



Charles Sturt  
University



# Gender Equity at Charles Sturt

## Transition back to work during COVID-19 – An evolving situation



Dr Stacey Jenkins, Acting Head of School in the School of Management and Marketing in the Faculty of Business, Justice and Behavioural Sciences, recently published an opinion piece, examining what our new normal could look like as people prepare to return to the office as COVID-19 restrictions begin to ease:

*Just as many Australians were starting to feel a sense of relief that it was safe to transition back to work recent spikes in infection rates have caused alarms of a second wave of COVID-19.*

*This complicates an already difficult situation for employers and employees given the inter-link between the economic wellbeing of business and family households.*

*Organisations should proceed with caution and address key considerations.*

### **COVIDSafe policies and action plans**

*Being agile in response to safety requirements for staff is a necessity. Businesses need to revisit their COVIDSafe plan.*

*It is of paramount importance that leaders consult staff, communicate what has been considered and put agreed measures in place.*

*Depending on local environments business may need to continue to scale up and down. This can mean different arrangements are required for different parts of the business.*

*Organisations, at a minimum, need effective risk management strategies to ensure systems are in place for maintaining effective hygiene, health monitoring and cleaning.*

*As part of their plan, employers should not interfere with the private life of staff. For example, employers should merely encourage employees to download the federal government's COVIDSafe app.*

*Considerations around if staff can perform the inherent requirements of their role from a remote location will need to be part of key deliberations.*

### **Flexible work arrangements**

*Legally organisations need to consider flexible work arrangement requests.*

*Some staff may have carer's responsibilities, or are more vulnerable to the virus than others, so this will require additional contemplation.*

*Employers should be taking the opportunity to carefully weigh up the pros and cons of staff working from home,*

*not just for safety reasons but for productivity and organisational culture outcomes.*

*Some employers and staff may find that their output has increased through working remotely from home.*

*Originally some staff may have dreaded working from home but may now have happily adapted, yet some may have always been keen and still relishing the opportunity to work from home. Moving back to the office could be shock to the system.*

*In this case, there should be consideration of a reintegration plan or hybrid model which fosters alternative work arrangements including the option, where appropriate, to work when and where employees want.*

*This could help maintain a work-life balance for staff, help with enhancing morale and satisfaction, reduce overall operating costs and lead to a more effective transition.*

### **Mental health support**

*Due to operational requirements, some workplaces will have had to let some staff go.*

*So as staff return to the office, they may be returning to a workplace where some colleagues are no longer present. This can impact their mental health and productivity levels.*

*Some staff may have also found the isolated work environment detrimental to their health due to loneliness and their own personal circumstances.*

*To help address this, a holistic workforce wellness strategy should be implemented to ensure appropriate support in the workplace is occurring.*

*I stand with UNICEF, Parents At Work, PANDA, Karitane and APLEN who recently released nine key family-friendly workplace recommendations to bridge the work and family divide beyond COVID-19:*

1. Normalise flexible work
2. Strengthen health, family and wellbeing
3. Provide new parent support
4. Address family and domestic violence
5. Provide financial wellbeing services to families
6. Review family leave policies
7. Support childcare
8. Educate leaders
9. Promote gender equality

## **Equal Pay Day**

The gender pay gap is the difference between women's and men's average weekly full-time equivalent earnings, expressed as a percentage of men's earnings.

The national gender pay gap is calculated annually by the Workplace Gender Equality Agency using the Australian Bureau of Statistics' labour force data.

In 2020, the national gender pay gap remained steady from 2019 & 2018. This pay gap shows a greater disparity between men and women. Every industry in Australia has a full time pay gap favouring full-time working men, even female dominated industries such as health care and social assistance.

Equal Pay Day was held on 28th August, marking the 59 additional days from the end of the previous financial year that women must work to earn the same pay as men.

Here at Charles Sturt, our gender pay gap is currently sitting at 13.71%, still below the National average.

The national theme for Equal Pay Day 2020 was '**Keep Minding the Gap**'. During this global pandemic, it is important that employers continue to focus on gender equality in their organisations. The COVID 19 pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on women and could affect women's long-term economic security and rates of workforce participation.

Research shows the main factors contributing to the gender pay gap are:

- discrimination and bias in hiring and pay decisions
- women and men working in different industries and different jobs, with female-dominated industries attracting lower wages
- women's disproportionate share of unpaid caring and domestic work
- lack of workforce flexibility to accommodate caring and other responsibilities, especially in senior roles
- women's greater time out of the workforce impacting career progression and opportunities



## Father's Day



Earlier this month families around the country celebrated Fathers' Day. For many, especially those in Victoria, it would've been a very different kind of celebration from years past. Aside from thanking our fathers and those who play father-like roles in our lives, Father's Day also offers a chance for us to continue to promote and recognise the work we still have to do in empowering men to be able to be the kinds of fathers they want to be and in ways that work for their family. One essential way in which we can do this is to improve the uptake of parental leave by fathers.

