

# SAGE

*Science in Australia Gender Equity*

Nalini Joshi



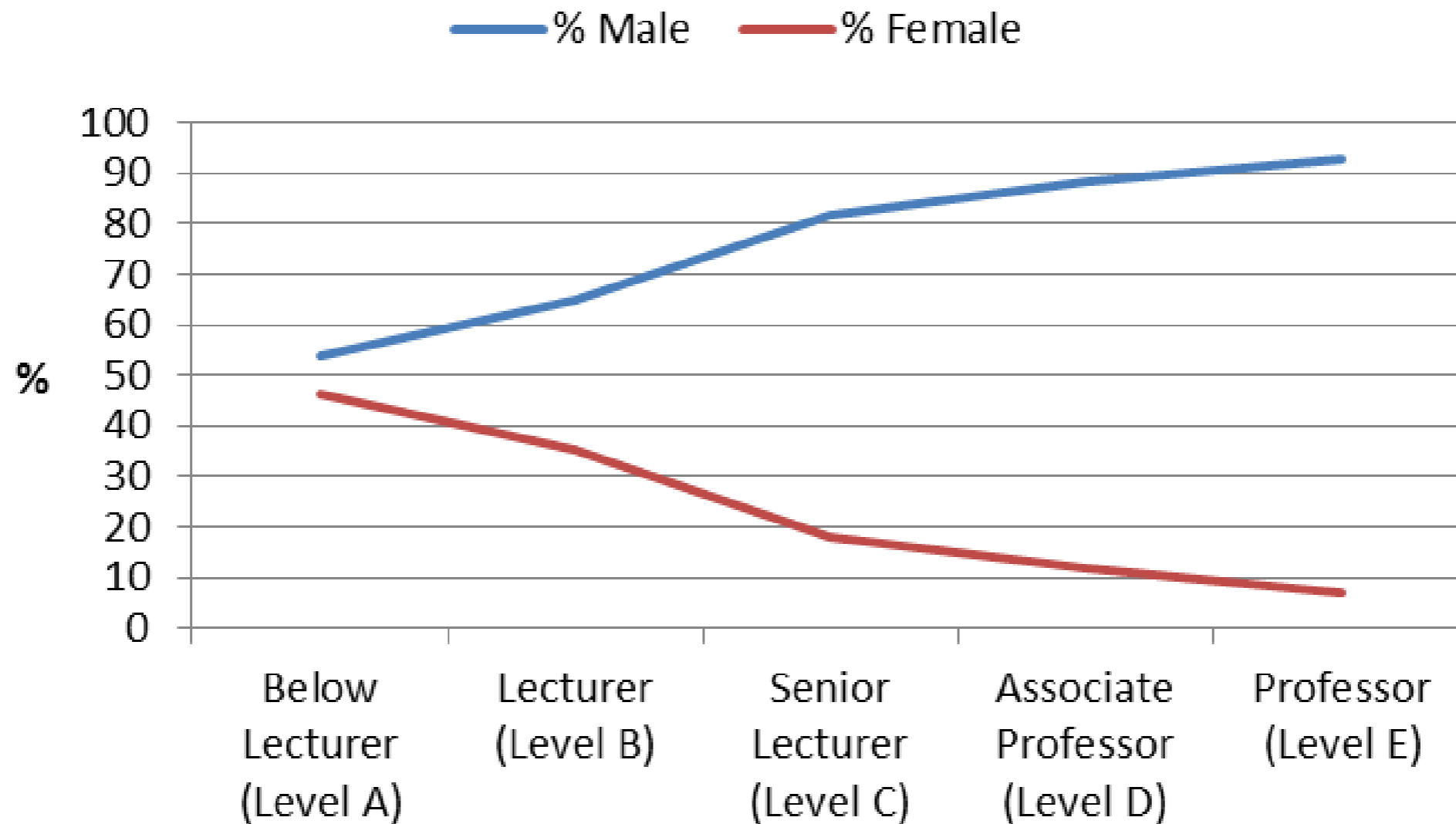
# Background

- Talented women entering science leave before they get to higher levels.
- Negligible change in Science since the 1990's.
- However, change has occurred in other areas of higher education.



