

**WESTERN SYDNEY**  
UNIVERSITY



# Improving Gender Equality Business Case

Office of Equity & Diversity 2019

## Executive Summary

From 2019 the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) requires that an organisational Business Case for Improving Gender Equality be endorsed by the Vice-Chancellor. In addition, the Vice-Chancellor is now required to communicate this Business case to all employees at least once every 12 months.

The University has for some 14 years been a leader in implementing strategies to achieve gender equality in its staffing profile. It has a demonstrably sound record in achieving incremental improvements in pursuit of gender equality across its staffing profile. In 2019 Western has been ranked first in the world from more than 450 universities world-wide for its work to address gender equality by the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings.

As at 31 March 2018, the University's workforce gender composition was 62% female and 38% male with women comprising 47% of all manager roles, an increase of 5% from 2017. The University's current target of 40% women in management roles has been reached in some but not all WGEA manager categories. The target has been reached in the categories of *Key Management Personnel* and *Other Managers*. However, the target has not yet been obtained in the *Senior Managers* category, which currently sits at 37% representation of women; and in the *Other Executive/General Managers* category the University is at 30% representation of women, down from 44% last year. This gap suggests further work is needed to ensure gender equity is fully achieved specifically in these groups and then maintained, including at the most senior levels.

Women represent 52% of Academics at level D, however are still significantly underrepresented at Academic Level E with only 32%; and women make up 52% of our Professional Senior Staff, and 35% of our Academic Senior Staff. There remains a clustering of female staff in professional roles at HEW levels 5, 6 and 7, with women making up 73% of staff at this level.

The University has seen a drop in the average total remuneration pay gap from 2017, down 1.8% to 15.5%, with the base salary gender pay gap currently at 13.9%. So whilst our results to date are encouraging, there remains further work to do in achieving and maintaining gender equity at large.

Organisational performance results make a powerful case for reducing the gender imbalance in senior and non-traditional management teams, including

- Improved financial and market performance from gender equal organisations
- Greater capitalisation of talent
- Enhanced leadership, team performance and motivation amongst staff
- Better risk management and corporate governance performance
- A reputation for social responsibility and gender inclusion

## Purpose

The University has achieved WGEA's EOCGE citation for the last consecutive 14 years and has a suite of policies, procedures, programs and practices in place to improve gender equality in the workplace.

This Business Case outlines the rationale for these measures and sets out our plans to continue improving gender equality in the workplace into the future.

## Organisational benefits of gender equality

Gender equality is a fundamental human right and integral to the University's commitment to being a world class university. Currently, over 50% of our students and staff members are women, 47% of our managers are women, and at 41% we have one of the highest rates of female professors in the sector.

The World Economic Forum recognizes gender equity's vital role in a country's overall economic performance. Since women represent half of the global population, growth and sustainability will be compromised if their talents are underdeveloped or under-utilised.<sup>1</sup> This is evidenced by Goldman Sachs & JBWere, who calculated that the rise in female employment since 1974 has boosted Australian economic activity by 22%.<sup>2</sup> Further, KPMG has projected that if the labour force participation gap between men and women was halved, Australia's annual GDP would increase by \$60 billion in 20 years.<sup>3</sup>

Organisations with more women in executive management positions have consistently been shown to:

- financially outperform those without senior women managers<sup>4</sup>
- have a significantly higher return on assets<sup>5</sup>
- demonstrate greater capitalisation of talent<sup>6</sup>
- perform better with women board members in areas of risk and audit<sup>7</sup>
- minimize talent loss, with its associated cost implications

Studies by McKinsey support these findings, and demonstrate that these benefits are particularly the case in organisations that are facing significant turbulence or need to be especially responsive and innovative, due largely to better processing of information and associated risks.<sup>8</sup>

IBM's WorkTends data, from a study of 33,000 workers in 28 countries, found that those employees who work in organisations with strong diversity and inclusion climates are three times more confident that their organisation's ability to perform well, than those who have a low diversity climate.<sup>9</sup>

Employee engagement within these companies is also typically three times higher than those organisations with low diversity climates (76% compared with 24%).<sup>10</sup> Employee turnover intention rates in organisations with high diversity levels are only half of that of their low diversity comparators.<sup>11</sup>

IBM's longitudinal data over 35 years has demonstrated a myriad of benefits for organisations that encourage and support gender diversity, benefiting financial

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<sup>1</sup> World Economic Forum (2015), Global Gender Gap Report

<sup>2</sup> Goldman and Sachs & JBWere (2009), Australia's hidden resource: the economic case for increasing Female Participation

<sup>3</sup> KPMG 2018, Ending Workforce Discrimination Against Women

<sup>4</sup> Adler, R. (2009). Profit, thy name is... Woman? Pacific Standard

<sup>5</sup> International Monetary Fund (2016) Gender Diversity in Senior Positions and Firm Performance: Evidence from Europe

