

RMIT Women Researchers' Network



Supporting and Empowering Women in Academia Symposium

*2023 Report
Review and
evaluation of WRN
Annual Symposium*

INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, the Women's Research Network (WRN) at RMIT has played a pivotal role in enabling female and female identified staff at all career stages to connect with one another and the broader academic community.

In the wake of the last few years, the need for (re)connection has never been more pressing, especially for women. With many of the long-standing gender disparities in academia highlighted and intensified by the pandemic.

The WRN symposium has now operated for 10 years with the annual symposium being run over the past 8 years. This year the symposium is celebrating all the work that the committee has done and will continue to do to support and empower women in academia.


This symposium aims to recognise and celebrate the advances made by women researchers in the past decade through the WRN. The symposium also aims to provide a day of networking and inspiration for RMIT researchers to continue our collective advocacy to advance gender equity policy, practice, and work culture. In addition, the event aims to address ways in which we can strive for changes to better support and empower women academics. In 2023, this will include an art prize competition as well, celebrating female-focused art by female art students.


The WRN symposium is our key event for the year, and it provides an opportunity for networking, fostering greater collaborations, and brings a lens to high priority areas for the University by hearing from keynote and panel members on ways in which they have worked in this space.

Poster Competition Winners

Early Career Researcher

First place in the Early Career Researcher (ECR) category of the poster competition at the RMIT Women Researchers' Network 2023 Symposium awarded to Hua Qian Ang for 'Laser Surface Melting of Magnesium Alloys for Biomedical Applications.'


Women Researchers' Network



Laser Surface Melting of Magnesium Alloys for Biomedical Applications

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Motivation

Next year, Mg devices will be used in human body (leading to permanent Mg bone growth with the patient) to accelerate bone healing.

Mg alloys show great promise for orthopaedic implants as they can dissolve in human body, avoiding second removal surgery after bone fracture heals, unlike traditional Steel & Titanium implants which need to be surgically removed [1].

Surface refinement can improve wear and corrosion resistance [2].

These properties, surface refinement is also important in implants. Rough surface can increase bone mineral content and decrease release of proteins and cells during healing. Laser surface melting can achieve the desired roughness [3].

Conclusions

Laser surface melting can improve the surface properties of magnesium alloys as new tissue forms and the release of magnesium ions are good for metabolism and bone growth.

Methodology/ Research Objective

Our objective is to obtain fine, uniform grains and reduce defects (porosity or cracks) in the surface layer after laser surface melting for better strength & corrosion resistance.

Looking under the microscope, the original microstructure only consist of large and non-uniform grains.

Laser surface melting, a surface modification technique, uses high energy laser beam to rapidly melt and solidify the metal surface layer to obtain fine and homogeneous microstructure, leading to improvement in mechanical properties.

Results

Using laser power of 1500 W, scan laser diameter of 1mm, scanning speed of 1500 mm/min, process at 90° to the base, laser surface melting followed by water quenching to the surface finish.

References

- [1] Saeed A, Ezz Z, Kawan SM, et al. Review of magnesium alloys and their applications. Journal of Magnesium and Alloys. 2008; 9: 23-43.
- [2] Zhang Y, Qiu D, Zhu S, et al. Grain refinement in laser melted Mg-20Sn-0.5Zr alloy. Scripta Metallurgica. 2020; 183: 14-16.
- [3] Jan Y, Sun SP, Jia SS. Characterization and wear resistance of laser surface melting A202 alloy. Journal of Alloys and Compounds. 2008; 455: 142-147.
- [4] Kojanovic D, Gasic R, Kevcic B, et al. Effect of Laser surface melting on corrosion and wear resistance of commercial Ti-6Al-4V alloy. Science and Engineering A. 2003; 361: 19-25.
- [5] Hsuah H, Buehler S, Sengul AK, et al. Laser surface modification of Mg-Zn-Gd alloy microstructural, mechanical and in vitro biocorrosion aspects. Materials Research Express. 2019.

Literature Review

To obtain optimum microstructure, an optimized set of laser processing parameters is essential. These parameters are laser power (P), laser beam diameter (D), scanning speed (S). They can affect the applied laser energy density (E) [4].

Literature Review


If energy density is too low, it may be insufficient to melt the surface, causing surface expansion.


If energy density is too high, it may lead to very deep melt pool partially penetrate the sample. If they also cause surface deformation (over hardening) existing in surface [5].


