

BoF: Establishing a ‘Women in HPC’ Australasia Chapter

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DESCRIPTION

The communities powering today’s high performance computing (HPC) and eResearch sectors encompass a range of skills, expertise, and professional backgrounds. However, gender diversity remains low. In New Zealand, a mere 3% of 15-year-old Kiwi girls say they are looking to pursue a career in ICT, according to an MYOB Women in Tech report¹. Looking at the workforce, women made up only 18% of New Zealand’s tech workforce and 28% of Australia’s in 2018².

Six years ago, Women in High Performance Computing³ (WHPC) was launched as an international effort to tackle the problem of diversity in HPC through research and education, and to encourage more women to participate in the community. Through collaboration, networking, education, and support programs (offered to women and the organisations who employ them), WHPC strives to bring together diversity advocates within the HPC and technical computing sectors, to encourage them to engage in outreach activities, and improve the visibility of inspirational role models. At Supercomputing 2018, WHPC hosted a special ‘Diversity Day’ event as well as program session discussions on ‘Best practices from organizations on improving workplace diversity’ and ‘Being part of the solution: instructions for advocates and allies’.⁴

Early in 2018, WHPC started a Chapters and Affiliates Programme⁵ through which five WHPC Chapters and three WHPC Affiliates are helping frame a sustainable future for WHPC and all who support the vision. In this Birds-of-a-Feather session, we would like to gather Australasian diversity and inclusion advocates to discuss the opportunity and potential for establishing a WHPC Chapter or Affiliate program here, to tap into WHPC’s global network and to better coordinate, support, and expand diversity efforts within Australasia’s eResearch and HPC sectors.

Equal parts brainstorming forum and straw-man strategy session, this BoF’s ideal outcomes would include:

- a greater understanding of existing efforts and support structures in place for encouraging diversity and gender equity in Australasia’s HPC and eResearch sectors
- new and/or stronger relationships built amongst Australasia diversity and gender equity advocates
- a short-term action plan to:
 - investigate the potential for establishing an Australasia WHPC Chapter
 - explore ways to better connect, coordinate, and leverage existing diversity and inclusion efforts (this could include new/more collaboration opportunities between New Zealand eScience Infrastructure (NeSI), Pawsey, NCI, etc. to broaden impacts and strengthen communities)

FORMAT:

This session would include:

- a moderated roundtable discussion
- a brainstorming exercise (focused on encouraging participation and input from all attendees)
- a short strategy / action planning exercise

DURATION:

Note to organisers -- This could be a 40-minute or 60-minute BoF. We are flexible and can tailor the length of the session to fit whatever timeslot is easiest to schedule within the program.

REFERENCES

1. MYOB Women in Tech report - <http://files.myob.com/news/MYOB-women-in-tech-report-2018.pdf> - published February 2018
2. HoneyPot 2018 Women in Tech Index - <https://womenlovetech.com/2018-women-in-tech-index/> - published in March 2018
3. Women in High Performance Computing (WHPC) - <https://womeninhpc.org>
4. WHPC events at SC18 - <https://womeninhpc.org/whpc-sc18/>
5. WHPC Chapters and Affiliates Programme - <https://womeninhpc.org/chapters-and-affiliates/>