# Consider 2001

2001



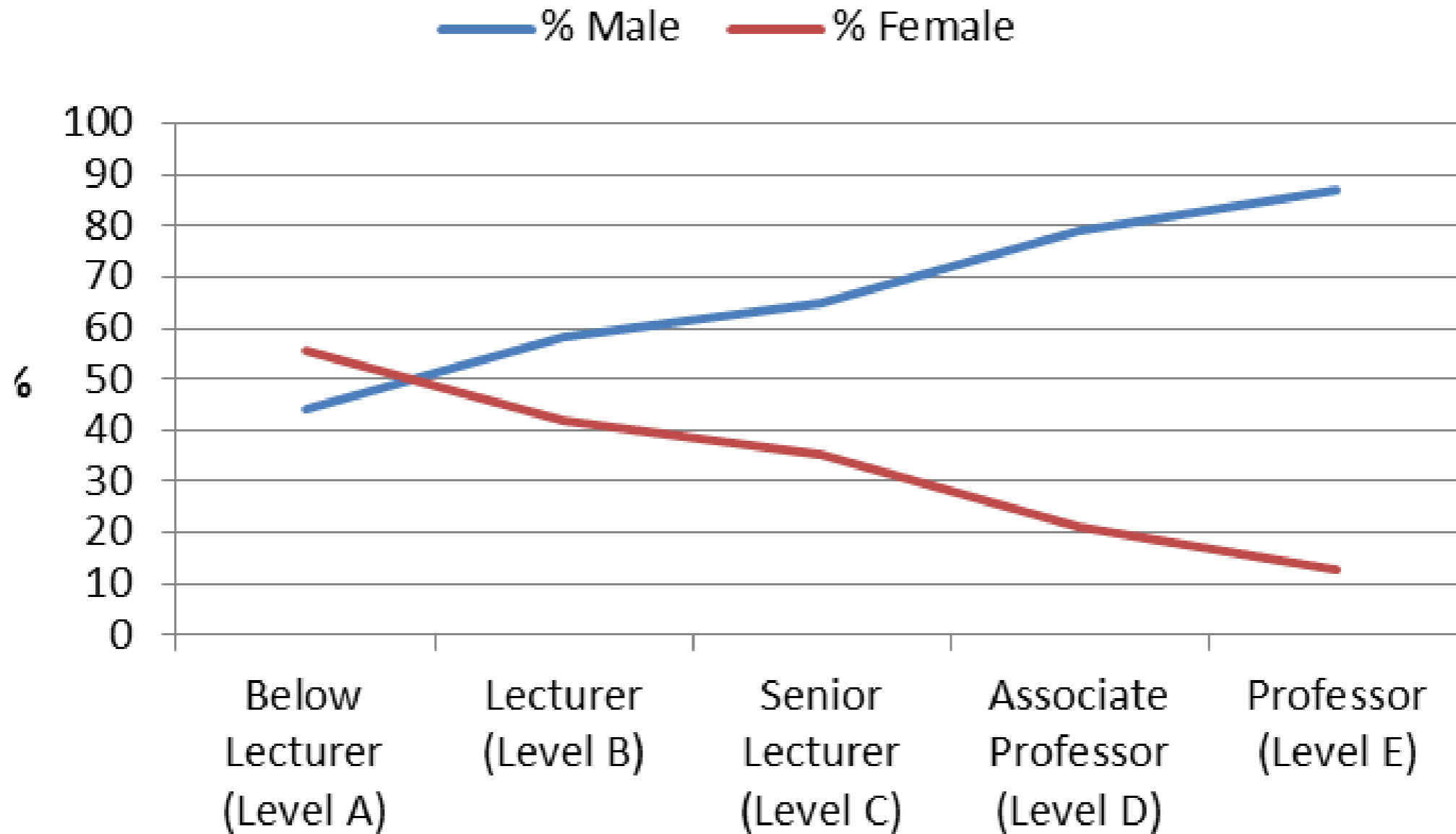
*Natural and physical sciences*

Source: Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education (DIISRTE) Higher Education Statistics Data Cube