About the Author

Dr Hua Qian Ang is a Senior Lecturer at RMIT and a Chartered Engineer of Engineers Australia. Her research areas are focused on the study and improvement of light alloy mechanical properties with additive manufacturing and laser processing technology. She has finished ECRCE Engineering Council, an educational comic series created for teaching and independent learning, to build readers' engineering knowledge and interest and inspire people of all ages into engineering.

Early Career Researcher (ECR) #WRN2023 #AmplifyAndAction




Women Researchers' Network



Is Trading in Stock Markets Gambling?

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Background

It is human nature to gamble, as we feel excited to take risk. Trading stocks has been found to provide fun and excitement similar to gambling. Investors around the world rushed into share markets during COVID-19. This study examines what drives investors into share markets. We compare abnormal trading volume driven by both individual investors and institutional investors during COVID-19 as compared to normal periods. When gambling was not available in lockdown, investors resorted to stock markets.

Research question

Do investors treat stock market investing as a substitute for gambling?

Research Design


We exploit the COVID-19 outbreak a quasi-natural experiment, where gambling wasn't available. We identify lottery-like stocks based on firm characteristics, such as trading volume and volatility. We compare abnormal trading volume driven by both individual investors and institutional investors during COVID-19 as compared to normal periods. When gambling was not available in lockdown, investors resorted to stock markets.

Findings

Investors, especially individual investors are found to trade excessively at a loss during lockdown, as compared to normal periods. The increase in trading is concentrated in stocks that have lottery-like features. This phenomenon exists in 37 developed and developing stock markets in the world. This finding is more pronounced in countries with a higher level of gambling activities, such as Australia. On average, stock market trading increases by 50% during COVID-19. Overall, stock market investing appears to be a substitute for gambling.

Implications and Relevance

Investors resort to the share markets as a substitute for gambling during COVID-19 lockdown. This finding has significant public policy implications, as traditional gambling is regulated and taxed as a social 'wrong' to be contained, whereas financial markets are not. This finding echoes the concerns that prolonged lockdown caused by the pandemic has severe negative impacts on mental health. Increasing stakes in risky assets, without considering one's risk preference and constraints, potentially have long-term consequences on the financial wellbeing of individuals.


Trading volume by investor types

Individual Institutional

Trading volume (USD)

1,000,000
2,000,000
3,000,000
4,000,000
5,000,000
6,000,000
7,000,000
8,000,000
9,000,000
10,000,000

2020/1/1 2020/2/1 2020/3/1 2020/4/1 2020/5/1 2020/6/1 2020/7/1 2020/8/1 2020/9/1 2020/10/1 2020/11/1 2020/12/1 2021/1/1 2021/2/1 2021/3/1 2021/4/1 2021/5/1 2021/6/1 2021/7/1 2021/8/1 2021/9/1 2021/10/1 2021/11/1 2021/12/1 2022/1/1 2022/2/1 2022/3/1 2022/4/1 2022/5/1 2022/6/1 2022/7/1 2022/8/1 2022/9/1 2022/10/1 2022/11/1 2022/12/1 2023/1/1 2023/2/1 2023/3/1 2023/4/1 2023/5/1 2023/6/1 2023/7/1 2023/8/1 2023/9/1 2023/10/1 2023/11/1 2023/12/1 2024/1/1 2024/2/1 2024/3/1 2024/4/1 2024/5/1 2024/6/1 2024/7/1 2024/8/1 2024/9/1 2024/10/1 2024/11/1 2024/12/1 2025/1/1 2025/2/1 2025/3/1 2025/4/1 2025/5/1 2025/6/1 2025/7/1 2025/8/1 2025/9/1 2025/10/1 2025/11/1 2025/12/1 2026/1/1 2026/2/1 2026/3/1 2026/4/1 2026/5/1 2026/6/1 2026/7/1 2026/8/1 2026/9/1 2026/10/1 2026/11/1 2026/12/1 2027/1/1 2027/2/1 2027/3/1 2027/4/1 2027/5/1 2027/6/1 2027/7/1 2027/8/1 2027/9/1 2027/10/1 2027/11/1 2027/12/1 2028/1/1 2028/2/1 2028/3/1 2028/4/1 2028/5/1 2028/6/1 2028/7/1 2028/8/1 2028/9/1 2028/10/1 2028/11/1 2028/12/1 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10:00am – 10:30am	Registration
10:30am – 10:45am	Opening Remarks WRN Chair, Prof. Sylvia Urban, followed by ADVC R&I, Prof Swee Mak
10:45am – 11:00am	Acknowledgement of Country
11:00am – 12:00pm	Keynote Speakers: Prof Marcia Devlin AM – Empowering academic women to build career success, despite the odds
12:00pm – 1:00pm	Networking Lunch
1:00pm – 2:00pm	Panel 1 (Livestreamed to RMIT Vietnam): Executive leaders: Leadership and institutional commitment to diversity and support for empowering women academics Chair: Dr Ruwini Edirisinghe // Panellists: Prof Kay Latham, Prof Tracy Taylor, Prof Naomi Stead, DVC-Research Prof Calum Drummond
2:00pm – 2:15pm	Short Break
2:15pm – 3:15pm	Panel 2 (Livestreamed to RMIT Vietnam): Professional staff and early and mid-career academic: Further support and empowerment of diversity in the university and for our women academics Chair: Dr Maryam Safari // Panellists: Dr Justyna Dabrowska, Dr Jodi Edwards, A/Prof Taghrid Istivan
3:15pm – 3:45pm	Afternoon tea
3:45pm – 4:45pm	Panel 3 WRN steering committee (past and present): Past and future support for diversity and empowering women academics Chair: Prof Sylvia Urban // Panellists: Prof Madhu Bhaskaran, Dr Stayci Taylor, Prof Matt Duckham
4:45pm – 5:00pm	Announcements & concluding remarks (WRN Chair): Poster session, Art Prize winners
5:00pm – 6:00pm	Drinks and celebration for current and past WRN committee members



