

# Women in Engineering

Attracting, retaining, supporting and celebrating,  
women in the engineering profession

September 2018



## Victorian Chair's Address

Welcome to the September edition of the WIE newsletter. At the end of August, we held our most prestigious event of the year, our sold out Senior Women in Engineering Lunch! We heard from Keynote Speaker Dr Collette Burke and MC Louise Adams. It was so rewarding to see 110 people engaging in constructive discussions and walking away feeling inspired, taking an action to step forward in leadership or to spark the passion for engineering in others.

We have been planning multiple co-hosted events to bring to our members, with organisations including the Young Professional Women's Association, Engineers Without Border and Institute of Civil Engineers. Additionally, our final event, the Presentation Skills Workshop, will be held on the 18 October, which will be suitable for both senior, early career engineers and students.

Please enquire if you would like to get involved in the committee or would like more information. Additionally, if you would like to distribute this newsletter and advertise our events to your companies and colleagues, please do not hesitate to do so. See you at the upcoming events!



Lauren Thompson

## WIE Committee Election 2019

The Women in Engineering Committee Election is here once again. Come and join us for a night of inspiration and forward-thinking. We will have a recap of 2018, a preview of 2019 and nominate the new committee!

The WIE committee is focused on:

- Attracting, retaining, supporting and celebrating women in the engineering profession
- Creating a platform for women and men to speak on topics that they are passionate about
- Encouraging diversity of all forms in Engineering
- Improving and strengthening the engineering community
- Being a group of thought-leaders in the industry

We are a group of energetic, passionate and like-minded future leaders. If you are passionate about having an impact in your industry, self-growth and building your community, WIE is for you!

Get involved and help drive and shape the future of WIE- Victoria. There are several office bearer positions available for election including: Chair (2/3 shared roles), Secretary, Events Coordinator and Media Manager. We also have several support roles for passionate individuals to lead our events under our vision. If this sounds like you, please visit the registration page for more information on office bearer's responsibility descriptions and join us at the committee election night to find out more!



**Date & Time:** 13 SEP 6-8pm

**Venue:** Engineers Australia

**Registration Link:**

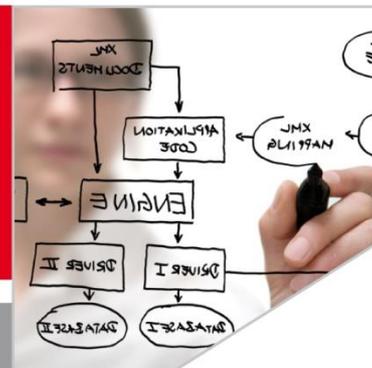
<https://www.engineersaustralia.org.au/Event/women-engineering-committee-elections>



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September 2018 – Upcoming Events

## Attracting a Diverse Workforce through Humanitarian Engineering

Listen to speakers from Engineers Without Borders and Women In Engineering discuss how the opportunity to make a positive difference can attract a wide variety of people to STEM.

- Can all projects be designed to meet technical specifications and consider social issues?
- How can we reframe engineering goals to be more relevant to societal needs?
- How can we ensure that we do engineering work that is also humanitarian work?

**Date & Time:** 18 SEPT 6-8 pm

**Venue:** Engineers Australia

**Registration Link:**

<https://www.engineersaustralia.org.au/Event/attracting-diverse-workforce-through-humanitarian-engineering-0>

## ICE 12<sup>th</sup> Brunel International Lecture Series

It is no secret or surprise that a transport boom is overtaking the world. On every continent and in every government, transportation infrastructure is seeing a call to action as hasn't been heard in decades. The reasons driving these are many, and the time for all institutions, private industries and members of the public to put a shoulder behind this boom is now.

Why is this so? Why now? The answer is because the next generation is "dreaming big" and they are crying out for 'Economic Prospects', 'Social Justice' and 'Environmental Imperatives'.

During the 12<sup>th</sup> Brunel Lecture Series, Linda Miller will address all of these concepts on her keynote on 'Transportation infrastructure and interdisciplinary interfaces on complex mega projects'.

**Date & Time:** 26 SEP 5:30-7:30 pm

**Co-Hosts:** WIE Victoria

**Venue:** Engineers Australia

**Registration Link:**

<https://www.engineersaustralia.org.au/Event/ice-12th-brunel-international-lecture-series-transportation-infrastructure-and-0>

## Public Speaking Skills Workshop

Public speaking is a necessity for engineers but is commonly known as one of their greatest challenges or fears. Training in this valuable skill is an essential 'enabler' for bringing out the best in teams.