via the Office of Chief Scientist

# Now?

2012

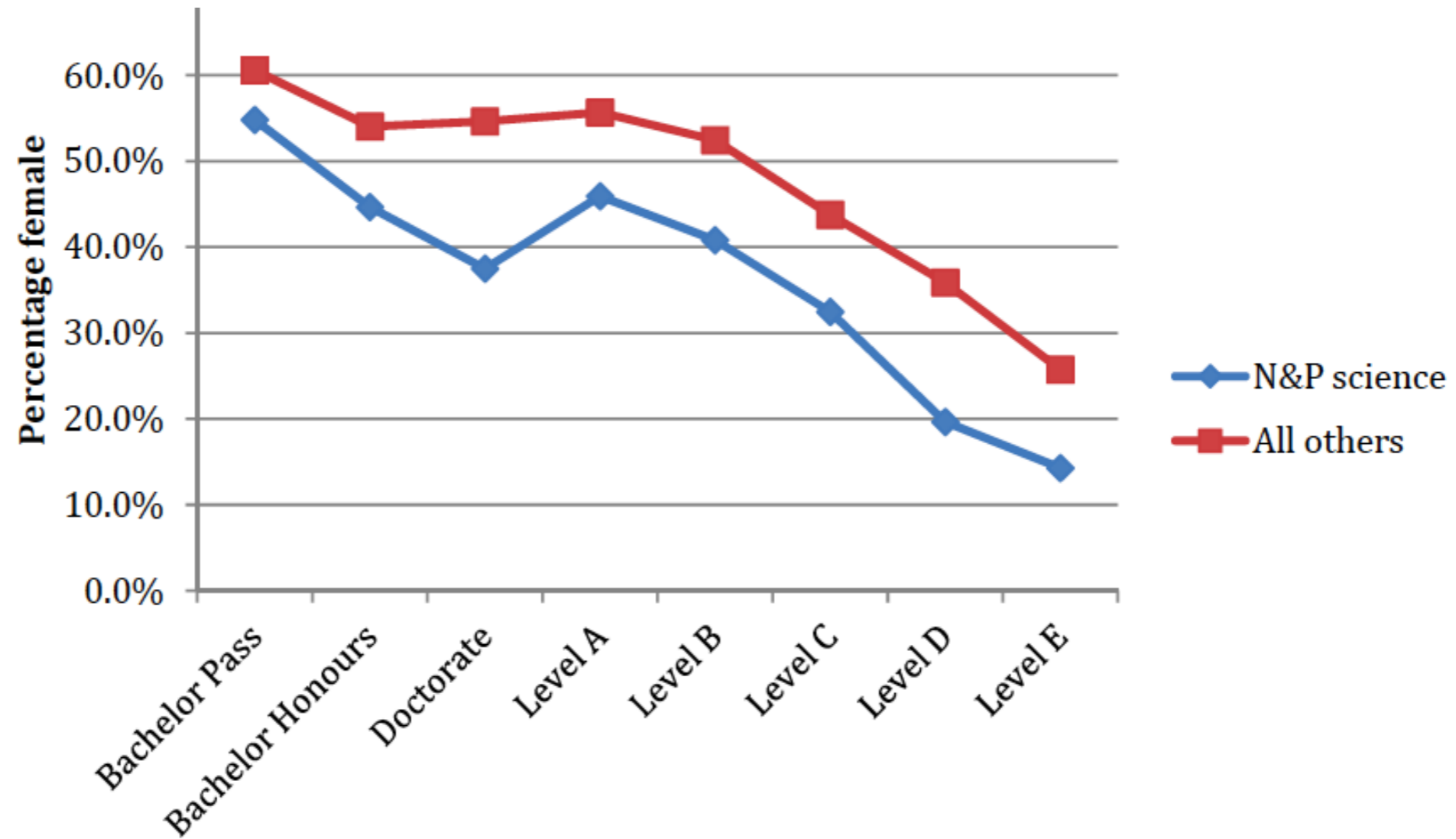


*Natural and physical sciences*

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# Attrition



**Figure 1: Female representation by student completions and academic level, 2011**

*DIIRSTE data, 2011 courtesy of Sharon Bell*

# Factors?

- Fierce competition: “We have to thank Nalini for reminding us of what Boutroux did in 1913.”
- Lack of role models
- Micro-aggression

# SAGE

- Initiated through the Australian Academy of Science
- Led by *NJ & Brian Schmidt*
- Inspired by the UK Athena Swan project

