Faculty of Information Technology

EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (EDI) COMMITTEE HIGHLIGHTS

Championing a more fair, equal and inclusive world

ANNUAL REPORT 2022
Professor Ann Nicholson
Dean, Faculty of Information Technology

Here in the Faculty of Information Technology, we see equity, diversity and inclusion as the linchpins of innovation. When different ideas, perspectives and backgrounds come together, they create a vibrant, progressive culture.

We actively champion people of all genders, sexual orientations, ethnicities and abilities, as well as First Nations peoples, to learn, work and thrive in IT. From supporting caregivers and new parents to mentoring future women in tech, we’re creating the society we envision tomorrow through our advocacy today.

I’m pleased to witness the positive outcomes driven by our Associate Dean (Equity, Diversity and Inclusion) and the Committee as we work towards a brighter future – removing obstacles for the disadvantaged and increasing representation of marginalised and minority groups.

Every action we take is one step closer to a fairer, more inclusive world for all.
A message from our Associate Dean (Equity, Diversity and Inclusion)

We're working towards an exciting intersectional agenda driven by initiatives that tackle inequity while supporting inclusion.

In 2022 we ramped up our support and actions for staff and students, delivering tailored mental health and disability support, increasing the proportion of underrepresented groups in key areas, delving deeper into the needs of students with disabilities and improving the experiences of women in IT.

The past year has seen the Committee, in partnership with other portfolios across the faculty and wider university, further embed our focus on equity, diversity and inclusion into everything we do.

We’ve seen our Women in Technology Mentoring program evolve into an inspirational, one-of-a-kind initiative. We introduced supportive workload adjustments to alleviate the impact of extended caregiving leave. And we were pleased to welcome two in-house professionals to help our staff and students with their mental health and wellbeing, and in delivering equitable learning outcomes, among many other initiatives.

In line with the University and sector’s commitment to an intersectional equity, diversity and inclusion approach, we’re accelerating efforts to support our staff, students and communities from all walks of life to have equitable access to opportunities and recognise diversity as a strength. As such, we’ve been busy developing our 2023-2025 Strategic Plan which we’re excited to release later in the year.

In the meantime, I hope you enjoy reading more about our activities in 2022 – with a snapshot of our focuses for the future. We’re also excited to welcome our Associate Dean (Indigenous) who will be joining the Committee from 2023 to implement the Faculty’s Indigenous Plan in tandem with the EDI strategy.
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Provide targeted training, programs and supportive initiatives for staff from underrepresented groups to progress their careers and address disadvantages.

INITIATIVES FOR STAFF

2022 saw us delve deeper into the challenges our staff members face and various ways we can address them. We were also delighted to celebrate several milestone achievements of influential champions in our faculty.
Awards and recognition

Dean’s Awards for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

We were pleased to receive 12 nominations from across the faculty in the second year since our Dean’s Awards for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion were introduced.

The 2022 recipients were:
- **Education**: Professor Graham Farr and Dr Rebecca Robinson (team award)
- **Environment and Culture**: Dr Fariha Jaigirdar
- **Environment and Culture**: Dr Mor Vered
- **Community**: Dr Delvin Varghese, Dr Margherita Angelucci, Meriem Tebourbi, Dr Tom Bartindale and Professor Patrick Olivier (team award)
- **Research**: Dr Tanjila Kanij, Dr Jennifer McIntosh and Professor John Grundy (team award)

Dr Jaigirdar, Dr Vered, Professor Farr, Dr Robinson, Dr Kanij, Dr McIntosh and Professor Grundy were also finalists in the Vice Chancellor’s Excellence Awards (Diversity and Inclusion) for their contributions.
In the 2022 Women Leading Tech Awards, Dr Jue (Grace) Xie from the Faculty’s Action Lab was recognised as a finalist and received a high commendation during the ceremony.

A specialist in human-centred computing and digital health, her work has supported many aspects of healthcare including parenting and women's wellbeing. Already collaborating with headspace Australia, she plans to create sustainable digital platforms for national health and community services.

We were delighted to celebrate Dr Kirsten Ellis receiving the 2022 Australian Museum Eureka Prize for STEM Inclusion – a multifaceted win for EDI.

Not only is she an inspirational woman in technology, but her invention TapeBlocks makes STEM activities more accessible for people living with physical and cognitive disabilities.

As part of the 2019 National Science Week, she distributed 500+ kits including TapeBlocks to disability organisations in Victoria.

We were proud to see our Faculty’s second Superstar of STEM, Associate Professor Rashina Hoda, complete the program after two years of carrying out this important role.