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

<sup>7</sup> Chief Executive Women 'The CEO Gender Diversity Toolkit'

<sup>8</sup> Rost, K., (2010) 'Opening the Black Box of Upper Eschalons: Drivers of poor Information Processing During the Financial Crisis', Corporate Governance: An International Review

Dezso, C L., & Ross, D G.,(2011) 'Does Female Representation in Top Management Improve Firm Performance? A Panel Data Investigation'

<sup>9</sup> IBM Smarter Workforce Institute(2014) The Business Case for Gender Balance

<sup>10</sup> Ibid

<sup>11</sup> Ibid

results, better addressing the needs of female staff to retain and develop high potential women staff and enhancing capacity for fresh and innovative thinking throughout the organisation. In the current higher education climate these factors will be important to building a sustainable future for Western.

## **Western's record on improving gender equality**

The University already has a proud record for improving gender equality, having this year been ranked first in the world for its work to address gender equality by the Times Higher Education University Impact Rankings.

The University will continue to build on this achievement through:

- implementing policies and programs aimed at increasing the representation of women in leadership positions, reducing the gender pay gap, and
- promoting workplace flexibility.

Some examples of our initiatives include:

### **Employer of Choice for Gender Equality**

This citation was awarded by the Federal Government's Workplace Gender Equality Agency on 25 February 2019. This marks 14 consecutive years that the University has achieved the citation.

### **Gender Equality Policy, Procedures and Guidelines**

In 2017, the University approved and implemented a new Gender Equality Policy to improve and promote gender equality in the workplace. Procedures and Guidelines were developed in conjunction with the Policy to set out employee requirements in relation to:

- attracting, motivating and retaining a diverse and high performing workforce;
- reducing the incidence and cost of employee turnover;
- improving productivity, innovation and creativity;
- securing research funding; and
- building social inclusion.

### **Vice-Chancellor's Gender Equality Committee (GEC)**

The VC established the GEC to develop, implement and monitor the Gender Equality Strategy and Action Plan 2015-2020. The GEC is also responsible for:

- commissioning works and reports and gathering data on gender equality;
- recommending targets to achieve gender equality in management and leadership positions;
- undertaking policy reviews and special projects
- guiding and monitoring the implementation of the Gender Equality Policy; and
- endorsing recommendations arising from research reports conducted with Gender Equality Fund grants.

### Vice-Chancellor's Gender Equality Fund

The VC's Gender Equality Fund was established in 2017 to inform and support gender equality initiatives at the University. The Fund provides annual grants of up to \$5000 to support research, projects or programs that aim to further facilitate gender equality and promote workplace inclusion, such as:

- a focus on breastfeeding at work,
- a review of academic induction & orientation packs, and
- improving access to information on parental leave entitlements.

In 2019, the University approved seven projects, granting a total of \$35,156 in funding.

### Gender Equality Strategy and Action Plan 2015-2020

The Strategy and Action Plan sets out the University's intention to role model best practice in fairness and equity in the workplace and in the learning environment. It supports Western's efforts in

- recruiting, retaining and supporting female staff members to advance their careers, and
- seeks to develop and achieve a deeper understanding and commitment to gender equity across the entire University.

In implementing the strategy, the University has:

- reviewed our Promotions Policies and Procedures;
- developed a Supporting Parents Toolkit;
- introduced up to 8 weeks of Primary Carer's Leave for partners;
- continued to improve the representation of women in management positions:
  - As at 31 March 2018, the University's workforce gender composition was 62% female and 38% male with women comprising 47% of all manager roles, an increase of 5% from 2017.
- reviewed pay equity data to identify areas of concern:
  - The University has seen a drop in the average total remuneration pay gap from 2017, down 1.8% to 15.5%, with the base salary gender pay gap currently at 13.9%.

### Supporting Parents Toolkit for Staff

The Toolkit was developed to support staff with caring responsibilities and details the provisions and services the University offers to staff with caring responsibilities, including leave provisions, staff checklists, breastfeeding support and parental facilities on campus.

### Science in Australia Gender Equity (SAGE) program

The SAGE program promotes gender equity and gender diversity in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine (STEMM). The University is participating in the SAGE pilot program which involves a thorough self-

assessment of our gender equity policies and practices as well as addressing future opportunities for promoting and retaining women in STEMM disciplines.

### People Strategy: Our People Securing Success

The University's 'People Strategy' aims to ensure that all staff have access to the support and development they need to pursue opportunities for future growth and advancement. It is designed to support our strategic goal to foster a dynamic, diverse, inclusive and innovative culture. Goal 3 of the Strategy is to attract and retain people with a shared purpose, through promoting diversity within the staffing profile that reflects the cultural, religious, gender, age and sexuality diversity of the region.

