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Outcomes of the Women in Science & Engineering Summit 2011

Lisa Harvey-Smith
CSIRO Astronomy & Space Science
13th May 2011



Statement of the Problem

“More women than men are studying science at university. But they’re not staying in science. We’re losing them mid-career.

We, as a nation, are not successfully supporting their transition into independent researchers and science leaders.

The loss of these highly trained, smart women means we are not tapping into our full national innovation potential.”

The WiSE Summit

The WiSE Summit brings together **science and industry leaders, advocates**, and high-achieving **young women in science and engineering** in a high profile event to:

Encourage science and engineering leaders to *take practical steps to secure a higher return on their investment* in young women scientists and engineers



Venue – attracting influential people



Notable Attendees

- **The Hon Kate Ellis**, Minister for the Status of Women
- **Margaret Sheil**, CEO, ARC
- **Sue Conde**, AM, President, UN Women Australia
- **Cathy Foley**, President, FASTS
- **Suzanne Cory**, President, Australian Academy of Science
- **Megan Clarke**, CEO, CSIRO
- **David Collins**, CEO, Australian Stem Cell Centre Ltd.
- **Graham Durant**, Director, Questacon
- **Susan Pond AM FTSE**, Director, ANSTO and ATSE
- **Jim Patrick**, Chief Scientist, Cochlear Ltd.
- Many other senior research leaders, Deans, VCs, CEOs, Ministerial Advisers, Heads of School, Chiefs, Directors...

Sponsors of WiSE Summit 2011



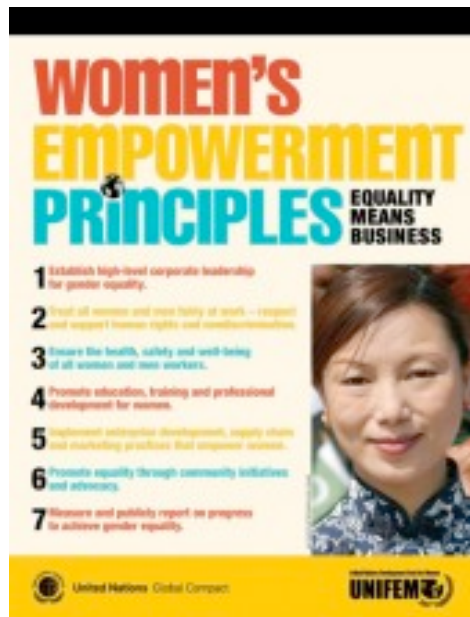
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Walter+Eliza Hall
Institute of Medical Research



UN Women's Empowerment Principles



Julie McKay, *Director of UN Women Australia* presenting the UN Women's Empowerment Principles.

Program

10.30am: Summit launch: Sue Conde AM, President, UN Women Australia

10.45am: Outline of issues faced by women in science and engineering:
Cathy Foley, President, FASTS

11.00am: Case studies of what has worked and what hasn't in the science and engineering sector

12.00 – 2.00pm: Lunch. Keynote speaker is Professor Margaret Sheil, CEO, Australian Research Council, on behalf of Senator the Hon. Kim Carr, Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research.

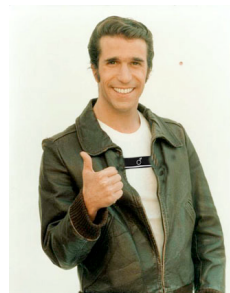
2.00 – 3.30pm: Roundtables:·Improving the workplace /practical tips for managers on gender equity/creating flexible workplaces· Balancing career and family—practical tips on how to make it work·Attracting school and university students·Changing the system—leaders of science and engineering agencies in discussion with the Hon Kate Ellis MP

3.30 pm: Leaders in the science and engineering sector announce their commitments to action to address under representation of women in science and engineering

3.45 pm: Summit close: Anthea Tinney, Chair, Australian National Commission for UNESCO.

Outcomes

All research leaders: Agreed to take the UN Women's Empowerment Principles back to their organisations with a view to adopting them.



Outcomes

CSIRO: Committed “to remove barriers to the promotion of highly skilled women and to increase incentives to encourage women to return to the workforce after maternity leave”.

Specifically:

- Increase the number of Payne-Scott awards—designed to bring women back to the workforce after maternity leave
- Report on gender participation within the CSIRO
- Remove cultural barriers, and build greater trust and respect within the CSIRO.



Outcomes

ARC and NMHRC: agreed to changes in how they assess research publications in the grant applications of those with interrupted careers.

- The ARC committed to extending the period taken into account.
- The NHMRC this year will consider *any nominated five years* of an applicant's career rather than simply the previous five years.

It has also agreed to monitor gender issues in general.



Outcomes

The Australian Technology Network universities:

- Performance Target: number of female staff who teach science, engineering and technology subjects will be in the same proportion as women employed in STE industries (about 16 per cent).



