



Inclusive Culture Program

Gender Strategy 2015-18

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Foreword from the CEO

I am pleased to present Geoscience Australia's *Gender Strategy 2015-18*. This strategy is focused on achieving gender equality and the equitable treatment of women at Geoscience Australia—a journey we commenced in 2013 with a cultural audit. This identified that women had fewer opportunities to contribute, participate and develop than their male colleagues, and inspired the creation of this strategy.

The Geoscience Australia *Gender Strategy 2015-18* is part of the *Inclusive Culture Program*—our workplace diversity program. Our *Inclusive Culture Program* vision is:



'An inclusive workplace culture that ensures everyone has equal opportunity to contribute, participate and progress'.

We are committed to the *Inclusive Culture Program* vision and the implementation of this strategy. This means equally valuing and respecting the differing skills and experiences all genders bring to the workplace, being aware of the cultural challenges faced by some as a result of their gender, and recognising how we as individuals play a part in building a more diverse and inclusive workplace.

Geoscience Australia has invested considerable effort to improving gender equality through our staff Cultural Reference Group, which champions change, consults with employees and monitors the implementation of our *Inclusive Culture Program*. The *Gender Strategy 2015-18* continues these efforts, and ensures they are aligned with our inclusive culture vision.

Realising our inclusive culture vision is a long-term journey. It is a vision to which we are committed, and, with everyone's involvement, I am confident we can achieve.

Chris Pigram PhD
Chief Executive Officer

June 2015

Drivers for change

Geoscience Australia's commitment through the Gender Strategy 2015-18 is triggered by external and internal drivers for change. These include its legal and social responsibility, the potential for improved organisational performance, its cultural audit findings and its workforce profile.

Legal and social responsibility

The legal framework in response to gender inequity has evolved over time to support change in Australian workplaces.

Historically, women have faced challenges in the workplace including unequal access to jobs, wages and conditions. In response, the Sex Discrimination Act was introduced in 1984 to prohibit discrimination on the grounds of sex, marital status, pregnancy or potential pregnancy, or family responsibilities, and prohibited sexual harassment. Principles of the Sex Discrimination Act were also enacted in the Industrial Relations Act introduced in 1988. These major reforms are partly credited to the representation of women in the workforce increasing from 33 per cent in 1984 to 45 per cent in 2006 (ABS, 2007).

Since the early 1990s, Australian women and men have been working together to progress gender equality and to recognise men and women as equals in their professional and personal lives (Broderick, 2011). Even with this shift in thinking, in 2015 there is still work to be done to remove discrimination and achieve gender equality in Australian workplaces.

Adding complexity, gender is no longer exclusively male and female. Following the release of the *Australian Government Guidelines on the Recognition of Sex and Gender* in 2013, Geoscience Australia, along with all other Australian Government entities, must respect and recognise that individuals can identify as a gender other than the sex or gender they were assigned at birth..

In addition, Geoscience Australia's legal responsibility is strengthened as an Australian Public Service employer. At the core of employment in the Australian Public Service is the Employment Principles. Enshrined in legislation, these principles include that the APS provides workplaces free from discrimination, patronage and favouritism, recognises the diversity of the Australian community, and fosters diversity in the workplace (Sections 10A (1)(f) and 10A (1)(g), *Public Service Act 1999 (Cth)*).

Improved organisational performance

In addition to the social and legal responsibility in supporting gender equality, a diverse workforce makes good business sense. Research has found that diverse and inclusive workplaces deliver improved organisational performance. A Right Management study (2012) lists the primary benefits of workplace diversity contributing to improved organisational performance as:

- high levels of employee engagement
- improved employee retention

- a greater ability to attract talent

Further benefits include lower absenteeism rates, increased creativity and innovation, high quality problem-solving in teams, and better service delivery (Dickie, Soldan and Fazey, 2012).

These benefits contribute to improving the cost and efficiency of the Australian Public Service.

