

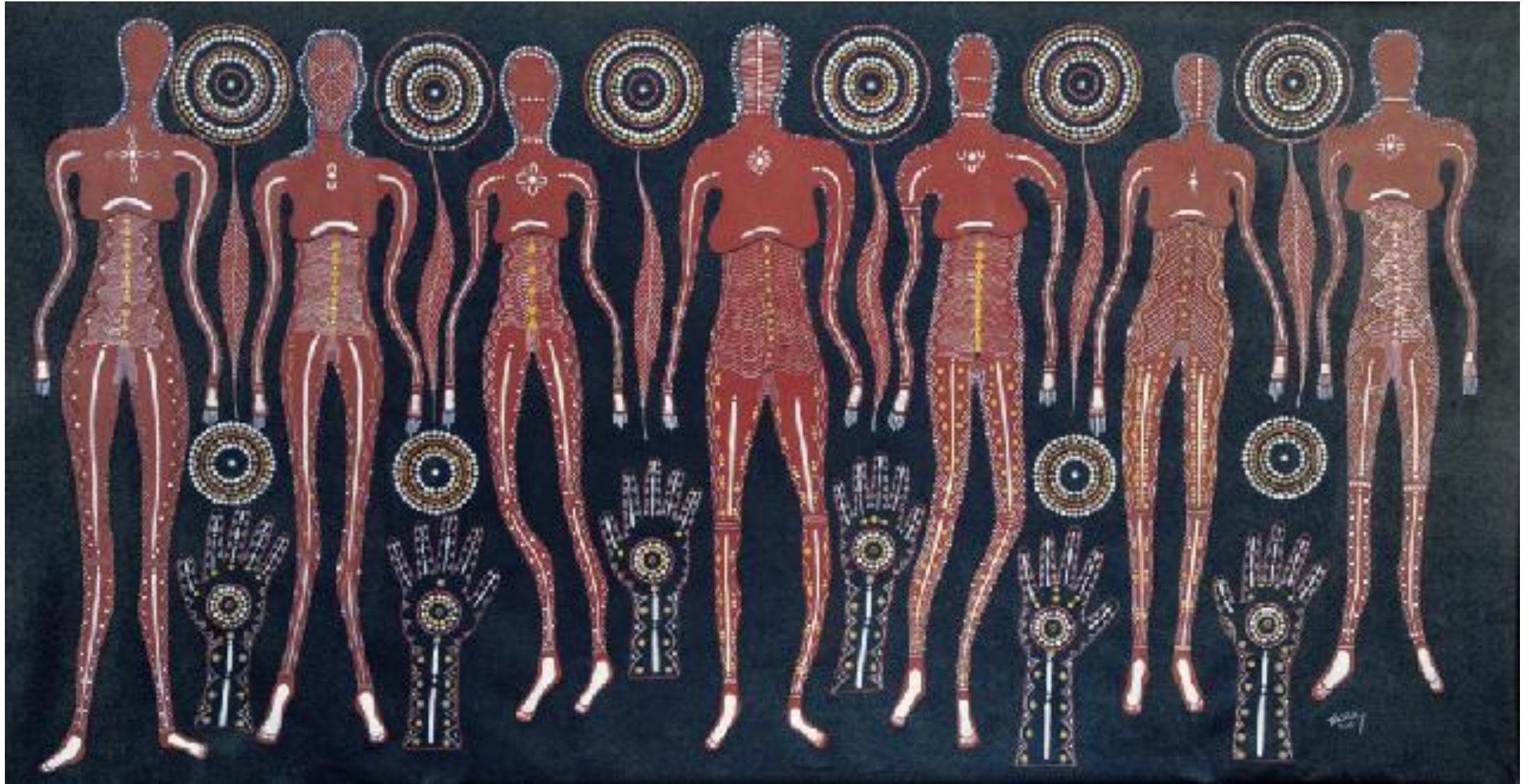
A colonial space: women spacefarers of the Antipodes

