

Putting Gender on your Agenda

Evaluating the introduction of Athena SWAN into Australia

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Introduction

A very serious problem

Globally, science and technology have a very serious problem.

The issue is that women are poorly represented in senior roles in the areas of scientific research and development (R&D). However, this is not from a lack of highly qualified women across the sector, or because there are not enough talented women scientists, technical experts or engineers.¹

Averaged across regions, women accounted for less than a third (28.8 per cent) of those employed in scientific R&D across the world in 2014.²

In Australia, the science and technology picture for women does not look any better.

In 2013, Australian women made up 50.2 per cent of the population and obtained more than 60 per cent of undergraduate degrees. However, women held fewer than 30 per cent of tenured jobs within academia.³ The disparity is even higher within the broader science sector.

While this proportion is a noticeable increase on 10 years ago, evidence suggests that time alone will not be sufficient to fix this inequity.

Women's careers within academia are still advancing at a much slower rate than men's, and this rate has apparently stabilised at its current unequal level.

The factors that lead to the unequal outcomes for men and women in science are complex, involved and wide-ranging, and consequently not easy to impact or change. Yet they are clearly leading to a tremendous loss of talent from academia that calls for concrete measures and concerted action.

In fact, the determinants of gender inequity in science appear to be a serious issue for more than one-third of Australia's workforce.

Structural barriers and organisational culture

Studies show that women academics and researchers in Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine – the STEM disciplines – are squeezed out of science careers by structural barriers and organisational culture.

Structural barriers are evident in the male-dominated executive teams in academia and research institutes, the outdated and embedded views of women academics and in the academic, progression and promotion processes that fail to take into account career breaks that women may need to take for family reasons.

The culture of an organisation can also seriously hinder women and minority groups, for example, a culture that allows and even validates sexual harassment will have a negative impact on people's careers.

A report from the USA this year shows that sexual harassment is a serious issue for women at all levels in academic science, engineering and medicine. Its findings reveal that these fields share characteristics that create conditions that make harassment more likely to occur.

The *Consensus Study Report: Sexual Harassment of Women – Climate, Culture and Consequences in Academic Sciences, Engineering and Medicine* from the US National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, demonstrates how such environments can silence and limit the career opportunities in the short- and long-term for both the targets of the sexual harassment and the bystanders.

The consequences of both structural barriers and organisational culture affecting women and minority groups result in a palpable loss of expertise, talent and investment.

1. UNESCO Institute for Statistics, UIS Fact Sheet: Women in Science (2017): p. 1.

2. UNESCO Institute for Statistics, UIS Fact Sheet: Women in Science (2017): p. 2.

3. SAGE November 2014 workshop.

The culture of an organisation can also seriously hinder women and minority groups

Ultimately, continuing gender inequity in Australia's science and technology sector will negatively impact both our scientific performance and productivity.

We know that we have a very serious problem – one we all need to tackle together to achieve better and fairer results for everyone.

Stepping up and taking leadership

Over recent years, there have been some much-needed changes and initiatives in support of gender equity and diversity in Australia's higher education and research sector.

However, the magnitude of the situation and the nature of the slow pace of change required strategic, systematic and coordinated action across the higher education and research sector. It was crucial that the relevant science and technology organisations and peak bodies in Australia stepped up to face this issue.

Australia's two well respected science and technology-based Academies were both committed to gender equity. Yet senior women were under-represented in both Academies.

The Academies agreed that bold strategies were needed to deal with the situation – both internally and externally.

For example, in 2011 the Australian Academy of Technology and Engineering reviewed its Gender Equity policy regarding the appointment of Fellows and found the representation of women sorely wanting. In 2012, it set a minimum target of 33 per cent of new Fellows (annually) to be women; this target will rise to 50 per cent by 2025.

In 2013, for the first time in years, not one woman was elected to the Australian Academy of Science Fellowship. This highlighted that business as usual was not acceptable and changes were made to the election process to ensure that women who were nominated for fellowship would be considered alongside their male counterparts in their fields of research. In addition, unconscious bias training was provided to key decision-makers in the election process.

In 2014 and 2015 further steps were taken by the two Academies to put gender on the agenda in Australia's higher education and research STEM disciplines.

Taking leadership of the issue, the Academies worked together to deliver tangible action for gender equity and diversity. The resulting initiative – Science in Australia Gender Equity (SAGE) – was established to pilot the UK's Athena SWAN Charter in Australia.

At its heart, the Athena SWAN framework aims to support the hiring, promotion, participation and retention of women in STEM, with the aim of reaching gender parity in the higher education and research sector.

Proven success in the UK

In November 2014, representatives from Australian academic, scientific and research institutions, as well as government, met for a SAGE Forum workshop in Canberra to discuss gender equity and the potential of adapting the UK's successful Athena SWAN Charter to use in Australia.

Athena SWAN is a successful enabling mechanism for gender equity, providing a framework in which to plan and undertake concrete work to create structural and cultural change for gender equity.

Established in 2005 in the UK, with the support of the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) that also operates the program there, the Athena SWAN Charter evolved from the work of the Athena Project and the Scientific Women's Academic Network (SWAN).

Its aim is to encourage and recognise organisational commitment and action: "Recognising advancement of gender equality: representation, progression and success for all." (www.ecu.ac.uk)

The similarities between Australian and UK academic, scientific and research sectors, combined with its systematic and evidence-based approach make Athena SWAN particularly relevant to Australia.

Owned and managed jointly by Australia's science and technology-based Academies, the SAGE Pilot focuses on three integral elements:

- > Piloting and assessing the Athena SWAN Charter in Australia and supporting the higher education and research institutions to engage successfully with the Pilot
- > Raising awareness of gender equity and diversity issues in STEM within the higher education and research sector and more broadly within the community

- > Collaborating with like-minded institutions to promote and support initiatives aimed at encouraging women and gender minorities to participate in STEMM and to address systemic barriers to equity

Building on the success of the UK Athena SWAN Charter, SAGE adapted its accreditation framework for use in Australia in 2015. This allowed the Pilot to start up and begin to address gender equity issues in the STEMM higher education and research sector fairly quickly.

SAGE and Athena SWAN funding

The initial stages of the SAGE Pilot were fully funded by the Academies, individual sponsors and participating institutions.

Additional funding of \$2 million over three financial years (2016-17 to 2019-20) was provided by the Australian Government under the National Innovation and Science Agenda, to accelerate the delivery of a range of activities across the three core SAGE elements.

This included supporting the expansion of the Pilot to make it available to all Australian publicly-funded research institutions on an annual basis from 2017; completing an independent evaluation of the SAGE Pilot; and determining a sustainable business model for an ongoing SAGE program.

For further information regarding funding and acknowledgements of all the organisations and individuals who provided leadership, sponsorship and the commitment to support this significant Pilot, please see page 40.

How has the Pilot progressed and what's next?

So, what are the next steps for SAGE and Athena SWAN in Australia?

At this point of the implementation, it was crucial to gain insight into the challenges faced by the higher education and research sector in relation to the Athena SWAN's framework and process, understand SAGE members' needs and, more importantly, their expectation and vision for change.

In this context, it was also necessary to define the future benefits and impact of Athena SWAN in Australia.

To this end, the independent evaluation of SAGE was initiated earlier than planned with its first stage comprising the formative evaluation.

The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) was engaged to undertake this evaluation. Between April and October 2017, ACER conducted widespread consultations involving more than 140 people, including senior leaders from SAGE member institutions, peak bodies and a range of external stakeholders, including those government agencies and other bodies with a focus on gender equity. This involved individual interviews, regional workshops and on-site focus groups.

The Athena SWAN process and SAGE-produced resources were also reviewed at the same time.

This precis of ACER's report: *Evaluating the introduction of Athena SWAN into Australia: putting gender on your agenda*, communicates the key findings of ACER's evaluation of the SAGE Pilot. It provides insights into the sector's experience with Athena SWAN, key elements of Athena SWAN that require adaptation, and the implementation of the Pilot.

ACER's evaluation identified key institutional and national challenges that must be addressed to make SAGE and Athena SWAN sustainable and impactful in Australia. These are addressed in this precis as is a proposed framework designed to facilitate and support the implementation of Athena SWAN in Australia.

It also reports on ACER's examination of the value of SAGE and Athena SWAN in Australia's STEMM higher education and research sector, details next steps and recommendations for future actions.

Why SAGE and Athena Swan are important for Australia

Award schemes are effective

In Europe and Australia, there are a range of award schemes and gender equity programs that all aim to increase gender equity in the workplace.

Some of these are designed specifically for women in science and technology in the higher education and research sector, others include all disciplines and business areas across organisations generally.

They range from the UK's Athena SWAN Charter to programs and initiatives in specific countries including Iceland, Germany, Norway and Australia, to name a few. Some of these are already up and running, others are still at the planning stage.

In 2015, the UK's Equality Challenge Unit released the *GENDER-NET Analysis report on award schemes, gender equality and structural change* in the higher education and research sector.

The report showed that, on balance, award schemes – based on independent accreditation – are an effective means of driving and creating structural change for gender equity, and that adequately resourced award schemes show demonstrated impact.

In terms of structural change, the impact of award schemes has been proven by certain indicators of women's representation and retention, for example, women's perception of improvement in their career development.

Further impact has been shown by achieving "top-level" leadership support, positive change in management and the work environment, improving transparency in decision-making and, importantly, sustained cultural change.

Prestige, recognition, competition and reputation

Inherently, awards also bring prestige, recognition, competition and enhanced reputation – all of which are genuinely valued by academics, universities and research institutions.

Awards can also provide an impetus to increase the pace of change internally in an organisation, but only if continuous progression and monitoring are built into the process.

Even the process of applying for an award can be in itself motivating. And in some cases, an award scheme is the primary motivator for senior managers to progress gender equity.

Award schemes provide a framework in which ongoing gender equity work can be documented, discussed, measured, celebrated and shared with other institutions. Award schemes that operate across institutions are also shown to be the most cost-effective.

The GENDER-NET report found that award schemes needed a set of key characteristics to demonstrate impact and to be successful in the higher education and research sector.

That is, they need to:

- > Be specific to higher education and research
- > Have significant academic involvement
- > Have an emphasis on continuous progression
- > Integrate departmental-level action
- > Require a self-assessment based on data, action planning, and monitoring of progress and impact
- > Take a culture-change approach

The pre-eminent option for Australia

With widespread agreement in the Australian STEMM higher education and research sector that cultural change was urgently needed, the Science in Australia Gender Equity (SAGE) Pilot was launched in September 2015.

A key component of the SAGE Pilot is the UK's successful Athena SWAN Charter, owned and operated by the UK's Equality Challenge Unit.

Chosen as the pre-eminent gender equity accreditation and awards framework to use in Australia, Athena SWAN has proven to be an effective and valuable mechanism for change.

It includes all the key characteristics needed to deliver change and has been extensively used, tested and evaluated in the UK for more than a decade.

As an established scheme, its processes and function have been regularly revisited, updated and improved over the time it has operated in the UK.

Inherently, awards also bring prestige, recognition competition and enhanced reputation

The advantages of Athena SWAN for Australia

In Australia, the SAGE Pilot of Athena SWAN includes reference to intersectionality generally, and to Indigenous people and Trans people specifically.

The SAGE Pilot of the Athena SWAN approach incorporates the Charter's key principles, a slightly modified version of the UK Bronze Institutional Award process, and a refined version of the peer review process that determines whether applicants receive the award.

Like Athena SWAN in the UK, SAGE's Athena SWAN Bronze Award helps participating organisations lay solid foundations for transformational rather than incremental change.

It includes:

- > A formal commitment from the institution's leadership
- > The establishment of an institutional coordinating body – the Self-Assessment Team or SAT
- > The collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data, to support the identification of issues, understand the root causes of these, and provide evidence that will inform the setting of actions and goals for change and the design of strategies to deliver all these and achieve impact

The advantages of using the Athena SWAN framework are considerable.

As a mechanism for change in the UK's higher education and research sector, Athena SWAN has been extremely successful. Athena SWAN confers awards at both institutional and departmental levels and offers three levels of awards – Bronze, Silver and Gold.

In the UK, impacts have included an increase in representation of women, improvements in the transition from postdoctoral researcher to first academic post, and in particular an impact in terms of cultural change.

It provides a framework in which to plan and undertake concrete work to create structural change for gender equity. The framework requires a comprehensive self-assessment involving staff at different levels of employment, from diverse disciplines and lived

experiences. This approach recognises and values the diversity of starting points and contexts. Therefore academics, researchers and students, not only Human Resources and equity staff, are central to the process.

Evaluating the Pilot

In Australia, SAGE Pilot has been implementing Athena SWAN for almost three years. Earlier this year, a national evaluation of the Pilot's implementation was completed by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER).

