OBJECTIVE 1: A WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE WORKING ENVIRONMENT

To nurture a welcoming, inclusive working environment, where all Department members feel comfortable and safe, with equal access to opportunities for career advancement and professional support.

[1.A; 1.B] We completed an assessment of the outcomes of our local culture survey and the local results in the University Your Say survey and have been able to identify a number of areas of concern, with action to be taken in 2020. Focus groups with female research and undergraduate students will be conducted in early 2020 to drill further into the findings and determine appropriate measures to take at Department level or wider.

[1.B] Manawari Cultural training will be completed by staff in Q1 2020, with a student module also on the way for 2020 which should be available to casual staff operating within the Association for Astronomy (in Department). At least three (3) staff have completed Mental Health First Aid training – a nationally recognised certificate – with more to follow in Q1 2020.

[1.C] EDC members provided input to a newly established MQ plan for gender neutral toilets and signage across campus. Our EDC page, dept main page, health and safety pages and physical noticeboards have been kept up to date with new resources added regularly. Articles and reports have been shared by email across the Department and included in our local newsletter. Our Ally members continue to be active in the network and Allies are growing in number, now up to 15 by year end 2019. Persons of contact posters will be updated in Q1 2020. Our Department-led social media publications and print media are reflective of our diverse profile and thought is given to ensure that balance and representation are fair across all platforms.

[1.D] We held a Women in STEM Morning Tea in March open to all FSE staff and students which was well attended, and an International Morning Tea for Department staff and students in October to celebrate our wide cultural diversity. A Department statement of welcome was composed and is on display at the newly opened MQ Observatory operations building; the statement underscores our efforts to be a welcoming, culturally safe and respectful place of study and learning that draws upon centuries of traditional knowledge to build new understanding. An Acknowledgement of Country was included at all Department-led events, and we were delighted to have been joined by Aunty Julie Janson who presented an inspiring and thought-provoking Welcome to Country at the MQ Observatory re-opening event in early December.

Specific action is needed in 2020 to: re-establish an ECR mentoring network; continue to build upon our relationship with Walanga Muru; recognise a wider range of religious festivals and celebrations that better reflects our diversity; and create an accessible carers/quiet space within Department.
OBJECTIVE 2: RAPID IMPROVEMENT IN DIVERSITY MEASURES

To achieve significant improvement in gender balance and other diversity measures in all parts of our operation at an accelerated rate.

[2.A] We engaged with the MQ Office of Workplace Equity and Diversity (OWED) and determined a fair approach to engage (for the first time) with female-only recruitment for an ECR position in quantum (within ARC EQuS); the new practice followed the lead of a number of institutions across Australia in this space. We collated and published an inclusive recruitment guide for use in Department and released a clear set of sessional staff hiring practices used within Department. Adherence to these practices – which apply MQ policies to the local teaching environment - ensure an equitable and sustainable outcome that supports the mentoring and career development needs of sessional teaching staff in our undergraduate spaces.

[2.B] We continued to engage with OWED to develop local and University-wide recruitment approaches. Staff in Department maintained their membership on the MQ SAGE working group and will continue to work across the University towards meeting our Bronze SAGE commitments in coming years. Staff in Department expressed interest in membership at the new Faculty Equity and Diversity committee to be established in 2020.

[2.C] Technical staff were granted Department assistance and support to attend career development training programs, conferences and workshops locally and interstate, while administration staff embarked upon regular integrated team sessions in Department aimed at enhancing leadership skills.

[2.D] We doubled the visibility of our EDI section on the Department landing page and optimised the use of search term functionality behind the websites to increase traffic and discoverability. As noted at [1.C] above we maintained visibility of our diverse profile and EDI activities via our social media platforms and print/electronic publications (e.g. Department research brochure). Our Workplace Culture Statement remains displayed prominently within all Department office areas (7WW, 6SR, CNBP, AHH, Observatory); the statement will be posted in our new 9WW space in the new year and was displayed at the Physics and Astronomy advising desk at the MQ Open Day in September.

Specific action is needed in 2020 to: update and widen data capture for our gender matrix; to establish a process for above-step job offers; and to engage with our research groups and centres with respect to resource/support provision and inclusive recruitment across research grant funded roles.

OBJECTIVE 3: AN INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

To ensure that our commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion extends to and is reflected in the experience of our students at all levels.

[3.A] The student experience is receiving increased attention across MQ, and FSE is no exception. We’ve been able to determine that the School of Engineering (at least) has identified a number of areas of concern amongst student cohorts that we share, and efforts were made to collaborate across focus groups and activities; much more needs to be done here to activate this collaboration effectively in 2020. As noted at [1.A] above, we intend to hold student focus groups in Q1 2020 and hope to draw upon the activities and resources developing in this space in SoE and at Faculty.