From 2019 to 2021, she has been active in the media, boosting the diversity and representation of science experts while inspiring young people studying STEM.

The Superstars of STEM program is a competitive initiative that smashes gender assumptions about who can work in science, technology, engineering and maths. It has made significant contributions against gender inequality by elevating diverse role models through advanced communication skills and opportunities.
In 2022 we implemented a 'gender-balanced shortlist' principle to further support a more diverse, inclusive culture, in line with Monash University's *Gender Equality Action Plan 2022-2025*.

The impact of the new shortlist guidelines has already been seen despite restrictions on hiring staff, with approximately 50% of continuing academic appointments in 2022 being women. We have also almost doubled the number of women professors in the faculty over the past year.

Overall, there has been a significant increase in the proportion of Level B women academics from 24% (16 women) in January 2020 to 43% (35 women) in January 2023, and a slight growth in Level E professors to 23% (8 women). However we are still behind on our 2025 Level E target of 40%. The significant growth in Level B academics will help build our Level C pipeline, which is where we have the lowest representation of women (13%, 4 women).

Across most discipline areas in the Faculty, achieving shortlisting targets requires concerted and targeted actions by hiring managers and recruiters with help from Monash HR. Therefore, information sessions for discipline group leads and other academic hiring managers were held to support this goal and encourage more women to apply.

This work aligns with Monash University's Inclusive Recruitment Guidelines that cover inclusive language in advertising, bias-free selection, inclusive interviewing, as well as the importance of diversity on panels.

We also have guidelines in place to support the Monash Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Framework by enabling more First Nations peoples to become IT providers, educators, researchers and leaders. This will also help build Indigenous research and capacity to address and serve the needs of First Australians.

As part of this, we work closely with the William Cooper Institute on applications submitted by an individual who identifies as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander to offer tailored support and advice.

Where one or more Indigenous Australian candidates have applied, a representative from the Institute or a nominee is involved as a member of the Selection Committee.
Women’s Research Accelerator Program (WRAP)

In 2022, the EDI and Research portfolios established guidelines and began accepting expressions of interest for WRAP.

To be launched in 2023, this two-year pilot will accept 12 fixed-term and continuing women researchers.

Despite accounting for 1/3 of the faculty, women academics have led 17% of funding applications from 2017 to 2022. They are also disproportionately less involved in Australian Research Council applications than men. Of the 29 Discovery Project proposals in 2021, only four were led by women. 13 included at least one woman chief investigator, while all included at least one male.

WRAP will address this disparity by:

- supporting women in advancing their research career aspirations
- increasing their participation in funding applications, including the amount led by women
- boosting the number of women candidates for external awards.

Returning to work adjustments for parents and primary caregivers

In 2021 we offered additional teaching and research support for staff with pre-school and school-aged children impacted by the pandemic.

This followed staff consultations and surveys which revealed that the pandemic and associated lockdowns were most acutely impacting the career opportunities and wellbeing of staff with caring responsibilities.

The positive outcomes of the 2021 initiative have driven the faculty to reassess support for caregivers more generally and create additional initiatives.

Embedded Counsellor (EC)

We were delighted to welcome Haylee Danaher, a psychologist who provides counselling and mental health programs as part of the Monash’s Health Service, as our Faculty’s first EC.

In this role, Haylee:

- gives advice to staff needing confidential support and guidance on managing student wellbeing and mental health
- provides general consultation to academics, professional staff and graduate research students, and referrals to appropriate services
- delivers mental health literacy and wellbeing programs to staff and students.

Continuing to address the impact of COVID-19

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STEM Sisters networking and movie night

On 12 August 2022, the Faculty of IT helped STEM Sisters host a networking and movie night at Clayton campus for students and staff.

It was an opportunity for the organisation to promote their ambassador program which allows talented, ambitious women international students in STEM across Victoria to improve their professional skills and connections by learning from industry leaders.

Attracting 49 attendees, the event featured several inspirational guest speakers, including our very own Professor Yolande Strengers and Professor Maria Garcia de la Banda.

Inclusive leadership training

Continuing our faculty-specific sessions, we organised Inclusive Leadership Training in October for senior leaders and managers – achieving our goal of having the entire executive team trained.

We also held four Cultural Safety Training sessions throughout the year as part of the Faculty’s commitment to the University’s Indigenous Strategy and creating a safe, respectful culture.

More than 60 staff attended the sessions, highlighting the importance of making these opportunities available.
2022 GOALS
Increase understanding of EDI issues among IT students and grow the culture of respect in computer science disciplines.

