

ASCEPT Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Survey Summary

Overview

The ASCEPT EDI survey collected responses from 58 ASCEPT members. Responses were from a broad cross-section of members, including students, early-, mid-, and senior-career professionals, emeritus members, and fellows. Respondents were from Australia, Aotearoa New Zealand, and Malaysia, and represented diverse cultural backgrounds, nationalities, and religions.

Overall, the findings indicate strong general support for ASCEPT's commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion, alongside constructive feedback regarding leadership representation, governance structures, and access to opportunities.

Perceptions of ASCEPT's Commitment to EDI

- The majority of respondents agree or strongly agree that ASCEPT demonstrates a commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion (82.76%).
- Positive perceptions are particularly associated with:
 - Inclusive conference programming and diverse session chairs and speakers
 - Board-level engagement with EDI, including representation and policy development
 - Visibility of EDI through workshops, communications, and targeted initiatives
- Several respondents express being impressed by the progress made in recent years.
- A minority of respondents express concern that commitment is more visible in policy and messaging than in structural change, or that it is not consistently evident in practice.

Equity of Access to Opportunities

- Most respondents agree or strongly agree that ASCEPT provides equitable access to opportunities such as presentations, awards, and leadership roles (79.31%).
- However, cost and geography are identified as significant barriers:
 - Respondents indicate that conference registration, travel, and accommodation costs disproportionately affect students, early-career members, caregivers, and those from regional or overseas (especially New Zealand) institutions.
 - Several respondents state that limited funding and travel support constrain participation for members from smaller or less-resourced institutions.

- Some respondents perceive that prestigious awards and senior opportunities do not yet reflect the full diversity of the membership. However, it is recognised that newly developed EDI policies and targeted awards are contributing to progress in this area.

Leadership, Governance, and Representation

- Several respondents highlight imbalances in leadership:
 - Leadership and board composition is perceived as concentrated within large metropolitan (Sydney–Melbourne) institutions
 - Women are underrepresented as society fellows
 - People from culturally diverse backgrounds remain under-represented in senior roles
- Respondents acknowledge improving diversity on committees, SIGs, and boards, and recognise these changes as positive signals for future leaders.

Experience of Inclusion and Culture

- Importantly, very few respondents report experiencing or observing overt discrimination within ASCEPT.
- Many describe the society as respectful, welcoming, and inclusive.
- Practical inclusion measures, such as prayer rooms, halal food options, and flexible considerations for carers and people with disabilities, are explicitly praised.
- Some members, especially newer ones, indicate limited awareness of EDI frameworks.

Key Barriers to Participation

Across responses, the most common comments relating to barriers to participation include:

- Cost (conference registration, travel, accommodation)
- Caregiving responsibilities
- Geographic distance and travel burden
- Limited institutional funding support
- Representation in senior leadership

Recommendations/Suggestions

Access & affordability

1. Continue to provide financial supports for students/ECRs
2. Offer accessible participation where feasible
3. Publish a transparent travel-grant rubric

Geographic equity & scheduling

1. Continue to strategically plan ASM host cities in alignment with the existing Environmental Sustainability Policy and Strategic Plan 2026-2030.
2. Increase transparency of ASM host city choices in member communications
3. Continue to strategically plan the date of the ASM to account for caregiver responsibilities and the end-of-year period

Leadership, recognition & transparency

1. Continue to ensure equitable and diverse representation participation
2. Continue to strengthen equity and diversity in leadership and awards

Member experience, culture & safety

1. Keep, and advertise, practical accommodations
 - Standardise prayer/quiet rooms, halal/vegetarian options, lactation rooms; include these clearly in the event info pack
 - Implement support for caregivers
2. Anonymous conduct & EDI concern reporting
 - Implement a confidential reporting channel during and after events; state response timelines and outcomes process in the Code of Conduct
3. Clarify data privacy for identity fields

Overall Interpretation

The survey demonstrates that members believe there is a strong foundation for EDI within ASCEPT. There is widespread recognition of recent progress, particularly through formal governance structures and inclusive event practices. At the same time, respondents indicate that structural factors, notably leadership representation, costs, and geographic equity remain the most significant challenges to achieving inclusive participation and opportunity.