*Steering Committee*

Sharon Bell

Marguerite Evans

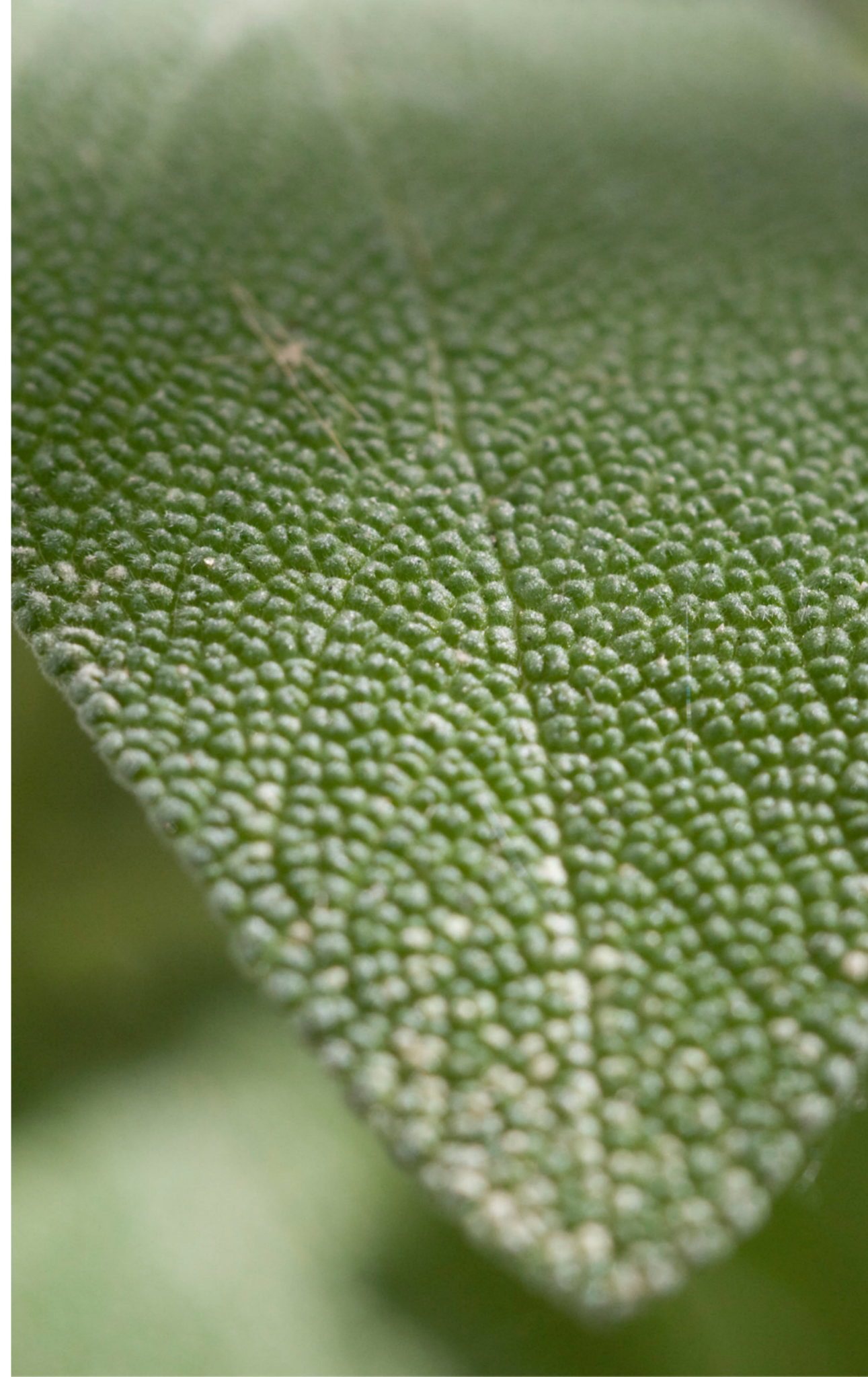
Nalini Joshi

Caroline McMillen

Jenny Martin

Roslyn Prinsley

Brian Schmidt



# Athena SWAN

- Established 2005 as a UK scheme to encourage and recognise excellence in women's employment in STEM
- Not a box-ticking exercise. Instead encourages local reflection and improvement.
- Members required to sign a charter of principles.
- Members may apply for 1 of 3 awards: bronze, silver and gold, relating to level of attainment and leadership in gender equity.



# Charter of Principles

- To address gender inequalities requires commitment and action from everyone, at all levels of the organisation
- To tackle the unequal representation of women in science requires changing cultures and attitudes across the organisation
- The absence of diversity at management and policy-making levels has broad implications which the organisation will examine
- The high loss rate of women in science is an urgent concern which the organisation will address
- The system of short-term contracts has particularly negative consequences for the retention and progression of women in science, which the organisation recognises
- There are both personal and structural obstacles to women making the transition from PhD into a sustainable academic career in science, which require the active consideration of the organisation

# Numbers

- 114 out of 120 eligible STEM organisations are Athena Swan members
- 319 university departments + 6 research institutes
- *Bronze awards*: 61 uni's & 162 departments
- *Silver awards*: 4 uni's & 85 departments
- *Gold awards*: 7 departments
- Awards only for 3 yrs (then reapply)