Professor Marcia Devlin, AM, PhD, GAICD, is a senior executive, psychologist, teacher, professor, academic and author and a globally recognised expert in education, equity, and leadership. In 2023, she was awarded an Australian Honour by the Governor General, becoming a Member of the Order of Australia (AM).



EMPOWERING ACADEMIC WOMEN TO BUILD CAREER SUCCESS, DESPITE THE ODDS

PROF MARCIA DEVLIN AM

1 OUR ODDS

86% MORE MEN IN PROFESSORIAL

75% OF SENIOR LEADERSHIP ROLES!

WE ARE RELATIVELY INVISIBLE

UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

WOMEN ... **STOP** MEETING GENDERED EXPECTATIONS

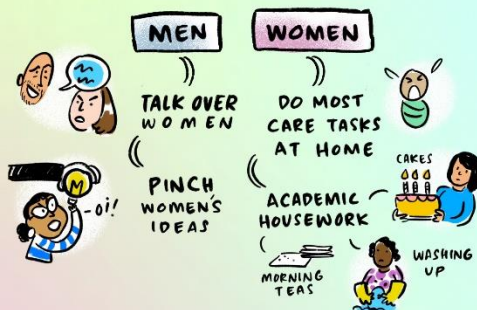
2 4 IDEAS TO BEAT THOSE ODDS

MAKE A CAREER PLAN

FORM A SUPPORT SQUAD

DO MORE OF WHAT COUNTS

RAISE YOUR PROFILE



- KEEP IT A SECRET
 - DEFINE YOUR LEGACY
 - MAKE A PLAN
 - SAY NO MORE OFTEN
 - GET BAD @ HOUSEWORK
- LOWER YOUR STANDARDS!

- NEUTRALISE FRENEMIES
 - PEOPLE YOU TRUST & MAKE YOU FEEL GOOD!
 - BUILD RELATIONSHIPS & RESILIENCE
- SLEEP EXERCISE DIET

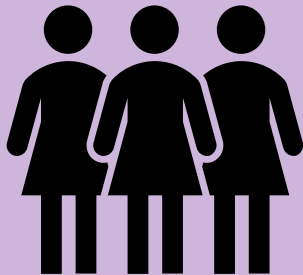
- PUBLICATIONS
- TIME MANAGEMENT
- PREPARE TO WORK AFTER HOURS
- TAKE OPPORTUNITIES TO LEAD
- MAXIMISE WHAT YOU DID!

- BE ON THE RADAR
- IMPROVE LIVES
- PLAIN ENGLISH
- GO DIGITAL! UNI WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA
- GET PRO PHOTOS

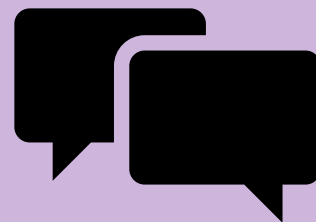
#WRN10

scribed with ♥ on Wurundjeri Land by Zahra Zainal

2023 Women Researchers' Network



**OVER 170
REGISTRATIONS**



**OVER 90
ATTENDEES**



Leadership and institutional commitment to diversity and support for empowering women academics

