Recommendations to Improve the Workplace at the
Research School of Earth Sciences (RSES) – October 2015

The RSES Equity and Diversity Committee (EDC) has used the Workplace Cultural Survey results, researched best practice, and discussed our various perspectives on the School extensively to formulate the following recommendations. We recognise that in some cases ANU policies and procedures are already in place, but they are not necessarily implemented. These recommendations are a snap-shot in time and will require periodic updating.

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1. Cultivate a positive and inclusive workplace culture

A fair, respectful and diverse workplace improves morale, collaborations, recruitment and work outcomes. Women and underrepresented groups[1] bring more diverse perspectives to workplaces and leadership, which enhances an organisation's productivity.

Promote cultural change
Encourage cultural change at all levels within RSES through education, awareness and motivation.

Expect professional behaviour
1) Even people with good intentions make mistakes, and most people are tolerant of occasional errors. Nevertheless, mistakes should be corrected at the earliest opportunity.
2) Instil an expectation in all Staff and Students that everyone should be treated with respect, consideration and fairness in the workplace.

Apply zero tolerance to bullying, harassment and discrimination in any form
Bullying, harassment and discrimination are against the law and need to be taken very seriously.
1) Enforce zero tolerance of bullying, harassment and discrimination from the top down following ANU policies and Australian laws.
2) Investigate all bullying, harassment and discrimination claims from multiple perspectives and communicate the outcomes to all parties involved.
3) Encourage everybody to speak out, preferably immediately, on witnessing bullying, harassment and discrimination in any form and provide suggestions on how to do this.
4) Educate Staff and Students about the ANU Code of Conduct, Code of Practice for Teaching and Learning, and child protection policies and what constitutes bullying and harassment, sexual assault, discrimination, age discrimination, conflict of interest and gender inclusive language.
5) Provide instruction to Supervisors in how to handle and address complaints effectively and confidentially as appropriate.

Support people who have experienced bullying, harassment and discrimination in any form
1) Clarify the channels that are available to targets of inappropriate behaviour for consultation (Staff and Students), resolution procedures (Staff and Students), resolution policies (Staff and Students) and reporting.
2) Find ways to empower targets of bad behaviour in the work place through consultation with HR (e.g. an ombudsman) and implement HR's suggestions.
3) Let targets know that, if they report such behaviour through confidential ANU channels, they and other targets will be supported if there are adverse impacts.
4) Provide instruction to targets in how to handle and address complaints effectively and confidentially as appropriate.

Increase the visibility of women and people from underrepresented groups and provide them with leadership opportunities
1) Work to ensure that the many forms of diversity at RSES are acknowledged and broadly accepted, e.g. differences in race, native language, disability, gender, sexuality, and carer's responsibilities.
2) Provide opportunities for women and underrepresented groups to take on new and additional challenges if they so desire. Do not assume that people are unable, uninterested or too busy due to their personal situation, e.g. gender, non-English mother tongue, carer status, age and other responsibilities.
3) Ensure that women and people from underrepresented groups are on significant RSES committees within RSES and ANU, appropriately nominated for awards, and provided with opportunities to develop leadership skills. Where necessary, provide workload relief in other areas.

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[1] *Underrepresented groups are those with disproportionately low representation compared to the relevant feeder community (e.g. broader Australian community, international academic community, high school graduates).*

4) Actively seek out a diversity of inspiring seminar speakers, including women and underrepresented groups in numbers commensurate with the wider university population.

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2. Implement flexible and family friendly policies

Flexibility improves the workplace for people who are parents, carers, suffering poor health or with other needs. Flexible and family friendly policies help people to meet job demands.

Offer flexible work options
Provide people with flexibility, relief and/or support should they need to take time out from full-time work, e.g. for carers' responsibilities or health issues. This is especially important for Administrative and Technical Staff, who have less flexibility than Academic Staff.

Plan for family friendly work hours
Schedule important commitments like teaching and meetings within family friendly work hours (e.g. 9.30 am – 2.30 pm) whenever possible.

