



Australian Government

# ADVANCING WOMEN IN STEM

## 2020 Action Plan

The Australian Government is driving efforts to encourage gender equity in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education and careers. Complemented by significant action occurring across the sector, the government's actions are already contributing to change in Australia's systems, institutions and workplaces.

In 2019, two guiding frameworks were released - the Australian Government's *Advancing Women in STEM* strategy (Strategy), and the *Women in STEM Decadal Plan* (Decadal Plan), led by the Australian Academy of Science and the Australian Academy of Technology and Engineering. These frameworks set out the government and sector's respective commitments to improving gender equity in STEM in Australia.

This Action Plan identifies early priorities arising from the Strategy and Decadal Plan, which will set the foundations for a national, coordinated approach to achieving sustained increases in gender equity in STEM. A focus on government practices, data and evaluation as key drivers will help us work towards our 2030 outcomes and achieve real improvements in our action areas.

As it is important to monitor the impacts of our programs and respond to changes in participation, we anticipate developing future action plans in coming years. These will be based on information we gather through data and evaluation. This will ensure government support remains well-targeted and effective.

## ADVANCING WOMEN IN STEM STRATEGY

### OUR VISION

An Australian society that provides equal opportunity for people of all genders to learn, work and engage in STEM

### GOVERNMENT LEADING THE WAY

The government will play a strong leadership role, working in partnership with the broader STEM sector to support, guide and advocate for action on STEM gender equity.

### OUR ACTION AREAS



#### ENABLING STEM POTENTIAL THROUGH EDUCATION

**2030 OUTCOME:** Australia's education system, from early education to tertiary, supports the active inclusion of girls and women and enables them to explore their full STEM potential.



#### SUPPORTING WOMEN IN STEM CAREERS

**2030 OUTCOME:** Australian STEM workplaces support the active recruitment and retention of women in STEM roles at all levels.



#### MAKING WOMEN IN STEM VISIBLE

**2030 OUTCOME:** Girls and women see STEM education and careers as viable and interesting paths, and understand the opportunities offered by STEM for their futures.

### 2020 ACTION PLAN - KEY DRIVERS



#### ACCELERATING CHANGE THROUGH GOVERNMENT PRACTICES

The government is committed to ensuring its institutional arrangements, policies and practices are equitable and advantageous to all people in STEM. Challenging and transforming government practices in relation to STEM inequities can provide an example for STEM-skilled employers, industries and organisations looking to create meaningful, lasting change.



#### LEADING A DATA-DRIVEN APPROACH

The government is taking a data-driven approach to track girls' and women's participation in STEM and ensure current and future activity supporting increased gender equity is fit-for-purpose, impactful and targeted. To identify and overcome barriers to girls' and women's participation in STEM in Australia, we need to look across the full STEM pathway. From childhood to senior leadership, where are we making a difference, and where do we have to do more?



#### EMBEDDING A CULTURE OF EVALUATION

The government is committed to embedding a culture of evaluation for all projects that support girls' and women's participation in STEM to ensure investment and effort supports measures that work. Significant effort is occurring across the government and broader STEM sector to address gender inequity. However, limited evaluation means we do not always understand which initiatives work to accelerate progress. To create systemic, transformative change, the government will strategically target future action based on evidence of what works, and what is needed for the Australian context.



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More information?  
[industry.gov.au/womeninstemstrategy](http://industry.gov.au/womeninstemstrategy)

## ACTIONS

### ACCELERATING CHANGE THROUGH GOVERNMENT PRACTICES

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

- The government has committed to funding the Science in Australia Gender Equity (SAGE) program until 2021-22. We will work with SAGE and the sector to ensure all eligible organisations can participate and succeed in the program.
- The government will maintain strong representation in the SAGE program through the participation of eligible publicly funded research agencies.

#### Anonymising research funding proposals

- The Government is supporting the Women in STEM Ambassador to conduct an Australian peer-reviewed trial of anonymised ranking in the assessment of research funding proposals. The Women in STEM Ambassador will work with participating organisations to gather important data on the effectiveness of this approach. The trial will provide a strong evidence base for the government and STEM sector to promote more equitable practices.

#### Increasing gender equity in research funding outcomes

- As key funders of the research system, the Australian Research Council (ARC) and National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) are driving change to increase women's participation in the research sector. The ARC is working with the higher education sector to develop measures to achieve gender parity in research funding applications. The NHMRC is developing strategies to improve the retention and progression of women in the health and medical research workforce.

### LEADING A DATA-DRIVEN APPROACH

#### STEM Equity Monitor

- The government is developing a national data report of girls' and women's engagement and participation in STEM education and employment. The *STEM Equity Monitor*, released annually over 10 years from 2020, will track system-level change to provide a consistent source of evidence. The *STEM Equity Monitor* will show where progress is being made and where to target further investment. It will also provide valuable insights into barriers and trends in STEM-qualified industries and occupations.

#### Measuring progress in STEM workplaces

- The Workplace Gender Equality Agency will enable voluntary reporting for public sector organisations, as well as organisations with under 100 employees, from 2021-2022. As recognised in the Decadal Plan, this will enable STEM-qualified organisations to evaluate and compare practices and publicly report on their progress. Incorporating this data into the *STEM Equity Monitor* will highlight STEM-qualified industries leading the way in responding to gender pay gaps and other workplace inequalities.

### EMBEDDING A CULTURE OF EVALUATION

#### National Evaluation Guidelines

- The government is supporting the Women in STEM Ambassador to develop national evaluation guidelines for projects that support girls' and women's participation in STEM. Directly responding to the Decadal Plan, this will enable program and initiative owners to undertake self-evaluation that is consistent and comparable across Australia. The evaluation guidelines will build a strong evidence base of what works for the Australian context.

#### Women in STEM and Entrepreneurship (WISE) Grants program

- The Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources (the department) will pilot the evaluation guidelines in a collaborative project with the Women in STEM Ambassador and previous WISE grants recipients. This will provide valuable insights into previously funded projects and allow the evaluation guidelines to be tested and refined before being available more broadly.
- From 2020-21, the department will provide all WISE funded projects with the evaluation guidelines. In the future, WISE grants could be used to upscale projects that have been evaluated and clearly demonstrate their impact in accelerating gender equity in STEM.

