important to address the issues of raising a family with the demands of research. Again, there are many simple, easy to implement strategies that will lead to "best practice" for gender equity.

1. Flexibility for return to work to meet deadlines and immovable commitments. More flexibility should be allowed in how women in science return to work and how work is performed at home. Panels, lectures and manuscript deadlines may conflict with maternity leave. At present, some maternity leave packages stipulate that maternity leave is lost as soon as there is even part-time return to work, which can be exceptionally detrimental to any woman who is a career researcher. It forces women to either stay at home or covertly work whilst on maternity leave. Equally discriminatory is the attempt to exclude women on maternity leave from entering the lab to participate in meetings or help lead a research team if they choose to do so.

2. Flexibility for return to work to meet the needs of the baby. During the first year of a baby's life, most parents find that demands vary enormously as the baby develops and grows, requiring flexible work hours. Every baby is different and has different needs that also are reflected in the care patterns that are necessary. Everyone acknowledges the nature of this problem, and the need for flexibility, but there is a debate on how best to deal with this. Some women want to retain full-time workloads, work from home some of the time, and ask for help from their partner or from carers. Other women want to work part time for a year or two. National funding bodies and universities should be encouraged to make more part-time fellowships available, consider part-time options in all fellowship schemes to meet their needs, or consider that every fellowship can be taken as part time. However, the single most important point we would urge is that every institution is flexible in the way it approaches the needs of its female staff when they have babies and young children; each researcher is of value to the institution and to Australia, and each will have her own way of dealing with any issues as they arise.

3. Flexible access to work. Flexible access to work can also include flexible parking permit arrangements during pregnancy and after returning, when access to temporary child care may be an issue. This needs to be considered in order to keep the mother engaged with her workplace and work colleagues in the transition from maternity leave and back to work. It is also important to ensure that Human Resources staff understand that for many researchers the job doesn't stop at maternity leave since they may have ongoing responsibilities (e.g. if they have staff and/or students), and international competitiveness is an ever present consideration. However, women should not be penalised if they are unable to maintain their work commitments during this leave period. Suitable alternate arrangements should be made during their absence. This is particularly important for single parents.

4. Assessing achievement relative to opportunity. It is in the interest of both the university/institute and the employee to offer the best possible advice on how to explain "achievements relative to opportunity" for grant, fellowship, award and promotion schemes to both assessors and applicants. It is critical that women in science are not judged on when or how they work whilst undertaking a primary carer role. What is important is that an employee's performance is judged relative to the opportunity the person has had whilst performing a primary carer role.

5. Lactation room and parenting room. These facilities are affordable if incorporated into plans for new buildings or renovations. This is routinely considered for other facilities such as areas for socialising and car/bike parking. The lactation room in particular should be a clean, private, lockable room that contains a comfortable chair, small table, and a refrigerator and, if adequately planned, a sink for washing equipment.

6. Family-friendly meeting times. Meetings can be scheduled between 9.15 am and 4.30 pm gratis, or at a time that suits the carer.

7. Peer support. A supportive, self-help environment giving relevant advice on the career and child raising issues will help, i.e. “science mother club”. The issues faced by mothers in research are different from other workforce issues and require the correct advice, moral support and positive role models. This facilitates the best advice and moral support and could encourage a cultural shift from the mother always being the primary carer, to more equity in parental care between mothers, fathers and professional carers.

8. Travel insurance. Often the underwriter of insurance does not see the travel of child dependents (under 18 years of age) as an added risk and therefore does not raise the premium for business-related travel to conferences. This is particularly true when a university or institute has a travel policy for all staff. We encourage workplaces to investigate this as an option to further support those scientists (men and women) who may need to travel with young children.

9. “Save that spot”. If a woman is offered a spot on a panel or committee but cannot attend that year due to family commitments, then the offer could be reserved for her for the following year. This would work well with mothers in the first year after having a baby.