The first Australian Athena SWAN accreditation awards are being presented in December 2018.

The Athena SWAN framework, its process and SAGE-produced resources and service delivery were reviewed at the same time. Concurrently, ACER worked with SAGE and the sector to develop a data framework to inform assessment of future impact and benefits to accrue from the implementation of SAGE.

With the full reports on the Pilot evaluation completed, SAGE decided the timing was right to pause and take stock of the findings of this evaluation. To do so provides the ideal opportunity to see how far the Pilot has come, consider what it has achieved to date, and what needs to change or be fine-tuned in the SAGE approach and resources moving forward.

In the UK, it was announced that Advance HE will undertake a major review of the Athena Swan Charter there, ensuring that it is fit for current and future needs of institutions, individuals and the sector as a whole.

Advance HE in the UK came into being in March this year, following the merger of the Equality Challenge Unit – which previously operated Athena SWAN in the UK, the Higher Education Academy and the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education. Advance HE's purpose is to advance the professional practice of higher education to improve outcomes for the benefit of students, staff and society.

With the SAGE Pilot evaluation finished, the full reports completed and the review of Athena SWAN in the UK taking place, SAGE will now build on the learnings from the Pilot evaluation and the experience in Australia.

In Australia, SAGE has been operating the Athena SWAN Pilot for almost three years

In full flight – beyond the Pilot

It will take many years to achieve gender equity and diversity at senior levels in the Australian STEM higher education and research sector. We will need to look at impact and measure success over an extended timescale.

Having said that, SAGE's progress and its impact in the higher education and research sector in Australia has been noticeably accelerated, when compared to the UK's experience with Athena SWAN for over a decade in the STEM higher education and research sector there.

It is also worth noting that although the Australian higher education and research sector is fully engaged and committed to the SAGE journey, it will take several years to see all SAGE member institutions achieve higher award levels.

Differences in gender equity and diversity occur across different STEM disciplines, between different departments within the same discipline, and between different types of research organisations. It is essential to identify and understand causes of, and develop responses to, gender inequity at the local level.

As a catalyst for change across the sector, the SAGE Pilot has provided a coordinated and national approach to improve gender equity and diversity in STEM in the higher education and research sector.

Over the past few years, SAGE has made a bold and constructive start to address the deep-seated and entrenched problems.

Looking beyond the Pilot evaluation, there is a real and clear need to work with the Athena SWAN framework to refine it optimally for the sector here – Athena SWAN for Australia.

Informed by this timely and constructive formative evaluation, SAGE will continue its vital work supporting the sector into the future with improvements and enhancements to the Athena SWAN framework – tailored expressly to the needs of gender equity and gender diversity in Australia's higher education and research sector.

In the next section of this report, we look at what the SAGE Pilot has achieved in Australia so far.

Piloting Athena SWAN in Australia – what’s been achieved so far?

Summary

Athena SWAN has provided a starting/focal point for discussion and action – a safe environment to move beyond talk on these issues, with strong engagement and championing across the sector.

Engagement:

- > Many leaders of organisations are passionately committed to achieving gender equity, high-profile champions of Athena SWAN and see it as a lever for change
- > The Self-Assessment teams (SATs) are working and play a pivotal role in the organisational implementation of Athena SWAN

Action:

- > Organisations involved to date report a wide range of change initiatives including:
 - Some have had quick and tangible wins
 - Less talking, more doing
 - Major reviews in some organisations – already resulting in totally changed culture, policies, committees, diversity, etc.
 - The development of multi-faceted promotion measures
 - Initiating and fast-tracking family-friendly policies – leave arrangements, improving work-life balance for all higher education and research staff, etc.

Impact:

- > Reported early impacts include:
 - Positive impact on gender equity within participating institutions
 - Increased career satisfaction and opportunities
 - Improved working practices to support career progression
 - Increased visibility of women in science
 - Increased proportion of women in STEMM departments

- > Athena SWAN highlights:
 - A series of progressively challenging public awards, achievable milestones, acknowledges progress made in a way valued by the target audience
 - Establishes a new organisational structure – the SAT – which has the potential to challenge the status quo even while working within it
 - Provides a structured process to follow, implement and support over time
 - Draws on local knowledge, builds ownership, facilitates a collaborative approach
 - Appeals to STEMM researchers due to being evidence-based leading to action
 - Encourages deep self-reflection, leads to individual and organisational behavioural change
 - Brings together academics/researchers, students and professionals of all ages
 - Offers access to new collaborative networks, a sense of belonging to an important movement
- > SAGE implementation highlights:
 - Management of the Pilot implementation has improved over time, now much better
 - Connection to the successful UK Athena SWAN framework is highly valued by participants and participating organisations
 - Achieving gender equity is a “generational” issue but, building on the current momentum and facilitating change via Athena SWAN, tangible outcomes for gender equity and diversity across Australia’s higher education and research sector can and should be achieved within a decade

The Australian experience – self-reflection and positive change

Through SAGE, Australia has leveraged Athena SWAN to help participating organisations lay solid foundations for **transformational rather than incremental change.**

The evaluation of the SAGE Pilot in Australia revealed that it is the major national initiative to mobilise collective on-the-ground action across the STEMM higher education and research sector.

Since its launch, the Pilot is now engaged with some 50 per cent of the higher education and research sector. In Australia, SAGE currently has 45 organisations undertaking the Athena SWAN Institutional Bronze process, comprising 33 universities, six Medical Research Institutes (MRIs) and six Publicly Funded Research Organisations (PFROs).

These organisations joined at different times, with Cohort 1 (15 universities, 3 MRIs and 2 PFROs) having now completed the full pathway to Bronze Awards. Cohort 2 began in 2016 and Cohort 3 in September 2017.

The extent of willingness to participate in such a comprehensive program of “cultural change” is virtually unprecedented in Australia and offers the prospect of achieving significant reform in the sector.

Athena SWAN requires organisations to engage in thorough self-reflection on their workplace to highlight problem areas and design actions that contribute to making a positive change at the local level.

This requires SAGE members to:

1. Collect data on women’s participation, retention and progression within the organisation
2. Critically analyse the data
3. Identify reasons for exclusion and under-representation of women in their organisation
4. Develop an action plan to address these
5. Show progress over time

Also, it provides a focal point to embed the many existing informal and formal good practices underway, to examine their impact, and to determine what further actions are required.

In considering Athena SWAN as a process for change, many respondents in the SAGE Pilot said it had given them the starting point they needed. Those who were already some way down the road generally saw Athena SWAN as a catalyst for change, rather than a driver.

“We had the tinder and Athena SWAN was the match.”

“We have the intent and the resources to make change anyway, but Athena SWAN is an important component and an interesting wand to wave.”

“The conversation is as important as the outcomes. Athena SWAN is another organisational lever.”

The extent of willingness to participate in such a comprehensive program of “cultural change” is virtually unprecedented in Australia

Advantages of the Athena SWAN approach

The advantages of the Athena SWAN approach are considerable.

Athena SWAN is a proven framework that works and has been extremely successful in the UK, so much so that it is no longer confined to STEMM but has been introduced in all disciplines in higher education and research. It is clear that the cultural change achieved extends across entire institutions, not just in the STEMM disciplines.

The fact that it is not just a “box-ticking” exercise, but a framework that offers practical, proven and tangible methods to achieve real outcomes and incentivises continued improvement in the higher education and research STEMM sector, makes it an effective approach to take.

Better working conditions for everyone

It also results in better working conditions for everyone – women and minority groups, and men at all levels within institutions – as well as giving visibility to the issues in an organisation.

Importantly, Athena SWAN is a proven catalyst for change at scale. It works and offers a consistent, efficient and effective approach to improving gender equity sector-wide.

It encourages multiple institutions to work and collaborate within the same broad framework, allowing evidence-based best practices and information on successful strategies to be shared.

Unlike other gender equity initiatives, Athena SWAN does not just determine the existence of appropriate policies, such as family friendly support packages or support for women returning from extended leave.

Instead, it requires comprehensive examination of, and action on, the effectiveness of all such policies and the structures and systems within which they operate.

Athena SWAN in the UK

In the UK, evaluations of Athena SWAN have found that it has had a positive impact on gender equity within participating institutions and departments.

Departments that have received awards have noted that Athena SWAN has improved their workplace environment. Key improvements included increased career satisfaction and opportunities for development and promotion, together with improved fairness in workload distribution.

For organisations, Athena SWAN has become a means to formalise and bring together existing gender equity actions already underway within their institution.

Sector-wide, it has enabled better understanding of the barriers and issues facing women and minority groups and created communities of practice that collaborate to improve outcomes.

Improved working practices

Like the UK's experience, the SAGE Pilot reveals that for many institutions the introduction of Athena SWAN is improving working practices to support career progression. In turn, this is leading to increased visibility of women in science and an increased proportion of women in STEMM departments.

The good practices being implemented within institutions are benefitting women and minority groups, and men, and are contributing to an improved working environment and culture.

Differences in gender equity across diverse institutions, different levels and various STEMM disciplines suggest that actions must be designed for different settings, and that while sharing best practice is important, it is also essential to develop local responses to gender equity issues.

Critical component of the change process – the impacts of the SAGE Pilot in Australia

The journey towards Athena SWAN Institutional Bronze accreditation is intended to be a critical component of the change

process in its own right. Consequently, most SAGE Cohort 1 (and some SAGE Cohort 2) organisations could point to changes of some kind that had already occurred as a result of their involvement in Athena SWAN.

“We had quick tangible wins reflecting [uni-wide] workshop input.”

“We could not have gone so far, so fast without it!”

“Less talk and complaining and more doing.”

“It’s already totally changed our organisation. Decision-making is changed forever. We couldn’t have done it without Athena SWAN. We are uniting around a structure to build what we want to do. Without Athena SWAN we would have been labelled zealots.”

Several organisations that had not done a lot of work in the area of gender equity prior to the SAGE Pilot reported that they had already overhauled their policies.

“Every faculty now has a gender/diversity committee.”

“We’ve now got some good policies [and they are being] adopted well.”

In some places the data were changing the perceptions of senior leaders.

“Realisation of executives and senior management – Yes we have a problem at Level E!”

“[We are] now paying attention to dwell times i.e. How long people stay in a band. Asked HR for data on who is ‘stuck’ and found women often spend longer/don’t apply for promotion.”

In many SAGE Cohort 1 organisations, SAT members commented – often with some surprise – that the qualitative data were proving to be more powerful than the quantitative data because they were giving them insights into values, beliefs and expectations.

Initiating and fast-tracking

As a catalyst for change, SAGE has provided a coordinated and national approach to improving gender equity and diversity in STEM across the higher education and research sector. Over the past few years, it has made a bold, fast-tracked and constructive start to address the deep-seated and entrenched problems in this sector.

In fact, a number of organisations had already initiated or fast-tracked moves to establish family-friendly policies, such as changes to departmental meeting times and carers’ leave arrangements, and/or provision of infrastructure, including on-campus child care arrangements and parental parking bays.

“Has led to a major review of GE in Engineering faculty ...

Family friendliness has totally changed ... We have set a target of 40 per cent more women.”

“[Our] flexibility means we are attracting people especially women (who are leaving higher paying jobs).”

Several organisations had developed new, multi-faceted promotion measures and were looking at ways of assisting researchers returning from parenting leave.

“[We now have] a Fellowship scheme – a part-time fixed-term contract for research. Results mean raising the number of high-profile publications.”

“Fellowships for return from parenting leave. Maths has one targeted at women, and two for anyone (actually got more female applicants for these, too).”

In a few instances, such actions were part of a high-level organisational strategy for transformational change that incorporated gender equity as a key component.

A lever for change

The leaders of these organisations are passionately committed to achieving gender equity, were high-profile champions of Athena SWAN within and external to their organisations, and were using the SAGE Pilot as a lever for change.

For example, one organisation had set a very challenging “hard” target for gender balance to be achieved by 2030, completely redesigned the criteria for promotion, and created opportunities for movement across the organisation that were also designed to develop new business opportunities and improve the sustainability of the organisation itself.

In most organisations, however, much of the impact reported on related to the nature and quality of conversation that had been occurring as a result of their involvement with Athena SWAN.

“Athena SWAN is important because it brings people into the conversation who haven’t been involved before.”

“A good conversation starter. Makes it possible to have difficult conversations.”

“Helps us surface stories.”

“Has raised some difficult issues.”

“Has raised the level of discussion. Shown a deeper and more complex set of issues. Doesn’t have numerical goals, [it’s more about] thinking about non-numerical issues.”

“It’s forcing us to have concerns, take it seriously.”

“Willingness to share the truth.”

... there is a passionate commitment to making Athena SWAN work in Australia

“Challenging the status quo in our organisation. Difficult when it surfaces the ‘bad’ stuff.”