Chair: Dr Ruwini Edirisinghe

Panellists: Professor Tracy Taylor, Deputy Vice Chancellor Research
 Professor Calum Drummond, Professor Naomi Stead, & Professor Kay Latham

EXECUTIVE LEADERS : LEADERSHIP & INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, & SUPPORT FOR EMPOWERING WOMEN ACADEMICS

DR RUWINI EDIRISINGHE PROF KAY LATHAM PROF TRACY TAYLOR PROF NAOMI STEAD PROF CALUM DRUMMOND

CHALLENGES ON THE PATH TO CAREER PROGRESS

- (IN THE PAST) NO PARTNER SUPPORT LEAVE
- LIMITED OPPORTUNITIES
- INTERSECTIONAL LEADERS IN GENDER EQUALITY
- WE JUST DO IT

USE INTERSECTING STRATEGIES

- ME! ARE TOO! SOCIAL MEDIA
- COLLECTIVISE THE PROBLEM
- USE DATA & STORYTELLING
- MAKE IT HAVE VERVE
- ASSUME IMPROVEMENT IS POSSIBLE

WOMENS GROUP

- FINDING GREAT SUPPORT NETWORKS
- TAKING ON ALIGNED OPPORTUNITIES
- GENERATIONAL CHANGE IS TAKING PLACE!
- SET TARGETS
- MENTOR NEW GEN CAN'T BE WHAT YOU CAN'T SEE!

LEADERS

- PRACTICE TRANSPARENT VALUES
- CALL IT OUT
- BE PART OF THE CONVERSATION
- LISTEN WIDELY
- YOU CAN BE A FORCE FOR GOOD!
- FIND PLACES TO LEVEL THE PLAYING FIELD

BE PROACTIVE ... IT'S EVERYONE'S PROBLEM

#WRN10

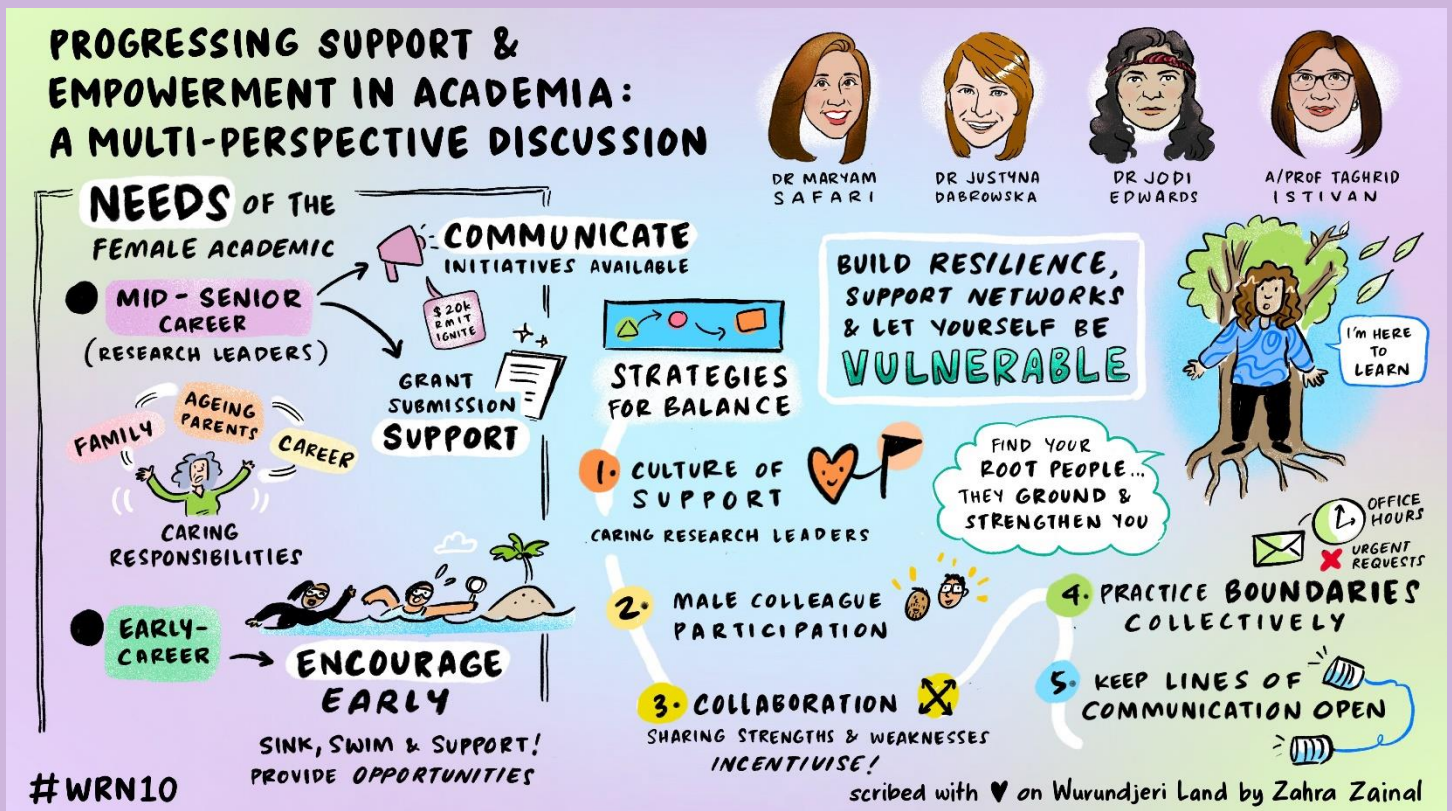
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Further support and empowerment of diversity in the university and for our women academics