SECTION 4. WHAT TO DO AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

At the national level, a scheme could be established that provides a benchmark for research institutes and universities to address the gender equity issues in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM). These benchmarks could be based on the recommendations in the 'Women in Science in Australia' report (Bell, 2009). An outstanding example of using awards to encourage policy change in this area is outlined in the Athena Scientific Women's Academic Network (SWAN) Charter in the UK (www.athenaswan.org.uk). Suggestions from The Forum include:

1. Mandatory Gender Equity Committees. Making it mandatory that a university or institute can only receive funding if they provide evidence that they have a functional Gender Equity Committee. **We urge the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and Australian Research Council (ARC) to put in place a policy that mandates that every administering institution (which includes all universities and most other research institutes) must have an effective gender equity program in place within three years, based on national benchmarks.**

2. Benchmarking maternity and paternity leave. It is important to note that under the National Employment Standards all employees are entitled to 12 months unpaid leave for adopted or newborn children (www.fairwork.gov.au/resources/fact-sheets/national-employment-standards/pages/default.aspx). However an important benchmark to consider may be the length of paid maternity leave. Some workplaces have generous maternity leave, such as the University of Queensland, which offers six months full pay maternity leave (or 12 months half pay), and Monash University (Appendix 2). The ARC has recently revised its regulations to give 14 weeks additional maternity paid leave to all Fellows, in addition to institutional maternity paid leave, and we urge this change on the NHMRC and other funding bodies.

On a practical note, six months of leave at full pay will encourage (and financially help) a mother to breastfeed for six months as recommended by the *NHMRC Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia* (www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines/publications/n29-n30-n31-n32-n33-n34). Benchmarking paid parental leave for partners/spouses may also help. For example, the University of Queensland offers two weeks paternity leave at full pay.

3. Compulsory training to prevent gender bias. It will be a benefit to the whole science community to have a compulsory online training course for both men and women to show how they can avoid gender and minority bias. National funding bodies could also lead the way by instigating compulsory training courses to learn about gender and minority bias in grant reviews. For example, before a researcher can accept a position on a grant or fellowship panel, the researcher should be expected to complete an online course that teaches the researcher how to make clear decisions without discrimination.

4. Use of telecommunication and internet communication systems. It could be considered that committees and panels are accessible by either teleconference or voice-over-Internet Protocol (VoIP, e.g. Skype) communication rather than by attending in person. A good example of the introduction of teleconferencing is the assessment of the 2013 applicants for NHMRC Research and Practitioner Fellowships. The use of teleconference or VoIP communication will become routine in the future. This is good for those researchers (male and female) with carerresponsibilities, although it will not completely replace the advantages gained through networking with peers on these committees/panels.

National bodies in Australia that could drive these initiatives might include funding bodies (NHMRC, ARC), Science and Technology Australia, Research Australia, Australian Association of Medical Research Institutes, the Group of Eight Universities and/or the Australian Vice Chancellors Committee. We stress that the funding bodies have a particularly important role to play.

SECTION 5. RECOGNITION AND SUPPORT FOR PARTNERS/SPOUSES WITH CARERS' DUTIES

Women typically shoulder caring responsibilities, whether it is for elderly parents, children or ill family members. By supporting women's partners/spouses who undertake carer responsibilities, institutes and universities are effectively supporting women whether they work in the same research environment or elsewhere. It is also important to remove the stigma associated with men accepting the primary carer role.

The same support schemes recommended for women (as listed in section 3) can also be applied for partners/spouses and include:

1. **Achievement relative to opportunity.** Ensuring assessment of "achievement relative to opportunity" where the partner/spouse has played an active role as a primary carer. This is particularly important for separated families where the default assigned custody is 50% to the father.

2. **Family-friendly meeting times.** Ensure meetings are held between 9:15 am and 4:30 pm or at a time that suits the carer.

3. **Flexible work hours.** Providing flexible work hours when required.

4. **Parenting/family rooms.** Ensuring that parenting/family rooms are available to all parents, whether male or female.

5. **Work culture.** Creating a work culture where spouses, especially men, are not adversely judged for choosing to take a primary carer role. For example, ensure that male researchers' mentors are positive about men being primary carers and provide practical advice on how to balance being a primary carer with research. This is particularly important for single parents.