Improve everyone's understanding of pregnancy, parental, and adoption leave in work and study
1) Educate Staff and Students about ANU equity and diversity policies such as carers' responsibilities and provide better support for partners with carers' responsibilities.
2) Request that HR provide training for Supervisors regarding ANU and Australian Research Council policies related to pregnancy, parental, and adoption leave and approaches that Supervisors can take to discussing such leave.
3) Provide and advertise a knowledgeable RSES Mentor and HR contact for people needing to make suitable arrangements for pregnancy, parental, and adoption leave.

Provide a carers' space
1) Apply the ANU policy for breastfeeding and provide a designated facility e.g. refurbish the existing first aid room.
2) Explore the options for providing a carers' space with hot desks and a play area within the ANU guidelines for children on campus.

Explore better options for childcare
Lobby ANU to ensure sufficient, affordable, high quality child care places to support a) Staff with family responsibilities; and b) short term, flexible childcare for Students.

Advertise ANU's provisions for carers
Ensure that Staff and Students are aware at induction that ANU offers funds for extraordinary carers' costs, a carer taking a dependant to a conference, school holiday childcare, and the option to purchase additional annual leave.

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3. Improve the Approaches to Recruitment and Promotion

An inclusive environment attracts and retains the most outstanding talent. For example, Australian Earth Science departments regularly graduate a high proportion of women and underrepresented groups (~ 50% PhDs), so a diverse pool of talent is available for recruitment. There is no trade-off between academic excellence and diversity.

Actively recruit and support students from underrepresented groups
1) Define an RSES plan to actively recruit and support Undergraduate and Postgraduate Students with diverse backgrounds through their programs.
2) Link the recruitment and support plan to ANU support groups and funding programs, e.g. Tjabal Centre, Disability Access Centre and ANU Gender Institute.

Establish a plan for hiring
1) Establish a long-term approach and action plan for the recruitment and hiring of diverse staff at RSES with specific goals and timetables.
2) Make the hiring plan a School priority and allocate designated funds.
3) Encourage women and people from underrepresented groups to apply for all positions, especially Laureate Fellowships.
4) Provide new women staff and staff from underrepresented groups with appropriate support.
5) Explore the possibilities of hiring diverse staff into continuing positions at an earlier stage in their careers, i.e. hire based on potential as a criterion.
6) Consider incentives and rewards for success in hiring diverse staff.

Require accountability of selection and promotion committees
1) Require selection and promotion committees – especially for continuing positions – to implement ANU policies and EDC recommendations to promote diversity before, during and after advertisement.
2) Require members of search and promotion committees to assess all applicants for jobs and promotions using "relative to opportunity" criteria and ensuring that the cultural background of all applicants is respected.
3) Require that all selection committees ask questions related to equity and diversity, following standard ANU selection criteria and EDC guidelines.

Require training in unconscious bias
Require all selection and promotion committees to familiarise themselves with unconscious bias and how it affects decision making, e.g. by causing women to have a significant disadvantage in job searches, teaching evaluations, ARC grant applications and promotion.

Widen the ANU hiring policies and implement them
1) Implement ANU policies to improve flexibility in hiring. Take advantage of existing ANU dual career, disability and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and women-only hiring policies.
2) Create and implement plans to provide better support for Staff in non-full-time employment or in home-based work.
3) Lobby ARC and ANU leadership to provide more job security for early career researchers such as longer contracts and more support.
4) Explore with HR the possibilities of advertising positions as open to part-time employment, job sharing and other flexible arrangements.
5) Include in job advertisements ANU's provisions for equity and diversity and its record.

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4. Improve communication, supervision and mentoring at RSES

Good communication, supervision, mentoring and training are basic requirements for developing everyone's career and for promoting a productive and successful work place. Many of the recommendations in this section relate to issues outside of the original remit of the EDC. However, they address issues raised in the survey.

