

## Report on GEAR Forums for Women – July 2025

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[GEAR Forums](#) provide an opportunity for the [GEAR team](#) to update women in the JCU community on JCU's actions towards gender equity, and to provide a space where women are welcome to raise and discuss equity issues that are important to them and share their views and experiences. GEAR Forums are confidential, with this de-identified report summarising the issues discussed across the Forums. GEAR Forum reports are used to inform the ongoing work of JCU in achieving gender equity.

On the 15 and 16 July 2025, 60 JCU women registered to attend a GEAR Forum hosted by GEAR Coordinator, Dr Ryl Harrison. The majority of the registrations came from women employed in ongoing positions (81%); 13% were fixed term and 5% casual. 76% were full-time, 24% part-time. 45% were Academic and 55% were Professional and Technical staff. 51% had attended a previous forum.

The forums began with an update on gender equity activities in 2025, and on the activities of the GEAR team. There was then opportunity for open discussion on matters women wanted to raise. A summary is outlined below.

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### Update to the GEAR Forum from the GEAR team on:

- The Gender Equity Advocacy and Reference Team's refreshed [terms of reference](#) in 2025, and new webpage of [Gender Equity Actions at JCU](#).
- The University's is embedding gender equity progress within the [Integrated Dynamic Planning](#) Process, focusing on the Colleges of Science and Engineering and College of Medicine and Dentistry.
- The Dean College of Science and Engineering provided an update at the July GEAR meeting:
  - Staff ratios have changed:
    - Change from .5 to .7 female for every 1 male employee (achieved through attrition of men, rather than recruitment of women).
  - College leadership has changed
    - 0% women in the leadership team in 2020 to 50% in 2025
  - College Actions:
    - Succession planning.
    - Female-only recruitment into geoscience & engineering
    - Awareness raising through presentations by senior industry figures (Lisa Harvey Smith, Lisa Kewley, Chief Scientist).
    - 2025: Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging group supported by Associate Deans for EDIB
- Promotions Process update
  - Late 2024 – Qualitative research on promotions process was completed by GEAR members Connor McShane and Stewart Lockie and provided to the Senior Leadership Group.
  - At the March GEAR Meeting – Chair of Academic Board outlined some promotions initiatives:
    - A mentor program to encourage applicants to think early about applications.
    - A Single platform between JCUA and JCUS to capture efficiencies and consistencies.

- Training sessions to focus on criteria promotions will be measured by, and training sessions on how to write a good narrative, address ROPE, seek support and advice, and provide evidence.
  - Panels will be brought together before deliberation to ensure correct training and understanding.
  - More structured feedback to support applicants on what they need to do for future success.
  - Policy and Procedure reviews will occur in 2026.
- JCU Respect program
  - [JCU Respect Annual Report 2024](#) published, noting.
    - 1500+ students participated in 44 Respectful Relationships Workshops, as well as 300+ HDR Candidates and Advisers.
    - 20+ Partnership meetings were held with residential colleges and specialist sexual assault support services, and 5 Memorandums of Understanding discussed or renewed.
  - Refreshed [Safety and Wellbeing](#) webpages, [Sexual harassment and sexual assault](#) webpages.
- [Wattle Leadership Program](#) update.
  - JCU joined in 2024, with 4 women attending last year and 5 this year. (5 academic and 4 P&T).
  - Some JCU alumni of the Wattle program are interested in holding some events and looking at sharing their learnings through a model of professional development peer support with other JCU women.
- [Workplace Gender Equality Agency Reporting](#) update.
  - JCU has completed reporting as required as an organisation with more than 500 staff. JCU staff can make comments on the institutional report to JCU or WGEA.
  - There are useful [employer data explorer](#) and [industry data explorers](#) available on the WGEA webpage.
- [JCU Gender Pay Gap Analysis](#) update
  - JCU's analysis was completed earlier this year.
    - Average Remuneration pay gap for Academic staff of 9.9%
    - Median Remuneration pay gap for Academic staff of 4.3%
    - Average Remuneration pay gap for Professional staff is 6.4%
    - Median Remuneration pay gap for Professional staff is -3.5%
  - JCU has committed to increasing visibility and monitoring of loadings, balancing promotion pathways and increasing the retention of senior women, more detail will be put against these actions by September.
- [VC Gender Equity Project Fund](#) update
  - Provides up to \$30,000 in financial support for between 1 and 6 targeted projects led by JCU staff. Two projects underway in 2025
    - Making the Invisible Visible: Service and Engagement Audit: Research Team is Megan Higgle, Allison Paley, Connor McShane and Helena Radke

- Gender Equity in HDR Candidature Project: Research Team Connar McShane and Sophie Walker

### **Summary of Forum Discussion:**

#### **Loadings – Pay Gap**

- Forum participants supported the commitment made by JCU to increasing visibility and monitoring of loadings, with some women noting they were not aware that some positions attracted loadings or how they were funded and expressing interest in understanding further what factors are considered in the allocation of loadings.

#### **Behaviour at Meetings**

- Some participants reported that inappropriate behaviours in meetings was occurring. This has been observed particularly in meetings chaired by men that were less structured/ formal, or at work group level, observing that some men may find it unnecessary or difficult to address behaviour by others who are their friends. Men have been observed disrespectfully derailing a meeting chaired by a woman by dominating discussion, repeatedly raising topics irrelevant to the agenda, and demeaning the work under discussion. Another participant described behaviour that included comments to a woman that described them as being insufficiently feminine.
- Women were interested to discuss what interventions could be used to address inappropriate behaviours – with one suggestion that inappropriately gendered comments can be responded to with “Sorry, could you repeat that” or “Oh, did you mean to say that out loud”.
- A Gender Equity Guide for Meetings is available [here](#). In addition, [Sexual Misconduct Officers](#) can provide confidential support any person who is experiencing sexist behaviours, sexual harassment or sexual assault, and it is possible to [make a report](#). There are three Sexual Misconduct Officers at JCU, and people are free to connect with the Officer they feel most comfortable with. There is also the [Staff Reporting and Complaints Portal](#).

#### **Service and Engagement**

- Forum participants expressed strong support for the [Making the Invisible Visible project](#), noting that there are widely differing views on what counts as service and engagement.

#### **Domestic Violence / Embedding prevention across the University in teaching and learning – practical strategies for academics**

- The Forum was advised of the recent [Our Watch webinar](#) where JCU’s Dr Alex Dancyger and Dr Ann Carrington presented information on the integration of trauma-informed practice into dentistry curriculum at JCU.
- JCU’s award winning dentistry resources are available [here](#), and there is opportunity to tailor the approach to other disciplines.

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#### **This report has been prepared by GEAR Coordinator:**

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