Dr Alice Gorman

Flinders University

Advisory Council, Space Industry Association of Australia

The Seven Sisters



Painting by Stella Wheildon (Kamilaroi, NSW)

1940s: Protesting the rocket bomb

- Alliance of Aboriginal activists, women's groups, Communist Party, disarmament and peace movement



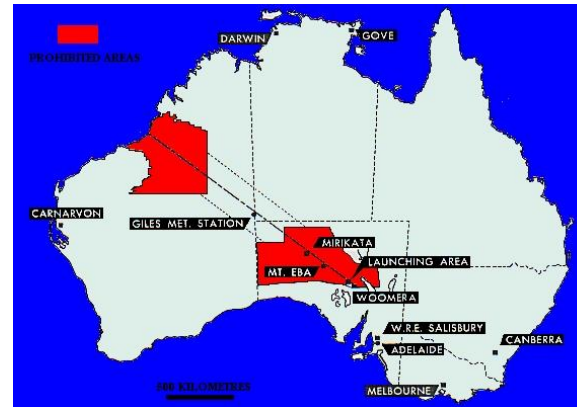
*Doris Blackburn, MP
Aborigines Advancement League*



*Margaret Tucker, Wiradjuri
Australian Aborigines League*

WOMEN WANT ROCKET SITE BAN

PERTH: Mrs. Mary Lester, State secretary of the Union of Australian Women, told an International Women's Day function that "projected rocket sites around Sydney would put Australia in the front line in any future war."



Woomera rocket range

ROCKET BOMB TESTS

Australians have been proud that their representatives abroad stood for the setting up of a court of human rights. Now let us show that we can practise what we preach, by respecting the human rights of our own aborigines. Their reserve should not be used for testing any kind of weapon nor should removal of them from that area be attempted. As is well known, their lives are bound up with their tribal grounds in a peculiar way that, to them, makes uprooting a spiritual disaster. Even if they went back afterwards, it might be to find their sacred places desecrated and their living seriously impaired by destruction of wild life.

Why rocket bombs should be made here at all is a problem for the public, who, without having been consulted, will be forced to pay for these abominations. But if the Government is determined on such experiment the proper place for it would be the environs of its spiritual home, Canberra. The people who live there, being white, could be evacuated with quickness, ease and certainty, and in the event of damage to buildings, crops and stock full compensation could be paid; in the case of the aborigines, neither the proper precautions beforehand, nor the compensation afterwards would be possible.—ELEANOR M. MOORE (Hon. Sec.), Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

Woomera: wives, mothers, servants, computers

- 1948: 1200 men /8 waitresses
- 1950s: 'computers', 'half-caste' domestic servants
- 1960s: highest birth rate in Australia
- 1970s: end of Australia's space age

1950s – WREDAC computer



Half-Castes May Work At Woomera

Half-caste girls may be employed as domestic servants at Woomera soon.

The SA Protector of Aborigines (Mr. C. Bartlett) said yesterday there was a fair demand for domestics at Woomera.

The native Patrol Officer (Mr W. B. McDougal) was at present taking a survey in the area to see whether half-caste girls could be sent there after they had finished a course in domestic service at the Fullarton Salvation Army Home.

