

ECU Athena SWAN Lead presents to BP Network on “The Good, the Bad and the Ugly’

Multinational company, BP stresses diversity and inclusion as more than a box-ticking exercise – it is a business essential. Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Strategic Partnerships) and Athena SWAN Lead at ECU, Professor Cobie Rudd was invited to provide the Address to BP’s Women’s International Network on unconscious bias in the workplace on 3 August 2016. Entitled, ‘*The Good, the Bad and the Ugly: Dealing with Unconscious and Conscious Bias in the Workplace*’, Professor Rudd discussed the importance of creating gender inclusive workplaces based on what organisations can do, as well as tips for women, men and gender diverse people.

“The biggest barriers are organisational culture and managerial discretion and they work together impacting ongoing performance, career progression and remuneration.”

As members of the Science in Australia Gender Equity (SAGE) Pilot of the Athena SWAN Charter in Australia, ECU will look at approaches to unconscious bias training that enables staff to make better decisions in recruitment, promotion, selection and overall. Through transparent decision making, ECU strives to make all staff aware of decisions based on preconceptions that may discriminate or disadvantage.

In alignment, minority groups should not feel they have to adopt behaviours or modify their appearance to align to mainstream norms.

“Rather than focusing on marginalised groups, building inclusivity into an environment will help counteract bias.”

Professor Rudd challenged attendees to make an extra effort to ensure females staff are fairly represented in recruitment processes within their organisations and to consider ‘targets with teeth’.

“This is not just about quotas. It’s about challenging the status quo and changing attitudes and behaviours and in turn organisational cultures”



Picture: Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Strategic Partnerships) and ECU Lead for Athena SWAN, Professor Cobie Rudd talks at the BP International Women’s Network Speaker Event, 3 August 2016 (at which, there were as many males as females in the audience).