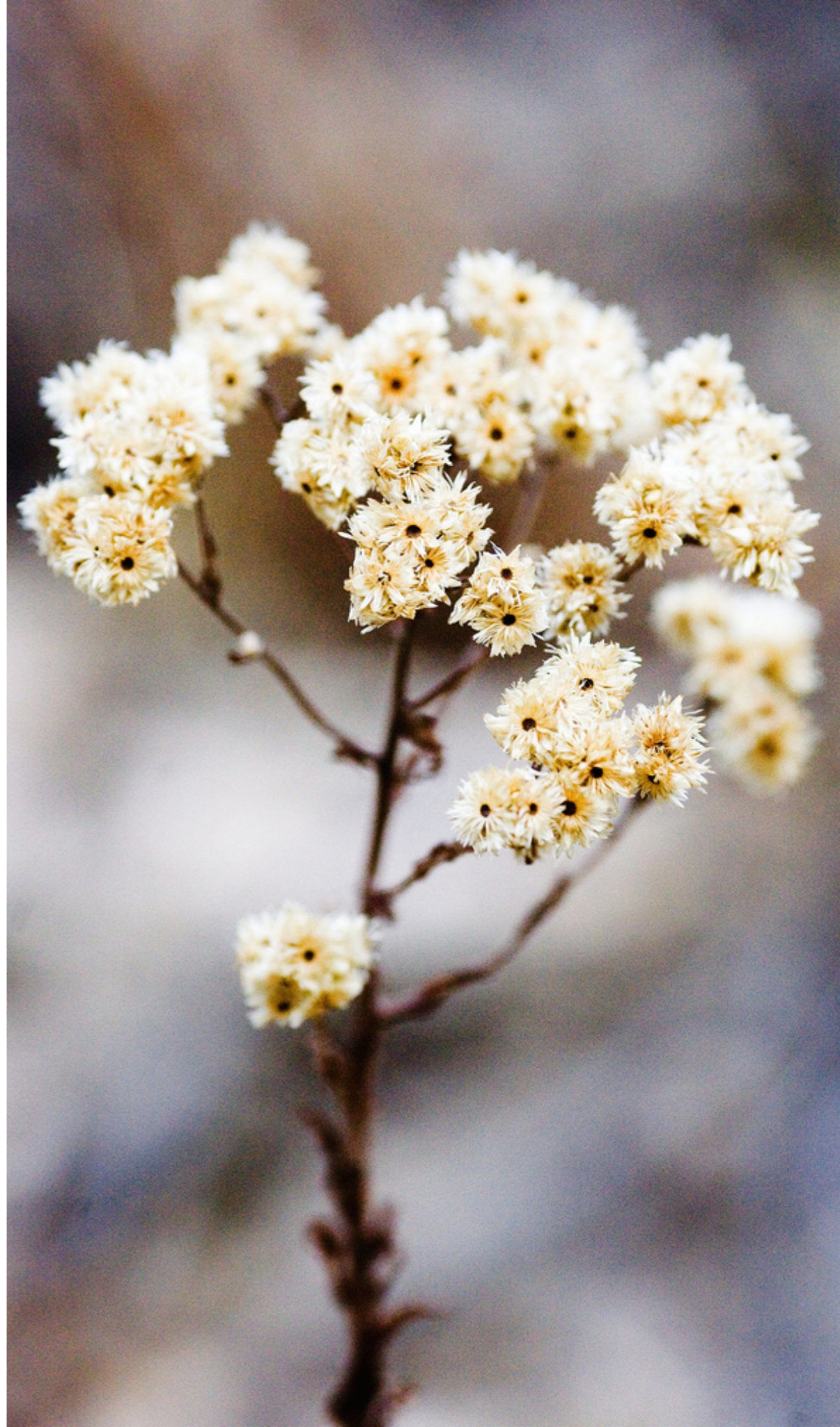
# Impact

- A catalyst for change
- Better communication
- Increases visibility of women
- Greater encouragement and targeted focus
- Good practice benefits *all* staff
- Staff report greater *career satisfaction*, more *developmental* opportunities and *fairer* workload
- In July 2011, the Chief Medical Officer for England announced that institutions applying for National Health Service (NHS) National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Biomedical Research Centres and Units funding need to have achieved *an Athena SWAN Silver Award*.



# What next for Australia?

- SAGE Workshop: 25-26 November 2014
- 2014-5: Formation of a nation-wide SAGE Forum
- 2015-7: Pilot study of a program for Australia
- Evaluation of Athena Swan program or new initiative.



# Welcome to SAGE

Join us and lead cultural change  
to enable us to *thrive* in our  
research community regardless  
of gender