Although it is more difficult to prove that such conversations are powerful – particularly to those who have not been directly involved – the literature on transformational change emphasises the importance of surfacing and exploring mental models, as a necessary pre-cursor to individual behaviour change, and to organisational culture change.

Given the long-term nature of the changes envisaged, each Pilot members efforts must be sustainable over time.

Pilot evaluation findings – positive outcomes and changing mindsets

Key findings from the SAGE Pilot evaluation demonstrate that national leadership and coordination of efforts, creating mechanisms of convergence together with modest government investment, are critical to delivering effective, fast-paced, and sustained change in gender equity and diversity in Australia’s higher education and research sector.

At this point in the report, we take a closer look at the feedback and observations reported by some 140 individuals who participated in the evaluation.

The right thing to do – high engagement

The Pilot evaluation showed that there is a passionate commitment to making Athena SWAN work in Australia.

The majority of senior organisational leaders, SAT members and external stakeholders consulted are strongly and passionately committed to gender equity, and have placed great faith in the Athena SWAN framework as a vehicle for tackling what they see as a “generational problem”.

Although there was general agreement that gender equity in STEMM would improve research outcomes, organisational decision-making and overall productivity, most reported being involved because they felt it was “the right thing to do”.

Several Pilot organisations were implementing highly strategic approaches to promote Athena SWAN and laying the foundations for broad engagement, including experimenting with processes that would directly involve members of the broader organisational community in the conversation about gender equity.

These organisations all had highly committed leaders who were playing an active role in Athena SWAN-related activities.

Strong support from senior leadership

The majority of SATs are being led by highly respected, highly skilled and influential people in their organisation, who are connecting their teams into broader networks, and using personal and professional influence and formal position power to ensure that Athena SWAN gains traction.

Many senior leaders are closely and visibly involved in several gender equity initiatives, including Athena SWAN, and SAT members see this as a very powerful motivator and driver.

The SATs are working

The SATs play a pivotal role in the organisational implementation of the Athena SWAN framework, being responsible for the preparation of the Award application, including not only the collection and analysis of data, but also the sharing of information, the building of essential relationships, the influencing of decision-makers and management of the politics and the sourcing and management of resources, including specialist skills and knowledge.

Many strengths in the framework

As an enabling mechanism for transformational change, it is evident that Athena SWAN has many strengths. The Athena SWAN framework:

- > Offers a series of progressively challenging external audits for public awards, which focuses and motivates effort, provides achievable milestones on what is likely to be a long journey, and acknowledges progress made in a way that is valued by the target audience
- > Establishes a new organisational structure – the SAT – which, if designed and positioned carefully, has the potential to challenge the status quo even while working within it
- > Provides a structured process that:
 - Provides participants with a clear starting point and a scaffolded process to support activity over time
 - Recognises the importance of context, draws on local knowledge and builds ownership
 - Appeals to STEMM researchers due to the emphasis on acting from evidence
 - Encourages deep reflection and the surfacing and exploration of mental models, a necessary precursor to individual and organisational behavioural change
- > Facilitates a collaborative approach that has the potential to tap into diverse perspectives and build genuine inclusivity by bringing together researchers and professionals and people at every career stage

- > Offers access to new networks and a sense of belonging to an important movement

Strong support and real appeal

Pilot members were strongly supportive of the Athena SWAN emphasis on data collection and analysis in the process, with many commenting on the appeal of this approach to STEM researchers.

From a change management perspective, there is also great value in gathering data on the current situation in order to identify patterns of behaviour and gain insights into possible underlying causes.

There was extensive evidence that Cohort 1 members were taking this aspect of the Athena SWAN process very seriously, with all identifying “data diving” processes, incorporating deep reflection, as critical to the process.

A safe environment to move beyond talk – evidence of impact already

There is early evidence to suggest that the Athena SWAN process is starting to have an impact. As one respondent put it, “Athena SWAN has put gender on our agenda!”

Some organisations have already implemented changes, including family friendly policies and practices such as broader promotion criteria.

At the time of the Pilot evaluation consultations, the major area where change had occurred was within the SATs themselves. In Cohort 1, the focus on data analysis had clearly encouraged deep reflection, initiated “difficult” conversations and led to insights that might have not occurred otherwise.

Athena SWAN has provided a sanctioned, safe environment within which to have these conversations, and a scaffolded process to help participants move beyond talk to action.

It is also important to note that SATs were providing a mechanism for capitalising on a diversity of ideas and perspectives. However, in some cases the potential was not yet being realised, as individuals from different fields (particularly academic/professional), backgrounds and career stages tried to find ways of appreciating what each had to bring to the table.

A national vision and agreed strategies

There is an appetite for the development of a national “vision” and agreed strategies. While most SAGE members saw Athena SWAN as the way forward, the question remains: a way forward to what?

While each organisation is trying to work out where it wants to go and how it wants to get there, collectively they recognised a need for a unifying national vision to help focus attention, effort and resources.

SAGE members and stakeholders also called for the development of national strategies to address systemic issues that affect how much individual research institutions can achieve, but which are outside their individual spheres of influence.

Managing the implementation process – things have improved

Management of the implementation process for the Pilot is improving.

Early in the evaluation process, ACER identified a number of issues regarding misaligned expectations about roles and responsibilities of the SAGE team, and aspects of their interactions with Pilot members.

Such issues were to be expected, given the complete change of SAGE governance and personnel part way through the process, and a general approach that has, of necessity, involved “building the plane flying”.

The restructured SAGE team responded quickly and effectively to the negative feedback that Pilot participants had provided, with actions including the development of a Service Charter that clarifies roles and responsibilities, and the appointment of a dedicated team member as a primary liaison for each Pilot member. Feedback from Pilot members to these modest steps has been positive.

As facilitators of the Pilot process, the team is operating as it should, learning as it goes, while managing many more members than would normally be part of a Pilot process.

As the Pilot implementation continues, there needs to be careful communication regarding responsibilities going forward.

UK Athena Swan process – adapting the framework for Australia

The Athena SWAN process

As a mechanism for transformational change, Athena SWAN offers:

- > a series of progressively challenging public awards which focuses and motivates effort, provides achievable milestones on what is likely to be a long journey, and acknowledges progress made in a way that is valued by the target audience
- > a structured framework that provides members with a clear starting point and a scaffolded process to support activity over time
- > a recognition of the importance of local knowledge and ownership
 - reflected in the focus on STEMM
 - the concept of SATs that brings researchers and professionals together and has the potential to cut across existing structures and systems, and challenge the status quo even while working within it
 - a process with the flexibility to support each organisation to identify issues and tailor action plans that suit its context
- > a collaborative approach with the potential to tap into diverse perspectives and build genuine inclusivity by bringing together researchers and professionals; people at every stage of their careers; and academics/researchers in STEMM and non-STEMM fields
- > a process designed to appeal to STEMM researchers, with a heavy initial emphasis on collecting and analysing quantitative data in order to identify targets for change, which also directs attention to qualitative data (traditionally the province of non-STEMM academics and Human Resources professionals, but critical to the Athena SWAN process)
- > a process that encourages deep reflection and the surfacing and exploration of mental models – a necessary precursor to individual and organisational behaviour change
- > new networks and a sense of belonging to a larger group dedicated to the same goals

Australian adaptations

Australian adaptations of the UK (2014) Athena SWAN process have had mixed success – one of the major changes SAGE made to the UK process was the introduction of intersectionality to the Bronze Institutional Award (it is introduced in the Silver level in the UK), and a specific focus on Indigeneity (something not covered in the UK).

Although members fully supported and recognised the importance of these areas, of all aspects of the application, they were causing the most angst.

Where does SAGE fit in the Gender Equity landscape?

SAGE is still working out where it fits into the broader Gender Equity landscape in Australia.

Although many Pilot members were unaware of it, the SAGE team has built links with other bodies – such as the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) and the Male Champion of Change (MCC) – and is exploring the ways in which SAGE can complement and learn from other programs with similar or “overlapping” intentions.

However, the majority of Pilot members suggested that the Athena SWAN process being used within the SAGE Pilot was better suited to achieving change in their organisations than initiatives such as WGEA’s Employer of Choice for Gender Equality.

UK connection and proven success

The majority of Pilot members value the connection to the Athena SWAN UK, but there is an interest in developing and acknowledging an Australian version.

For many respondents, it was important that SAGE had adopted an existing model with a global reputation, and that this model “came from academics” and had credibility and prestige.

However, a minority of respondents wanted to abandon all reference to “Athena SWAN” and create a clearly Australian program. Others cautioned that the loss of a clear connection to the original program would undermine its credibility and even “destroy the program” in Australia.

The majority of those consulted believed the link should be retained, perhaps as “Athena SWAN Australia”.

Whatever the name, there were multiple calls for more active national promotion, including a concerted effort to engage with university Vice-Chancellors and other organisational leaders.

“Generational” timeframe

Notwithstanding the importance of short-term achievements, SAGE members and stakeholders were in agreement that achieving gender equity was a “generational” issue, where the most significant impacts might not be evident for 15 or 20 years.

However, the Athena SWAN progression model can and will reverse gender inequities, while also strengthening inclusive participation from women and diverse minority genders and groups, including in particular Indigenous peoples, in Australia’s higher education and research sector.

Early evidence of institutional and sector level actions suggests that building on the current momentum the sector has for change, and facilitating mechanisms of convergence to support change, tangible outcomes of gender equity and diversity across Australia's higher education and research sector, can and should be substantially achieved within a decade.

Fulfilling this ambitious goal is possible through a nationally shared vision, leadership and resourcing.

The leadership and investment of the Australian Government, Australia's two learned science and technology-based Academies and members of the higher education and research sector is already transforming this vital sector in Australia.

Realising the SAGE vision – enabling sustainable and tangible impact

The Pilot evaluation emphasises the importance of positioning SAGE strategically, within organisational programs, and nationally, across “joined up” efforts – an approach that permits SAGE to act as a collaboration, accreditation and recognition platform.

An approach that delivers strategic “fit” and “convergence” of local and national programs to provide additional value is key. One that fosters and facilitates the co-sharing of national diversity and inclusion tools operating across the higher education and research sector and industry (particularly STEMM-underpinned) sectors.

Furthermore, enabling tracking and impact measure is fundamental to continue the drive for change and improvement.

Establishing a national data framework that draws on data that are already collected and reported, and that incorporates critical metrics across the core domains of Athena SWAN, is the means to monitor (and act on) the progress and impact of SAGE – local and national. This, in turn will inform how to best realise the national vision for gender equity and diversity for the higher education and research sector.

Potential for monitoring tool

To this end, the evaluation proposes an innovative tool – the Athena SWAN Sustainability Tool (ASST) – that has potential to support acting on the evaluation's key findings. In particular, this proposed tool offers an approach to monitor the collective health and progress of SAGE members on the journey of change and to link this information to the key elements of the SAGE data framework currently under development.⁴

As the entity responsible for ASST's future implementation and maintenance, SAGE has already identified the need to monitor progress and impact systematically. Such monitoring will provide information for several reasons, e.g. to demonstrate SAGE's value to its members and stakeholders, including current and potential funding bodies, and to gather information on its performance in order to keep improving its service provision.

Testing and trialling ASST will be progressed post Pilot in close consultation with SAGE members and the higher education and research sector.

The Australian Athena SWAN Pilot – summing up

The SAGE Pilot has strong support from the senior leaders of Australian higher education and research organisations, particularly universities, and a large number of committed SAT members are investing time and energy in the Award process.

Athena SWAN has many features that suggest it is an effective mechanism for transformational change in STEMM disciplines, but there are also a range of issues that could undermine its potential for change and the sustainability of the SAGE Pilot. The recommendations of the ACER evaluation set forth a course to facilitate the effective adoption and adaptation of Athena SWAN to Australia's higher education and research sectors.

In this section of the report we have discussed the positive outcomes, impacts and benefits of the SAGE Pilot in Australia so far.

In the next part of this report, we acknowledge and examine the elements of Athena SWAN and the Pilot that will need to change and be reworked for the Australian experience and sector as we move forward.

4. SAGE independent evaluation included work to develop and establish a data framework to inform future assessment and reporting on impact and benefits of implementing Athena SWAN in Australia.

Recognising the need for change and customisation – the Athena SWAN experience in Australia

The UK's Athena SWAN is a successful enabling mechanism for gender equity. It provides a framework in which to plan and undertake concrete work to create structural and cultural change for gender equity. In the UK it has been in use for over 12 years and, during this time, has been reviewed and continuously improved and updated as necessary.

In Australia, the Athena SWAN journey time has been much shorter – condensing the 12 years of UK experience of this program into a two-year timeframe for the SAGE Pilot – and preparing members and stakeholders for institutional Bronze accreditation award in that timeframe as well.

