



Australian Government

Chief Scientist

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Where could STEM take you?

Australians with qualifications in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) are working across the economy in many roles from wine-makers to financial analysts, according to a new report from The Office of the Chief Scientist.

Australia's Chief Scientist Dr Alan Finkel said Australia's STEM Workforce is the first comprehensive analysis of the STEM-qualified population and is a valuable resource for students, parents, teachers and policy makers. The report is based on data from the 2011 Census, the most recent comprehensive and detailed data set of this type of information. The report will serve as a benchmark for future studies.

"This report provides a wealth of information on where STEM qualifications – from both the university and the vocational education and training (VET) sectors – may take you, what jobs you may have and what salary you may earn," Dr Finkel said.

"Studying STEM opens up countless job options and this report shows that Australians are taking diverse career paths."

The report investigates the workforce destinations of people with qualifications in STEM fields, looking at the demographics, industries, occupations and salaries that students studying for those qualifications can expect in the workforce.

The report found that fewer than one-third of STEM university graduates were female, with Physics and Astronomy and Engineering having even lower proportions of female graduates. Biological Sciences and Environmental Studies graduates were evenly split between the genders. In the VET sector, only 9 per cent of those with STEM qualifications were women.

Dr Finkel said that even more worrying than the gender imbalance in some STEM fields, was the pay-gap between men and women in all STEM fields revealed in the report. These differences cannot be fully explained by having children or by the increased proportion of women working part-time.

The analysis also found that gaining a doctorate is a sound investment, with more STEM PhD graduates in the top income bracket than their Bachelor-qualified counterparts. However, these same STEM PhD holders are less likely to own their own business or to work in the private sector.

Dr Finkel said that preparing students for a variety of jobs and industries was vital to sustaining the future workforce.

"This report shows that STEM-qualified Australians are working across the economy. It is critical that qualifications at all levels prepare students for the breadth of roles and industries they might pursue."

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