Attract, recruit and retain women students and those from other underrepresented groups.

STUDENT INITIATIVES
The reactivation of Monash’s campuses provided even greater opportunities to engage students in new EDI activities while enriching our existing initiatives.
Almost 80% of participants reported they were likely (36%) or highly likely (already planning, 42%) to study a VCE Science, Maths or Technology subject.

Across the two cohorts, 76% of participants were more likely (49%) or highly likely (already planning to, 27%) to consider a STEM-related career after school.

The program has educated 39 students to date, receiving extremely positive feedback – with most agreeing that the experience helped them explore broader ideas and gain new skills.

Superbots 2.0

Following the successful pilot of the Superbots Industry Immersion program in November 2021, we partnered with Monash Tech School, TalkViaOne and the Women in Voice ANZ chapter again to run a second session on 4 April 2022.

Open to girls in Years 7 to 9, Superbots 2.0 was also co-facilitated by Professor Yolande Strengers and three PhD candidates from the Faculty of IT. With more than 20 students attending from three schools, the experience demonstrated the critical overlap between human, technical and innovation studies.

The program will run again in 2023 with a larger cohort.
Previously known as The Collective, this student-led initiative was rebranded and will launch again in 2023. It will involve a new student committee and social media platforms to engage with external stakeholders.

UniTy aims to foster a supportive women and non-binary IT student network through social events, podcasts, newsletters and professional development opportunities.

Disability Support Services (DSS) mentorships

In 2022, we established a mentoring program for students registered with the DSS who were struggling with their studies. The initiative was modelled on the mentorships provided to First Nations students registered with the William Cooper Institute.

It was piloted in Semester 2 and the summer semester with a small number of Peer Assisted Study Sessions leaders and students, with the support of the Faculty’s EDI Committee, Education portfolio, Student Services and DSS.

Following the success of the pilot, we are expanding the program by inviting Faculty teaching associates and PASS leaders to become mentors. We will also have a larger cohort of students participating in the initiative.

Equitable Learning and Disability Liaison (ELDL)

In 2022, we appointed Rebecca Robinson to our inaugural ELDL role – formerly called the Mental Health and Disability Liaison.

This position helps learners struggling with their studies by linking them to Disability Support Services (DSS), student support services, the Embedded Counsellor and other related resources in the Faculty.

Working closely with the Associate Dean (Equity, Diversity and Inclusion) and Student Services, the ELDL is a point of contact for students to understand and access resources available for mental health and disability support. They also help academic and teaching staff interpret and implement reasonable adjustments from DSS in specific units.
Evolving the Women in Technology Mentoring program

Entering a new phase, our popular Women in Technology Mentoring program set itself apart in 2022 by becoming the first and only one of its kind at Monash to offer women-to-women mentorships exclusively.

The duration was also extended from six to 12 weeks, allowing for semester-long support and connection between students and professionals.

2022 saw 62 mentors – 28 of which were alumni – from high-profile tech companies such as KPMG, EY and NBN join to empower future women leaders in tech. It also involved several in-person events, facilitating deeper interactions, professional development workshops and greater networking opportunities.

The 2023 program will launch in late April and already has significant interest to participate.

20 years ago, during my time at Monash studying IT, there were no programs like this on offer. Having a program like this would've given my career an advantage, which is why I am honoured to volunteer as a mentor.

- Carol Chew, Mediaocean
Throughout 2022 we hosted and contributed to a range of initiatives that enhance support, foster inclusion, raise awareness and voice our solidarity with underrepresented groups.

2022 GOAL
Grow the culture of respect, inclusion and understanding of equity and diversity matters among staff.
International Women's Day
Monash Tech Talk

Held on 2 March 2022 to commemorate International Women's Day, we organised a Monash Tech Talk focusing on the intersection between IT, women and sustainability.

Specifically it covered:
- how big tech is impacting marginalised communities globally
- the work and achievements of women leading sustainability innovation in IT
- the importance of amplifying women's voices in the design of technological advancements for sustainability and the environment.

The event was hosted by award-winning author, journalist and broadcaster Tracey Spicer AM, and featured an expert panel of speakers.

Open Day

We trialled an EDI booth during Monash's first in-person Open Day since the pandemic to raise awareness about the Faculty's inclusive culture, values and initiatives.

With more than 25,000 visitors to the IT precinct, the booth was well received and attracted strong interest from prospective students and parents. The pronoun pins and rainbow sticker badges were particularly popular, acting as welcome giveaways that started conversations about equity, inclusion, diversity and LGBTIQA+ communities.

