

ECU hosts the inaugural Women Leaders in Public Sector Forum for WA, 7 April 2016

ECU was chosen by the Public Sector Network to host the annual Women Leaders in Public Sector Forum in Perth for 2016 including panel discussions being led by Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Strategic Partnerships) and Lead for Athena SWAN at ECU, Professor Cobie Rudd. A diverse range of participants from across the Public Sector met to discuss the emerging challenges and opportunities in improving gender equality.

The Forum commenced with a message from Senator the Hon. Michaela Cash, Minister for Women and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service who noted the achievements of the last half century in progressing gender equality and the importance to build on past wins, taking responsibility for change.

Key speakers included Charlie Cunningham, CEO of Business News, Stephanie Black, Executive Director, Government Procurement, WA Department of Finance and Sadie Godfrey, Assistant Auditor General Business Services, Office of the Auditor General. Referring to personal experiences across their own career trajectories, speakers discussed several focal themes in the gender equality space including maintaining momentum in innovation, gaining respect for expertise amongst colleagues and challenges that face women in male dominated sectors.

Attendees from all genders across the public sector attended the day. Pressing issues discussed included overcoming unconscious and conscious bias, removing traditional barriers in order to improve gender representation and the need for open, attentive and transparent leadership.

The Forum concluded with a panel led discussion on future leadership and increasing women's confidence and advancing careers. ECU's Dean of its South West Campus, Ms Lyn Farrell opened the Forum and Professor Rudd led the closing session. The final panel discussion gave attendees the opportunity to discuss ideas for a fairer and more dynamic future work force.



Picture: Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Strategic Partnerships) and ECU Lead for Athena SWAN, Professor Cobie Rudd leading panel discussions.