Geoscience Australia Cultural Audit

Noting the low number of women progressing to executive level positions, Geoscience Australia commissioned a cultural audit in 2013. The audit aimed to identify cultural norms and practices to determine if they were unintentionally disadvantaging or impeding the career progression of women.

The cultural audit found Geoscience Australia was not harnessing the breadth and depth of its talent, in that women have fewer opportunities to contribute, participate and develop than their male colleagues. The audit also found that the pre-requisites for career opportunities and progression provide men with an unintentional advantage and identified gender stereotyping and unconscious bias as perpetuating this inequality.

Workforce profile

At the time of the cultural audit, the ongoing workforce profile was two-thirds male (65 percent, or 411 employees) and one-third female (34 per cent, or 216 employees). There was no data available on employees identifying as transgender, intersex or indeterminate gender (X).

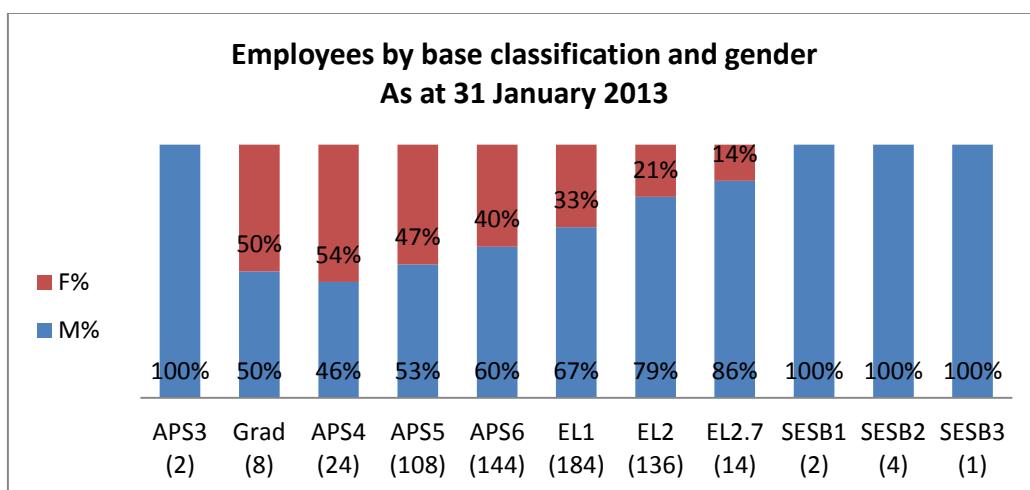


Figure 1: Ongoing employees by base classification and gender, Geoscience Australia, 31 January 2013. The graduate classification represents the cohort of science and ICT graduates, separate from other employees at the APS 4 level.

Geoscience Australia went through an agency-wide reduction in staff in 2014. During the period of 31 March 2014 to 3 February 2015, the workforce reduced from 735 employees to 628.

As at 31 March 2015, the overall workforce remains at two-thirds male (65 per cent, or 371 employees) and one-third female (34 per cent, or 199 employees). This is the same gender profile as 2013 with representation continuing to decline with increasing classification. There was no data available on employees identifying as transgender, intersex or indeterminate gender (X).