In his What's New post highlighting the Day, Acting Vice-Chancellor John Germov said, *'Research by the Workplace Gender Equality Agency highlights that on average, men are not utilising conditions and entitlements to their full potential. Although the designation of primary and secondary carer roles is not defined by gender at Charles Sturt, the uptake of parental leave by men is very low.'*

*I would like everyone to think about the flexibility that is available to parents and would actively encourage all employees to utilise the working arrangements available to them in order to create and maintain a positive work-life balance'.*

Beyond Charles Sturt, researchers have noted that providing fathers with more paid leave, especially government-based schemes, and incentivising and encouraging its take-up, is not just good for fathers and families but is an essential step towards gender equity. The research highlights the unequal burden on mothers who still take on the lion's share of unpaid work and whose careers and lifetime earnings and superannuation take the largest hit. It concludes that this cannot significantly change until all men across all sectors and occupations are able and willing to take substantial parental leave, especially in those early childhood years. The article can be found [here](#).

But as our low uptake of parental leave by fathers here at Charles Sturt shows, it is not just about having good policy and entitlement settings, it is also cultural and social attitudes about the vital role fathers have in healthy families, and that being able to father as they need to is good for men's health and overall wellbeing. We also need widespread cultural change in attitudes and beliefs about gender roles at work that see many men feel unable, stigmatised or penalised for taking parental leave.

Information that may be of interest to families relating to leave arrangements here at Charles Sturt, such as purchased leave, special leave, personal leave, leave without pay, change of fraction, remote work and flexible arrangements can be found on the [Division of People & Culture webpage](#).

### The Lived Experience of Gender and Gender Equity Policies at a Regional Australian University

While participating in the Leadership Development for Women Program during 2019, one of the group projects produced a report, *The Lived Experience of Gender and the Dependent Care Support Travel Policy*. Group participants were Shara Cameron, Jessie Lymn, Jennifer Manyweathers, Katie Murrell-Orgill, & Geraldine Rurenga. The report can be found [here](#).

Recently, the group was successful in getting their manuscript published in Social Sciences and secured a grant to cover publication costs. The article can be viewed [here](#).

### Professor Cate Thomas nominated for an Aspire Award

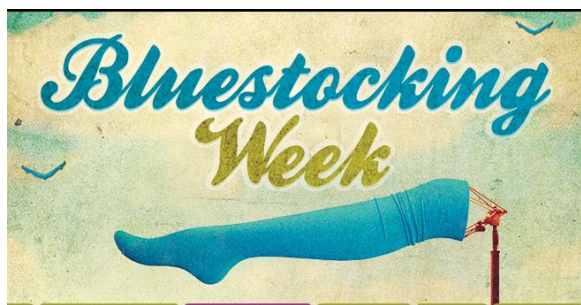
We congratulate our very own Convenor of Athena SWAN and Associate Dean Academic within the Faculty of Science for her recent nomination.

The Aspire Awards recognise accomplishments of people with disability, and Cate has been nominated by Dr Denise Wood in the category of Government and Non-Government. We wish Cate all the best for the announcement of the winners at the national event to be held on Friday 30 October!

You can read the press release [here](#) and find out more about the awards [here](#).



## Bluestocking Week






On the 2<sup>nd</sup> September, in collaboration with the Senior Women's Forum, Division of People and Culture Equity & Diversity and Athena SWAN, we held a panel discussion to mark Bluestocking Week.

Bluestocking Week is held annually in August, and the dates for 2020 were 31<sup>st</sup> August to 4<sup>th</sup> September. Bluestocking Week is named for the first generations of university women of the 19th century who grabbed the term and, even as it was used by their opponents as a derogatory dismissal of their achievements, proudly wore it as a badge of serious scholarship. More information on Bluestocking Week can be found [here](#).

The panel discussion expanded on the panel discussion held last year, and the topic was on the Successes and Challenges of Female Academics in the Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, and Medicine (STEMM) disciplines. The discussion will be moderated and guided by Jennifer Galloway.

The panel consisted of




-  Associate Professor Faye McMillan, Director of the Djirruwang Program
-  Professor Leslie Weston, Research Professor of Plant Biology
-  Associate Professor Lihong Zheng, Associate Professor in Computer Science
-  Karen Brakell, Senior Engineer in Residence

Thank you for taking part, and the valuable insights you provided.

The session was recorded and can be found [here](#).

