

Australian Society of Plant Scientists Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Date: 2020-2022

Introduction

This Diversity and Inclusion Policy sets out our commitment to diversity and inclusion in our programs, activities and the places we interact; how we will achieve those objectives; and how we will measure those achievements.

It details the strategies we will use to ensure we value and respect the diversity of our members and that of the communities in which we operate, and what we will do to create programs, events and interactions that are fair, accessible, flexible, inclusive and in which unlawful discrimination, bullying, harassment or victimisation are not tolerated.

Policy Objectives

Our objectives are to:

- make equity, diversity and inclusion a central part of how our organization works, and of our programs and events;
- support and empower our members to be able to do their best and bring their whole selves to their engagement in our field;
- support and empower a diversity of plant science researchers, professionals, stakeholders and affiliates to participate fully in our events and programs;
- ensure that all members have equal access to opportunities available through The Australian Society of Plant Scientists initiatives and are equitably rewarded and recognised for their contributions;
- lead by example, so that our members and other organisations within our sector can see the tangible benefits of diversity and inclusion.

Diversity

The term diversity, when referenced in this policy, refers to all the characteristics that make individuals different from each other.

It includes characteristics such as age, caring responsibilities, cultural diversity, disability, gender, Indigeneity, sexual orientation and gender identity, and religion.

Diversity is about our commitment to creating an organisation that reflects the communities we serve, and inclusion is about our commitment to equality and treating all individuals – our members, stakeholders, employees, and the communities in which we operate – with fairness and respect.

Inclusion

Inclusion refers to the act of creating professional environments, events and programs in which any individual or group feels welcomed, respected, valued and empowered to fully participate and contribute.

Inclusive environments, events and programs incorporate new and different ways of thinking, interacting and working so that all individuals, whether members of majority or minority groups, are able to contribute.

Inclusion occurs when the diverse mix of people in our organisation, programs, and at our events, experience:

- Feeling valued and respected
- Having a sense of belonging and connection
- Being able to access opportunities and resources
- Being able to contribute their perspectives and talents

Policy Principles

The key principles which underpin our approach to diversity and inclusion are:

Governance and leadership

The Executive Committee is responsible for leading diversity and inclusion policies and actions in the organisation so as to ensure its reputation as a representative, innovative, socially and economically responsible organisation. Diversity and Inclusion will be a standing item on the ASPS Council and AGM agenda.

Membership

Our organisation will proactively seek members from a diverse range of backgrounds, experiences, qualities and expression, and ensure our activities, operations, policy development and strategic management embrace a diversity of perspectives, by balancing participation by gender, by enhancing the numbers and participation of minority groups, people from different career stages and specialties, and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. To monitor this we collect optional information when members join the society, including **identification as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander** and gender identity.

Our organisation will promote diversity and inclusion by actively seeking to include and celebrate a diverse range of faces, voices and perspectives in our prizes, awards, meetings, and events (see below).

Prizes and awards

When assessing applicants for various ASPS awards, consideration will be given for research output relative to opportunity. This means applicants that have experienced career interruptions due to caring responsibilities or illness will only be assessed relative to opportunity.

Jan Anderson Award. A specific award to showcase early to mid-career women plant scientists.

Support for carers to attend ASPS meetings, *scheme TBA.*

Meetings and events

Organisers of meetings and events are requested to enact the following checklist

- aim for gender parity in selection organisers/chairs/speakers
- consider career stage, cultural and linguistic diversity when selecting these positions
- include a welcome to country in our activities
- encourage inclusive and respectful behavior
- if possible, include a “noisy room” with talks streamed to this room to enable people to bring kids if needed
- ensure there are facilities for breastfeeding and the location is included in meeting information

Communications, marketing, outreach and engagement

ASPS website has an Inclusion and Diversity page that contains this policy, meeting checklist, relevant awards and links to allied organisations.

<https://www.queersinscience.org.au/>

<http://www.prideinclusionprograms.com.au/>

<https://insiderguides.com.au/never-ok-campaign/>

<https://www.wearitpurple.org/>

<https://www.whiteribbon.org.au/>

<https://www.csiro.au/en/Showcase/Indigenous-Futures>

Where appropriate these links will be promoted at meetings and events.

Accountability and Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the Executive Committee to ensure the implementation of this policy. Progress on the implementation of this policy will be reported by the Inclusion and Equity officer at the AGM as standing item on the agenda.

Violation of this policy

Complaints, reports of violation, or feedback on this policy should be raised directly to the Inclusion and Equity officer. If the complainant feels unable to raise an issue with the Inclusion and Equity officer, they should approach the President.

Where this policy is violated, the Inclusion and Equity officer will defer to the Executive Committee immediately, working with them to identify swift and appropriate action.

Review of this policy

This policy will be formally reviewed at AGM 2021 by the Executive Committee and thereafter biannually.

Why is it important?

Our organisation practices diversity and inclusion because it makes good sense. Our mission is to bring together all members of the Australian Society of Plant Scientists to advance the role, reputation and impact of plant science across the nation. We recognise that inclusion and diversity play a key role in enabling us to achieve this mission. An inclusive culture within our organisation, and across our programs and events, will assist our organisation to achieve these goals and allow us to meet our obligations under the Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986, Age Discrimination Act, Sex Discrimination Act, Racial Discrimination Act, Racial Hatred Act, Disability Discrimination Act, and other relevant anti-discrimination laws.