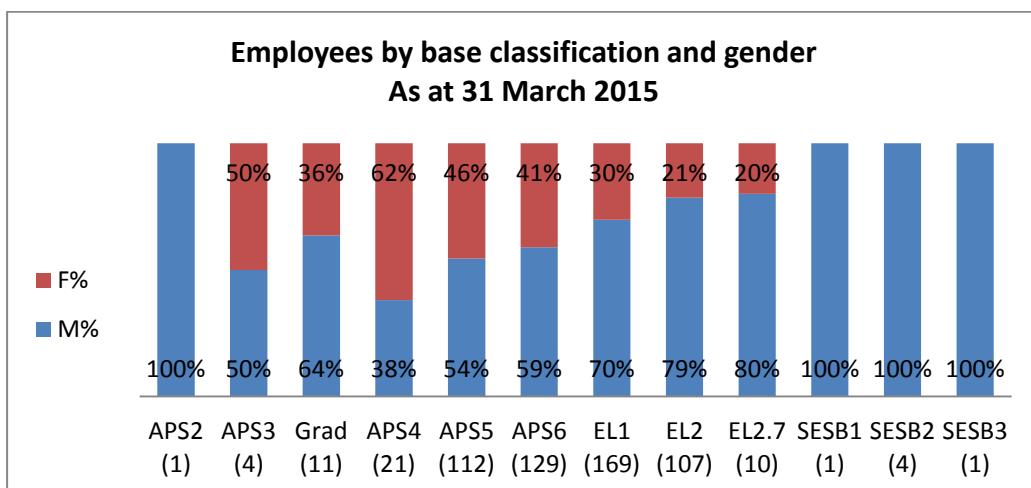


Figure 2: Ongoing employees by base classification and gender, Geoscience Australia, 31 March 2015. The graduate classification represents the cohort of science and ICT graduates, separate from other employees at the APS4 level.

Summary

Geoscience Australia's people are its most valuable resource. The agency has much to gain from harnessing the diversity of skills and experience of all genders, increasing employee engagement, and increasing creativity and innovation through diversity in thought.

Employment inequalities are unjust and unfair. Geoscience Australia has a legal and social duty to address discrimination and disadvantage and its practices must reflect legal compliance and ethical practice. As an Australian Public Service employer, it is open to scrutiny from the general public and from Government.

Further, the risks of inaction strengthen the need for a gender strategy. These risks include potential discrimination complaints, lower performance as a result of decreased morale, increased absenteeism and a lack of trust in management from employees. These risks all result in increased costs for the organisation and lower organisational performance.

This strategy is Geoscience Australia's commitment to action as a result of these drivers for change. It aims to improve organisational culture, provide equal opportunities to contribute participate and progress to all genders, and support the equitable treatment of women.

Strategic framework

Geoscience Australia's *Gender Strategy 2015-18* is one component of its broader commitment to diversity through its *Inclusive Culture Program*. All Australian Public Service agencies must have a workplace diversity program to support the APS Employment Principles of diversity and workplaces free from discrimination, under Section 18 of the *Public Service Act 1999*.

Geoscience Australia's Strategic Plan and the priorities of its People Strategy inform the development of the *Inclusive Culture Program*.

