Nixon Review: Bias & Discrimination Working Group

Co-chairs:

Honorary Associate Professor Sally Moyle ,

Shehana Samaraweera

Executive Sponsors:

Professor Tony Connolly,

Hannah Leary

Australian National University

Approach

Scope: Address 14 possible actions, spanning recommendations 7, 9.1, 12, and 13.3 from the Nixon Review.

Intersectional Lens: Adopted a deeply intersectional perspective to address discrimination across diverse cohorts in the ANU community.

Broad Scope: Identify alternative best practices across diverse contexts.

Application and our goal: Scaling recommendations to apply broadly across all systems, practices, and culture to create sustainable change that prevents bias and discrimination across all ANU activities– from recruitment, to daily operations, to institutional culture.

Build Momentum: Amplify earlier work to gain traction and drive meaningful, lasting institutional change.

Methodology

Foundation: Established shared group values, modelling a safe, inclusive and respectful university community.

Structure: Formed three thematic subgroups to workshop the specific actions and recommendations assigned.

Expert Consultation: Engaged 11 guest speakers bringing lived experience and subject-matter expertise to inform our work

Evaluation Framework: Used a framework to evaluate each recommendation and its impact and required investment.

The evaluation framework helped us to prioritise actions based on their potential for meaningful change and return on investment.

Evaluation Framework

The framework was used to evaluate:

- Breadth (reach) & depth (significance) of impact
- Required investment (time/resources) for implementation.

This enabled clear identification of actions with low ROI, allowing the group to prioritise initiatives with greater potential for meaningful change.

The identification of quick wins, high-impact actions and action interdependencies will help inform implementation planning.

Outputs

A final comprehensive report covering the range of issues identified throughout the process, overarching recommendations, and possible actions beyond the scope of the referred Nixon recommendations.

Annexure 1: The outputs template responding specifically to the referred Nixon recommendations and possible actions (7, 9.1, 12, 13.3).

Annexure 2: A spreadsheet that extracts all the recommendations and actions, including overarching ones responding to related Nixon Report findings, from both the report and outputs template, assessed using an 'Impact/Investment' framework.

Critical Success Factors

A safe, inclusive, and respectful culture is upheld by four pillars:

Pillar 1

Clear expectations and standards relating to bias and discrimination

Pillar 2

Accountability across the community

Pillar 3

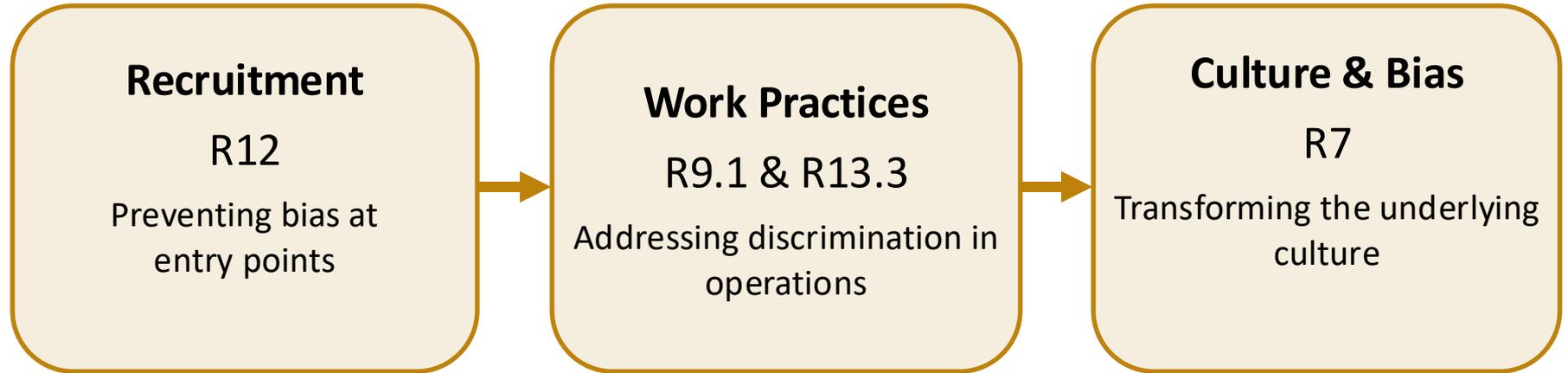Leaders actively and consistently prioritise and model standards