## Academic Promotions Review





Members of the university community are invited to comment on the following draft policy, procedures and guidelines, which have been posted for comment on the policy library bulletin board:

-  Academic Promotion Policy
-  Academic Promotion Procedure
-  Academic Staff Qualifications and Expectations Procedure

## Academic Promotion Guidelines

Please comment via [the policy library bulletin board](#) by Friday 16<sup>th</sup> October. Before commenting, please read the summary of the changes and the reasons for them that is attached to the policy draft.

A few key points that the team suggested were:

-  Promotion committee members will receive unconscious bias training.
-  The minimum proportion of each gender required in the membership of a promotion committee is raised from one third to 40 per cent.
-  A member of the Equity and Diversity team in the Division of People and Culture will attend each promotion committee meeting to advise the committee on promotion applications from members of equity groups.
-  Heads of school are expected to identify academic staff who are a member of an equity group or a woman in a school that has a lower proportion of women at higher academic levels who appear to have achievements that would qualify them for promotion, to encourage them to consider applying for promotion, and offer them an academic mentor to advise them on how to strengthen their case for promotion.



## Women's Health Week

Women's Health Week is a week dedicated to all women across Australia to make good health and wellbeing a priority. Women's Health Week is the time to do something for your health and start making positive changes that can last a lifetime. Now in its 8<sup>th</sup> year, Women's Health Week ran from the 7<sup>th</sup> to the 11<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

Each day of the week is dedicated to a different theme:

### Monday: The wonders down-under

Today is about diving into the 'wonders down-under' and talking about how to take care of your vagina, vulva, uterus and ovaries. These amazing body parts

can impact your health in so many ways, so let's empower ourselves and learn more about them.

### Tuesday: Heartbeat heroes

Today is all about cardiovascular health – that is, the health of your heart and blood vessels. Women's Health Week have a quick quiz to learn how women's heart health is different to men's, what hormones have to do with it, and how Hollywood hasn't done female heart health any favours. Together let's uncover why this topic is a crucial area for all women in Australia.

### Wednesday: The inside story

Today we're turning our attention inward and giving you the inside story on bladder, gut and bowel health. From gut-nourishing foods and bathroom habits to pelvic floor fitness and everything in between – this is your complete guide to the health of your inner workings.

### Thursday: The heads up

There's no doubt about it, 2020 has been a year of challenges and constant change. Today is a reminder that your mental health matters and there are many ways to support it. Learn how to manage anxiety, understand your sleep patterns and uncover the foods and moves that can boost brain health.

### Friday: Money matters

Today is all about money matters, and what this has to do with your health. Learn how to deal with financial stress, navigate tricky healthcare costs, get tips on planning for a secure future, or whip up a thrifty recipe from the Jean Hailes Kitchen!


For more information, please visit the [Women's Health Week website](#).

### Want to know more about gender equity?


Gender equity and equity more broadly encompass a wide range of issues, stories and challenges both here at Charles Sturt and across our communities. The following articles and resources give an insight into some of these issues and stories.

 [Gender Equity Insights 2020: Delivering the Business Outcomes](#)

In partnership with the Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre (BCEC), WGEA uncovers new insights about gender pay gaps in Australian workplaces. Every year since 2016, BCEC has produced a report analysing the Agency's datasets to explore trends and identify policies and practices that work to address gender inequality in the workplace.

 [Australian Women are Losing One Year of Progress for Every Month of the Pandemic](#)

Based on the June quarter's Financy Women's Index, this article looks at the impact of COVID-19 on women's employment trends, leadership, wages, superannuation and unpaid work.

 [Removing the 'secondary' carer label sees fourfold increase in dads taking parental leave at ING](#)

A year after being one of the first banks to trial a new approach to parental leave, ING has made great strides with four times as many dads taking parental leave. The bank offers 14 weeks paid leave to parents who are able to take it anytime during the first two years of the child's life. But they have found there is still some way to go in changing expectations and perceptions around parental leave for men.

### Key Dates

There are lots of events and activities planned to support and promote gender equity at Charles Sturt. In addition to those activities listed below, keep an eye out for announcements in What's New and check for updates on the Gender Equity [webpage](#).

10<sup>th</sup> October

[World Mental Health Day](#)

12<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>  
November

[Trans\\* Awareness Week](#)

8<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup>  
November  
(postponed  
from 5<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>  
July)

[National NAIDOC Week](#)

25<sup>th</sup> Nov–10<sup>th</sup>  
Dec

[16 Days of Activism](#)

3<sup>rd</sup> December

[International Day of People with Disability](#)

December

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For more information or to get involved please contact the team at: [genderequity@csu.edu.au](mailto:genderequity@csu.edu.au)