Join the WIE in this valuable workshop and we will show you how to deliver presentations with real impact. You will learn how to overcome fears and deal with anxiety. You will understand how to tailor your presentations to the audience and structure the presentation content for added clarity. This workshop will also give you the tools to enhance your natural skills and develop as a polished professional presenter in the business arena regardless of the size of the audience or how formal the setting is. You will gain polish and confidence in all aspects of your delivery.

**Date & Time:** 18 OCT 5:30-7:30 pm

**Venue:** Engineers Australia

**Registration Link:** TBC

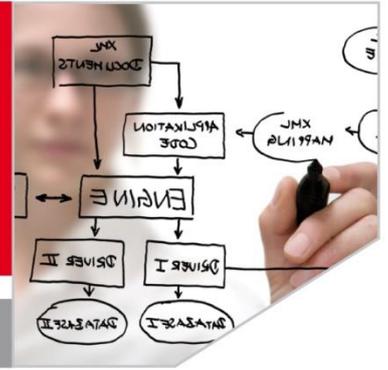


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## Past Event: WIE Senior Women in Engineering Lunch



On Thursday the 23rd of August over 100 people attended the Senior Women in Engineering Lunch held at Truck Restaurant, Melbourne. The sold-out event was attended by a good mix of people at different stages of their career. The event unquestionably delivered on the WIE principles of celebrating and retaining women in engineering and was notably attended by Engineers Australia National President Trish White and the Victorian President Alesha Printz.

The event was MC'ed by Louise Adams, Regional Director VIC/SA at Aurecon, who warmed up the room by pointing out the structural beams in the middle of the space, an example of the collaboration between structural engineers and architects. Louise introduced the main speaker, Dr Collette Burke the Chief Engineer of Victoria. Collette took attendees through her professional journey, providing plenty of anecdotes including stories about her first job at the docks. In a world where we're constantly challenged to think about our five-year plan, Collette shared that she truly loves not knowing what the next five years will bring. She invited the audience to cherish their own journey, admitting that she would never have imagined herself in her current position.



Collette spoke about the differences in mentoring and sponsorship. Mentoring is a forum to provide advice and develop skills and sponsorship involves promoting colleagues and staff. This was a reminder to be aware of our social interactions and that we still have long careers ahead of us.

The percentage of female engineers practicing as engineers is approximately 13.6% and there is a high percentage of females who leave as they reach their mid to senior careers. This led to the discussion of the introduction and continuation of STEM education at earlier stages as well as the increasing number of role models emerging in the profession.



Attendees were invited to have group discussions on the topic "What makes you passionate about your career/job". This led to some interesting conversations which were later shared to the group. Overall it was a wonderful event and huge thanks to all who attended.



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## WIE Representation at the National Schools Science Week



National Science Week is Australia's annual celebration of science and technology. Running each year in August, it features more than 1000 events around Australia, including those delivered by universities, schools, research institutions, libraries, museums and science centres. These events attract a wide audience from children to adults, and science amateurs to professionals. Over one million people participate in science events across the nation.

Established in 1997, National Science Week provides an opportunity to acknowledge the contributions of Australian scientists to the world of knowledge. It also aims to encourage an interest in science pursuits among the general public, and to encourage younger people to be fascinated by the world we live in.

All schools across Australia celebrated the 2018 National Science Week from 11<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> August. This year's theme was "Game Changers and Change Makers". While many STEM professionals take this as an opportunity to impart their knowledge to the wider school community, our current Vice Chair of WIE, Nadeesha Dharmasiri, shared her knowledge and experience on water engineering with the Hartwell Primary School grade 3 students. While she made her talk interesting with lots of facts and photos on changing climate and its impact on Australian water resources, this enthusiastic bunch of students amazed her with their overall knowledge on more advanced topics such as tsunamis. It was a very productive day and our Vice Chair is looking forward to sharing again next year.

## Website Link Round Up

The 39 most powerful female engineers of 2018

(<http://www.businessinsider.com.au/the-most-powerful-female-engineers-of-2018-2018-4?r=US&IR=T>)

Attention Working Moms: It's OK to Not Be OK

([https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/attention-working-moms-its-ok-sarah-robb-o-hagan/?trk=eml-email\\_feed\\_ecosystem\\_digest\\_01-recommended\\_articles-8-Unknown&midToken=AQGq\\_SmDW2hZHw&fromEmail=fromEmail&ut=0fWfjHhPTuUo1](https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/attention-working-moms-its-ok-sarah-robb-o-hagan/?trk=eml-email_feed_ecosystem_digest_01-recommended_articles-8-Unknown&midToken=AQGq_SmDW2hZHw&fromEmail=fromEmail&ut=0fWfjHhPTuUo1))