6. **"Save that spot".** If a partner or spouse needs to play a primary carer role and cannot accept a position on a committee or panel then the spot should be available for the following year.

SECTION 6. REFERENCES AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The Forum would also like to acknowledge contributions from all the *Science Pathways 2012* participants.

The Australian EMCR Forum website is http://science.org.au/ecr/emcr***/***

APPENDIX 1: Showcase: The Walter and Eliza Hall Institute

Background

As at April 2011:

- The majority of the undergraduate and PhD students were women (nearly 60%)
- Approximately 50% of WEHI post-doctoral scientists were women
- 25% of WEHI lab heads were women
- **Only one** of the WEHI 15 division heads were women (6.6%)
- **Only two** of the WEHI 21 professors were women (9.5%)

The problem was perceived as being two-fold:

1. Women find it hard to combine motherhood with building a career in science.
2. There are inherent differences in the way that women and men approach their career progression.

To address the imbalance a gender equity committee was developed and co-chaired by Assoc. Prof. Lynn Corcoran and Prof. Terry Speed. There is representation from HR, Education, students, postdoctoral researchers and laboratory heads. Importantly, an external expert, Sharon Bell is also on this committee. Sharon Bell is the principal author of the FASTS Women in Science in Australia report (www.wehi.edu.au/about_us/gender_equity/).

Three main initiatives were developed and implemented by WEHI:

1. Childcare and family support
2. Equal pay, appointment and promotion for men and women
3. Training, mentoring, perception and presentation of achievements

1. Childcare and family support schemes

a. **The Craven and Shearer Award: Childcare support** is provided for outstanding female postdoctoral fellows who are aiming to become independent laboratory heads or current female laboratory heads with pre-school-age children. There are a limited number of support packages of up to $15,000 per annum that can be used to pay for the out-of-pocket costs for childcare for pre-school-age children. Although the applications can be made at any time the applications are awarded on a competitive basis and require the support of the division head. This funding can be used for regular childcare, or to aid the researcher to participate in peer-review committees (e.g. NHMRC grant review panel), speak at scientific conferences and accept invitations to participate in other academic activities. This is used to encourage women to accept important opportunities that they may not otherwise accept based on financial or family reasons; this funding allows the women to either take their children with them or have extra care at home while they are away.

b. **Technical support while on maternity leave.** To reduce the adverse impact on productivity caused by going on maternity leave, technical support is available upon approval by the division head. To date, five applications have been approved (1 lab head, 4 post-doctoral researchers). Each awardee received a grant to the value of 3 months FTE at the awardee's salary level. This money can be spent on either a research assistant or a post-doctoral researcher.

   The person to be paid currently has to be sourced from within the researcher's own group or division, or via a short-term appointment. Ideally, the help would come from WEHI experienced research assistants.

c. **Lactation room.** The lactation room is a private room designed for either breastfeeding infants or milk expression and storage.

d. **Parenting room.** The parenting room is equipped with toys, a microwave and change table, and can be used by parents while either caring for young infants or if the parent needs to bring a sick child to work. WEHI also sponsors parenting rooms at important conferences such as the series of five Lorne Conferences (Victoria).

e. **Additional time for contract renewal.** For female laboratory heads that have a child in their first 5-year term, the assessment for renewal will be extended by 12 months per child born in this period.

f. **Family-friendly meeting times.** All institute meetings must be scheduled between 9.15 am and 4.30 pm to allow staff with family responsibilities to attend meetings and balance family commitments.

g. **Flexible working hours.** WEHI increases the flexibility of working hours for parents where a postdoc and a lab head can negotiate a reasonable balance between attending key laboratory events and family duties. The WEHI also offers a 46/52 working year, where staff can opt to work for 46 weeks, with payment spread over 52 weeks, i.e. they can have 10 weeks of annual leave to cover school holidays.