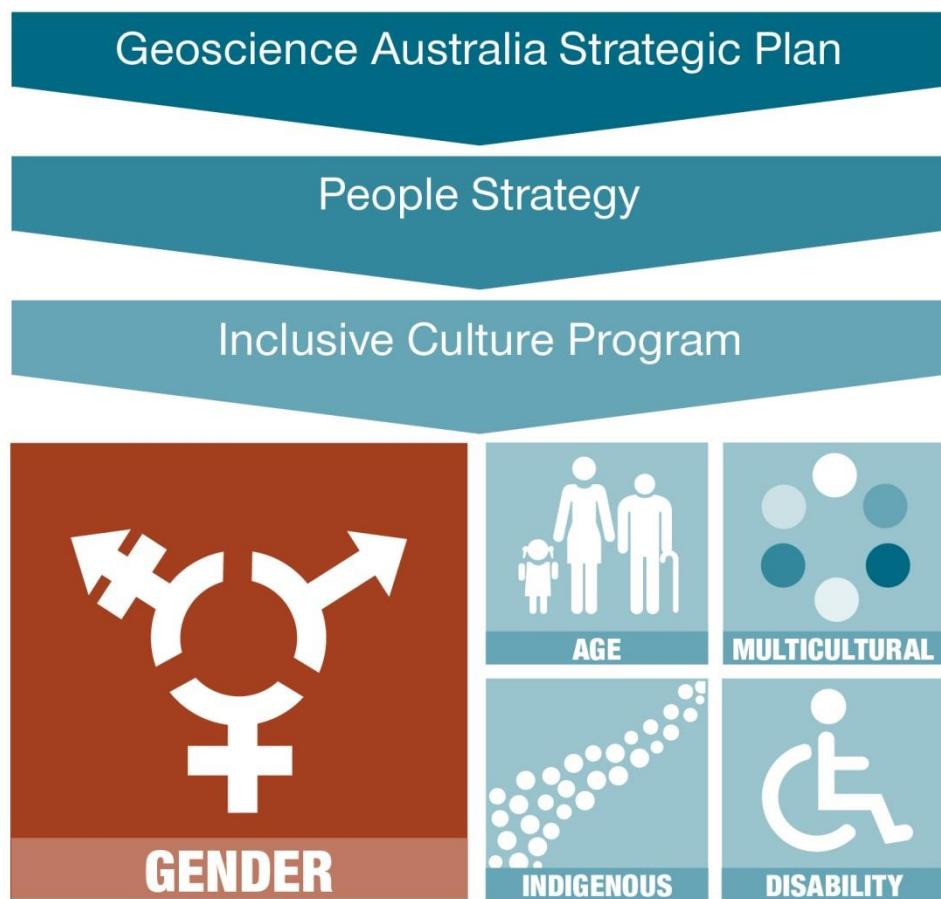


Figure 3: Links between the *Inclusive Culture Program* and Geoscience Australia's Strategic Plan and People Strategy.

Objectives

The objective of Geoscience Australia's *Inclusive Culture Program* is to realise the inclusive culture vision: "An inclusive workplace culture that ensures everyone has equal opportunity to contribute, participate and progress". To do this, the Inclusive Culture Program includes five diversity target groups: gender, age, multicultural, disability and Indigenous Australians.

This gender strategy is a targeted initiative contributing to long-term cultural change. To achieve this, our Gender Action Plan (at Appendix C) lists activities against three focus areas:

Focus area 1: Building an inclusive and equitable culture.

Focus area 2: Supporting a flexible and empowering workplace.

Focus area 3: Aspiring to improve gender representation.

The Workplace Gender Equality Agency recommends that organisations set targets when the representation of women in leadership positions is less than 40 per cent (WGEA, 2014). Representational targets are used by both public and private organisations to improve gender equality outcomes while remaining focussed on the merits of employee talent. Other Commonwealth employers with gender representational targets include the Treasury and the Australian Federal Police.

The objectives and targets of our three focus areas are detailed in *Table 1* below.

Focus area	Objective	Target
1	Improve employee perceptions of Geoscience Australia's commitment to workplace diversity.	Perceptions increased by 10 per cent or higher in the 2015 APS State of the Service Census in comparison to 2014 result.
2	Improve employee engagement scores in the annual APS State of the Service Census.	Engagement scores (job, team, supervisor and agency engagement) increased in the 2015 APS State of the Service Census in comparison to 2014 result, and higher than the APS average.
3	Increase representation of women in senior leadership positions (Executive Level 2 and above) to be reflective of our workforce gender profile.	Representation of women in senior leadership positions increased from 19 per cent at 31 March 2015 to 33 per cent by 30 June 2018.

Roles and responsibilities

All employees

All employees influence the organisational culture at Geoscience Australia through their actions, behaviours and shared assumptions. The success of this strategy relies on all employees actively participating and providing feedback on various activities resulting from this strategy.

Inclusive Culture Champions

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and General Manager, Corporate Services are Geoscience Australia's Inclusive Culture Executive Champions. The Executive Champions lead and drive the journey to an inclusive culture by challenging the status quo and communicating the inclusive culture vision.

Our CEO chairs Geoscience Australia's Cultural Reference Group and our General Manager, Corporate Services is an active member of the group.

Executive and Senior Leadership Team

The Executive Team and Senior Leadership Team have an important responsibility in promoting this strategy and influencing the desired inclusive culture. They do this through modelling inclusive behaviours and taking gender equality and equity into consideration during decision making.

