

## ECU provides insights on what it will take at the STEM Gender Equality Congress, Berlin

ECU's Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Strategic Partnerships), Professor Cobie Rudd joined gender equality experts from around the world to talk sustainable change at the annual global STEM Gender Equality Congress in Berlin on 8 and 9 of June 2017. Presenting to a full capacity audience, Professor Rudd shared ECU's insights and experiences to date as participants in the Australian Pilot of the Athena SWAN Charter, discussing what it will take to integrate inclusivity strategies into the workplace, namely within science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) disciplines.

Including representatives from the World Economic Forum, UNESCO, European Institute for Gender Equality, the Equality Challenge Unit, Science in Australia Gender Equity (SAGE) and Accenture as well as numerous universities from around the world, the Congress facilitated a series of panel discussions and presentations that allowed organisations to collaborate on addressing the underrepresentation of women in STEM through progressive and disruptive solutions.

Barriers for women in STEM extend across a wide spectrum of factors. This includes the ongoing gender stereotyping of science and research roles and the perception they are not considered 'family-friendly', particularly for employees returning to work after parental leave.

"We must avoid having to 'prove it, then prove it again' – we cannot discount women's successes in STEM, but we do – it's a type of bias that is common in universities." Professor Rudd said.



ECU is currently looking at biases in recruitment, appraisal and promotions and unconscious bias training is now available for all staff to facilitate decision making processes.

The Congress raised the importance of inclusivity networks (for all diversity groups), growing science 'ecosystems' internally within organisations and providing genuine sponsors for aspiring staff. The economic benefits of gender equality were also explored within the context of the existing global gender pay gap and the underrepresentation of women in STEM which impacts organisational performance and innovation growth.

ECU were diamond sponsors of this global event which has received an extremely positive response and will continue next year, taking place in Amsterdam, Holland.

*Picture: "We need to acknowledge that everyone has a different life journey and we cannot continually rely on one particular model or approach to work", Professor Rudd talks at the World STEM Gender Equality Congress, 8 June 2017.*