2. Equal pay, appointment and promotion

Ideally many of the opportunities that arise from the above initiatives will help contribute to an overall increase in the opportunity for promotion of women with primary carer responsibilities. WEHI is currently auditing their policy on the following:

– Equal pay
– Equal appointment
– Speed of promotion

In addition, there is a specific fellowship scheme called the Cory Fellowship, named after the Institute's 5th director, Professor Suzanne Cory. WEHI created a $1.25 million, five-year fellowship to appoint a new female laboratory head. The fellowship is available every five years. In 2009, Associate Professor Clare Scott was the first recipient.

3. Training, mentoring, perception and presentation of achievements

a. 'Women in Science' lectures and mentoring. WEHI runs a 'Women in Science' lecture series with informal lunchtime discussions with speakers. This is also an opportunity for female researchers to compare experiences and network with other female scientists.

b. Leadership and skills training. WEHI is developing a comprehensive program to broaden skills such as leadership, presentation skills, management skills, as well as running business and communication intern programs. This scheme is also used to fund senior postdoctoral researchers to attend strategic and leadership programs, e.g. 'Women in Science', Canberra 2012.

c. 'Women in Science' conference. WEHI sends delegates to take part in the annual 'Women in Science conference', Canberra, each year.

d. Official mentorship program. There is an official mentorship scheme for both female and male postdoctoral researchers and lab/division heads. The institute matches mentees with mentors based on interests but with effort made to have the pair made interdivisional rather than within division. This program was started in October 2012 and will be extended to postgraduate students in the future.

e. Advocacy and promotion. Increasing women's representation at conferences by creating a registry of potential female speakers and session chairs. This is coordinated through professional societies.

APPENDIX 2: Showcase: Monash University

The Equal Opportunity for Women Committee is co-chaired by the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Ed Byrne, and Provost and Senior Vice-President, Prof. Edwina Cornish. This Committee aims to improve the performance of Monash University in the area of gender equity by creating an organisational culture that is inclusive and in which female staff participate equally at all levels.

Gender Equity Strategy 2011-2015

Why? The 'Monash University Gender Equity Strategy 2011-2015' (Dalton and Heyward, 2010) was developed by the Equal Opportunity for Women Committee to respond to the under-representation of women in senior roles, particularly those in senior academic roles.

Indicators of progress. The Strategy sets a number of KPIs for Monash University including being in the top two of the Go8 by 2015 with respect to women appointed into senior academic and professional roles.

1. Gender Equity Toolkit

This is a Monash University intranet resource for Monash University staff (http://monash.edu/equity-diversity/social-inclusion/eofw/gender-equity-toolkit.html). It provides information for both employees and staff who are recruiting/employing female staff. Topics include; recruitment, career development, workload allocation, assessing achievement relative to opportunity, flexible work practices, improving research performance, participation on committees and decision-making bodies, highlighting the achievements of women, workforce and succession planning and eliminating discrimination and sexual harassment.

2. *Advancing Women in Research Grant* program

The *Advancing Women in Research Grant* program is a support program for women who are both researchers and have primary carer responsibilities. The primary target researcher level is Level B and Level C researchers. The program offers a total of $10,000 funding to support professional activities and career coaching (to the value of $2,000). In 2012 this was awarded to 14 women in the science, engineering and technology disciplines and awardees were determined through a competitive selection process. The grant could be used for teaching relief, relief from other duties e.g. unit/course coordination, research assistance, travel for research purposes, professional development (e.g. training courses, attendance at conferences). (http://monash.edu/equity-diversity/social-inclusion/eofw/gender-equity-grants.html). Similar schemes include the University of Adelaide's Barbara Kidman Women's Fellowship Scheme 2013 worth up to $30,000 (www.adelaide.edu.au/research/fellowships/)

The coaching component of the program included two group and four individual coaching sessions with an experienced coach. It is important to note that at the time of writing this program had not been evaluated and renewal of this program is currently unknown.

Outcomes: Program evaluated late 2012.

3. *Gender Equity Travel Support Grant* program

The *Gender Equity Travel Support Grants* were initiated to financially assist female academic/research staff of all levels with primary carer responsibilities with travel costs. The financial assistance was specifically to help pay for any personal out-of-pocket expenses incurred so that the academic staff member could attend a prestigious conference. The financial assistance was initiated in 2012 (two rounds per year) to successful applicants and was assessed in a competitive process.

