

**Australasian Neuroscience Society (ANS) Equity and Diversity Committee**  
**Policy Statement**

Written: April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2017

Amended: July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Ratified by ANS Council: October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019

**Broader context:**

Across scientific fields of research, there is extensive evidence that women are under-represented, which means we are missing potential talent and innovation, as well as having a marked inequity in opportunities for science careers. There is also a need to extend the diversity of our society by supporting researchers from different ethnic, cultural, religious, geographical and socioeconomic backgrounds, regardless of their sexuality or disability, and those who need support for other reasons. This document outlines our objectives and approaches for building a diverse and inclusive society, and for allowing all members to fulfil their potentials within our organisation.

**Policy Objectives**

- To make equity, diversity, and inclusion central parts of how our organisation carries out its business.
- To support and empower our members to fulfil their potentials without discrimination, bullying, harassment or victimisation
- To support and empower a diversity of neuroscientists to participate fully in our meetings and other programs.
- To ensure that all members have equal access to opportunities available through the ANS's initiatives, and are equitably rewarded and recognised for their contributions.
- To combat bias, including unconscious bias, in decision making by having explicit guidelines for selection of invited and selected talks, leadership roles, and awards.
- To improve the opportunities for caregivers to engage with ANS by having supportive options for conferences and other events.
- To establish procedures that treat all of our members equitably, and when necessary, counterbalance existing cultural inequities.

**Specific Policies**

- Gender balance on ANS committees and the ANS Council should reflect\* the overall gender balance of ANS membership. This should be true for all committees from 2021. The responsibility for this lies with each committee chair.
- Gender balance in invited and selected talks at the ANS annual meeting should reflect the overall gender balance of ANS membership. This will take effect from the 2020 meeting. This is the responsibility of the meetings Selection Committee, which should include at least one member of the E&D Committee.
- Selection of invited and selected speakers at the ANS annual meeting should emphasise broader diversity, including diversity of cultural identity, disability, gender, Indigeneity, sexual orientation, and gender identity. This responsibility lies with the Selection Committee, including its member from the E&D Committee.

- Nominations of diverse neuroscientists should be actively sought for ANS awards. Those selecting awardees should be mindful of potential bias, and should perform selection with the goal of diverse awardees. This responsibility lies with the ANS President and the E&D Committee Chair.
- Measures should be taken to accommodate carers at the ANS annual meeting. Carers grants established in 2018 should be maintained. The efficacy and feasibility of on-site childcare should be assessed following its introduction at the 2019 meeting, and this should be maintained if feasible.
- ANS Equity and Diversity Policy Statement should be reviewed every three years by the E&D Committee.

\* Throughout this document, “reflect” means that the committee’s membership should have at least the same percentage of women as ANS as a whole, allowing for variations around the percentages of committees with small numbers of members. Any committee with equal representation of women and men will be viewed as balanced, regardless of ANS membership.