Chair: Dr Maryam Safari

Panellists: Dr Justyna Dabrowska, Dr Jodi Edwards, & Associate Professor Taghrid Istivan






Past and future support for diversity and empowering women academics


Chair: Professor Sylvia Urban

Panellists: Professor Madhu Bhaskaran, Dr Stayci Taylor, & Professor Matt Duckham


10 YEARS OF THE WRN: REFLECTING ON the PAST, NAVIGATING the PRESENT, SHAPING OUR FUTURE




PROF SYLVIA URBAN



PROF MADHU BHASKARAN



DR STAYCI TAYLOR



PROF MATT DUCKHAM

OUR PAST...

WHY WRN? = I HAD NO CAREER PEERS...

SO I CREATED A NETWORK OF WOMEN TO TALK TO!

WOMEN RETURNING FROM MATERNITY LEAVE CAN TAKE A SEMESTER OFF

↑ A CHANGE MADHU REQUESTED, & RECEIVED!

WORKLOAD

YOU'RE NEVER TOO YOUNG TO AFFECT CHANGE

PRESENT...

WHY BECOME A COMMITTEE MEMBER?

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR CHANGE

CONNECTING WITH PEOPLE ACROSS FACULTIES

ROLE OF MEN SUPPORTING WRN

- EDUCATE
- CREATE SPACE
- INVEST TIME
- RESPOND TO CRITICISM BETTER

PUSH BACK ON EXCUSES

BUT IT'S BASED ON MERIT!

OUR RECRUITMENT PROCESSES ARE IMPERFECT

& FUTURE!

LANGUAGE MATTERS

VISION ALL GENDER INCLUSIVITY

INCLUDE CHALLENGES OF CHILD-FREE WOMEN

KEEP EDUCATING

& FIND WHAT TO DO TO CONTINUE REAL PROGRESS

#WRN10

scribed with ♥ on Wurundjeri Land by Zahra Zainal

Art Prize Winners

For the first time, the WRN has run an Art Prize competition, to recognize the artistic efforts of female artists. These art prizes aimed to highlight the complexities of womanhood and therefore empower those who may often feel disempowered because of the constraints existing in the world for women.



First Prize

Cecilia Sordi Campos PhD (Art)

Digital self-portrait, and digitised lumen print with menstrual blood, fresh flowers, figs, and blackberries. Buried on February 24, 2023. Unearthed on March 20, 2023.

The image 'benedictus fructus ventris' is part of the practice-led project titled the motherhood that wasn't, which is grounded in the complexities of my lived experiences of infertility caused by endometriosis. My experience as an infertile woman of colour leads me to a continuing preoccupation of what this signifies in social and cultural contexts. Using my menstrual blood as a drawing medium, I seek to uncover possibilities for imagining the infertile womb as capable of alternative forms of creation, thus contributing an empathic response to an issue that is subjugated by shame and underrepresented in the creative and public spheres.



Second Prize

Robyn Phelan (PhD Art)

Hand formed clays, terra sigillata, ceramic stain, hand-braided and woven family clothing.

Clay records every mark that transpires between the pressure of the body and its surface. Robyn Phelan's compressive act of making is also applied to cloth re-using body-worn textile material, sourced from the artist's family. Generating Feminist narratives in her material choice and the labour of her making process, this work explores relationships between the maternal body and the agency of bodies found in nature and culture. Intimately assembled, *Advice from a tree - how to hold, how to carry, how to care*, specifically considers the role of societal expectations, sustainability, metaphor, and play in creative practice.

