



Charles Sturt
University



Gender Equity at Charles Sturt

Vice-Chancellor Renée Leon



I am proud to be the first woman to be Vice-Chancellor of Charles Sturt University. My career has been primarily in the Australian Public Service, and I hope my experience in senior leadership roles of large organisations will benefit the University in these times of significant disruption in higher education.

Here is a potted story about me: my degrees are in Arts and Law, first at the ANU and then at Cambridge University where I took a Master of Law.

After graduating, I worked as a policy lawyer in the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department (AGD) in Canberra, in a range of areas, including human rights, international law, and access to justice.

During that time, I was a founding member of the AGD Women's Network, which achieved the establishment of

a women's adviser position on what was then an all-male Executive, the inclusion of a workplace creche in the new AGD building, and support arrangements to enable people in leadership positions to work part-time to better balance family responsibilities.

I had two children myself during those years, and experienced the full juggle of working and parenting, especially as I moved into increasingly senior and demanding roles in AGD and in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, where I had the honour of working with Australia's first female Prime Minister, Julia Gillard. I served as CEO of the ACT Department of Justice and Community Safety for three years, and later became Secretary of the Department of Employment for four years, and then Secretary of the Department of Human Services as my last role in the Australian Public Service.

In all these positions, I have always had a very strong focus on people, and particularly sought to ensure that leaders had both the responsibility and the capability to lead well. I have also been a champion for equity and diversity, for example in ensuring that executive teams consider gender-disaggregated data on pay, recognition, promotions, and development opportunities so that we could ensure equity and eliminate bias, and in setting very clear expectations about appropriate workplace behaviour, with zero tolerance for sexual harassment or disrespectful behaviour more generally.

I look forward to getting to know the issues that matter to women at Charles Sturt, and to engaging with you to make sure we have a positive culture, where everyone is enabled to be their best.



Defence Women in STEM Undergraduate Scholarship

In August, The Morrison Government awarded a record 25 scholarships to women studying Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) at 13 universities across Australia.

The scholarships are a key initiative under the 'More, Together – Defence Science and Technology Strategy 2030'. The program is aimed at encouraging high-performing women to continue their studies in science, technology, engineering and mathematics fields and boost representation and job opportunities in the workforce. Minister for Defence Industry Melissa Price said Defence continued to lead the nation in promoting STEM workforce diversity, with the Defence Women in STEM Undergraduate scholarships playing a significant role in building the talent pipeline.

Below is a Q&A spotlight Bushra Khan (studying Bachelor of Information Technology online) in recognition of being 1 of 2 Charles Sturt successful recipients.

Bushra currently lives in Canberra with her husband and four kids. She was born in Pakistan and migration to Australia about a decade ago, first living in Adelaide until the move to Canberra in 2018.

What impact are you hoping to make on your community/the world with your degree?

I am hoping to contribute towards the progress in information technology and make life easier for people.

What drew you to that field?

With the world rapidly growing towards digitalisation, information technology has become an integral part of our lives. What fascinates me is how fast the digital space is changing. This constant change and opportunity to learn new aspects is important for me. A career in IT is as exciting and dynamic as life itself.

What made you apply for the scholarship?

I appreciate the number of scholarships offered at Charles Sturt. It was when I came to know about the Defence Women in STEM Undergraduate Scholarship



through an email from the university which made me apply for it.

How will receiving this scholarship help?

It will keep me motivated to do better than ever!

What motivated you to start studying – why did you choose Charles Sturt?

I wanted to start my career after being a stay-at-home mum for past many years. But with my youngest child still a pre-schooler, I wanted a flexible study option. I did some research and Charles Sturt's online study option seemed the best choice. I believe that the academic experience and support provided is the biggest strength of studying with Charles Sturt. I am loving being a part of this University and really appreciate the caring efforts of the talented, strong, and intelligent faculty and staff of the University. Studying with Charles Sturt has been one of the richest experiences of my life!

We wish Bushra all the best for her studies and work in the STEM space!

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee Update from the new Chairperson - Professor Janelle Wheat



I am honoured to be the new Chair of the University's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion new Committee.

We recently updated our Terms of Reference and now have a new vision and agenda. Our new and existing members all share a passion and desire to progress equity, diversity, and inclusion at Charles Sturt and, also in the higher education sector and our regions.

As one of the University's senior female leaders, I know and welcome the responsibility I have to mentor and sponsor other staff, especially women, to engage in professional development and achieve their career aspirations. I would like to see equity, diversity and inclusion treated as a priority across our entire institution and for both our staff and students to have the opportunity to engage in conversations and training on these important topics.

I plan to use my position at Charles Sturt and bring my leadership skills and experiences contributing to many EDI initiatives, such as the successful Athena Swan accreditation at both Charles Sturt and University of New South Wales, and the University's Leadership Development for Women Program, to advance the outcomes of the Committee.

We all have a social responsibility in creating a fair and inclusive environment for all our colleagues and students. It is therefore a key focus of mine that our new Committee will play a significant role in ensuring this happens and driving and supporting positive change and progress at Charles Sturt.