1954

WOMEN'S INTEREST IN WOOMERA

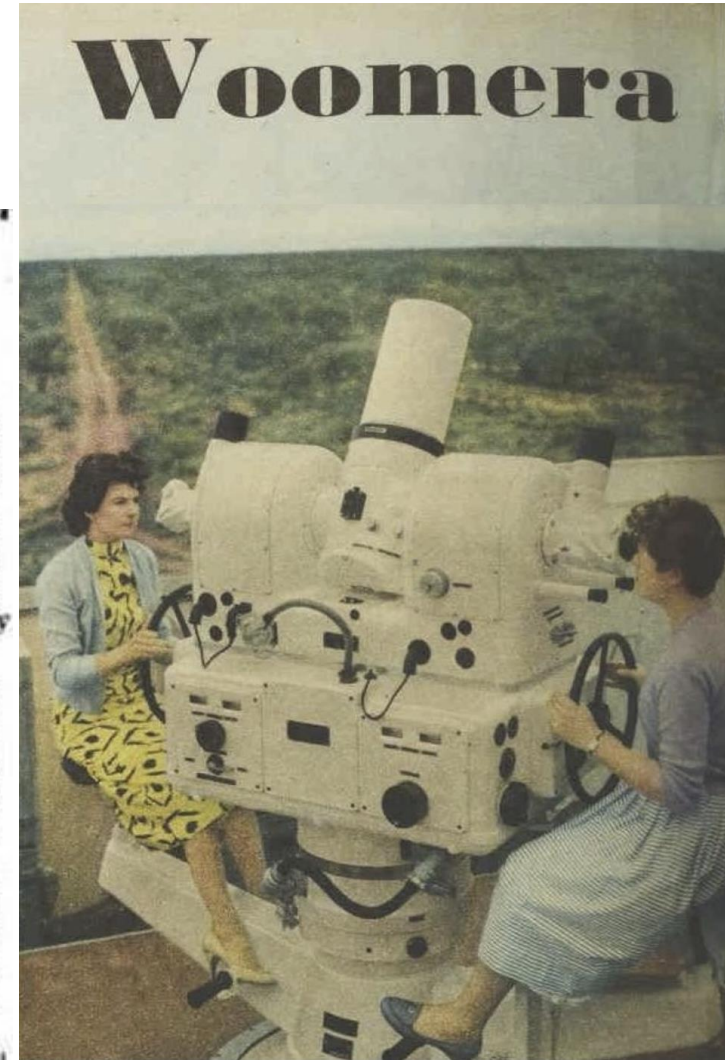
Melbourne. — Australian women are keenly interested in jobs at the Woomera Rocket Range.

More than 70 women and girls have applied to the Long Range Weapons Board of Administration for forty computing jobs.

Most sent written applications to Salisbury (SA), but some wrote and applied personally to officers of the Commonwealth Department of Supply and Development in Melbourne and Sydney.