YES NO MAYBE



Curtin University of Technology
University of South Australia
RMIT University
University of Technology Sydney
Queensland University of Technology

Outcomes

IBM agreed to support CSIRO's *Scientists in Schools* Program.



Outcomes



News.com.au

Business Story

Female 'brain drain', skills shortage hurting economic prosperity chances

• Fox AP
• April 11, 2011 10:48 AM
Recommended 10 people recommended this, be the first of your friends.
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A LEADING Australian scientist says the economy is suffering because female scientists don't receive the same opportunity as their male peers.

Australian Institute of Physics president Cathy Foley has warned the situation is exacerbated because of the current skills shortage.

"We're going to lose economic prosperity and opportunities of human ability to really contribute, to deal with the main issues that are facing Australia and the rest of the world," she told ABC Television, adding a change of culture in the community is essential.

Dr Foley is attending a summit in Canberra which is investigating the female brain drain.

"There's a need for real investment in looking at what are the issues that stop women from working regularly in science," she said.

Once women get into the workforce they are not promoted or dealt with in the same way as their male colleagues.

"We're training a lot of women who just for a range of reasons are not able to be maintained in the workforce," Dr Foley said.

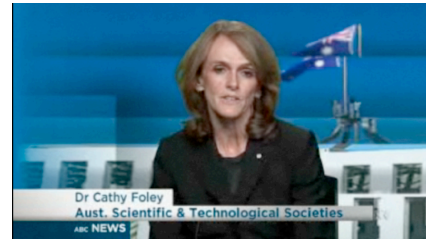
"And we're losing them leave or do other things or just not participate at all."

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CSIRO. Lisa Harvey-Smith



'Fed-up' women ditching science careers

By David Mark

Updated Mon Apr 11, 2011 4:22pm AEST

A summit in Canberra is examining why Australian women are dropping out of science and engineering, often when they are at the peak of their careers.

Organisers of the today's summit say this brain drain is costing the country both culturally and economically.

Neuroscientist Catherine Leamey, who is taking some time off after having her first baby nine months ago, says she will go back to work later this year with some trepidation.

"I did [undergraduate] and honours at New South Wales University and then I did a PhD and then I did a post-doc at MIT in the US. Then I came back and got a lectureship at Sydney University and now I'm a senior lecturer," she said.

"Your ability to raise funding, which is what you need to do to be able to do science, is by producing papers and having had a baby, it will affect that in many, many ways," she said.

"It will continue to affect us for some time to come."

Anna-Maria Arabia, the head of the Federation of Australian Scientific and Technological Societies (FASTS), says a scientist's success is based on their publication rate.

"But it is a publication rate that may have been calculated over the number of years that they have been in research since their PhD where perhaps five of those years may have been out of the workforce to raise children," she said.

Dr Leamey says many women simply give up on research when they return to work.

"Once they have a child, they pretty much just decide, OK, I will become a teaching academic and stop doing research just because it just gets too hard," she said.

"They can't raise funding and they sort of get basically fed up with the whole process."

Ms Arabia says the summit, organised by FASTS, aims to address that problem, which is a common story for many women scientists in their 30s and 40s.

"In all scientific disciplines, the evidence shows that there is significant under-representation of women, particularly at senior levels," she said.

"Within publicly funded research organisations particularly we see a low level of women: in some cases, less than 10 per cent at senior levels."

Ms Arabia says having a career after a baby is not the only issue for women in science.

"In the physical sciences and in engineering, we have greater under-representation even at more junior levels because women aren't entering the workforce having not studied science and engineering," she said.

This means women cannot fill the shortfall of scientists and engineers who are in demand to service the mining boom or help build the proposed giant telescope.

For that reason, Ms Arabia says the summit is not looking at the problem as a women's issue, but rather as being about productivity, the economy and our culture.

"We are looking at leaders within the scientific community to commit to action to address the under-representation of women in science and engineering," she said.

Tags: science-and-technology chemistry women australia aot canberra-2000

First posted Mon Apr 11, 2011 3:16pm AEST



There is significant under-representation of women in science and engineering, particularly at senior levels. (AAP: Vera Deval, file photo)

• Video: Science industry suffers from female brain drain (7pm, TV News 24/10)



What's Next?

- FASTS will conduct an audit of practices amongst its member societies with the aim of ***increasing the participation of women through best practice.***
- FASTS will gather examples of existing practices, programs and policies which have been successful and develop a toolkit to guide the science and technology sector.
- Continued engagement of STE leaders is crucial
- Organisations big and small should adopt the UN Women's Empowerment Principles
- Looking forward to next year's WiSE Summit!

CSIRO Astronomy & Space Science

Lisa Harvey-Smith

CSIRO SKA Project Scientist

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Thank you