Cultural Reference Group

Geoscience Australia's Cultural Reference Group (CRG) is a group of committed volunteers, internal and external to the organisation. The group champions the *Inclusive Culture Program* and is responsible for monitoring the implementation of this strategy. CRG members communicate and consult with employees and represent their views on inclusive culture initiatives. The CRG provides a point of contact for employees with personal experiences or concerns in relation to inclusive culture, and refers employees to support as appropriate to the situation.

People and Culture

People and Culture is accountable for implementing, monitoring, reviewing and reporting on this strategy.

Staff Networks

Our staff-led networks provide important informal social systems for employees. They support the inclusive culture vision by encouraging participation in and contribution to events and activities.

Monitoring, review and evaluation

Monitoring

Geoscience Australia will carefully monitor its workforce and incorporate a breakdown by gender in workforce metrics reported to the Geoscience Australia Advisory Board. Organisational climate is heavily influenced by organisational culture (Dickie, Soldan and Fazey, 2012) and will serve to measure progress towards cultural change during the life of this strategy. The workforce climate will be monitored annually through the APS State of the Service Census, with results analysed by gender.

Sample metrics which will be monitored and reported on through the life of this strategy are provided in *Table 2* below.

Metric/Item	Purpose	Report audience	Frequency and mechanism
Gender profile: the breakdown of total headcount by gender	Monitors the composition of the workforce, and to assist with promotion of gender diversity.	Geoscience Australia Advisory Board	Monthly Corporate Report
Performers of the month: names of all recipients and their division.	Monitors gender diversity in award recipients and provide visibility of recipients to the Geoscience Australia Advisory Board.	Geoscience Australia Advisory Board	Monthly Corporate Report
Learning and development access by gender: the breakdown of learning and development participants by gender and their Division	Monitors equal opportunity and access of all genders to learning and development and identify any differences between divisions.	Geoscience Australia Advisory Board	Monthly Corporate Report
Gender representation by classification	Monitors gender representation across classifications and changes in the gender disparity at senior levels.	Geoscience Australia Advisory Board	Quarterly Corporate Report
Employee separations by gender	Monitors the employees leaving Geoscience Australia and identify trends in a particular gender.	Geoscience Australia Advisory Board	Annually People Report

Performance ratings by gender and employment type	Captures performance ratings by gender and if there is a difference between ratings applied to full-time and part-time employees.	All employees	Annually, during August All staff email on performance rating results
APS State of the Service Employee Census results analysed by gender	Monitors changes in the organisational climate and satisfaction levels for each gender, potentially indicating changes in organisational culture.	Geoscience Australia Advisory Board All employees	Annual State of the Service Census results report Intranet article
Reports of harassment, bullying and discrimination in the State of the Service Employee Census	Monitors the incidence of harassment, bullying and discrimination in comparison to the number of reports received.	Geoscience Australia Advisory Board	Annual State of the Service Census results report
Exit survey analysis	Monitors employee reasons for leaving and whether related to gender inequity.	Geoscience Australia Advisory Board	Annually People Report
Recruitment statistics	Monitors the gender profile of candidates at the job application, shortlisting and selection stages of recruitment.	Geoscience Australia Advisory Board	Annually People Report

Review

People and Culture will review this strategy and its action plan annually in consultation with employees and the Cultural Reference Group. Activities arising from this strategy will be prioritised through input from the Cultural Reference Group representing employee views. Where activities require action from the People and Culture Section, activities will be prioritised through annual business planning processes and with respect to resource capacity.

Evaluation

At the end of this strategy's life, Geoscience Australia will self-evaluate the outcomes against the objectives and the Workplace Gender Equality Agency's 'Employer of Choice for Gender Equality' criteria (2014). Progress made by this strategy and lessons learnt will inform the development of future diversity strategies for Geoscience Australia.

