



Caring for the Carers

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Overview

- For Australia to succeed as a knowledge economy, talented female scientists need to be supported
- In biology, over 50% of all Bachelor of Science and PhD graduates are women however only 10-20% of senior investigators are women
- Non-biology STEM disciplines struggle to attract women; the number of female senior investigators is very low
- Australia's research workforce has the greatest attrition rates for individuals between the ages of 35-45 years
- While some women choose to leave, many do not want to, but feel they must for a variety of reasons
- Gender equity and equality in STEM is not just a "women's issue"

Issues	Support systems in place	Improvements	Resources
Why are women leaving science			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maternity, sick or carer's leave • Long, unsociable hours • Lack of job security or stability • Lack of equitable remuneration or promotion compared to male colleagues • 'Glass ceiling' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paid maternity leave • Opportunity to work reduced hours • Human Resources • Support groups (e.g. CNBP Mother's group; Professional Women networks) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easier access to information about the existing support systems • Promote healthy work/life balance • Longer contracts / Extension of contract in-line with time lost on maternity / sick / carers leave • Appreciation of female colleagues and encouragement to apply for awards and promotion • Courses specific for women's career development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Resources • CNBP Administrators • Colleagues • Mentors
Returning to work			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seminar/meeting scheduling incompatible with carer responsibilities • Full time work in a part time role • Expectation to return as the 'same' employee • Comparisons to returning female colleagues who have more support at home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule meetings/ seminar during the core work hours of 10 – 3 • Video/tele conference • Opportunity for onsite car park for 3rd trimester pregnant woman 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of crèche facilities or 'baby/cry room' for women on maternity leave interested in attending seminar and networking • Retention funding to hire technicians to keep research moving while working reduced hours and/or support child and other carer-related needs • 'Get in back in touch' days before official return to work • Quiet places for expressing / Arrangements for storage of expressed milk. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GoTo meetings • Skype • Recorded seminars
Ongoing career disruption			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining track record for competitive grants: Inability to travel / Reduced work days / School holidays etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ARC: 2 years career disruption per child for up to 2 children • NHMRC: calculates time on leave or at part time to allow for career disruption • Access to travel/babysitter funds to assist with balancing work and carer duties (CNBP Travel Fund / University Carers Funds) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual researchers: Documentation of career impacts (lost opportunities: interstate/international travel for conferences, collaboration etc) • Grant reviewers: Consideration of career disruption; Gender equality on review panels • Funding: Competitive grants to support researchers with career disruption (e.g. Barbara Kidman Fellowship at University of Adelaide); R.A support for part time staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ARC • NHMRC • Women in STEM • Athena Swan Charter