This scheme aims to fund two main scenarios:

1. Employment of a professional carer to replace the care normally provided by the female researcher.

2. Provision of travel costs of a relative or professional carer to accompany the female researcher and her child(ren) to the conference venue.

Outcomes: Program evaluated late 2012.

4. Achievement relative to opportunity

Monash University incorporates the philosophy of assessing "achievement relative to opportunity" into employment related policies, including:

- academic probation
- academic promotion
- recruitment/selection procedures
- performance development

Advice on how to communicate and evaluate using the principle of "achievement relative to opportunity" is provided in an internal toolkit.

5. University-wide *Mentoring Scheme for Women*

Every two years Monash University manages a structured six-month *Mentoring Scheme for Women*. Monash University coordinates the matching of an applicant (mentee) with a more senior mentor from a compatible area. The program involves a preparation session for both the mentee and mentor so that they understand the structure, process and goals of the scheme (http://monash.edu/equity-diversity/women/mentoring-scheme-main-page.html).

This program has run since 2000 and is currently in high demand. The program is capped at 60 mentees (in 2011, there were 125 applicants and the scheme is therefore oversubscribed).

Outcomes: Many of the mentees achieve their goals including promotion, change to a higher paid job, change in fixed term job to ongoing job and increased responsibilities.

6. *Senior Women's Shadowing Program*

The *Monash University Senior Women's Shadowing Program* is a six-month program that runs every second year. The program aims to:

- improve the leadership skills of individual female researchers
- improve the profile of the participant
- give them an understanding of the senior management team at Monash University
- assist the University in increasing the number of women in senior management

This scheme is only available to women at Academic Levels D and Level E or HEW Level 10 and above. There were 12 positions available in the 2012 program. Each participant is matched with a member of the University's Senior Management Team, which can include the Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellors/Pro-Vice Chancellors, Deans and Divisional Directors. They spend six half-days observing their matched senior leader in a variety of activities. The participants also come together to compare experiences and knowledge gained throughout the course of the scheme to aid networking. (http://monash.edu/equity-diversity/women/mentoring-scheme-main-page.html).

Outcome: Analysis of this scheme shows that 40% of the participants use this experience to take on more senior roles within the University. However, this program does not directly benefit EMCRs.

7. Academic promotion *Information Session for Women*

Monash University holds an annual *Information Session for Women* on how to achieve successful academic advancement – from 2013 onwards this will include both research-only as well as teaching and research staff. This session includes a panel of guest speakers who share their experiences of how they have achieved recent promotion and/or who have served on a promotion panel.

8. Health and well-being resources

Family resources are provided including:

- parenting rooms on some campuses (Berwick, Clayton, Caulfield, Gippsland, Peninsula)
- childcare facilities (Clayton, Caulfield, Gippsland)
- school holiday programs (Clayton campus only)

The limitation of these resources is that they are not provided on all campuses of the University and are often oversubscribed.

9. Parental leave

Monash University has a generous parental (maternity or adoption) leave scheme for staff members who qualify (eligible individuals must have worked at Monash for more than 12 months).

- Maternity/adoption leave schemes (3 months full paid leave followed by a further 9 months leave at 60% pay)
- One week paid parental leave for spouses/partners and two weeks unpaid leave. There is also an option of a second week of paid leave by opting to take the leave loading as paid leave.
- There is also opportunity to select either a 44/52, 46/52, 48/52 or 50/52 Voluntary Reduced Working Year scheme in negotiation with the supervisor.

Outcomes: 92% of women return to work after maternity leave.

10. SPRINGBOARD women's development program

This is a four-month program where each woman sets her own goals for both work and personal life. Participants initially assess their own strengths and areas for improvement, set appropriate goals and work out ways of achieving these goals. Through this program, women:

- have more self confidence and motivation
- set and achieve clear goals
- develop a positive attitude
- communicate more assertively and effectively
- learn how to promote a positive professional image
- improve their work/life balance

One of the main strengths of this program is to help women become more assertive in their workplace and make positive decisions for their career.