Appendix A: Glossary

Climate Organisational climate is the shared perceptions held by employees on how the work environment is experienced. Climate is influenced by the organisational culture.

Culture Organisational culture is the shared attitudes, assumptions, expectations, values and beliefs of employees to produce cultural behavioural norms (how things are done around here). The organisational culture covers appropriate ways to think, act and behave (Dickie, Soldan and Fazey, 2012).

Diversity includes but is not limited to differences based on gender, age, race, religion, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, and disability.

Employee engagement indicates the level of commitment to organisational goals, values and the employee's motivation to contribute to organisational success. When employees are engaged, they use discretionary effort. Engaged employees lead to improved performance and business outcomes (Kruse, 2012). Employee engagement is measured through the APS State of the Service Employee Census and is viewed in light of four elements: job engagement, team engagement, supervisor engagement and agency engagement. Drivers of employee engagement include the opportunity to use their skills, personal feelings of accomplishment, reward and recognition, the honesty and integrity of their colleagues, performance of their supervisor, communication between senior leaders and employees, whether employees feel valued for their contributions and access to effective learning and development.

Exit survey A survey conducted on employees separating from Geoscience Australia which rates their satisfaction of their employment against a range of factors

including culture, supervisor performance, learning and development and organisational programs.

Executive Geoscience Australia's Executive team includes the CEO, Deputy CEO, Chiefs of Divisions, General Manager Corporate and the Chief Information Officer.

Gender is part of a person's social and personal identity and a state of difference due to social and cultural differences rather than biological differences (a person's sex). Gender is recognised as male, female, transgender, intersex or indeterminate gender.

Gender equality is a state in which all genders have equal rights, access and opportunities.

Gender equity is fairness in rights, access and opportunities without discrimination on the basis of gender and addressing the imbalances in the benefits or opportunities due to gender.

Headcount The number of employees employed at a point in time. Includes full-time and part-time, ongoing and non-ongoing and employees on long term leave, for example maternity leave.

Indeterminate A person of indeterminate sex or gender is someone whose biological sex cannot be unambiguously determined or someone who identifies as neither male nor female (Attorney-General's Department, 2013).

Intersex An intersex person may have the biological attributes of both sexes or lack some of the biological attributes considered necessary to be defined as one or the other sex. Intersex is always congenital and can originate from genetic, chromosomal or hormonal variations. Environmental influences such as endocrine disruptors can also play a

role in some intersex differences. People who are intersex may identify as male, female or X (Attorney-General's Department, 2013).

Senior Leadership Team Geoscience Australia's Senior Leadership Team (in addition to the Executive) includes our Branch Heads and Directors.

Separations The number of ongoing and non-ongoing employees separating (leaving) Geoscience Australia during the reporting period.

Stereotype A widely held, fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular person or thing.

Trans or Transgender is someone who identifies as a gender that is different to their sex at birth. People who are transgender are born male or female, but emotionally or psychologically identify as a different sex. People who are transgender may undergo medical and psychological treatment including hormone therapy, sex reassignment surgery or other physical procedures (Attorney-General's Department, 2013).

Unconscious bias is a prejudice or an assumption made about another person based on common cultural stereotypes or norms, rather than on conscious, thoughtful judgement.

Appendix B: References

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Commonwealth

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Appendix C: Gender Action Plan

Focus area 1: Building an inclusive and equitable workforce culture

A gender-inclusive and equitable workforce culture focuses on the behaviours and attitudes displayed by senior executives through to individuals to ensure they foster inclusion and equity for all genders.

Table 1 below details specific activities that will contribute to building a gender inclusive and equitable workforce culture.