The Gender and Feminist Studies Network in 2021 and Beyond - Donna Bridges

The Gender and Feminist Studies Network was established at Charles Sturt in Feb 2021 by Donna Bridges, Chelsea Litchfield and Larissa Bamberry. The 'Gender Network' is a cross faculty initiative that is inclusive of professional staff and HDR students. We currently have around 50 members. Our network of academics and professionals at Charles Sturt are engaged in research, scholarship and professional activity related to gender equity, gender and sexual diversity, feminist theory, masculinity studies, queer and LGBTIQ+ studies. The aim of the network is to promote and make visible all activity in this space at Charles Sturt and to increase opportunities for networking and collaboration.

Importantly, we have sought to work with and engage in meaningful collaborations with other areas of Charles Sturt related to our own vision and mission. For example, we have worked closely with Athena SWAN/Equity, Diversity and Inclusion team in the "Violence Against Women in Regional and Rural Areas" seminar in July – this online seminar featured five experts from our regions who work in the violence against women space attracted 120 participants, including participants from all over Australia and attracted considerable media attention. [You can view the recording here.](#)

We have also established a website to highlight our members participation in research, scholarship and activity in this space. Special thanks go to Jason White at the research office for providing the funding for the website and to Elizabeth Wulff and Sonja Maria who the website 'can do' members of the GaFS Network. Thanks



too for the help of Nic Steepe in our early attempts to get the website populated with information. The website is ongoing – we have work to do – but it is looking great and is [available at this link](#).

The Gender Network submitted a book proposal to Routledge called "Gender, Feminist and Queer Studies: Power, Privilege and Inequality in a Time of Neoliberal Conservatism". Around 25 members of the network have submitted book chapter abstracts to the book, and we have several national and international co-authors participating. As part of this initiative:

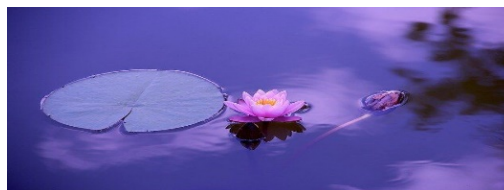
- Larissa Bamberry has been facilitating an ongoing writing workshop for members.
- Writing projects among members and associated research projects have emerged.
- Members who are new to this scholarship space have found opportunities to get involved.
- Senior members with experience in gender, feminist and queer studies have provided mentoring to members less experienced in this scholarship space.

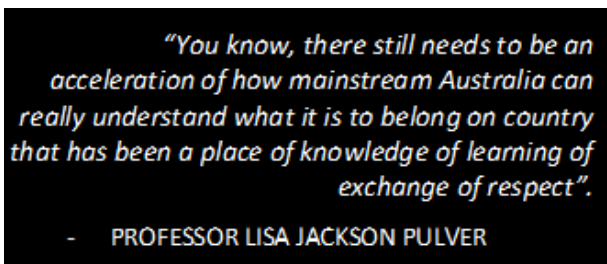
Members of the Gender Network have delivered presentations to the group – Alisha McFarlane, Sophie Meredith, Joy Wallace and Susanne Francisco are to be commended for their contribution – all of them delivered fascinating seminars that were valuable to other members of the group. Their presentations are available on the website under events.

Over the year we have been in operation the presence and activity of the Gender and Feminist Studies at Charles Sturt was a significant contribution to submissions for:

- Sustainable Development Goal 5: Gender equality
- WGEA Employer of Choice for Gender Equality citation

Next year we will be looking for more opportunities to engage with the university, our national and international colleagues and with our communities in the gender, feminist and queer studies space. Please join us if you haven't already – prior experience is not a prerequisite for membership – if you would like to develop a research/scholarship profile in this space and/or are keen to get involved in activities please get in touch dbridges@csu.edu.au. Please get in touch for any ideas you might have for 2022.





Athena SWAN Dean's Lunch

Professor Lisa Jackson Pulver

Professor Megan Smith hosted the 2021 Athena Swan Dean's Lunch for staff in the Faculty of Science and Health with a focus on sharing 'My Career Journey' with special guest speaker Professor Lisa Jackson Pulver and a panel of esteemed professional and academic staff including Jenny McIntyre, Jane Quinn, Linda Deravin, Ana Horta, Sarah Verdon, Maumita Bhattacharya and Marta Hernandez-Jover.

Professor Jackson Pulver is the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Indigenous Strategy and Services at the University of Sydney.

An educator who played a key role in the development of a designated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Unit (Muru Marri) within the Faculty of Medicine at UNSW Australia and was instrumental in developing an Indigenous Master elective (2005) and an eventual Master Public Health stream (2012).

During this time, she engaged vigorously with many communities and organisations to develop a series of residential scholarship programs that inspire donors to contribute over half a million dollars annually to the Gamarada Ngiyani Yana suite of programs. There are over thirty students currently enrolled in this residential scholarship program.

In 2011, Professor Jackson Pulver was made a member in the General Division of the Order of Australia for 'service to medical education, particularly through the Muru Marri Indigenous Health Unit at The University of New South Wales and as a supporter of educational opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.



