NHMRC’S WOMEN IN HEALTH SCIENCE COMMITTEE

Addressing the loss of women from medical research

Professor Anne Kelso, AO
**What is the issue?**

Retention and progression of women in Australian health and medical

### 2014 NHMRC Fellowship applications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fellowship Type</th>
<th>% women applicants</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ECF</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDF</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRF A</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRF B</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRF</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPRF</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fellowship applications 2014

NHMRC Fellowships

Proportion %

*similar trend across BRAs
Why is it an issue for NHMRC?

• Largest funder of health and medical research in Australia
  – >$800M of new grants will be awarded in 2015
    • Approximately 12% of the total funding for the Australian health and medical research effort

• NHMRC funded researchers employed by wide diversity of organisations
  – Universities
  – Hospitals
  – Independent Medical Research Institutes

• Obligation to ensure that Commonwealth funds are well spent
What have we done?

- Career disruptions and relative to opportunity;

- Part-time NHMRC fellowships;

- Better balanced representation between men and women on peer review committees;

- Elizabeth Blackburn Fellowship to recognise outstanding women scientists;

- NHMRC Women in Health Science Committee; and

- Revised NHMRC’s Administering Institution Policy to place greater emphasis on gender equity.
Research Funding - 2014

Proportion of all 2014 MREA Funding

Men

Women
Research Funding – 2014

Basic Science

Clinical Medicine and Science

Public Health

Health Services Research
Objectives of workshop

• To identify:
  – better ways of assessing career disruptions including potential metrics
    • *Are there better options for peer review?*
  – ways to promote part-time research or provide better support for those wishing to work full-time with career disruptions
    • *How can NHMRC work with institutions to ensure we provide opportunities for women to remain in the research workforce?*
Objectives of workshop

• To identify:
  – factors that should underpin the assessment Re-entry Fellowships
    • NHMRC is committed to introducing ‘re-entry’ fellowships at the CDF-equivalent level
    • What should the eligibility criteria be?
    • How should these applicants be assessed?
  – how institutional gender equity policies should be assessed, as stated in the revised NHMRC Administering Institution Policy
    • Revised or updated policies?
    • What would a ‘fail’ look like?
Goals of workshop

- To identify key practical points/ideas for each objective
- Present concrete ideas to NHMRC’s Research Committee
- Further consultation with the wider research sector, if applicable
- Final proposal/s to Research Committee for endorsement
- Implementation
Women in Science

• There is still much more that needs to be done but NHMRC cannot do it alone
• Sector-wide change is required
• Change will require:
  – Organisational change
  – Behavioural change
  – Structural change
  – Cultural change