	<i>Activities</i>	<i>Estimated timing</i>	<i>Lead responsibility</i>
1.1	Support and communications from Geoscience Australia's Executive and Senior Leadership Team regarding what is expected of employee behaviour and its vision for an inclusive culture.	Ongoing	CEO, Executive and Senior Leadership Team
1.2	Develop a communications strategy that: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• promotes the vision for equal opportunity• continues the conversation• encourages cultural change• promotes personal/individual ownership and accountability of all employees for cultural change.	Developed by 1 July 2015	People and Culture
1.3	Build awareness and provide training for employees on unconscious bias and gender stereotypes.	Ongoing	People and Culture
1.4	Model appropriate behaviours and actions, and 'call out' inappropriate behaviour. Encourage awareness and change in others.	Ongoing	Executive Senior Leadership Team All employees
1.5	Review Recognition and Awards opportunities for employees who demonstrate inclusive behaviours.	Reviewed by 1 December 2015	People and Culture
1.6	Develop clear behavioural performance expectations and include them in performance development plans.	Complete by 1 August 2015	Cultural Reference Group

1.7	Review systems and policies that address poor workplace behaviour and misconduct, and communicate these to employees.	Complete by 1 December 2015	People and Culture
1.8	Ensure awareness of support resources available to employees affected by poor workplace behaviour or discrimination, for example EAP, Harassment Contact Officers and Mental Health First Aiders.	Ongoing	People and Culture
1.9	Sponsor the employee-driven Women's Network.	Ongoing	General Manager Corporate
1.10	Ensure all employees complete mandatory diversity and inclusion training.	Annually	Senior Leadership Team

Focus area 2: Supporting a flexible and empowering workplace

Supporting a flexible and empowering workplace requires contemporary HR policy and practice. *Table 2* below details specific activities that will contribute to supporting a flexible and empowering workplace.

	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Estimated timing</i>	<i>Lead responsibility</i>
2.1	Support a physical working environment that caters for employees with caring responsibilities through the construction of a child care facility.	Complete by 30 June 2018	Governance and Business Services
2.2	Identify potential barriers in the Enterprise Agreement to incremental pay advancement and other entitlements for women following maternity leave. Negotiate changes in new Enterprise Agreement.	Negotiations complete by 30 June 2016	People and Culture
2.3	Review flexible working arrangements for potential barriers as a result of gender.	Complete by 30 September 2015	Cultural Reference Group
2.4	Empower employees with coaching skills to support career development.	Delivered annually	People and Culture
2.5	Review and improve the Geoscience Australia mentoring program to provide equitable access to mentors.	Complete by 1 December 2015	People and Culture
2.6	Support managers with part-time employees through tool kits and resources, and include a part-time employee component to management training programs.	Complete by 30 September 2015	People and Culture
2.7	Include content on unconscious bias, gender-based leadership traits and managing diversity in 'Geo' leadership programs.	Complete by 1 December 2015	People and Culture
2.8	Develop a talent management framework to support equitable career development.	Complete by 30 June 2016	People and Culture
2.9	Continue the Women in Leadership People Seminar Series.	Ongoing	People and Culture
2.10	Ensure compliance with the Australian Government Guidelines for the Recognition of Sex and Gender.	Compliant by 1 July 2016	People and Culture

Focus area 3: Aspiring to improve gender representation

Aspiring to improve gender representation across classifications requires a focus on the attraction of gender-diverse talent and on recruitment practices. *Table 3* below details specific activities that will contribute to improving gender representation across classifications.

	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Estimated timing</i>	<i>Lead responsibility</i>
3.1	Review recruitment advertising and ensure inclusive wording that encourages attraction from all genders.	Ongoing	People and Culture
3.2	Trial ‘blind shortlisting’ by removing gender-identifying information from applications prior to assessment for shortlisting.	Trial conducted in 2015-16	People and Culture
3.3	Promote flexible working arrangements at recruitment and commencement. Classify all positions as ‘full-time/part-time’ by default.	Ongoing	People and Culture
3.4	Review mandatory recruitment and selection e-learning modules ensuring panels are trained on recognising unconscious bias and stereotypes.	Complete by 1 December 2015	People and Culture
3.5	Ensure recruitment and selection panels are gender diverse.	Ongoing	Panel Chair