



Science Strategy and Priorities Taskforce
By email: DiversityinSTEM@industry.gov.au

Dear Taskforce,

Submission in response to Diversity in STEM Review Dialogue Starter

The Business Council for Sustainable Development Australia (**BCSDAustralia**) welcomes the opportunity to make this submission to this Taskforce.

We commend the Australian Government for establishing an independent expert panel to lead a Diversity in STEM Review. This initiative is critical for ensuring that every Australian has access to and can thrive in STEM-based education and work, and for ensuring that the STEM system is able to innovate and contribute to a prosperous and sustainable future for all Australians.

BCSD Australia fully supports this initiative and believes that promoting diversity in STEM is essential for creating a sustainable world. As global, CEO-led organization of over 200 leading companies, we are committed to accelerating the transition to a sustainable world, and promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in the workplace is a key focus area for us. We believe that diverse teams are more innovative, creative, and better able to address complex challenges.

It's important to recognize that addressing the lack of diversity in STEM requires collective, sustained action from all sectors of society, including government, industry, and communities. We hope that this Dialogue Starter will encourage a broad range of people and organizations, especially underrepresented groups in STEM, to share their experiences and perspectives on the barriers they have encountered in the STEM system.

As a conversation starter we offer the following thoughts:

- we encourage the Diversity in STEM Review to align itself with several United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG 4: Quality Education, SDG 5: Gender Equality, SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, and SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities. Promoting diversity in STEM is critical for achieving these goals, and we believe that this issue is not only important for achieving these SDGs but also for promoting sustainable development and creating a better world for all.
- promoting diversity in STEM is aligned with the priorities of many businesses these days and our organization, as part of the Global Network of the [World Business Council for Sustainable Development \(WBCSD\)](#) and its membership - a global, CEO-led organization of over 200 leading companies, and over 70 Australian organizations (private and public sector, philanthropy and academia), - are committed to accelerating the transition to a sustainable world. One of our key focus areas is promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in the workplace, as we believe that diverse teams are more innovative, creative, and better able to address complex challenges. Some examples of their engagement and activity in this area include:
 1. [Women Empowerment Action \(WEA\)](#) - WEA is a WBCSD initiative focused on advancing gender equality in the workplace. The initiative includes a task force that develops and promotes best practices for gender equality and diversity in the workplace, including in STEM fields.
 2. [The CEO Guide to Gender Equality](#) - The WBCSD released a CEO Guide to Gender Equality, which provides guidance and best practices for companies to promote gender equality and diversity in the workplace, including in STEM fields.
 3. [Reporting and measurement](#) - The WBCSD encourages companies to report on diversity and inclusion metrics, including in STEM fields, and provides guidance on how to measure and report on these metrics effectively.

4. **[Collaborations and partnerships](#)** - The WBCSD collaborates with other organizations and initiatives focused on promoting diversity and inclusion in STEM, such as the International Women's Forum and the Global Business Coalition for Women's Economic Empowerment.
- As a leading business organization, we have seen many of our members and other companies take action to promote gender equality and diversity in the workplace, including in STEM. There are numerous leading corporate practices on diversity in STEM that companies are implementing to promote diversity and inclusion in their organizations. Some examples include:
 - **Diversity and inclusion training:** Many companies are offering training to their employees on diversity and inclusion to create awareness and foster an inclusive work environment.
 - **Partnering with educational institutions:** Companies are partnering with universities and educational institutions to provide scholarships and mentorship opportunities for underrepresented groups in STEM fields.
 - **Employee resource groups (ERGs):** ERGs are groups of employees who come together to support and advocate for individuals from underrepresented groups. Many companies are creating ERGs focused on diversity in STEM to provide a community and support for their employees.
 - **Recruitment initiatives:** Companies are implementing initiatives to increase the representation of underrepresented groups in their recruitment efforts, including targeted outreach, job fairs, and partnerships with diversity-focused organizations.
 - **Providing career development opportunities:** Companies are providing development opportunities such as mentorship, coaching, and leadership training for employees from underrepresented groups to support their career growth in STEM fields.
 - **Diverse leadership and governance:** Companies are focusing on diversity and inclusion at all levels, including board members and leadership positions, to create a more diverse and inclusive culture and make better decisions.
 - **Setting targets:** We have also seen companies such as BHP and Rio Tinto set targets to increase gender diversity in their workforce, while others like ANZ Bank have implemented flexible work arrangements to support employees with family responsibilities.

Overall, these practices show a commitment to diversity and inclusion in STEM, which can help companies attract and retain a diverse workforce, foster innovation, and drive business success.

- We also draw your attention to [The Corporate Role in Inclusive STEM Education Opportunities \(Wildlife Habitat Council \(WHC\)\)](#) white paper, sponsored by a BCSD Australia member BASF, that explores how companies can prepare the next generation of STEM professionals by developing inclusive learning opportunities based around conservation concepts and utilizing corporate conservation projects as sites of learning (such as forest and prairie habitats and pollinator gardens). The paper explores several case studies of initiatives led by ten companies.

Finally, because we are a multi-sector business-led NGO, in addition to supporting the Diversity in STEM Review, we would like to offer our expertise and resources to help advance this important issue. We would be happy to bring together our members to share insights and experiences on this topic and to support the efforts of the Diversity in STEM Review Panel.

We look forward to the draft recommendations that will be published in mid-2023 and the final report in October 2023. We believe that this initiative will be an important step towards creating a more inclusive and diverse STEM system in Australia. Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to working together to promote diversity in STEM and create a more sustainable and equitable future for all Australians.

Yours faithfully,



Yours faithfully,

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