[3.B] The Arthur Pryor Scholarship, awarded annually by the Department to a commencing undergraduate student, was awarded in 2019 to a student from a regional area of NSW who was able to demonstrate disadvantage during schooling; the same approach will be taken again when awarding the scholarship in 2020. During 2019, at discretion of the Department teaching leadership group, UG student mental health concerns in particular have been a focus for flexibility in completion of assessment tasks within the bounds of equity and fairness, but beyond the regular scope of Special Consideration for illness or misadventure.

[3.C] EDI-awareness and expectations around staff:student behaviours were included in 2019 in sessional teaching staff induction sessions; these will remain a standard fixture in sessions in future.
Continuing and fixed term academic staff were amongst those who attended the Drawing the Line workshops in June (see [5.C] below), which drew attention to bullying and harassment and how to address instances that may occur.

Specific action needs to be taken here in 2020 to: work with current UG and research students in establishing a workplace culture statement relevant to them; and further take-up of training and workshop modules around addressing bullying and harassment needs to be encouraged, particularly amongst casual staff.

**Objective 4: A leader in EDI practice**

To maintain and extend our role as a leader in equity, diversity and inclusion within the University, and build our reputation as a successful example of an equitable, diverse and inclusive workplace within our professional community.

[4.A] ASA Pleiades award scheme requires new application by end 2020. In the meantime, Department EDC members have kept up to date with key national and international documents including: Department members have contributed feedback to ARC in response to proposed changes to gender equity in the DECPRA scheme; and provided feedback to the Women in STEM Decadal plan.

[4.B] Department staff have maintained active representation on a range of external Committees and bodies. Examples include (but are not limited to): Prof Dan Zucker, ASA Chair; Prof Michael Steel, AIP; Prof Judith Dawes, EDI committee for Science and Technology Australia; A/Prof Thomas Volz and Dr Guillermo Munoz Mutato, ARC EQuS EDI group.

[4.C] Together with a number of institutions and groups, recognition of this Department’s EDI approach and initiatives taken over the last several years was included in a Nature Astronomy article published in December. The article, written by Prof Lisa Kewley (ANU, ASTRO 3D CoE Director), focuses on diversity and inclusion in Australian astronomy and provides a clear indication of the recent history of challenges and initiatives that exist in our community. Group members presented at or assisted in organising international workshops. Examples include: Prof Dan Zucker presented on a range of EDI matters, including the history of Pleiades at a Symposium of the International Astronomical Union in Japan; Prof Michael Steel co-organised two IDEA sessions at ANZCOP2019 with A/Prof Celine D’Orgeville (ANU) addressing a range of current EDI matters and activities; Prof Judith Dawes participated in a Diversity Panel for the Asia Pacific Optical Sensing conference in NZ, drawing upon her personal experiences, including with successful actions/policies in the diversity space.

[4.D] We have continued to build our connection with schools and groups in under-represented areas, including regional areas of Australia. We provided outreach to new groups through participation in roadtrips such as the Upper Hunter LEAP Roadshow in December, and equipment to new groups through donations of surplus teaching instrumentation.

Specific action needs to be taken here in 2020 to: generate a set of outreach guidelines and a school/group directory of contacts that will facilitate improved impact in under-represented areas; invite EDI-active members to local EDC meetings to improve knowledge sharing; determine where improvements will be needed and how to achieve those to position the Department to apply for Gold Pleiades, or Bronze SAGE (or both).

**Objective 5: An EDI-aware and active workforce**

To build a Department community with awareness, motivation and skills to actively promote and implement equity, diversity and inclusion principles in our spaces.

[5.A] Our noticeboards have been maintained with news articles and relevant posters included throughout the year. Staff, students and the wider community have been kept up-to-date with our actions and those across the community through notifications on our website and social platforms, in
our newsletter, at Department meetings and through email communications. As mentioned at [2.D] above, a copy of our Workplace Culture Statement was displayed at the August Open Day.

[5.B] A number of existing Department EDC members have indicated a desire to be included in the Faculty level EDI committee to be established in 2020, and Department leadership are working with relevant contacts in faculty to ensure that there is synergy with our own actions, plans and approach. Department leadership shared and facilitated discussion about relevant documents including the results of the University Your Say survey, Gender Equity Strategy 2.0 and the SAGE action plan.

[5.C]; [5.D] Department staff completed a Drawing the Line workshop facilitated by MQ workplace coach Rachael Brady. The workshop provided a grounding in MQ and government legislation around bullying and harassment, then created foundations for starting conversations about or calling out instances that may be considered ‘below the line’. The workshop was attended by continuing and fixed term academic, professional, research and technical staff and creates increased potential to address instances of sub-standard behaviour noted amongst a number of cohorts, as revealed in the results of our 2018 culture survey. Training opportunities with the faculty and OWED were shared across Department, with positive take-up seen especially among non-EDC staff in Ally Network and Mental Health First Aid training.

Specific action needs to be taken here in 2020 to identify a wider range of on- and off-campus training opportunities to up-skill staff and students (particularly non-EDC members) in a range of EDI-relevant fields/areas of concern.