Urgent attention and swift action

The shorter timeframe came about partly due to the serious issues regarding gender equity in the Australian higher education and research sector, which required urgent attention and swift action.

The speed of implementation also reflected the window of opportunity provided by Pilot members' enthusiasm to test Athena SWAN in Australia and drive momentum for cultural change in the higher education and research sector. The Pilot members involved in the first Cohort are true pioneers and can justifiably be called "heroes of reform" for this sector.

The two science and technology-based Academies also wanted to see Athena SWAN in Australia bear fruit as quickly as possible. This vision was shared by the Government when it provided funding to allow expansion and acceleration of the Pilot.

For this to happen in the much shorter timeframe, the UK version of Athena SWAN was used for the Pilot in Australia – with little change or true customisation for the sector here.

Therefore the experience of Athena SWAN in Australia has been very different to the experience of Athena SWAN in the UK and more difficult.

Diversity, Intersectionality and Indigeneity

Athena SWAN in Australia used some of the original Athena SWAN UK, but also mixed in later UK framework enhancements. This included the addition of diversity together with intersectionality and Indigeneity.

None of these additional aspects were included in the UK framework at the start, but rather evolved much later informed by experience, continuous review and the improvement process. It goes without saying that Indigeneity is not a feature of the UK's experience.

Therefore, this "add on" approach without customisation to fit local context was notably simplistic, leading to confusion and concern. See also – *Intersectionality – a commitment to diversity, but too early to include?* – on page 27.

The two science and technology-based Academies also wanted to see Athena SWAN in Australia bear fruit as quickly as possible

Lack of customisation

While the SAGE evaluation highlights some implementation processes as critical issues that impacted implementation of the Pilot, it showed that the lack of customisation of Athena SWAN for Australia was a major concern for most participants. The one-size fits all approach and the “add on” nature of intersectionality, particularly in regard to Indigeneity, caused real issues in the implementation of the framework in Australia.

SAGE Pilot of Athena SWAN – feedback on the Adapted Process

The SAGE evaluation identified both strengths and weaknesses of the modified Athena SWAN process used in the Pilot in Australia.

Strengths of the Athena SWAN process commonly identified by SAGE members and stakeholders included:

- > the “data driven” approach, including the questions posed and the requirement for both qualitative and quantitative data
- > the logical, structured approach to the development of an action plan reflecting, and responding to, the evidence
- > the flexibility to tailor the action plan to the context
- > the formal accreditation system incorporating peer review

Issues raised centred on the SAGE Pilot modifications, including:

- > the ambiguity of the guidelines, combined with the uneasy relationship between flexibility and prescription
- > doubts about how contextualised action plans would be received by peer reviewers if these deviated too far from perceived “requirements”
- > the “one size fits all” approach that has seen large and small Pilot organisations of all three types using a process originally designed for UK universities
- > the availability, and perceived relevance, of some of the data requested (which reflected the UK context)
- > the “add on” nature of intersectionality, particularly in regard to Indigeneity, the apparent isolation of intersectionality from other aspects of the application, and issues associated with word counts
- > the (two-year) lead time

The SAGE Pilot used a slightly modified version of the 2014 Equality Challenge Unit Institutional Bronze application and handbook from the UK’s Athena SWAN framework.

To assist Pilot members through the process leading up to their applications, the SAGE team provided a website with general information and FAQs. Other resources were also made available, including an extensive bank of questions intended to assist

with the preparation of tailored Culture surveys. Some of these resources were progressively updated and added to throughout the Pilot.

The SAGE team also facilitated introductory meetings to assist with the establishment of the Athena SWAN process in each organisation and presented a series of workshops on topics such as data collection and analysis, among others. The team also provided input into Regional Network Meetings (RNMs), hosted two symposia and part-sponsored “Going for Gold”, a national tour involving Professor Tom Welton from Imperial College, London.

Despite the effort that the SAGE team had put into the additional materials provided, in the eyes of most members, the handbook that was supplied was all-important. It appears to have become the “holy book” around which everything revolved, and was in fact referred to by several respondents as “the Bible”.

It is easy to see why this may have happened. In its opening, applicants are exhorted to “refer to this handbook at all times when completing your application form. Applications that are incomplete or do not comply with the criteria set out in this handbook may not be accepted”.

In the absence of previous experience of what is deemed to be “acceptable”, the majority of Pilot members followed the handbook/application to the letter in order to ensure that they did not miss out on an Institutional Bronze Award on a technicality.

However, one of the problems with trying to stay close to the requirements is that these are not very clear. This is partly to do with the design and execution of the handbook and application, with many judging them to be user-unfriendly, obscure and, at times, illogical. However, there are genuine and deeper issues impacting on the way many Pilot members have tackled the whole process. There has been a disconnect between the prescriptive nature of the application “requirements” and a key Athena SWAN message about the importance of organisations tailoring the process, and action plans, to their own needs. One respondent was well aware of the implications of this tension:

“We had to choose carefully between compliance and innovation. If it had really been a small Pilot – seven or eight organisations – we might not have gone down the tick-box road.” SAT leader

In organisations where senior leaders and/or SAT members had UK experience, SAT members were more likely to “trust the system”, and were more comfortable with the apparent ambiguity of the process. For example, one observed, “the flexibility is awesome”, and was accepting of the fact that the process was likely to go “in many different directions”. A few respondents without UK experience also supported this aspect but, at the time of the consultations, they were in the minority.

“It feels like a compliance exercise.”

“Athena SWAN wouldn’t work if it was SO structured (That’s why WGEA doesn’t work).”

“The prescriptive nature of the application is good or we would spend too long. It gives [things] a framework, a shape.”

Almost everyone wanted more scaffolding:

“You need a manual for writing the SAGE application.”

“We need guidelines for the application form.”

There was a general consensus that the handbook and application were not easy to interpret without guidance. (As one member asked rather plaintively, “What is the actual meaning of this application?”). However, few participants placed any faith in advice from the SAGE team, when this reflected the flexibility principle. There were many comments that illustrated this desire for certainty, coupled with distrust of any guidance that did not provide this:

“More clear guidance – less ‘It’s up to you,’ [it] depends on context!”

“[SAGE is] not providing the level of detail and direction organisations need.”

“[SAGE and the Athena SWAN process] are too flexible. It’s ‘Just do whatever’s easiest!’”

There was a consistent call for models, examples and templates that would reduce the ambiguity and the necessity of “reinventing the wheel”:

“Model timeline for expectations of deliverables.”

“Model for research organisations.”

“Very flexible, but examples of action plan with headings would still be helpful (with a choice to use or not).”

Late in the evaluation process, the SAGE team provided what was, in effect, a detailed guide (to the guide⁵) to assist Pilot members as they worked through the application process. This received positive feedback from Pilot members who were interviewed after that time.

The lack of a clear shared direction – Which quest? Which target? What’s most important?

There has been confusion and disagreement about where effort should be focused

While no one argued with the need for gender equity in STEMM, the evaluation found widespread discomfort about, and different interpretations of, the Athena SWAN scope. There was confusion regarding, or questioning of, every element of the SAGE Pilot – the field, the quest, the target groups and the priority issues.

The positioning of the SAGE Pilot of Athena SWAN may have contributed to this. For example, on the SAGE website, the opening statement appears to establish the focus of Athena SWAN:

Science in Australia Gender Equity (SAGE) is a program of activities designed to improve gender equity and diversity in the Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine (STEMM)

However, the next paragraph zooms in on career progression for women, while the way in which the specific stand-alone questions in the SAGE version of the Institutional Bronze Award handbook regarding different aspects of intersectionality appears to shine a light on diversity.

Which field?

Should Athena SWAN focus on gender equity/diversity/inclusion in STEMM or should this be for everyone? Some respondents from STEMM fields saw value in the focus on STEMM, and in the involvement of STEMM academics because it involves people at the coal face. However, there was a widespread feeling that Athena SWAN should involve everyone in the organisation because gender equity, diversity and inclusion issues were universal. A few non-academic respondents in the universities were highly critical of both the STEMM focus and the focus on academics. As one group put it, “The narrow focus on gender/STEMM/academics is an issue,” but hoped that this could be expanded beyond the Pilot.

Which quest?

Should Athena SWAN’s primary focus within SAGE be on gender equity, should it be on equity more generally, on gender/equity

There was confusion regarding, or questioning of, every element of the current Athena SWAN Pilot

5. Publication of the SAGE Peer Review Guidance and Procedures.

and diversity or on inclusion and diversity, recognising that gender equity is a sub-set of diversity?

While the SAGE Expert Advisory Group believed that the primary focus of Athena SWAN should be on gender equity with awareness of the impact of intersectionality, there was less alignment among Pilot members regarding where the priorities should lie. In a number of Pilot organisations, the lack of clarity or formal agreement about these fundamental aspects had already created issues, including questions about the status of existing strategies aimed at improving equity, gender equity, diversity and inclusion and reconciliation; misunderstandings about the nature and extent of the SAT's role and the role of human resources, diversity and inclusion project officers; and friction between committees and working parties associated with the range of strategies regarding roles and responsibilities, power, influence and resourcing.

Which target groups?

The Institutional Bronze application requires a review of general policies, and the collection and comparison of STEMM and non-STEMM data, and many of the actions being pursued by Pilot members, such as parental leave arrangements, were by their very nature, organisation-wide. This reinforced the widespread view that Athena SWAN should be applicable to everyone. The more limited focus was leading to resentment and friction, particularly from professionals involved in the SATs.

"The narrow focus on gender/STEMM/academics is an issue."

"Professional staff have the same leadership issues but think Athena SWAN is for academics so feel left out."

"Giving carriage to academics and not including professional staff leads to a certain amount of 'pisseyoffedness.'"

There were several comments about the need to address gender inequity for men, the apparent focus on women aiming for leadership positions and the lack of focus on students.

"The focus on looking at people at the top (high flyers) is over emphasised and overlooks others. Should look at the pipeline and future leaders."

"Priorities? Gender imbalance is higher in nursing than in engineering!"

"Not including students is a strong weakness. Students are the professionals of tomorrow. That's where you make change."

Lack of a clear, shared direction

While all respondents hoped Athena SWAN would provide a way forward, the question remains: a way forward to what? In most organisations there was no shared picture of where their implementation of Athena SWAN might be heading. As one respondent observed: *"We just have a sort of general, vague aspiration."*

This is an issue. Without a shared vision and endpoint it will be difficult to focus effort, people may start working at cross purposes (if they are not already) and it will also frustrate efforts to align Athena SWAN implementation with the organisation's broader vision and strategy.

The process of developing a detailed, shared picture of a desired future can also act as a significant change process in its own right, as long as it involves many people rather than only a few.

Engagement – getting people on board, buy-in and senior support

- > Strong, visible support from most senior leaders with some being directly involved and others acting as champions
- > Lack of widespread engagement from middle level leadership, with some notable exceptions

There is passionate commitment to making Athena SWAN work in Australia but, even with strong support from senior leaders, the majority of Pilot organisations identified "engagement" as a major challenge.

Having worked through the data collection and analysis phase, Cohort 1 organisations were particularly aware that the real barriers to gender equity were cultural, rather than structural, and that they needed to identify strategies that would help people explore the values, beliefs and assumptions that might be underpinning resistance to change.

However, this was an area that many Pilot members felt ill-equipped to address. While many suggested that they could do with assistance, few had looked within their own organisations for people with the necessary expertise.

"Professional staff have the same leadership issues but think Athena SWAN is for academics so feel left out"

Highly respected, highly skilled, influential people

The majority of SATs are being led by highly respected, highly skilled and influential people within organisations, who are connecting their SATs into broader networks and using personal and professional influence and formal position power to ensure that Athena SWAN gains traction. Many senior leaders are closely and visibly involved in several gender equity initiatives, including Athena SWAN, and SAT members see this as a powerful motivator and driver.

Notwithstanding those Deans and Heads of School who were highly supportive and closely involved, the majority of Pilot organisations reported a lack of engagement of middle level leaders. However, few had taken explicit steps to address this issue, hoping that things would change post-Institutional Bronze Award when individual departments can apply for an award.

Some suggested that a key reason for their organisation joining was to anticipate the introduction of a UK-style link to research funds. And for a few, it was more about perceptions of the negative connotations associated with not joining:

“Risk if we didn’t join, if funding eventually tied to it.”

“We were already committed to doing this work [gender equity]. It wasn’t clear what we’d get for [\$x] so we decided why pay? But 32 others did so we were conspicuous. We joined – to avoid shame really.”

“If the Award is not achieved, there will be a loss of engagement and reputation/brand.”

One university reported that “Our leaders are asking, “Where is the ROI [from Athena SWAN]?”, but another SAT respondent roundly rejected the pragmatic arguments for involvement that they had heard put forward by some leaders:

“Stop talking about the economic effects of SAGE/GE. Diversity has other benefits!”