We also hosted a joint information session on EDI and double degrees, the offerings with the highest diversity and representation of women, which was extremely well-attended.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Week

To celebrate EDI Week, the Faculty organised a number of initiatives for staff and students:

- **Fundraising morning tea**: An event collecting gold coin donations for ConnectingUp, which went towards giving technology to a youth centre.

- **FIT Voices Library**: Little permanent libraries for Faculty members to borrow books and donate their own to learn about different voices and perspectives.

- **Inclusive technologies webinar and lunch**: Attendees heard from Melanie Tran, a UX designer and social impact advocate living with disability, and enjoyed lunch from ASRC catering – a social enterprise that creates pathways to employment for people seeking asylum.
Munch and Mingle

Responding to consistent feedback from students, the Faculty introduced a speed friending event called ‘Munch and Mingle’.

Featuring pizza, games, clubs and giveaways, the initiative was a chance for future learners to familiarise themselves with the community before joining Monash. It was also an opportunity for current students to meet new people and make friends – something that was difficult during the pandemic.

The event received over 200 registrations and very positive feedback from attendees.

R U OK? Day

The Faculty hosted an R U OK? Day morning tea which sparked important conversations between staff and graduate research students about mental health and wellbeing.

We also invited our Embedded Counsellor to give a short presentation that delved deeper into the theme ‘No qualifications needed’ and the support services available at Monash.
2022 GOAL
Progress our comprehensive EDI Strategy to improve equity, diversity and inclusion outcomes.

RESEARCH AND DATA ANALYSIS
Keeping our fingers on the pulse, we ran several studies in 2022 to identify evolving EDI challenges across the Faculty and how we can adapt to address them.
Focus groups with women students

After our 2021 insights report ‘Championing girls and women in IT’, we conducted seven focus groups in February 2022 (three undergraduate, three postgraduate and one graduate research) to better understand our women students following reported negative experiences late last year.

The focus groups were facilitated by IT students with support from the Student Services team and supervision by Dr Trang Do, an anthropology PhD candidate working with us to improve women’s representation in our degrees.

The research found that women students benefit from tailored initiatives and supportive teaching practices to address their underrepresentation in IT disciplines. It also highlighted the need to continue building the Faculty’s inclusive culture for gender equity and respectful conduct on campus.

Review of disability challenges and supports for students

People with disabilities are underrepresented can face challenges in STEM education and careers. In 2022 our research assistant Dr Trang Do explored how best to engage and support these students.

Recognising the different forms of disability and distinct STEM learning needs, Dr Do produced briefing papers on the following:

- Learning Disability and Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity-Disorder.
- Autism Spectrum Disorder.
- Sensory disabilities.
- Mobility and dexterity disabilities.

The briefing papers identified barriers to pursuing STEM/IT higher education, and opportunities for supportive initiatives and measures.

The research was presented to the EDI Committee to inform initiatives for students with disabilities.

STEM Equity Monitor

Professor Yolande Strengers provided commentary to the media on the release of the federal government’s STEM Equity Monitor – a national data resource on girls and women in STEM.

This was circulated widely via The Wire, the Australian Computing Society’s Information Age and Women Love Tech.

The data shows small improvements when it comes to women enrolling in IT degrees, and a strong need to address stereotypes and barriers to girls’ interests and pursuit of IT subjects at school.
Increasing underrepresented students in IT

We're seeing a 2.5% year-on-year growth among domestic undergraduate women numbers, and we've set an interim target of 28% for 2023.

The same growth rate applies for domestic postgraduate women students, however the interim 2023 target for this cohort is 33%.

The total proportion of women IT students across all cohorts in 2022 was 23.4%.

Students from low socioeconomic backgrounds are also a priority in the EDI strategy. We have seen a 0.25% year-on-year growth in enrolments from this group and have set a target of 12% for 2023.
After two years of lockdowns, the reactivation of Monash’s campuses meant we were able to better assess and improve how our Faculty spaces and services support members across our community.

2022 GOALS
Provide inclusive access to all Faculty of IT buildings and facilities. Enhance access to our services for underrepresented or disadvantaged groups, including online and physical education spaces.
Accessibility review

A key objective since the EDI strategic plan was formulated in 2019 has been to review the accessibility of IT spaces and identify areas of improvement.

With the return to campus in 2022 after two years of lockdowns, we were able to complete our first internal review.

