



*Women in
Astronomy*



ASA Chapter Women in Astronomy

ASA Annual Science Meeting 2010



Women in Astronomy



Welcome to the new ASA Chapter!

- Established by the ASA Council in November 2009
- Executive:
 - Sarah Maddison (Swinburne, Chair)
 - Kate Brooks (ATNF, ASA Council)
 - Matthew Colless (AAO)
 - Bryan Gaensler (Sydney)
 - Tanya Hill (Museum Victoria)
 - Baerbel Koribalski (ATNF)
 - Minnie Mao (Tasmania/ATNF/AAO)
 - Raquel Salmeron (ANU)
 - Steven Tingay (ICRAR/Curtin)



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Rationale for the Chapter

- Number of women studying u/grad science increasing
- But women still under represented beyond student years
 - US astronomer: women are 25% of grad students, 15% of postdocs & A/Profs, and just 5% of Profs (Urry 2000)
 - Are these numbers similar in Australia?
- Recent efforts to improve status of women in astronomy (e.g. Baltimore Charter & IAU WG on Women in Astronomy)
- Many astro women still feel at gender-based disadvantage
- Networking is a very positive resource
- But need formal structure
- Hence the establishment of the the ASA Chapter



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Aims of WiA Chapter

- primary goals:
 1. monitor the status of women working in Australian astronomy via collection of statistics
 2. recommend future actions that will improve the environment for all astronomers.
- Assist the community to ensure appropriate representation for women at scientific meetings and on high-level decision making committees.
- Organise annual meetings at ASA ASM

More info: <http://asawomeninastronomy.org/>



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“Best practice” in family friendly policies

(1) Walter & Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research

http://www.wehi.edu.au/about_us/gender_equity/

At the institute nearly 60% of our undergraduate and PhD students are women and about 50% of our post-doctoral scientists are women. At the laboratory head and division head level, the situation is much more sobering: 27% of our lab heads are women, but none of our 10 division heads and only 6% of our professors are women.

- **Cory Fellowship.** \$1.25 million, 5yr fellowship for new women heads.
- **Childcare support.** \$15,000 pa childcare costs
- **Meeting and travel support.** For postdocs and female lab. heads
- **Technical support while on maternity leave.** For postdocs
- **Additional time for contract renewal.** Additional 12 months (per child)
- **Women In Science lectures and mentoring.** Three times a year



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(2) Monash University “Populate and Publish” (!) maternity leave grant

<http://www.sci.monash.edu.au/research/maternity.html>

The Faculty of Science is committed to supporting and encouraging its female academics and recognises that taking maternity leave may lead to a reduced research profile with possible adverse affects on the ability to attract research grants and to maintain career progression.

- Women academics returning from maternity leave
- Untied grant of \$15,000 to be used for any research-related purpose (e.g. teaching relief, research assistance, and the purchase or maintenance of research consumables)



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(3) UNSW Vice Chancellor’s Childcare Support Fund for Women Researcher

http://www.hr.unsw.edu.au/equity/childcare_support_fund_vc.rtf

The Vice-Chancellor's Childcare Support Fund is intended to enable women researchers with childcare responsibilities to enhance (attain, sustain or re-establish) their research careers on a national and/or international level.

- Grants for women researchers (postdocs & academics) to attend scientific meetings and pay for childcare costs (e.g. employment of child carer or travel for family member)
- \$500 Sydney, \$1000 Australia, \$2000 international

Under the NSW Anti-Discrimination Act, UNSW is permitted to positively discriminate where an EEO group has suffered disadvantage in the past. This measure is designed to assist female research staff in an area that has been identified as restricting career development opportunities.



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(4) University of Adelaide “Return to Work Bonus”

<http://www.adelaide.edu.au/staff/balance/leave/family/>

- Maternity leave: 26 weeks paid leave with 12 “bonus” weeks
- Either use the 12 weeks for 26 weeks of paid leave
- Or use the bonus weeks as return to work options.
 - access to Conference Leave
 - opportunity to work part-time while being paid full-time
 - access to leave to attend seminars
 - opportunity to employ a casual for teaching supporting
 - opportunity to employ a research assistant



“Best practice” in family friendly policies

(5) CSIRO’s Ruby Payne-Scott Award

Designed to support researchers who have taken extended leave to care for a newborn child following birth. The grant provides support to researchers to re-establish themselves and re-connect with the research underway in their field and related fields of research.

- up to \$35,000 in year after returning from mat leave
- postdocs & permanent staff
 - pay for teaching relief
 - hire RA
 - host workshops
 - go on sabbatical
 - host visiting scientist
 - cover costs of family travel and/or nanny