Professor Jackson Pulver is an academic leader, a recognised expert in public health, a prominent researcher, a visionary, and a tireless advocate for Health and Education. Her artworks adorn the reports she writes. Lisa was very inspiring telling her story and sharing why First Nations Protocols and awareness are critical for all of us in higher education.

[Find Lisa's talk and the discussion following here.](#)

The second half of the event was devoted to sharing career journeys.

Many women recounted that they had experienced a fortuitous event or person who supported them. Breakout discussion were led by panellists to explore ways we might transform university working conditions to promote gender equality.

Participants were polled about how they feel about post-Covid work. The great majority keen to embed hybrid work practices into normal work life and consider a change to advance gender equality and enshrine improved flexible work practice.

What flexible work practices are or might be helpful to create greater opportunity for you to advance at work?

<i>Embedding hybrid workplace practice to flexibly work from home or the office</i>	85% (29)
<i>A 4 day work week (full pay)</i>	70% (24)
<i>Flexible start and finish times</i>	64% (22)
<i>Meetings no earlier than 10am</i>	38% (13)
<i>More leave for chronic or episodic health issues such as endometriosis, menopause or other issues</i>	23% (8)
<i>Improved paid parenting/carer leave provisions</i>	23% (8)

Some positive feedback from the event:

"Absolutely fantastic. As a male, it was fantastic to learn and be more aware of the issues and ensure that I reflect on being a better leader by gaining wisdom from the stories I heard".

"Today's event was inspirational. Lisa's story was motivational, and she was a wonderful presenter".

"The breakout rooms were great – it was good to listen to stories :)"

"Absolutely brilliant. This reinforced for me that people are at the heart of everything we do, and that we are all special people to do the work we do for our students and our communities".

Review of 2021

As we get ready to wrap up another challenging and unusual year, it's a perfect opportunity to review 2021 and some of the exciting achievements we have had in the gender equity space.

The Senior Women's Forum (SWF) also held quarterly meetings, most notably, the ever-popular Bluestocking Week Panel Discussion featuring incredible stories from Charles Sturt female academics. Additionally, Genevieve Doyle engaged with attendees about the revised University Strategy, coinciding with International Women's Day and opened by Interim VC John Germov. SWF also advocated for an extension of the ECR Grants Scheme to enable more access and opportunity, and were instrumental in an official statement made by the Executive Leadership Team regarding Charles Sturt signatory on the Joint Sector Position Statement (JSPS) on Gender Equity and COVID-19.

In lieu of not being able to deliver face-to-face training, Promotions Committee members were enrolled to complete the Unconscious Bias and Inclusivity Training STRIVE Module, in accordance with the Promotions Policy. In addition, there was an equity and diversity representative on the Promotions Committee (B>C, C>D, D>E) for each of the Faculties, as well as on the Job Classification Advisory Committee (JCAC) Rounds 1 and 2. This has been an important shift and inclusion to ensure equity and diversity is front and centre during these discussions and decisions.

It has also been an intense year regarding engagement with the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA). Annual reporting was completed in August, and we successfully submitted our WGEA Employer of Choice for Gender Equality Citation 2021-23 in November 2021, with the decision to be announced in March next year (fingers crossed)! A massive thank you to everyone who contributed to the Citation. There have been some additional changes being implemented to ensure we align with the Citation requirements, including updates to ELMO Modules (inclusion of gender stereotypes and/or barriers that prevent men from requesting flexible work arrangements and inclusion of resistance to initiatives and steps to manage resistance), 3 weeks paid Partner Leave, and the removal of the eligibility period to access primary carers leave (8 weeks) for continuing staff.

For more information or to get involved, please contact the team at genderequity@csu.edu.au

Charles Sturt was also engaged to provide a submission into the Review of the Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012, and invited to participate in the WGEA Stakeholder Session regarding their new Strategy, and what this means for organisations who are Employer of Choice Citation holders. We will keep you updated, as the proposed initiatives (including 'Communities of Practice' in the gender equity space) are relevant and of interest to the wider Charles Sturt community.

Some exciting news for those who are not aware – Clare Ellis will continue to work with us at Charles Sturt while Kim Doyle is on parental leave (expected back in April 2022) and Nicholas Steepe has been converted from a fixed-term contract to continuing! :D

We look forward to continuing to progress and advance gender equity at Charles Sturt, and in the communities, we live and work in, in the New Year. A major part of this will be the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Enabling Strategy. In the meantime, we would like to wish you a very happy holiday period and well-deserved break.



Want to know more about gender equity?

 [Yammer – Athena Swan Community](#)

You are strongly encouraged to join the conversation about gender equity, diversity, and inclusion; the personal and the political, the local and the global through Yammer.

 [2021 Kep Enderby Memorial Lecture by Alice Pung](#)

Australian Human Rights Commission 2021 Kep Enderby Memorial Lecture, delivered by writer Alice Pung on the theme, Embracing Cultural Diversity in Australia.