Improve communication channels at RSES
1) Regularly update the RSES e-mail lists to include all new Staff and Students.
2) Clarify the RSES organisational structure and processes and ANU policies and procedures through the School Forum, the RSES intranet and induction process.
3) Ensure that back-up strategies are implemented when key Supervisors or Staff are absent and consult with HR about streamlining delegation procedures.
4) Clearly articulate the membership eligibility, attendance expectations, goals and records of both Faculty Meetings and School Forums to all members of RSES through e-mail and the induction process.
5) Provide clear mechanisms for all Staff, especially those disinclined to speak out in public, to provide suggestions for change, e.g. Suggestions Box, Chair of Forum and Chair of Faculty.
6) Make administrative decisions transparent and report these in appropriate forums.
7) Provide transparency in the availability and allocation of resources, e.g. technical support and matching funds for grants, as well as office and research space.
8) Make a conscious effort to acknowledge, recognise and reward the value of different types of work (e.g. research, teaching, demonstrating, administration, analysis, design and construction, mentoring, outreach, and service), work outputs, and career milestones (retirement and awards).

Provide and encourage proactive supervision
1) Provide clear information on the roles of Supervisors and Staff/Students using the Performance and Development or Milestone processes.
2) Require that Supervisors and Advisory Committees follow ANU guidelines for supervision and encourage them to take the ANU course in effective supervision,
3) Require that Postgraduate Students follow guidelines for candidature.
4) Recommend that all Academic Staff and demonstrators are trained in teaching and demonstrating, e.g. CHELT courses.
5) Assist researchers with writing papers and grant applications, e.g., by promoting writing groups such as the Postgraduate Students and RSES women staff groups.
6) Take a proactive, long-term approach in working with Staff and Students to build successful careers and promotion cases; including giving the "hard advice" that is essential for advancement.
7) Encourage all Staff and Students to bring forward and implement creative ideas.
8) Encourage all Staff and Students to be proactive in seeking assistance and mentoring.

Value and implement better mentoring approaches

Good mentoring creates good practice. RSES should recognise and value mentoring.

1) Make Staff aware of the benefits of career mentoring and offer professional coaching if desired.
2) Work closely with Mentors and Senior Staff to foster mentoring relationships.
3) Seek advice from HR on how to provide training on welcoming and supporting indigenous people as well as other people from underrepresented groups.
4) Several options are available for mentoring and RSES should consider multiple approaches, for example:
   a) Develop a program for formal mentoring, e.g. use the ANU-wide mentoring program as a template or resource.
   b) Ensure that new RSES Staff and Students go through an appropriate induction with a Mentor.
   c) Follow up on induction with specific help on topics to be discussed further, e.g. personal items like visas, childcare and disability support; a snapshot of RSES and ANU history and statistics; research set-up; grant applications; teaching arrangements; and career issues.
   d) Provide opportunities for Staff and/or Students to interact using informal networks and social events that are deliberately inclusive.
   e) Create formal resources to help mentor people in challenging aspects of their work, e.g. a grant review group, archives of successful grant and promotion applications, archives of job advertisements and reclassification documents.
   f) Establish processes to co-ordinate effectively with other researchers and the Research Office on equipment, collaborative and industry grants.
   g) Provide links on the RSES intranet to other units within ANU including NECTAR, CHELT, writing groups for Postgraduate Students and RSES women staff, the ANU Gender Institute and other support groups.

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5. Monitor progress

Monitoring is required to ensure that the initiatives implemented are effective.

1) Monitor the initiatives being taken to improve gender balance and diversity and collect data (baseline and ongoing) to show the effectiveness of the initiatives taken by RSES.
2) The EDC should review collected data and provide recommendations to the Director and School, where appropriate, to enhance the process of improving the workplace culture at RSES.
3) Provide progress reports twice per year to the Director and School Forum.

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6. Future role of the Equity and Diversity Committee

The EDC should be a School resource and catalyst for cultural change, championed by everyone in the School. The EDC should provide advice, oversee policies, gather data on progress and challenge the School with new ideas on an ongoing basis. It should actively liaise with, and be involved in, hiring or selection committees. The EDC should provide up-to-date information to the School in the form of a Workshop, presentations, information on the RSES intranet, and induction documents. All Continuing Staff should be encouraged to be active members of the EDC at some stage. The committee must keep the School engaged with its work, e.g. all Staff and Students should be encouraged to participate in the forthcoming EDC workshop.