The picture was somewhat different at the level of Deans and Heads of School. The evaluation noted many who were deeply committed to gender equity and who had been implementing a range of strategies over a number of years. They welcomed Athena SWAN as a vehicle to help them in this regard. Nonetheless, in other organisations, there appeared to be significantly less involvement and/or commitment at these levels.

“May not be a shared vision in our organisation – especially some mid-level leaders.” SAT member

A few Pilot members had foreseen these issues, and had sought to engage key (often male) leaders from STEMM faculties in the SAT. Others saw the involvement of mid-level leaders as an issue to be

tackled in the future. However, in several universities, the lack of engagement appears to have had implications for the day-to-day running of the SAT.

Respondents reported that their immediate superiors made it difficult for them to be actively involved in their SATs because they treated this work as an additional load to be undertaken outside of all other commitments (including those considered to be under the “service” banner). Lack of engagement at Head of School level also had the potential to limit the implementation of practices that were being promoted by the SATs, such as rescheduling meetings to more family-friendly times.

Respondents who had been involved in Athena SWAN in the UK observed that the engagement of middle managers tends to begin once a department takes up Athena SWAN.

Engaging your organisation with Athena SWAN:

- > There are marked differences in approaches to the promotion of Athena SWAN internally and more broadly
- > While all Cohort 1 members have reached out to their organisations through surveys, only one third have experimented with ways of engaging members of their organisations in face-to-face conversations about gender equity
- > Almost all Pilot members had found it “tough to get buy-in”, attributing this to “culture” and seeing it as the greatest barrier they face. Many intimated that they would welcome assistance in developing strategies for change

SAT members were at different stages in terms of engaging with members of their organisations. This did not necessarily depend on whether they were in Cohort 1 or 2.

There was also a marked difference in the profile of Athena SWAN within organisations, ranging from highly visible to very low profile.

The majority of SATs and members reported that engaging with their wider organisation about the SAGE Pilot was extremely challenging:

- > It’s a hard sell
- > Inertia with newness – a struggle
- > So many people with no idea!
- > Difficult to have it owned by everyone, especially academe
- > Some are concerned it’s a women’s feminist issue
- > Patchy support
- > Apathy and cynicism from STEMM areas
- > Change will be hard

While this appeared to be overwhelming for those who were also committed to using Athena SWAN organisation-wide, it was an issue for all.

Almost everyone believed that the real barriers were at the level of values, beliefs and assumptions (collectively referred to by most as “culture”). Comments such as, “How to change people’s beliefs/embedded culture?” and “How do we show people it’s an important issue?” were widespread.

A significant issue concerned the nature and degree of male involvement. This started at SAT level but went across the organisation, and was also evident at RNMs and other events.

“Need for senior male involvement.”

“Need buy-in from men too.”

“Not as many men in the conversation – [they] don’t think it’s about them (e.g. men came wanting to talk about women).”

SAGE: Communications, Engagement, Marketing and Brand

Strengths

- > Some communications and engagement have already happened
- > Most Pilot members and other key stakeholders see the Athena SWAN “brand” with its UK connections as a positive that should be retained

Issues

- > Communications and engagement have been limited so far – a real need to strengthen SAGE’s efforts in this area
- > Confusion around what to call the Pilot has potential to undermine effort

Communications and Engagement

SAGE members identified the level of communications and engagement by SAGE to be somewhat limited in nature. They noted a real need to strengthen and improve SAGE’s communications and engagement efforts moving forward.

As SAGE and its work comes of age and becomes more visible to the higher education and research sector, more targeted communications and a range of engagement approaches and channels are needed for members and stakeholders, and more generally.

In December this year, SAGE will confer the first Athena SWAN Institutional Bronze Awards and publicise these via the media and social media – so a more strategic, consistent and holistic approach to communications and engagement is crucial.

Athena SWAN – national profile and branding

To many respondents, it was important that Australia had franchised an existing model with a global reputation, and that this model “came from academics” and had “credibility and prestige”.

“Provides membership of a recognised program, with connection to the UK and other Australian units as major plus.”

“It’s a plus that it wasn’t invented in Australia. If it was ... it would have died. The UK connection gives it street cred.”

“Athena SWAN is internationally recognised and this is important. Don’t mess with this or you will lose the power of the program!”

However, while accepting that there was sense in starting from the general Athena SWAN approach, some respondents did not see a need to stay with the Athena SWAN brand, and called for a clearly Australian version:

“Brand promotion and differentiation from the UK model – [Make it] more Australia specific.”

“The extent of university demand to participate in the Pilot is an indicator of its appeal in this sector, reflecting prior knowledge of Athena SWAN’s existence, and a sense of readiness.”

“When I first talked about Athena SWAN there wasn’t a lot of interest, but then the NHMRC survey on gender [came] out. Athena SWAN appeared at a point where the sector was thinking there would be a problem getting attention [on GE] and the new VC saw it as a vehicle for change.”

“Right time. Right pick!”

What’s in a name?

Pilot members and other key stakeholders reported that naming issues were exacerbating engagement issues. There was no consistency regarding nomenclature. There was a serious and widespread uneasiness about what to call the Pilot that had the potential to undermine broader engagement. Was it “SAGE-Athena-SWAN”, “Athena SWAN” or just plain “SAGE”?

“Use of the terms “SAGE” and “Athena SWAN”. What is the best term to use?”

"We are struggling with the brand and what to call ourselves."

"Naming conventions – not comfortable talking about it!"

Some organisations were hedging their bets, referring to "SAGE Athena-SWAN", while others had adopted "SAGE" alone. A respondent who had been part of Athena AWAN in the UK was adamant that:

"... the emphasis must be on Athena SWAN, not on SAGE. SAGE is the implementation team in the background and not a program in its own right."

Whatever the name, there were multiple calls for a better brand (although no clear agreement about what that should look like) and more active promotion:

"Maximise impact (brand). Do people even know what it is?"

"More profiling of SAGE as a brand with senior leaders."

"Tell the story to VCs in language they understand."

"[Need] brand promotion and differentiation from the UK model – an Australian version."

"Tell of successes better."

The Self-Assessment Teams (SATs) – How are they working?

- > Most SATs have been formed according to Athena SWAN handbook guidelines with an emphasis on representation ahead of skills, knowledge and nous
- > The majority of SATs are led by highly respected, highly skilled and influential people, most of whom are women
- > While efforts have been made to achieve gender balance, most SATs have more women than men
- > Most SATs were entirely focused on the application process and had given little consideration to skill needs, focus or organisational "fit". They did not have succession plans, and had not considered what would happen to their SAT post-application
- > It was too early to establish the nature and content of Athena SWAN action plans, or to ascertain how these might align with, and support, broader organisational strategies

The SAT is key for the Athena SWAN framework to work properly and is also fundamental to the Institutional Bronze Award.

The SAT plays a pivotal role in the organisational implementation of the framework – being responsible for the preparation of the Award application, including the collection and analysis of data – but also as an "on the ground promoter" and driver of the whole journey to discovery and change for everyone involved.

The majority of SATs had been formed through a mix of targeted invitations and calls for volunteers, but however members were recruited, almost all of those interviewed in this evaluation reported joining Athena SWAN because they believed it was important.

"I want to see visible action."

"It empowers women in STEMM."

Many female SAT members were also influenced by their own negative experiences. As one said: *"I don't want others to go through that."* Several male SAT members whose female partners were also STEMM researchers felt compelled to join having observed the differences in their career trajectories. Although some SATs had deliberately aimed for "close to" a gender balance, most had more females than males.

Most university SATs had brought together a mix of senior leaders, STEMM academics and professional staff members. Although the majority wanted Athena SWAN to move beyond STEMM, and beyond academia, only a few SATs involved non-STEMM academics or postgraduate students.

One of Athena SWAN's greatest design strengths is that it deliberately brings STEMM academics/researchers and professional staff together within the SAT, where they need to pool their collective knowledge and skills to achieve an outcome. In many organisations, this is not how things have worked in the past because, as one respondent observed, *"gender equity 'belongs' to organisational professional staff"*.

Resourcing the SAT

- > Most organisations have under-estimated the resourcing implications of Athena SWAN
- > Time release for SAT members is an issue, and has the potential to lead to “SAT fatigue”

Most respondents observed that their organisations had not had any realistic idea of the resources that would be required to support Athena SWAN. The most critical area requiring resources during the Bronze phase is obviously the SAT.

Allocating time for this work is essential, and most respondents did not feel they had enough. Despite their passion for the cause, a number of respondents observed that they did not think they would be able to maintain the momentum. They identified an emerging phenomenon called “SAT fatigue”.

Some SATs had encountered specific resourcing issues in regard to the availability, willingness and expertise of those with access to the data they required.

“We need to allocate people to get the data.”

“Asked HR for the data for Athena SWAN – hopeless!”

“There is only one data person who is hammered by so many people asking for data. We are all competing!”

A well-designed SAT

If a SAT is designed to be genuinely inclusive, provide strategic leadership and is well supported by the leadership of the organisation it operates in, it will truly position the organisation on its course to achieve tangible change beyond the kudos of the awards.

Although some notable examples of well-designed SATs were identified, the flexibility communicated by the SAGE guidance posed some real challenges to effective design and establishment of SATs across the sector.

Issues worth noting include:

- > Focus on diversity and inclusive representation at the expense of necessary skills, knowledge, organisational nous and influence
- > Little thought to sustainable governance structures to support continuation of change into the future
- > Value creation from collaboration across SAT and organisational structures that are key to resourcing and driving change
- > Attracting men proved difficult

The right fit?

- > Athena SWAN is reported to be kick-starting, or reinvigorating, approaches to gender equity in many Pilot organisations
- > When establishing the Pilot in their organisation, few seriously considered how Athena SWAN would fit into current structures, particularly re existing strategies and programs related to gender equity, diversity and Indigeneity

The majority of Pilot members already had formal policies, strategies and committees in place that involved a focus on gender equity in its own right, or were part of a broader focus on diversity and inclusion. There was, however, significant variation in their levels of sophistication:

“We are known for our actions in this space. We have leadership and support programs and had set and achieved a 42 per cent gender balance target.”

“We had awareness of issues around GE and were already doing some things to progress GE.”

“We were an Employer of Choice on Diversity. We had a Committee of Inclusion and Diversity and one working group morphed into our SAT.”

“One area responsible for Diversity was working on pay equity and student equity.”

“We only had a Woman in Leadership program.”

However, wherever they were in the journey towards gender equity, the evaluation found few organisations that had seriously considered how Athena SWAN would fit into current structures. Indeed, in several instances, Cohort 1 members who were a year into the process had just had their first meeting with another pre-existing committee, or were thinking of scheduling one, to identify areas in which they might collaborate.

In some organisations, this lack of attention to “fit” has created internal issues, not all of which had been resolved. In some areas, the issues had manifested as a strategy struggle, with some SAT members cautioning against letting Athena SWAN take over:

“[We have] competing equity plans and people.”

“Athena SWAN is only part of the plan to address GE. It can't be the be all and end all.”

“We don't want to be driven by SAGE. There are other things happening.”

In several organisations, there was tension in regard to the gender equity-related work they had undertaken prior to joining Athena SWAN. Issues ranged from logistical concerns about how these should be captured in the Bronze application, to resentment that Athena SWAN might be credited with outcomes in which it had played no part.

“SAGE doesn’t acknowledge what we’ve already done.”

“We don’t think they should get the credit.”

Within an organisation, considerations around “fit” are critical to the design of other elements of the Athena SWAN framework.

Issues to address include:

- > Determining the focus of Athena SWAN and how it will impact on the likelihood of Athena SWAN and the SAT complementing or competing with established committees, programs, etc. and the nature of mechanisms to manage across these, and allocate resources
- > Fit involves determining the degree of formal power and influence given to the SAT as an enabling mechanism. Where does it fit within the decision-making hierarchy? Is it a decision-making body in its own right, or a provider of advice?
- > Fit also involves deciding on the nature and degree of alignment between high-level strategies and the Athena SWAN Bronze action plan

The focus on data – getting the right data

- > **The emphasis on data collection and analysis as a precursor to the development of the action plan has strengths and weaknesses**

Members were strongly supportive of the Athena SWAN emphasis on data collection and analysis in the Bronze Award process, with many commenting on the appeal of this approach to STEM researchers. From a change management perspective, there is also great value in gathering data on the current situation in order to identify patterns of behaviour, and gain insights into possible underlying causes. There was extensive evidence that Cohort 1 members were taking this aspect of the Athena SWAN process very seriously, with all having identified “data diving” processes, incorporating deep reflection, as critical to the process.