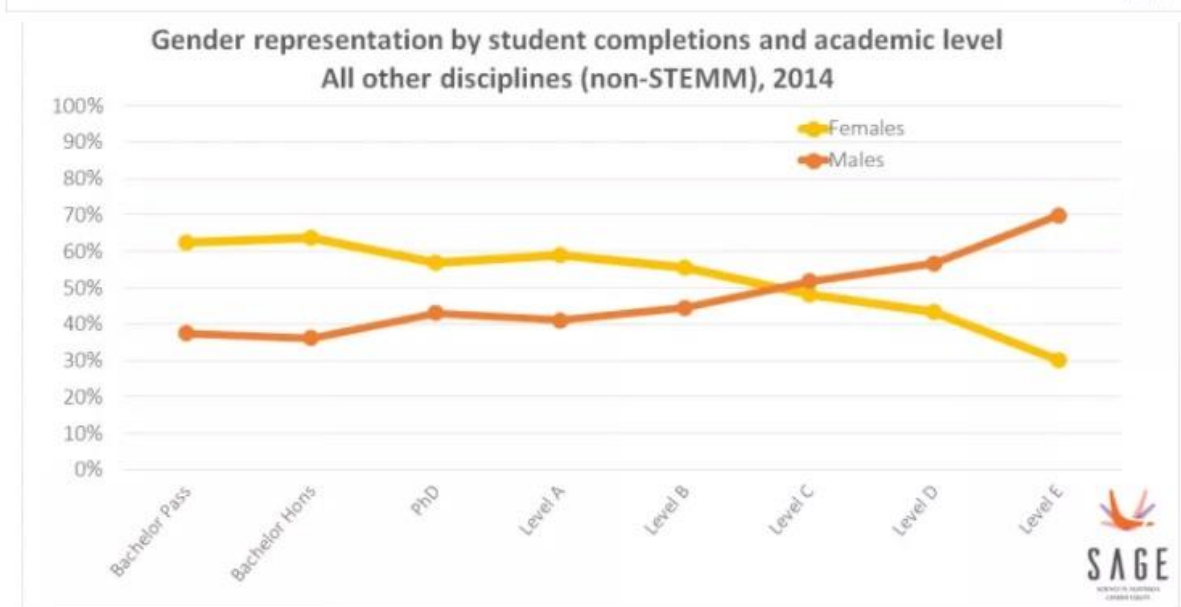
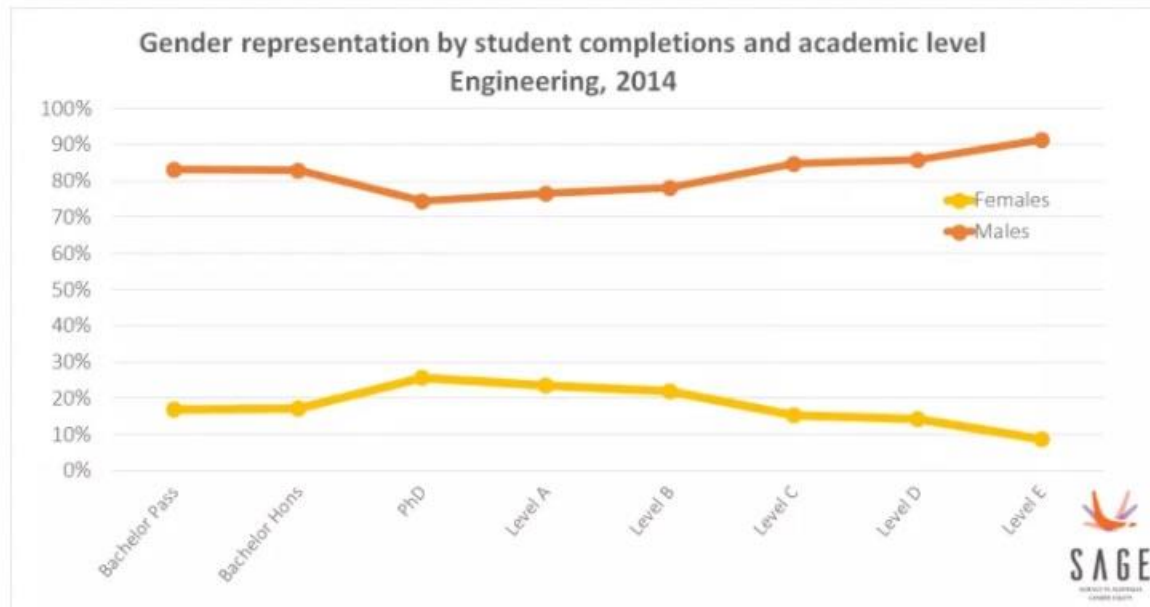
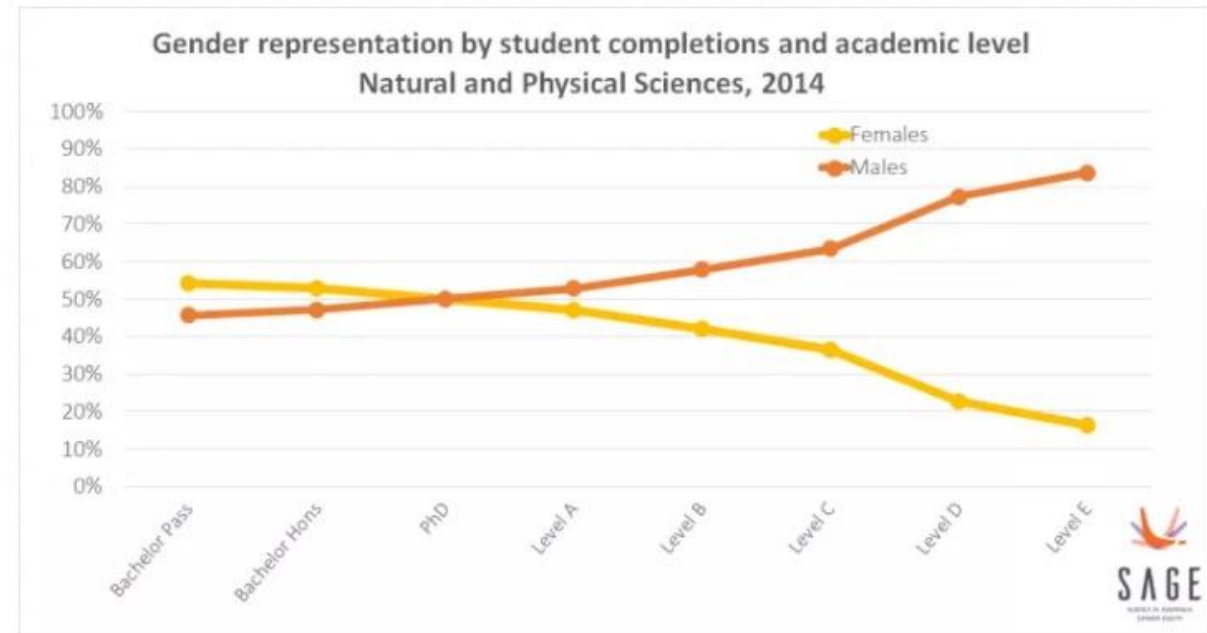
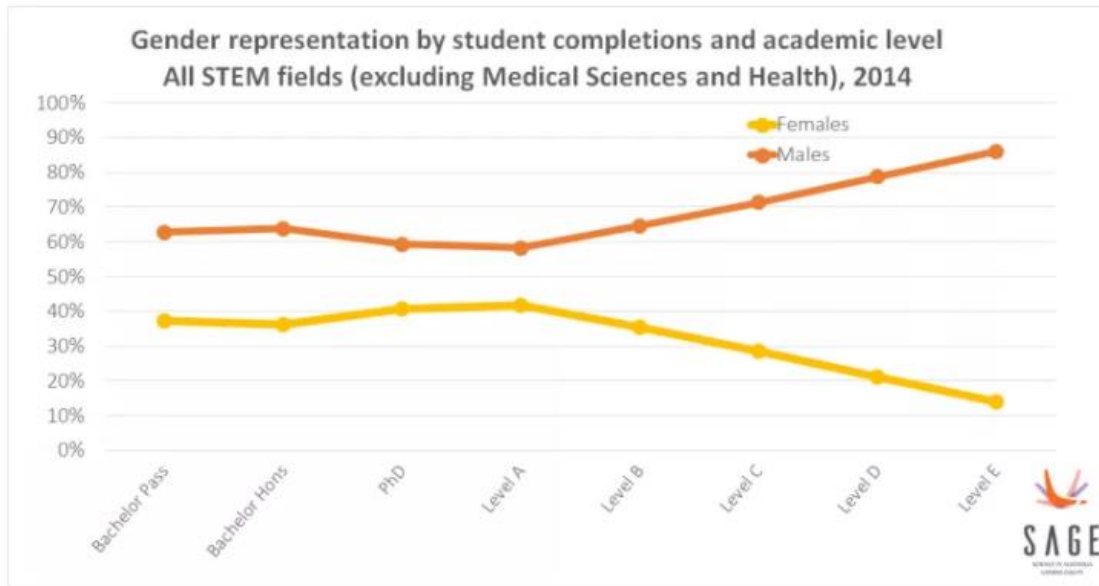
Women will be paid between £6/3/ and £7/2/ a week and girls, between £4/9/ and £5/17/. Their job will be to compute and dissect the result of rocket experiments.

