



**Professional  
Scientists  
Australia**

# A DIVERSE AND SUSTAINABLE STEM WORKFORCE

*Professional Scientists Australia's diversity work is central to gaining proper respect, recognition and reward for STEM professionals. We want to ensure a sustainable STEM workforce that brings a range of perspectives to solving Australia's key challenges and to highlight the issues that create barriers to opportunity and merit-based advancement.*

## WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE?

We want to ensure Professional Scientists Australia has a credible voice in the national discussion around women in STEM by helping identify and [document the gender pay gap](#), [providing evidence of women's actual experiences in STEM workplaces](#), [providing practical solutions for employers to start addressing the attrition of women](#) in workplaces, talking about [what unconscious bias is](#) and ways to address it, providing [practical career support](#) for our female members working in STEM, looking at how gender equity issues play out in different industries such as [engineering](#), [IT](#) and [defence](#), collaborating with other like-minded organisations to bring about positive [long-term change](#) and utilising the industrial relations system to effect broader change.

# WHAT ARE THE PRIORITIES?

- ensure the role of gender diversity as part of workforce development is understood as central to the Government's core strategy of economic growth and jobs through science and R&D is understood – a 4% increase in the participation rate of women over the next decade would add \$25 billion dollars to the economy;
- assist our members to understand diversity issues and become advocates for change;
- ensure that gender diversity is understood as more than just a supply/pipeline issue and that means supporting not only measures that improve the participation rates of under-represented groups in STEM but advocating for measures to address the attrition of female professionals from the workforce;
- highlight the obstacles to merit-based progression and advancement for professional women working in STEM fields/professions at the workplace level including:
  - » bias in career-building activities
  - » lack of role models and mentors
  - » differential access to networking and professional development opportunities
  - » the career penalty attached to working part-time
  - » the penalty attached to career disruption and return to work after a career break due to carer responsibilities
  - » conscious and unconscious bias in promotion decisions and recruitment
  - » sexual harassment, and
  - » gender stereotypes that create barriers and undermine respect and recognition of competency and contribution
- address gendered occupational segregation, both
  - » the over-representation of women professionals in roles with less responsibility, lower pay and less employment security, and
  - » the under-representation of women in senior, management and leadership roles
- utilise the industrial relations system to effect broad change, including
  - » reviewing the historical under-valuation of work in female-dominated industries
  - » supporting mechanisms that allow for more equitable sharing of caregiving responsibilities
  - » supporting measures to enhance women's access to superannuation provisions to improve retirement savings over the longer term
  - » enhancing paid parental leave provisions ensuring men can take time off work to care for a newborn child as well as women
  - » providing a right to family-friendly working hours, and
  - » providing paid domestic violence leave
- ensure that gender diversity and the gender pay gap in STEM are understood as mainstream economic and workforce development issues and key economic reform priorities for the coming decade.