At the same time, from a theoretical perspective at least, there are potential dangers inherent in the guidelines for developing “evidence-based” action plans. This could be interpreted in a way that suggests that cause and effect in complex organisations are closely related in time and space.

As scientists, engineers and medical researchers who work with complex systems would appreciate, this is not necessarily the case. The approach also assumes that all data that might be pertinent to decision-making were in fact collected and considered, or alternatively that the “right” areas of focus were selected, but feedback from Cohort 1 on both qualitative and quantitative data collection suggests that neither of these scenarios can be assumed. The issues lie in expectations about how closely a plan should be aimed at addressing specific findings *arising from* data analysis, given that these may only be symptoms of a deeper problem. There is a risk that Pilot members keen to follow the Athena SWAN rules will work from specific data to the development of specific “solutions” that will not address the real issues at all.

A study of Cohort 1 action plans – as part of the next phase of the evaluation – could help to establish whether this theoretical issue has manifested itself in the nature of the strategies proposed, and whether there is a need to place more emphasis on change management principles and practice as part of the Bronze application process.

Although highly critical of the materials that describe the “requirements”, the majority of Cohort 1 members appeared to have wrestled successfully with the materials and had managed to identify and collect data that they hoped would be acceptable. At the time of the main consultation they were immersed in the data analysis process. Despite finding themselves running down “lots of rabbit holes”, most reported finding the process very powerful:

“The data collection phase [is a positive] – you’ve got to dig to find out what’s wrong.”

“It’s a really good gap analysis.”

“The standard stuff [data] won’t give you what you need. You have to find ways to collect nuanced data. You have got to dig down to find out what’s wrong. The questions get you to look in the right places.”

“The data collection phase [is a positive] – you’ve got to dig to find out what’s wrong”

In Cohort 1 there was ample evidence that the process was leading to deep reflection and the surfacing and exploration of mental models that is a necessary pre-cursor to behaviour change:

“The data resonates for STEMM people. We won’t get anywhere without it.”

“Very nuanced – not only quantitative but qualitative too. Encourages detailed delving, introspection.”

“The SAGE process is getting people to reflect and has brought to light some problem areas.”

Cohort 1 members raised a number of issues regarding the data, with many suggesting that some of these could be addressed with additional support from SAGE:

“Qualitative and quantitative data required is not easily available.”

“Data rich but where to source? Does it match up? SAGE guidance not very helpful (ambiguous). They haven’t worked out what they are benchmarking.”

“Need framework to give guidance and cross check.”

A few organisations felt constrained by the data they were asked to collect. One reported:

“We conducted trial reporting and found a lot that was not relevant to us. Need to put energies into the things that matter!”

Lacking the experience of Cohort 1, Cohort 2 members were more likely to have general doubts about the process, without being able to provide detail:

“[The process is] too data driven.”

“Worry about the data they are asking us to look for. Is it suitable for the Australian context, especially transgender?”

“Worry that the process doesn’t allow you to chase gut feeling – have anecdotal evidence but no provision to use it.”

MRIs and PFROs raised issues about the difficulty of translating the university-oriented classifications in the handbook into their own context:

“We have lab technicians with PhDs. Are they ‘scientists?’ We redefined them as researchers – more honest classification that captures more women.”

“What about professional staff who don’t get a grant so move to another part of the organisation (e.g. communications) and take a major salary drop?”

A particular challenge for MRIs was that:

“We don’t use academic grading scales or job descriptions and titles so we had to assign.”

A number of respondents called for a standardised set of qualitative questions to use as the basis of a “culture” survey. Although a small number of organisations had used questions from the extensive bank developed by SAGE, others had misinterpreted this bank as a survey in its own right and balked at its length.

Monitoring

- > Most organisations are collecting at least some non-standard data. This could create problems if it pertains to their action plans, and needs to be collected over time in order to monitor progress
- > It is unlikely that many organisations would consider changing data collection and reporting systems to accommodate this
- > No SATs were identified that had undertaken formal reflection on their Athena SWAN process to consider how it was tracking, or to identify changes that might need to be made to ensure sustainability post-Bronze

The data-driven aspects of the Bronze award process provide a base line against which to monitor progress. However, in many cases, the data that have been collected are not part of the organisation’s usual data collection and reporting processes. Most SATs have had to go to a lot of trouble to get what they need.

Where a SAT relies on non-standard data to identify an area of need – and designs strategies to address it – the lack of established structures and systems to monitor progress could present an ongoing problem. It is not an easy or inexpensive business to change data collection and reporting systems, particularly in large organisations such as universities, and it should not be assumed that organisations would consider doing so. Several senior leaders made it clear that this would not happen.

*“We will not be changing our data collection and reporting systems, SAGE Athena SWAN is just not that important!”
Manager Business Intelligence*

Cohort 1 members were so focused on the application that they admitted they had not given much thought to this, or indeed to any aspect of the future post-Bronze. None appeared to have invested time in formal reflection on the effectiveness of their own processes, although several commented on the usefulness of the SAGE evaluation workshops and interviews in this regard. Given the effort that was going into the preparation of Cohort 1 applications, this narrowed focus is understandable, but it is also a risk for sustainability.

Continuous improvement of Athena SWAN processes will be critical for sustainability, and strategies to ensure the on-going sustainability of the Athena SWAN implementation should be an integral part of Bronze action plans.

Intersectionality – a commitment to diversity, but too early to include?

For many respondents, this aspect of the application was the most vexed. They were torn between a passionate commitment to diversity and opportunities for all, and a feeling that they were not yet in a place where they could address this within Athena SWAN.

“A positive is recognising complexity, e.g. intersectionality.”

“People say focus on GE and the rest will follow, but need intersectionality as part.”

“We are not sophisticated enough yet to do this aspect justice.”

“Transgender numbers are so tiny and we have limited time and \$. I know it sounds awful but will we gain more by focusing on women first?”

There was strong support for a focus on Indigenous Australians, but widespread concern about the approach adopted in the application:

“Opportunity missed. Needs more thought, prominence.”

“Seems to be from a UK perspective focused on ethnicity/ racial groups not for first nation people – quite different. Needs strong context.”

“Indigenous seems tacked on – reflects UK source – needs to be explicit.”

There were also issues about the way in which these groups had been sectioned off from the mainstream in the application:

“Don’t put intersectionality in silos to check off as part of Award.”

“Why is transgender on its own? LGBTI but not T – odd way to split group and acronyms/LGBTI terms.”

“Indigenous people shouldn’t be put together with LGBTI.”

While Pilot members had stories they wanted to tell, there was widespread concern that not only would they not be able to do these justice, but that they might be penalised – and perhaps lose Bronze – if they did not manage to capture enough relevant information within the limited word counts.

The Pilot timeframe – two years

The majority of members welcomed having two years to prepare their applications, some arguing that it was not just that the process was time-consuming (which most agreed it was), but that it was important to allow time for exploration and reflection. Those who were happy with the timeframe also identified the deadline as a “push factor to motivate” that “forces action” and “creates a need for an audit-style approach”.

However, in both Cohorts 1 and 2, there was a handful of organisations that had already done a lot of work on gender equity before they joined SAGE, and believed they were “well down the track”. They felt that the current situation did not offer “enough rewards for early adopters”, and wanted a shorter timeframe.

“The process is far too long (academic staff work on deadlines and are time poor).”

“It feels like an endless process. It is crazy to set a deadline of two years.”

While they recognised the difficulty of scheduling additional peer review processes at this early stage of the SAGE Pilot implementation, they suggested that more flexibility should be considered in the future, with the option to submit early, or even to begin the process at Silver.

The formal award system with peer review

Some respondents liked the fact that Athena SWAN led to an award because it was, “competitive, motivating, an external stick”, fostered “healthy competition”, and “creates energy”. In contrast, one group called Athena SWAN “a beautiful model” because the process was “collaborative rather than win/lose”. They pointed out that everyone could be a winner, gaining Bronze, Silver or Gold if they deserved it.

It was clear that the award system was being taken very seriously. **No one** wanted to miss out on Bronze:

"How do I feel? Paranoid. Daily conversations. Will we get this done? Will we get Bronze??!!"

"Different to WGEA, a lot more at stake for us."

However, no one wanted to miss out on Bronze for the "wrong" reasons either. Respondents were united in their belief that an award should be genuinely deserved, and that the peer review process should be rigorous and fair. At the time of most consultations, no details of this process had been released and there were major concerns about it. For example, would the first panels be blinded by their own experiences of developing an application?

In fact these concerns did drive change. The assessment process for accreditation for the Bronze Award did look to and address these early concerns. The need to ensure robust, independent peer review with procedural fairness was underpinned by the Academies changing the systems of moderation, so as to enhance trust and confidence for Pilot members.

The peer review process was in early development during this evaluation and, as such, was not available for specific feedback. However, this is an important area that is earmarked for review as part of the SAGE Pilot evaluation.

**"It was clear that the award system was being taken very seriously.
No one wanted to miss out on Bronze"**

Administration and Implementation: the SAGE team – evaluation feedback

The SAGE team

Strengths

- > The team exists!
- > A newly formed SAGE team has demonstrated that they listen and are responsive
- > Regional Network Meetings, symposia and other special events
- > Recent developments in response to Pilot member feedback (e.g. the Service Charter and case management approach)

Issues raised

- > The difficult beginning
- > Transition of the SAGE team was accompanied by a different set of messages
- > Lack of role clarity
- > Poor communication practices and a sense of distance between the team and SAGE members, particularly those in Cohort 1
- > Questions around specialist skills within the SAGE team, particularly in relation to data
- > The isolation felt by regional members, including those in Western Australia

Cohort 1 respondents were critical of the implementation approach applied by the SAGE team involved in the introduction of the Pilot:

“A clunky start with not a lot of listening or taking advice.”

“Athena SWAN has solid principles and the general structure works but there have been specific issues with the roll-out.”

“An opportunity wasted at the beginning.”

Some respondents were unsettled by the transition to a new team following the changed governance arrangements of SAGE and the associated changes in messages. This had contributed to what one

group called “flip flopping” about goals and methods. However, the change of personnel was generally seen as a positive, with many members reporting that members of the restructured team were very helpful when contacted:

“Team fantastically helpful. Customer service great. Value add.”

“SAGE team restructure – very approachable. You know someone will get back to you.”

“They’ll learn! They are prepared to change!”

However, most Pilot participants wanted more:

“[There needs to be more] engagement with the cohort.”

“SAGE is not acting as keeper of knowledge – needs to engage at a more personal level.”

“Not enough resource commitment from national office.”

“Spend time in Perth!”

There was widespread dissatisfaction with approaches to communication:

“Lack of clarity around process – challenge with communication.”

“[They] talk about working with members on timing but not enough flexibility on specific dates and times. Need advance warning of events, e.g. a calendar.”

“Not enough guidance from SAGE about how to negotiate for resources within your organisation.”

“Better communication strategy to utilise material provided by us, e.g. we went to a lot of trouble to provide material for

International Women's Day but it was not widely promoted or used despite considerable expense on our part to produce it."

Many respondents suggested that SAGE team members adopt a case management approach:

"We need someone who understands our problems."

"Contact from SAGE. [Need to] check in with organisations on a regular basis."

"[Consistent] relationship manager for each organisation."

There was a strong expectation that the SAGE team itself should be able to provide specialised skills and knowledge in a range of areas pertinent to the Athena SWAN process:

"We need people on the SAGE team with backgrounds in HR/ academia/governance and data. And we need clear points of contact on these specific areas."

"We need people with blended skills who understand research and people."

"SAGE lacks understanding and skills sets in the data area."

The SAGE team is clearly critical to the functioning of Athena SWAN in Australia. However, the evaluation found a lack of clarity about SAGE's roles and responsibilities vis-a-vis SAGE members that had led to some frustrations.

It is worth noting that feedback from this evaluation has led to a number of changes being introduced by the SAGE team. These included the development of a Service Charter – which clarified the SAGE team's roles and responsibilities to SAGE members; and a new "case management" approach – where a SAGE team member became responsible for an identified group of Pilot members, thus creating the opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of their individual and collective situations.

Indeed, several Pilot members made a point of telling the ACER team members that the feedback provided during the consultations had clearly been heard and acted upon.

Other support structures

The Regional Network Meetings (RNMs) were identified as a major strength of the Athena SWAN process by most of the Pilot members who were regular attendees.

"[A positive] is the generosity of the network, the willingness to share, no patch protection."

"Not a sense of competition across organisations."

"Good to know I'm not the only one feeling isolated."

At the same time, some respondents felt that these meetings were not achieving as much as they could.

"Loose agenda, needs Terms of Reference and needs to share good practice."

"The conversation is about the problem, whereas it should be about helping each other."

"RNMs dominated by universities – a different language to medical research organisations."

"At the last RNM there was frustration that both Cohort 1 and 2 were there."