1949



Operating the cinetheodolite

Where are we now? Australian women in STEM



Australian Space Research Conferences



- Under 30% female participants
- Presentations in proportion to attendance

Strategies: childcare, live streaming, financial support, avoid 'manels'

- Change from 'science' to 'research' to increase non-STEM participation
- Indigenous Sky Knowledge sessions

Strategy: use as gateway to Indigenous women's participation

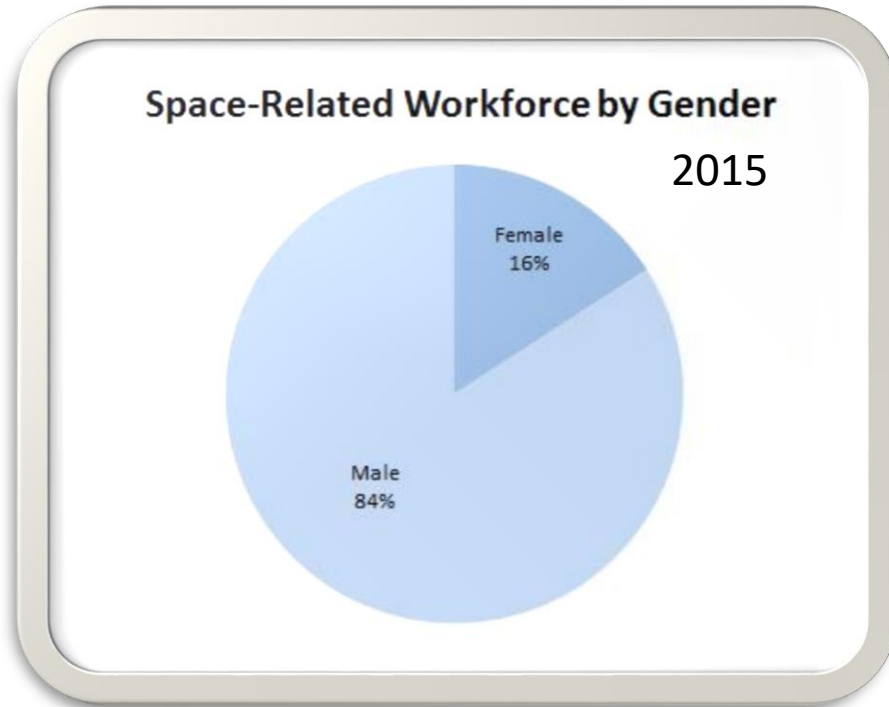
	16 th ASRC (2016)			15 th ASRC (2015)			
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Non binary	Total
Delegates	128 73.6%	46 26.4%	174	145 75.9%	45 23.6%	1 0.5%	191
Talks	86 71.1%	35 28.9%	121	89 74.8%	30 25.2%		129

From Horner et al 2017

The Gender Balance of the Australian Space Research Community: A Snapshot from the 16th ASRC, 2016

Jonathan Horner, Belinda Nicholson, Ann Cairns, Wayne Short and Alice Gorman. Proceedings of the 16th Australian Space Science Conference, 2017 <https://arxiv.org/abs/1708.03897>

Women in space industry



APAC Report 2016: survey of 46 companies

- Space Industry Association of Australia
 - Board – 1/5
 - Advisory Council – 3/15

**Strategies: recruit more women members.
Mentor women onto Council and Board**

- Space start-ups founded by women
 - Fleet Space
 - Ozius Spatial
 - Quberider

Strategy: encourage accelerators/incubators to have explicit policies about female employment

- Astronaut candidates
 - MarsOne - 1

Australian Space Agency: a new beginning?

- Build in equity goals
- Reject rather than replicate colonial values/language/history
- Recognise differential impacts of space technology on women, Aboriginal people and Aboriginal women
- Recognise creative ways women, including Aboriginal women, engage with satellite technology
- A place at the table – and a voice



Edna Dale / Imintji Moon Rising Wandjina. Credit: Artlandish Gallery

When we're back again
perhaps girls will get the chance
to pilot and walk.