Third Prize

Zina Sofer (BA Honours)

Woven photograph printed on Canson rag photographique fine art paper.

Mrs. Jessie Mary Vasey O.B.E. and C.B.E, the founder, and the president of the War Widows Guild, strongly advocated for widows' rights, adequate pension, social status, special benefits, and housing. She encouraged women to learn weaving that would help to generate extra income to their unlivable pension. This industry took off and became one of the major financial sources that funded the purchases and building of the War Widows Housing. Her vision has changed the lives of thousands of women and their children for better and forever. For my Honours Photography Studio project, I am researching the Forgotten History of WWGA (War Widows Guild of Australia) which this portrait is part of.



Commendation

Melanie Sky

(Bachelor of Fine Art (Painting))

Acrylic and ink on canvas, framed in raw Ash.

“Kaleidoscope” captures the Australian landscape in vibrant bloom after flooding and explores the themes of connection, network, supportive environments, and flourishing communities in rural and remote Australia. The crossing channel in the centre symbolises the interconnectedness of nature and people and the vivid colours reflect the harmony required for communal growth and positive change. Through challenging times of flooding in 2022, Melanie Sky crafted this piece to celebrate the resilience of both the land and its inhabitants, envisioning a harmonious coexistence that nurtures thriving societies.



Commendation

Nicole Morgan-Smith (Master of Fine Art)

Collage, acrylic paint on salvaged wood

‘Unmade’ explores the idea of indexicality. Mapping the indexical nature of shared moments through mark making, enabling the viewer to see the residue of thinking, not only of the individual but to contain and express the collaborative dynamic.

Women Researchers' Network Steering Committee



WRN Chair Professor Sylvia Urban, School of Science, (Applied Chemistry & Environmental Science) & Reconciliation Facilitator, School of Science (STEM College)



Dr Ruwini Edirisinghe (Deputy Chair) is a senior lecturer at the School of Property, Construction & Project Management (College of Design & Social Context)



Professor Matt Duckham is a Professor in the School of Science & Director of the RMIT Information in Society Enabling Impact Platforms



Associate Professor Rita Zhang is a Senior Lecturer in Construction Management in the School of Property, Construction and Project Management (PCPM) at RMIT



Associate Professor Chrystal Zhang is in Aviation in the School of Engineering, STEM College. Her latest book is focuses on China's trade, policy, & international air transport



Associate Professor Angel Zhong is an award-winning RMIT finance researcher who specialises in empirical asset pricing and investor behaviour in financial markets



Dr Deborah Wise is a Senior Lecturer & the Program Manager for the Bachelor of Communication & Public Relations



Associate Professor Melanie Davern works within the Health, Place & Society group in the Centre for Urban Research



Dr Catherine Earl is a Senior Lecturer in Communication and Research Cluster Lead for Cities and Urbanism in the School of Communication and Design at RMIT Vietnam



Dr Maryam Safari is a corporate governance scholar in the School of Accounting, Information Systems, and Supply Chain



Dr Michael Kend, PhD, is a lecturer in the School of Accounting at RMIT



Vindya Warnakulasooriyage is a first-year PhD student in Mathematical Sciences at RMIT



Viktor Arity has taught at RMIT since 2012. Viktor's research interests include designing & implementing educational games for business education



Amy Love, an Organisational Development & Diversity & Inclusion manager, with experience building inclusive practice and cultural transformation

Acknowledgements

In addition to the WRN Steering Committee, this event was supported by Secretariat and event support to the WRN Committee and WRN Symposium provided by the Research and Innovation Capability team and R&I Communications team: Andrea Davies, Annette Herrera, Eloise Amirtharajah, Catherine Lake, Charlie Wright, Keely Tzoukos, Samantha Maurel.



Professor Kay Latham is an experienced materials' research chemist, educator, & advocate for equity & diversity



Join Us

The Women Researchers' Network is open to all RMIT academic and research staff, and HDR students.

Thank You

The Women Researchers' Network would like to thank everyone who was involved with organising and assisting the 2022 Annual Symposium. Everyone's contributions created a very successful and memorable day. The WRN extends its thanks to RMIT's Vice-Chancellor, Prof Alec Cameron, Prof Swee L Mak (Associate Deputy Vice-Chancellor, R&I), our keynote speakers and panellists, our WRN Organising Committee, and finally, the WRN secretariat support Annette Herrera.