Representatives from several regional universities, who seldom attended RNMs in person, identified a number of issues:

"We need opportunities to engage face to face with regional network members as conversations pre and post RNMs are very valuable."

"The phone at the RNM hasn't been optimal."

"The video at RNMs – you can't hear people."

"The level of intimacy is missing."

"Get rid of RNM – academics are time poor!"

There was an appetite for new networks, and a call for SAGE to facilitate these:

"SAT working groups – possible collaboration on areas of interest across organisations, but need SAGE's assistance to facilitate this across regions, nationally and internationally. Need to draw the pieces together systematically."

"Set up networks for different groups (ATN, Go8, IRU, MRI, etc.)."

"Help facilitate WA members to attend East Coast events and network meetings."

Comments on other support resources were mixed.

"Website growing – lots of examples."

"Tom Welton very helpful – alleviated concerns."

"Symposium good."

"SAGE Road Show not enough – a lot [of SAT members] come in wanting to make a difference but it's a lot of work [they don't realise] they need to engage with stuff – some not across this at all."

"SAGE workshops useful (improved over time). Good to hear case studies."

SAGE: Leadership of the Pilot

Strengths

- > Appreciation of a collective approach to achieving gender equity (and a widespread belief that Athena SWAN is better suited to achieving this within universities, MRIs and PFROs than initiatives such as WGEA)

Issues

- > A lack of visible leadership to set direction, focus collective effort, coordinate with other programs with similar intentions and advocate in areas that are beyond the spheres of influence of individual Pilot members
- > A lack of clarity about who should be providing this leadership, and about the role of the SAGE team in this regard

The need for more visible leadership was identified to be closely related to the need for a shared vision and a sense of collective direction. There was agreement that organisations themselves could only do so much towards gender equity in STEM, and that the SAGE Pilot itself had an important role to play nationally.

There was a general feeling that SAGE leadership needed greater visibility, and that more needed to be done on many fronts:

"[Are] the Academy of Science and SAGE providing example leadership? If not, not good for SAGE as an initiative."

"SAGE leadership needs more visibility, engagement with the cohort, vision and values, communication."

"Need a National Communications strategy."

"Need sector-wide impact and linking to students."

However, among Pilot members, there were different levels of awareness regarding the roles that the Academies, the SAGE Expert Advisory Group (EAG) and the SAGE team were playing. Although many respondents had some idea that the two Academies were ultimately responsible for the SAGE Pilot, the majority appeared to assume that the SAGE team should be providing leadership.

Pilot members appeared to have limited awareness of the EAG, and some key stakeholders raised questions about the nature of its role,

particularly as the SAGE Pilot evolves. It was beyond the scope of this evaluation to explore this aspect in detail, but the EAG brings together a group of people who are leaders in their own fields and who are prepared to contribute their time and expertise. This is clearly of value. However, the question to be considered now is whether this group can play a visible role in the leadership of the Pilot into the future, and if so, how this might best be achieved.

SAGE: Focus

Strengths

- > The introduction of the Pilot offers the potential to focus and coordinate effort

Issues

- > Lack of national vision and sense of direction
- > Lack of clarity about priorities – is the major focus on gender equity or on diversity? Should the framework go beyond STEM?

Issues around lack of visible leadership were closely connected to concerns about where SAGE was going. Every consultation workshop reached the same conclusion – that there was an urgent need to develop a shared sense of direction:

"Lacks direction, floundering."

"Need a national vision. SAGE role to connect and hold it together."

"Need a shared vision – leverage bottom-up process. Need to get things right systematically."

"Permanence and vision – please!"

"Adopt a nation building approach – integrated, cohesive – government, unis, medical research institutes, etc. and industry. If [they] all got together with a groundswell to monitor effectiveness over time ... "

Generally, respondents recognised that the issues related to the quest, fields of application and target groups should be addressed as part of the development of a shared picture of where the SAGE Pilot should be heading.

"SAGE leadership needs more visibility, engagement with the cohort, vision and values, communication"

SAGE: Fit

Strengths

- > SAGE is liaising with other key initiatives, such as WGEA and the MCC
- > Pilot members believe Athena SWAN is more relevant to their needs than WGEA's Employer of Choice for Gender Equality

Issues

- > Most Pilot members are unclear about SAGE's broader remit

Issues of "fit" could take on a different complexion if SAGE was to expand Athena SWAN to all fields and to all organisational employees, and / or if a formal link were to be made to research funding.

The SAGE Pilot embraces three types of organisation but the current Athena SWAN process is primarily designed for UK universities. The "one size fits all" approach appears to be creating more problems than it solves.

Although the SAGE team is liaising with other bodies, few SAT members appeared to be aware of work that was, essentially, occurring behind the scenes. In most workshops, members raised concerns about where SAGE and Athena SWAN belonged in the broader scheme of things.

"No engagement at national level with peak bodies."

"[Should be] working with other organisations to share approaches that work e.g. bridges [between] higher education, WGEA, Stonewall, EPHEA."

During consultations, many members compared Athena SWAN to WGEA, emphasising that they felt Athena SWAN was better suited to their type of organisation. While there appeared to be a general acceptance that organisations of a certain size would continue to be required to report to WGEA, this was seen as a compliance exercise with limited impact on the reality of achieving gender equity. There was evidence to suggest that Athena SWAN has the potential to impact on participation in WGEA's Employer of Choice for Gender Equity, with several universities intimating that they were considering moving their focus to Athena SWAN.

"There's no evidence of WGEA as a vehicle for change. It's morphed into a compliance reporting mechanism."

"Athena SWAN is different to WGEA. There's a lot more at stake for us."

SAGE: Resourcing

Strengths

- > The SAGE initiative currently has external funding plus income from SAGE membership
- > Pilot members want the SAGE Pilot to continue in the long term and there are no immediate indications that members will withdraw
- > The SAGE team has access to the resources it needs to provide appropriate support

Issues

- > Members are concerned that SAGE may end prematurely due to lack of funds
- > A few universities were unsure whether membership added enough value to justify continuing

Despite criticisms of the process, the vast majority of respondents wanted the SAGE Pilot to continue, and were concerned at the possibility that it might not.

"A lot of goodwill and momentum, but if SAGE defunded [by the government] it would be hard to keep going."

"What is the sustainability of 'SAGE central'?"

"So many working together gives momentum, collaboration is wonderful – hold onto it! Can't do this without it (needs multiple rivers)."

SAGE needs to find ways to become self-supporting, and membership fees are an obvious source of income. The Pilot organisations that raised issues about fees tended to be those that were well advanced in terms of gender equity prior to the introduction of Athena SWAN. Their ideas about what constitutes "value for money" may be very different from those of Pilot members that are using Athena SWAN to get started on this journey. This would be an important area to explore further once Cohort 1 applications have been assessed.

Most respondents supported the idea of linking research funding to Athena SWAN status, as occurs in the UK. They saw this as a powerful way of ensuring sustainability for the program overall, and for maintaining the support of their organisations. For some, this link could not come soon enough, but others believed there was a need to move more slowly towards this goal. One key stakeholder suggested that it might prove very difficult to introduce into Australia, given the greater complexity of decision-making that would need to precede such a move.

SAGE: Monitoring

Strengths

- > SAGE is in the process of developing a national data framework to track progress over time

Issues

- > There is currently no way of standardising data collected by individual organisations as part of their applications
- > There may be resistance to changing the application process if only because so many organisations have already used it

Notwithstanding the importance of short-term achievements, stakeholders interviewed for the SAGE evaluation were in agreement that achieving gender equity was a “generational issue”, where the most significant impacts might not be evident for 15 to 20 years.

Thus, SAGE through Athena SWAN is a mechanism for change that must either stay the course in its own right, or be instrumental in facilitating the establishment of new approaches that will.

SAGE needs to monitor its impact for several reasons – to demonstrate its value to various stakeholders, including current and potential funding bodies, and to gather information on its performance in order to keep improving its service provision.

Recommendations, investing wisely and what the future holds

SAGE Pilot – what the future holds?

Optimistically, the Pilot evaluation found that the Athena SWAN framework can reverse gender inequities while strengthening inclusive participation from women and diverse minority genders and groups (including Indigenous peoples) in Australia's higher education and research sector.

Over the past three years, the SAGE Pilot of Athena SWAN and the Institutional Bronze Accreditation process has more than proved itself to the higher education and research sector in Australia.

As STEMM is vital for Australian's future prosperity and wellbeing, the nation's National Science Statement sets out the Government's vision for a society engaged in and enriched by science.

Australia has demonstrated strong leadership through supporting and implementing the SAGE Pilot. This positive action has been influential in driving action internationally – in the USA and Canada, both countries have adopted a similar pilot of Athena SWAN, and in Japan, work to establish a pilot informed by SAGE is in progress.

Australia – Strategy and Decadal Plan

Currently, important work is progressing to help coordinate and support the Australian Government's efforts to increase women's participation in STEM. The Women in STEM Strategy led by the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science and the development of a Decadal Plan for Women in STEM, led by the Australian Academy of Science in collaboration with the Australian Academy of Technology and Engineering, are two critical national flagship initiatives.

Along with these significant initiatives and many others besides, SAGE Pilot of Athena SWAN is pioneering transformational change to address the issues underpinning both gender inequity and the lack of diversity in STEMM in Australia.

Acting in concert, these key strategic initiatives can change workplace attitudes and shift gendered expectations and beliefs about science and technology study and careers. The early impacts identified by the SAGE Pilot evaluation demonstrate this with caveats.

Athena SWAN Charter – right for Australia with minor modifications

The Pilot evaluation also showed that the Athena SWAN framework is suited to Australia's higher education and research sector, with minor modifications to better integrate the local context and culture – especially in relation to Indigenous people.

ACER's evaluation also found that:

- > \$2 million of Government funding under the National Innovation and Science Agenda has accelerated the scope and scale of uptake of Athena SWAN across the higher education and research sector in Australia
- > Tracking and measuring impact is key to continuing the drive for change
- > There is a critical need to articulate a national vision for gender equity, diversity and inclusion
- > The way in which intersectionality and Indigeneity were incorporated into the SAGE Pilot of Athena SWAN has created a new set of issues that are entirely Australian
- > The picture for intersectionality and Indigeneity in STEMM in this particular sector is complex and impactful for minority groups including Indigenous peoples, transgender and LGBTIQ communities – this is especially so as their experiences will be compounded by the intersection of other determinants of disadvantage

Strong support from senior leaders, more focus on others

The Pilot currently has strong support from senior leaders of Australian higher education and research organisations. However, three types of stakeholders need further attention and focus – middle managers, senior decision-makers and influential national leaders.

SAGE needs to explore ways of assisting Pilot members to engage middle managers and senior decision-makers during and post the Bronze phase of the Pilot. Also, there is a real need for collective support by influential national leaders for the strategic positioning of SAGE, to leverage nationally funded diversity and inclusion programs in order to fast track and enhance sector transformation.

Tailoring for optimisation

To optimise Athena SWAN for Australia, the applications and assessment criteria must be tailored to the three types of institutions that operate in the sector: universities, medical research institutes and publicly funded research organisations.

The Pilot evaluation showed that SAGE's implementation of Athena SWAN in Australia has improved, but there is a real need to redesign the services and products to better respond to evolving needs across the sector – especially to take into account institutional capacity, access to resources and institutional progress on the pathway to change.

More support, strategic positioning

It is clear from the evaluation report that institutions must be supported to integrate Athena SWAN into their organisational strategies and actions, so that it complements, builds on and sustains their journey to transformation and accreditation. The report proposes a framework⁶, the Athena SWAN Sustainability Tool (ASST), to facilitate and support this.

There is also agreement that SAGE must be positioned strategically to leverage national programs and initiatives and to enable national progress and impact.

Build on momentum, articulate the vision

The Australian Government and the two peak science and technology Academies are well placed to inform a national leadership model and the articulation of the vision for the future of gender equity and diversity in the higher education and research sector. Government support and investment is vital to achieving this and to positioning SAGE Pilot to build on and sustain the momentum for change, and further lead the way in this critical and vital endeavour for Australia.

Early evidence of institutional and sector level actions suggests that building on the sector's current momentum for improving gender equity and diversity should result in tangible outcomes across Australia's higher education and research sector within a decade.

Australia has demonstrated strong leadership through supporting and implementing the SAGE Pilot

6. This framework will require further consideration and consultation with the sector, especially in the context of the design of the SAGE data framework.

Recommendations – general approach, scope and positioning

Recommendation – Athena SWAN in the Australian context:

That the Athena SWAN name, principles and general approach continue to be the central component of the SAGE Pilot, but that modifications be made to the branding and process to increase the potential for long-term sustainability in the Australian context.

