

Concrete Steps for Supporting a Diverse HPC and eResearch Workforce

The Australasian WHPC+ community started at a Birds of a Feather session at C3DIS in Brisbane in 2019. Representatives from NCI, Pawsey, NeSI, AeRO, Monash and other WHPC and eResearch centres attended. In the two years since, WHPC+ Australasia has grown into a more formalised group with an organising committee, a monthly newsletter, a Slack channel and fortnightly catch-ups. The community should be a welcoming place for anyone in the HPC and eResearch administration, computational science and engineering space!

In a Birds of a Feather session at C3DIS 2021, the group came up with a list of concrete steps that facilities and their leaders should take to further the stated aims of increasing diversity amongst the HPC and eResearch workforce in Australasia.

Read more about the AusNZ Chapter:

<https://aero.edu.au/whpc/>

Read more about WHPC in general:

<https://womeninhpc.org/about-us>

Join the Slack channel:

https://join.slack.com/t/whpcausnz/shared_invite/zt-s54mc7ab-nEZ8yLqnOEeFe6~3HU_0iw

Link expires on the 24th of July.

Join the Fortnightly catch-ups:

<https://anu.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwtdeqgrj4tHNMqjTt-xPovi3jMEWdN0eFS>

Every other Wednesday at 2:30pm Canberra time.

Event-related actions

- Senior members of eResearch and HPC facilities should take [the Panel Pledge](#).
 - This avoids #manels (all male panels)
 - Create a list of 10 people in your field who you could suggest to speak in your place – a quick reference sheet.
 - <https://www.stemwomen.org.au/> has lots of women willing to participate in conferences/board roles/outreach in school opportunities.
- Event programme committees should be more diverse (including not just women, but also ECRs, people from outside the global North, gender-diverse people, Indigenous people, people with disabilities, and others)
 - Events should have diverse speakers and session chairs

- Events should be welcoming to diverse attendees
- WHPC AusNZ could be on committees of relevant conferences (or act as a consultant) BEFORE programmes are published/as they are built
 - Could refer people who are interested in being on these committees
- Be respectful and open when asking for participation, as individuals may be tapped quite often
- You can be honest about 'box-ticking' but also describe what the researcher/speaker brings to the conversation/panel/discussion
- Make diversity (of presenters and attendees) a KPI for events and include diversity as part of the evaluation of the event (e.g. as part of the participant survey)
- Senior members of eResearch and HPC facilities should attend sessions on Diversity and Inclusion at conferences;
 - Junior staff and women more likely to attend D&I sessions
 - Senior staff could bring along a shadow junior staffer to give them networking opportunities and see sessions from the Exec perspective
 - Seeing senior staff at these events makes them easier to approach about diversity and inclusion!

Workplace-related actions

- Senior members of eResearch and HPC facilities should be open to opportunities, making change and taking on suggestions for improvement
 - E.g. the Women in STEM Ambassador's [National Trial of Anonymising Grant Proposals](#) or the Australian Academy of Science's [STEM Women](#) portal
- Organisations should make targets for gender parity in their governance/boards.
- Unconscious bias training for senior members of eResearch and HPC facilities (offered by most universities)
- Ally training for senior members of eResearch and HPC facilities (offered by most universities)
- Indigenous Cultural Awareness training for senior members of eResearch and HPC facilities (offered by most universities)
- eResearch and HPC facilities can adopt a diversity and inclusion policy
- Accessible and inclusive job interviews
 - Avoid school pick-up and drop-off times
 - Provide simple parking options
 - Give time before interviews for interviewees to consider the questions (catering to different learning/processing styles)
- Writing job descriptions with inclusive language

Considerations for taking to Management

Is there a Diversity and Inclusion committee at your organisation that can support staff?

- Structure helps staff to take ideas up the chain
- Provides champions at the Executive level
- Allows for great opportunities once it is active
- There is evidence for the benefits of diverse and inclusive environments (see Resources)
- Keep in mind that a D&I committee will benefit from getting leaders to 'co-author' or be involved in strategy writing. It improves accountability and creates ownership.
- Encourage specific areas/departments in the organisation to take ownership of actions (e.g. your Property management people might sign up to provide gender-neutral bathroom facilities or your media team might sign up to broaden the 'promo faces' used to advertise your organisation.

What is already in place to support Diversity & Inclusion in the workplace?

- Existing policies?
- Strategic goals?
 - This allows for managers to support change through impact on organisational level
 - Demonstrate with actual numbers - 'what gets measured can be changed'
- Activities or projects such as Science in Australia Gender Equity's [Athena Swan Accreditation](#)?

Who will call out event organising committees for not having diverse speakers or inclusion policies?

- The research community should be vocal. This helps organising committees and decision makers.
- Diversity is not just women. There are other unheard groups – ECRs/People of Colour /age/diverse genders.
- There are constructive ways to call out:
 - Benefit of the doubt - don't assume malice
 - Use resources you can point them to – what if someone just doesn't know?
 - Challenge the person's lens (not the individual)

How do we address non-inclusive behaviours in younger/ECR/new researchers/staff?

- Share responsibility for positive and respectful spaces across everyone in the organisation
 - Anyone can, and should feel able to, call out behaviour that doesn't feel inclusive
 - Encourage inclusive language/conduct awareness
 - Supportive feedback processes built in to training

- Clear and enforced rules about appropriate behaviour and language

Resources

- [*Impact of COVID-19 on women in the STEM workforce*](#) report from the Australian Academy of Science
- Evidence for the benefits of diverse and inclusive environments
 - <https://github.com/folkswhocode/awesome-diversity#actionable-resources>
- Reflecting on privilege and white fragility:
 - <https://meanjin.com.au/essays/so-white-so-what/?fbclid=IwAR3TpW2IlzoVoVKaKfGw6kbpPssbnE2TjffLKGofk6I53iZgqXqHGI8bevg>
- Carpentries Instructor training builds DEI into their curriculum:
 - <https://data-lessons.github.io/instructor-training/09-eia/index.html>
- Must-Do's for Writing Inclusive job descriptions:
 - <https://www.linkedin.com/business/talent/blog/talent-acquisition/must-dos-for-writing-inclusive-job-descriptions>
- Review the text in job descriptions or leadership capabilities to remove potentially gendered language (free online tools to do this include <https://www.totaljobs.com/insidejob/gender-bias-decoder/> and <http://gender-decoder.katmatfield.com/>) or companies like Textio can offer a professional solution
- Australian Workplace Equality Index
 - <https://www.pid-awei.com.au/>