### Athena Swan Member

The Athena Swan Charter was established in 2005 in the UK in response to the chronic under-representation of women in science leadership. As a participant in the Athena SWAN Awards Program, WSU has adopted the ten charter principles, and begun the process of collecting and analysing data, developing and implementing action plans, and monitoring progress.

### Accreditation as a 'Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace'

The University has recently achieved accreditation as a 'Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace' with the Australian Breastfeeding Association (ABA). This has involved:

- fitting out 17 parent and women rooms across nine University campuses to make them breastfeeding friendly
- developing and implementing a new 'Breastfeeding on University Premises' Policy

## Recommendations for the future

The University has a strong framework of policies and procedures in pursuit of gender equality. However, cognisant that continued progress in gender equality is imperative for its success, the University proposes to expand its focus on workplace flexibility and identify more effective component strategies.

One of the key inhibitors for women returning to work in high income countries like Australia is capacity to breastfeed comfortably.<sup>12</sup> Research indicates that supporting employees to combine breastfeeding and paid work has many benefits for organisations including:

- Reduced absenteeism: A study in the US reported that one-day absences to care for sick children occur more than twice as often for mothers of babies who are not breastfed.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> AIHW. (2011). 2010 Australian National Infant Feeding Survey: indicator results. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

<sup>13</sup> Cohen R, Mrtek MB, Mrtek R (1995) Comparison of Maternal Absenteeism and Infant Illness Rates Among Breast-feeding and Formula-feeding Women in Two Corporations American Journal of Health Promotion 10(2): 148-15.

- Lower turnover rates: Research has found that women who are supported to breastfeed by their employers are more likely to return to work after maternity leave.<sup>14</sup> The cost benefits of the retention of trained staff can be significant (no advertising, recruitment or training costs).
- High productivity and loyalty: organisations that provide support for breastfeeding have consistently reported improved morale, better satisfaction and higher productivity.<sup>15</sup>

Other planned projects for 2019 and beyond include:

### Establishing Equity and Diversity Working Parties

The University's Executive Committee has endorsed a proposal to implement and establish Equity and Diversity Working Parties (EDWP) at the School / Division / Institute level, involving the installation of 15 EDWPs across the University to provide formal mechanisms to implement core gender equity policy and strategies across the breadth of the University. The 15 new EDWPs will support Schools, Institutes and Divisions at the local level in the effective implementation of equity and diversity policy and strategy frameworks and adherence to those requirements.

### Updating the Gender Equality Strategy and Action Plan

The Strategy will be revised to include:

- targets for reducing the gender pay gap in areas it exists;
- support for part-time / reduced hours roles for Managers;
- professional development for long-term casuals; and
- formal evaluation / tracking mechanisms which will reflect progress against measurable objectives within the Strategy over time.

### Policy and Communications Strategy for Breastfeeding Rooms

The next steps in promoting breastfeeding on campus include:

- developing and implementing a new 'Breastfeeding on University Premises' Policy that applies to all students, staff and visitors to University campuses; and
- developing and implementing a thorough and broad communications plan including website updates and the production of new guidelines, checklists and forms to support the new Policy

### Reviewing Online Flexible Work Training Modules

The compulsory Online Flexible Work Training Modules will be reviewed and updated to reflect current flexible work policies and expanded to address gender stereotypes that prevent men from requesting flexible work as well as supporting its' relevance to elder care responsibilities.

### Updating our Pay Gap Analysis Dashboard

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<sup>14</sup> Payne, D., & James, L. (2008). 'Make or break Mothers' experiences of returning to paid employment and breastfeeding: a New Zealand study. *Breastfeeding Review*. 16 (2), 21: 2-27.

<sup>15</sup> Galty, J. (1997). Lactation and the labor market: breastfeeding, labor market changes, and public policy in the United States. *Health Care Women Int.*, 18, 467-480.

The Pay Gap Analysis Dashboard will be updated to capture additional field requirements including:

- annual salary increases;
- salaries on promotion; and
- improved performance salary summary data.

#### Developing a Western Sydney University Panel Pledge for gender equity

This is an initiative to help improve gender diversity on discussion panels, discussion forums and other external events. Staff will be encouraged to sign the Pledge, with specific relevance for those whose roles involve planning, sponsoring or speaking at a discussion panel or forum.

#### Improving our Gender Equality Reporting Requirements

The University will analyse, report and respond to the following additional gender equity indicators:

- Recruitment and exit numbers of staff by gender;
- Evidence of staff participation rates in formal leadership training programs by gender and full time/part time status;
- Pay gap analysis expanded to include:
  - performance pay;
  - annual salary increases; and
  - salaries on promotion
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**RECOMMENDATION: For approval**

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<b>Reviewer</b>	<b>Date &amp; Time Approval received</b>
Michelle Falconer	5/9/19
Angelo Kourtis, Vice-President (People and Advancement)	17/9/19
Barney Glover, Vice-Chancellor	