Conducted with the Faculty’s accessibility experts, EDI Committee and Operations team, we discovered that there were still gaps – particularly around parenting facilities across IT buildings. It also highlighted the need for continued advocacy for such spaces in central facilities as well as other issues to address.

A Braille signage audit is planned for 2023 to identify and address areas for improvement.
2023 priorities at a glance

The Faculty of IT champions equity, diversity and inclusion in everything we do. Through our research. Through our teaching. Through our outreach. And through the way we work, learn and interact.

Our EDI Strategy is complemented by our comprehensive Indigenous Strategy and Implementation plan, which commits to working in partnership and consultation with Indigenous Elders, organisations and communities.

It also aligns with Monash Impact 2030 by attracting talented students and staff, irrespective of gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, disability, cultural, social or economic circumstances and any other protected personal characteristic. Together we can build a diverse, connected community passionate about sharing the University's knowledge and practices.

With a focus on continual improvement, we have been hard at work developing our 2023-2025 EDI strategy, which will build upon our progress over the past three years.

Key areas of focus will be:

1. Targeted academic and PhD recruitment to support equity, diversity and inclusion outcomes

2. Meaningful and enabling initiatives for students to support equity, diversity and inclusion outcomes.

3. Meaningful and enabling initiatives for staff to support equity, diversity and inclusion outcomes.

4. Inclusive and accessible buildings, operations and experiences.

5. Faculty-wide culture change and leadership to support equity, diversity and inclusion across education, research and operations.

6. Targeted and timely research and data analytics.
In 2023 the Faculty of IT will launch the MATS Centre which will be a hub for research, education and impact in the disability space. Its aim will be to support people with disabilities to live self-directed lives by understanding the role of technology as an enabler or barrier to social and economic participation. It will also drive technological innovation that meets the needs of people with disabilities, their families, educators and employers. By partnering with people with lived experience of disability and ensuring their needs guide the Centre’s activities, we can spearhead the development and adoption of potentially life-changing technologies. Furthermore, we aim to get more people with disabilities studying STEM subjects and degrees, ensure all graduates appreciate inclusive design and kickstart a vibrant entrepreneurial culture that takes any new technologies we develop out into the world.

In 2022 the Faculty appointed its first Associate Dean (Indigenous) Professor Christopher Lawrence who will be joining the EDI Committee. His focus will be on Indigenous student outreach, embedding Indigenous perspectives and case studies in curricula, and boosting Indigenous staff numbers.

Inaugural Associate Dean (Indigenous)

Approved by the Vice-Chancellor’s Group, from 1 January 2023 the Achievement Relative to Opportunity online module is now mandatory for academic leaders and staff who are part of key bodies that make assessments and employment-related decisions, as well as those on appeals panels. Following this initial rollout, from 1 July 2023 it will be compulsory for all academic supervisors.

The EDI Committee contributed to the module and the faculty is planning adjustments to recruitment processes and other practices to accommodate Achievement Relative to Opportunity assessments.

Introducing the Monash Assistive Technology and Society (MATS) Centre

Assessing Achievement Relative to Opportunity
The Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee comprises diverse people from across the faculty who represent different genders, ethnicities and backgrounds.

Members have lived experiences in mental health and disability, LGBTIQA+ communities, underrepresentation in IT and computer science, parenting and low socioeconomic backgrounds – having been the first in their families to attend university. Alongside their passion, they also have research and teaching expertise in gender equity, inclusive technologies, LGBTIQA+, training and inclusion, mental health and wellbeing, and disability inclusion.

We would like to thank the Committee members and collaborators for their dedication and contributions to equity, diversity and inclusion in 2022.
Associate Professor Yolande Strengers  
(She/her)  
Chair

Professor John Grundy  
(He/him)  
Deputy Chair

Professor Maria García de la Banda  
(She/her)  
Athena SWAN Steering Committee Representative

Swamy Ananthanarayan  
(He/him)  
Academic Representative

Philip Abramson  
(He/him)  
Professional Staff Representative

Paul Miller  
(He/him)  
Sessional Staff Representative

Roisin McNaney  
(She/her)  
Academic Representative

Ruth Nagassa  
(She/her)  
Postgraduate representative
El Leemann
(She/her/they)
Undergraduate Representative

Courtney Johnson
(She/her)
Manager, Marketing and Communications
(Ex Officio Member)

Cally Martin
(She/her)
Strategy and Planning Specialist
(Ex Officio Member)

Peter Barton
(He/him)
Manager, Educational Services
(Ex Officio Member)

Elspeth Ellis
(She/her)
HR Representative
(Ex Officio Member)