



Cooperative  
Research  
Australia

**CRA's submission to Diversity in  
STEM: dialogue starter  
(April 2023)**

*Cooperative Research Australia acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land on which we operate, the Ngunnawal people. We also acknowledge the traditional custodians of the various lands across Australia upon which our members operate.*

*We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging and celebrate the diversity of Aboriginal peoples and their ongoing cultures and connections to our lands and waters.*

**For further enquiries contact:**

Jane O'Dwyer

Chief Executive Officer

Cooperative Research Australia

PO Box 5357. Braddon, ACT, 2612

02 6260 3988

[www.cooperativeresearch.org.au](http://www.cooperativeresearch.org.au)

## Our input in the conversation

For Cooperative Research Australia (CRA), STEM represents the foundation of innovation and progress in the modern world. Our organization is dedicated to promoting research and development in Australia and we recognize the crucial role that STEM plays in driving economic growth, creating new job opportunities, and solving the most pressing challenges facing society today.

We believe that diversity and inclusion are critical to the success of STEM. We recognize that historically, there have been significant barriers to accessing and belonging in STEM, particularly for women, Indigenous Australians, people with disabilities, and other underrepresented groups.

While we have made progress, we recognize that there is still much work to be done to address this issue. We acknowledge that institutional and systemic biases exist, and we are committed to challenging these biases and fostering a more inclusive culture. We have contributed to this effort in a few ways, including representing these values in our engagement with stakeholders and through our advocacy, but also by facilitating forums for our members to learn from each other's experiences.

In line with this, we believe that addressing these biases and assumptions requires a concerted effort from all stakeholders -at all levels- in the STEM system, including government, industry, educational institutions, and individuals. We must work together to challenge stereotypes and promote diversity at all levels of the STEM workforce.

CRA supports this task through promoting a sharing and learning environment of Communities of Practice, which help us build better our submissions to open consultations and personal engagements with stakeholders. We encourage a similar approach to achieve diversity at all levels of the STEM workforce, in addition to targeted programs and initiatives that provide mentorship, support, and opportunities for these groups and for the service suppliers to these groups.

Finally, CRA recommends that, to deliver effective programs and initiatives, it is essential to involve underrepresented groups in their design and implementation. This ensures that the programs are tailored to the needs of the communities they aim to serve and can have a meaningful impact on increasing diversity in STEM.

At CRA, we are committed to working with all stakeholders to create a more diverse and inclusive STEM system that reflects the diversity of Australia's population and thereby foster wider participation from those currently underrepresented and have our nation benefit from the advanced outcomes created through diverse channels of thought and delivery.