It is critical to reflect how the local setting in Australia also imposes unique complexities, especially when gender, diversity of culture, systems and social factors intersect. This includes how this specifically relates to Indigenous people and their unique issues and concerns in relation to STEMM in the higher education and research space.

Any modifications to and solutions for the Athena SWAN framework regarding this key group need to involve, embrace and accept Indigenous people's engagement and input into sourcing, recommending and implementing modifications and solutions.

SAGE response:

- > Recommendation accepted
- > SAGE will progress modifications and guideline development through stronger engagement and consultation with specialists drawn from the higher education and research sector

Recommendation – STEMM context, scope and positioning:

That STEMM remain the context for the immediate future, and that the two science and technology Academies, supported by the SAGE team, revisit and clarify other aspects of the Pilot's scope to assist current Pilot members and to position SAGE for the post-Pilot period.

This includes revisiting, clarifying and positioning SAGE in regard to intersectionality; and also to source, create, incorporate and implement specific solutions and/or modifications for intersectionality in Australia.

SAGE response:

- > Recommendation accepted
- > The SAGE Expert Advisory Group noted the importance of inclusion to workplace cultural change and, in this context, transitioning to an all-encompassing scope for SAGE is best considered in the medium term
- > However, it is important that transition to a broader scope be balanced against the desire to fast-track change in STEMM disciplines and enhance SAGE's ability to serve the sector's needs

Recommendations – stakeholders

Recommendation – modify application process for MRIs and PFROs:

That modified versions of the SAGE Athena SWAN Bronze application be developed for Medical Research Institute and Publicly Funded Research Organisation members, drawing on the experience of Pilot members from these types of organisation.

SAGE response:

- > Recommendation accepted
- > SAGE will progress this recommendation by consulting closely with reference groups to be established from the MRI and PFRO sector institutions

Recommendation – diversity, value for money, stakeholder expectations:

That efforts be made to identify what diverse SAGE members perceive to be "value for money" in the accreditation award process to ensure that stakeholder expectations are achievable and aligned.

SAGE response:

- > Recommendation accepted
- > SAGE has commenced work to enhance the service offerings for the sector, informed by both the findings from this evaluation and feedback received through its regional networks
- > The suite of services is being reviewed as a part of the development of the business model for the future, which will be informed by consultation with SAGE members and the higher education and research sector

As part of this process, the potential to highlight ASST elements should be explored in relation to MRIs and PFROs

Recommendations – leadership and vision

Recommendation – strong visible leaders and a shared “vision”:

That strategies be developed to ensure that the SAGE Pilot has strong, visible leaders who, as part of their role, facilitate the development of a shared “vision” to inform and help focus the effort of all involved.

SAGE response:

- > Recommendation accepted
- > Working with Australia’s two science and technology Academies, the SAGE Management Board – supported by its Executive Director – will facilitate consultation with the higher education and research sector to inform the structure/s needed to give leadership for and agree a vision for gender equity and diversity nationally and especially for the higher education and research sector
- > Consultation in support of this will also be facilitated through and informed by the work on the Women in STEM Decadal Plan

Recommendation – revisit and clarify the SAGE team / external stakeholder roles:

That the roles and responsibilities of the SAGE team, and other stakeholders external to the SAGE Pilot, be revisited and clarified in light of this “vision”, taking into consideration the range of issues currently being determined as part of SAGE’s business modelling process.

SAGE response:

- > Recommendation accepted
- > Fine-tuning of the roles will be progressed as a part of the development of the business model for the future, which will take into account the key findings of this evaluation and the vision for the future (informed by the work in progress on the Women in STEM Decadal Plan)

Recommendation – engaging middle managers and senior decision-makers:

That SAGE explore ways of assisting Pilot members seeking to engage middle managers and/or senior decision-makers during and post-Bronze phase.

SAGE response:

- > Recommendation accepted
- > SAGE will develop a range of engagement activities and communication resources to support SAGE members in their engagement efforts
- > Examples of this include national tour opportunities modelled on “Professor Tom Welton”, member interviews and podcasts, practical workshops and other initiatives supported by increased investment in communication and outreach activities
- > The suite of services is being reviewed as part of the development of the business model for the future, which will be informed by consultation with SAGE members and the higher education and research sector

Athena SWAN Sustainability Tool

Recommendation – explore potential of the ASST tool and its applications:

That the potential of the ASST tool and its applications be explored after Cohort 1 applications have been assessed, and inform the development of a translational map to assist Bronze Award applicants in the development of nuanced action plans that recognise the challenges associated with leveraging change in complex systems.

Recommendation – draft ASST tool available for Pilot members:

That the draft ASST tool be made available to Pilot members for self-assessment purposes, with refinements being made to the descriptors on the basis of their feedback.

Recommendation – use ASST tool as framework for second stage evaluation:

That SAGE summative evaluation uses the ASST tool as an evaluation framework, incorporates a particular focus on the data requirements that have proved most useful to Cohort 1 members, and approaches taken to intersectionality and Indigeneity and to the development of action plans, and consider the implications of the findings for the Institutional Bronze and Silver Awards and for the SAGE data framework.

SAGE response:

- > Recommendations accepted in part
- > There are significant practical implications to introducing the proposed ASST tool during the Pilot phase, particularly in the light of the Pilot timeframes and the need to consult more closely on the tool's potential and application across a diverse range of institutions
- > SAGE will explore the ASST tool applicability and its potential to be tested by the sector post the Pilot period and as a part of the continued development of the data framework
- > SAGE will also take into account outcomes from the Women in STEM Decadal Plan, that may be of relevance to enhancing the monitoring and tracking of progress and impact

Athena SWAN as an instrument of change

The evaluation found that:

- > Pilot organisations value the Award for a range of reasons, but most appear to be involved because it is “the right thing to do”
- > The structured approach has given some organisations the starting point and impetus they needed, while enabling others to reflect on, and further enhance, the journey they were already on
- > The focus on data analysis appeals to STEMM researchers and encourages deep reflection, “difficult” conversations and insights that may not have occurred otherwise
- > Athena SWAN provides a sanctioned, safe (and internationally recognised) environment within which to have these conversations, thus increasing the potential for impact
- > The focus on STEMM is providing a way of tapping into local knowledge. In some organisations it is also galvanising at least a small proportion of STEMM researchers into action alongside professional staff who have previously worked towards gender equity in isolation
- > Although the relationship between academics and professionals can be somewhat uneasy, in bringing together individuals from different fields, backgrounds and career stages, the SAT and working parties are providing a mechanism for capitalising on a diversity of ideas and perspectives
- > Joining SAGE creates a sense of camaraderie, a feeling of strength in numbers and a network of organisations that are genuinely interested in learning from, and helping, each other

Conclusion

The right decision

As this report demonstrates, the two science and technology Academies made the right decision to run a SAGE Pilot of the already tried and tested UK's Athena SWAN Charter in Australia.

Over the past three years, the Pilot has been successful in initiating new conversations on Gender Equity and stimulating coordinated action to effect broad change across the higher education and research sector.

Setting up SAGE and using an already successful STEM gender equity and diversity framework from the UK meant that the delivery of Athena SWAN could happen fairly quickly. Although overall this worked fairly well, it highlighted issues unique to the Australian context.

To facilitate the Pilot launch and implementation quickly, SAGE used the UK framework with little change and no customisation for the Australian context. This lack of customisation created challenges in addressing Indigeneity and intersectionality, which all stakeholders found difficult to work with and incorporate.

Extremely valuable feedback

The extensive and constructive feedback from SAGE members and stakeholders received via the Pilot implementation and this formative evaluation, has been extremely valuable. SAGE will now work with its members and stakeholders within the higher education and research sector to address the feedback and recommendations.

Taking the lead

The positive action that Australia has taken in this space, via initiating the SAGE Pilot, has demonstrated strong leadership and influenced further action internationally. In the USA and Canada similar pilots of Athena SWAN have been adopted and in Japan work is underway to establish a pilot informed by SAGE.

SAGE is in a good position to lead and support gender equity and

diversity interests in the region. SAGE is also part of a growing community worldwide – taking action and collaborating in support of advancing gender equity and diversity in the higher education and research sector.

With STEM being vital for Australia's and the world's future prosperity and wellbeing, the SAGE Pilot was particularly well-timed to support substantial improvements in gender equity and diversity in this key sector.

Bold and innovative

The continuing success of SAGE and its sustainability into the future is dependent on the commitment, input and ongoing participation of Australia's higher education and research sector.

The boldness and courage of SAGE Pilot members is acknowledged in their commitment to transparency and to take action – they are true pioneers and champions of Athena SWAN in Australia.

Acknowledgements and thanks

The commitment to make a difference

The initial stages of the SAGE Pilot were fully-funded by the two Academies, individual donors and participating institutions.

SAGE wishes to acknowledge the following individual and organisational donors – without whose generous financial donations and personal commitment to this innovative initiative would have remained just an idea:

- > Professor Mahananda Dasgupta FAA
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- > Professor TP Speed FAA FRS and FE (Sally) Speed
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Whilst donations were essential to seed fund the SAGE Pilot, the leadership of Australia's pioneering higher education and research institutions (see page 41) transformed the Pilot concept into operational reality through commitment to participate and the payment of subscription fees.

Additional funding was acquired from the Australian Government under the National Innovation and Science Agenda, to deliver a range of activities across SAGE's core mission.

The Australian Government grant comprised \$2 million over three years, 2016–17 to 2019–20.

Acknowledgments and Thank you

The two science and technology Academies recognise the importance of this essential and significant funding for gender equity and diversity in STEMM in the higher education and research sector in Australia, and acknowledge it as necessary and vital to help achieve a more equitable and inclusive future for STEMM nationally.

We extend our gratitude and appreciation to all our funding partners and donors – the Australian Government, SAGE donors and sponsors and the participating institutions – without you, SAGE would not have happened. Thank you.

Also, a special thank you to ACER who undertook the formative SAGE Pilot evaluation and completed a comprehensive report with exemplary expertise and professionalism. Between April and October 2017, ACER conducted widespread consultations involving more than 140 people, including senior leaders and members of organisational bodies and a range of external stakeholders. This involved individual interviews, regional workshops and on-site focus groups – thank you for all your work on the evaluation. SAGE also wishes to acknowledge Country Fire Services Victoria, which shared information with ACER to inform monitoring approaches.

And finally, a very big thank you to SAGE members who without hesitation joined this SAGE Pilot. Your pioneering steps, hard work and effort to facilitate transformational change in the higher education and research sector in Australia are acknowledged and recognised.

SAGE MEMBERS – Cohort 1

- > Australia's Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO)
- > Baker Heart and Diabetes Institute
- > Charles Sturt University
- > Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO)
- > Curtin University
- > Edith Cowan University
- > Griffith University
- > Monash University
- > Queensland University of Technology
- > South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute (SAHMRI)
- > Southern Cross University
- > Swinburne University of Technology
- > University of Canberra
- > University of Melbourne
- > University of Newcastle
- > University of Technology Sydney
- > University of Western Australia
- > University of Wollongong
- > UNSW Sydney
- > Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research (WEHI)

SAGE MEMBERS – Cohort 2

- > Australian Astronomical Observatory
- > Australian National University
- > Bond University
- > Burnet Institute for Medical Research
- > Deakin University
- > Defence Science and Technology
- > Federation University
- > Flinders University
- > George Institute
- > James Cook University
- > La Trobe University
- > Macquarie University
- > RMIT University
- > Telethon Kids Institute
- > University of Queensland
- > University of South Australia
- > University of the Sunshine Coast
- > University of Sydney
- > University of Tasmania
- > Western Sydney University

SAGE MEMBERS – Cohort 3

- > Australian Institute of Marine Science
- > Geoscience Australia
- > Murdoch University
- > University of Adelaide
- > University of Southern Queensland

List of Acronyms

Advance HE – Advance Higher Education (UK)
Athena SWAN UK – The Athena project and the Scientific Women’s Academic Network UK
ASST – Athena SWAN Sustainability Tool
ACER – Australian Council for Educational Research
EAG – Expert Advisory Group
ECU – Equality Challenge Unit (UK)
EPHEA – Equity Practitioners in Higher Education Australasia
FAQs – Frequently Asked Questions
GE – Gender Equity
Go8 – Group of Eight
IRU – Innovative Research Universities
LGBTQIA – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual
MCC – Male Champions of Change
MRI/s – Medical Research Institute/s
NISA – National Innovation and Science Agenda
PFRO/s – Publicly Funded Research Organisation/s
RMN/s – Regional Network Meeting/s
ROI – Return on investment
R&D – Research and Development
SAGE – Science in Australia Gender Equity
STEM – Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
STEMM – Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine
SAT/s – Self-Assessment Team/s
VC – Vice-Chancellor
WGEA – The Workplace Gender Equality Agency