Pillar 4

Resource the work and mechanisms

Sub-Groups

We organised work around three critical intervention points to prevent and address bias across the lifecycle of discrimination:

Recruitment

R12

Preventing bias at entry points

Work Practices

R9.1 & R13.3

Addressing discrimination in operations

Culture & Bias

R7

Transforming the underlying culture

Recruitment

Recommendation 12

Require and enforce compliance with fair recruitment practices

- Staffing resources

- Enhanced training and materials

- Inclusive and equitable candidate assessment

- Amendments to policy and procedure

- Accountability measures

- Improve processes and embed Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DE&I)

Work Practices

Nixon Recommendations 9.1 and 13.3

- 9.1 Provide skills training to supervisors to enable them to manage the needs of students and staff during their pregnancy and return to University

- 13.3 Cease non-competitive ongoing appointments to positions with supervisory responsibilities

Work Practices

Working group recommendations 9.1 and 13.3

- Adopt innovative, experiential training methods, beyond standard online modules. Consider incorporating cultural, community-based, empathy-building activities to foster deeper understanding and behavioural change (e.g. KNoTs offered via the McCusker Institute or intersectional walks).

- Strengthen the probation process to include a 360-degree review, gathering input from the entire team, including HDR students where applicable, to assess a supervisor's commitment, competence and effectiveness.

- Revise the workload allocation model to explicitly recognise and value leadership as a distinct category.

Culture and Bias

Nixon Recommendation 7.1

Review academic performance measurement to ensure unbiased assessment and compliance with ANU policies and procedures and relevant laws

- 7.1 Assess the Research Performance Dashboard to assess its alignment with the ANU Gender Equity Strategy and ANU Policies and Procedures, in particular Gender Equity Strategy Action Item 1.4: Work with Colleges and Portfolios to develop and use workload models and performance appraisal processes that account for gender equity matters, including recording and appraisal of part-time workloads, in accordance with the ANU Enterprise Agreement, and Gender Equity Strategy Action Item 1.5: Produce guidance and training for managers and supervisors regarding skills for the development and implementation of appropriate gender inclusive practices;

Culture and Bias

Nixon Recommendations 7.2 & 7.3

- 7.2 Assess the Dashboard in view of the Academic Promotions Procedure and the Guideline on Assessing achievement relative to opportunity;

- 7.3 Consider the approach identified in the forthcoming paper on academic performance measurement from former Chief Scientist Cathy Foley .

20/10/2025

Culture and Bias

Working Group Recommendation 7

- ANU Focus and APPA (Academic Performance and Productivity Analytics unit) to work closely and to be regularly monitored

- Alternative to SELTs

- Consider publications in languages other than English and research opportunities outside of the Anglosphere.

- In-person training for all.

- Decommission of the former College of Health and Medicine Research Performance Dashboard

Overarching Recommendations

Positive Duty
Introduce positive duty to address all forms of discrimination, with mandatory training and accountability

Data Insights
Regular data-driven review of recruitment, promotions, pay-gaps, workload allocation, and performance management

Employment Security & Flexibility
Reduce precarious employment and ensure equitable access to flexible work and leave provisions

Transparent Processes
Enhance transparency in promotions, appointments, and supervision through competitive processes and clearly defined quality standards

Cultural Transformation
Foster a culture of care that values diverse intersectional experiences led by visible, consistent leadership commitment and role modelling

Implementation
Coordinated implementation of all Working Group recommendations, supported by a formal senior role leading an Inclusion Community of Practice

Thank you

Questions?

Alice Richardson

Bryan Wang

Christine Phillips

Emma Zeng

Hannah Lopez

Jill Mowbray-Tsutsumi (Project Liaison)

Kim Neville

Manuel Delicado Cantero

Meera Ashar

Merryn McKinnon

Mika Yamaguchi

Rachel Stuart

Rory Kelly

Sally Moyle (Academic Staff Co-Chair)

Sarthak Pathak

Shehana Samaraweera (Professional Staff Co-Chair)

Uday Narayan Yadav

Australian National University