CSIRO STEM professionals in schools program

(<https://www.csiro.au/en/Education/Programs/STEM-Professionals-in-Schools>)

Rocket Woman: How to cook curry and get a spacecraft into Mars orbit (<https://www.bbc.com/news/stories-45374442>)

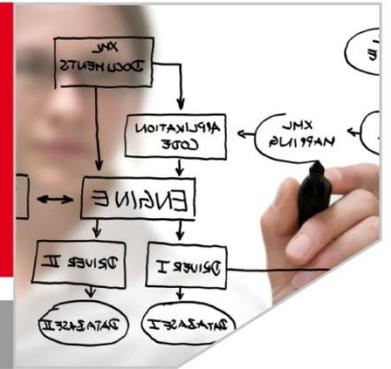


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## Woman of the Month: Victoria Dodds

Victoria Dodds is the Bureau of Meteorology's Flood Services Manager for Queensland. Her team is responsible for the flood forecasting and warning service for the whole of the state, and this involves working shifts as required during flood events.

Victoria started her career with a MA Honours in Geography followed by a Masters in Applied Meteorology. Her first role was working as a flood forecaster for the Thames catchment in the Environment Agency (UK) before re-training as a weather forecaster for the UK Met Office. Victoria went on to become the first female Deputy Chief specialising in operational Hydrometeorology.

After gaining her MBA, Victoria and her husband moved to Australia. In 2012, Victoria joined the Bureau of Meteorology as a Senior Flood Forecaster and in 2017 gained promotion to Flood Services Manager, just before the impact of Cyclone Debbie in Queensland.

Victoria is also a Chartered Scientist and a member of the Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management as well as a qualified weather forecaster, flood forecaster and most importantly a wife and mum of two wonderful little boys.

We felt privileged to ask her a few questions:



Picture: Victoria Dodds

***"Never give up, push yourself hard to achieve the things you want"***

### What do you most enjoy/love about your job?

Probably the fact that it contributes to public safety. I feel I make a difference to the community. I always try to perform my duties to the best of my ability in the Flood Warning Centre to ensure the safety of people during flood events. There is no routine for my job. It is different every day. I get to challenge myself in different aspects in this job, from technical operations to people management. There is a big diversity and I feel very lucky to be in this role.

### What are your success habits?

Am I allowed to say coffee, chocolate and supportive husband? I'm very busy at both professional and home fronts. Therefore, every morning after dropping the kids to the daycare, I go to my favourite café in the neighbourhood and allow myself to have 15-20 mins reflection time. It helps my transition from being a mom and wife in the early hours of the day to a career woman during that time I spend in the office.

I do a lot of reflections during the day, forward thinking and deciding what to do next. It helps me to get my priorities straight for that day and make myself more controllable.

I always push myself out of my comfort zone. It helps me move forward. I challenge myself professionally. For example, I trained in the university to pursue a career in geography but did not hesitate to check the deep waters in weather forecasting and make that move to that profession. It was effectively starting everything again, but as the proverb says 'no pain no gain'. I make myself do things that I want to do somehow, without thinking about too many possibilities that could happen.

### What/who has inspired you throughout your career?

This is going to make you laugh, but I always admired Indiana Jones. He is a scientist, adventurer, fun loving and everything exciting in one package. From a very young age, I was fascinated by science and extreme weather events and was passionate about helping people in need. I saw all these qualities in Indiana and wanted to be his next version. I have a very creative imagination. I think that urge to live in that character shaped my career path into a reality.

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Apart from fictional characters, different people have inspired me throughout my life. However, I should say my best friend has inspired me the most. She is a very successful entrepreneur now and effectively started everything from scratch. She never gives up and I admire her a lot for that quality. She always believes in me and supports me at all my important life decisions.

**What do you think the biggest challenge women in STEM face nowadays? And how could they work on it?**

I think the biggest challenge is the work life balance. Working parents struggle, because managing that professional front while dealing with a busy home life can be overwhelming at times. But as women we need to have a strong mind and accept the fact that we somehow need to deal with it. Having a support network can be rewarding, but we need to be more open about our challenges and ask for that help. I have a super supportive husband and I always ask for help whenever I want. I also think any organisation can help women to maintain the work life balance by implementing flexible work arrangements in the workplace.

**What advices would you give to young women in STEM aspiring to become a leader in their fields?**

Never give up. If something seems impossible at certain times, then remember it can become a possibility for you in the future. Push yourself hard to achieve things you want in life. After completing my Bachelors in Geography, I wanted to pursue a career in weather forecasting, but the UK Met Office said I need a Masters Physics/Meteorology. I spent one whole year upskilling in mathematics and physics and got myself a job as a meteorologist at the end. There was lot of hard work, which went in to that decision, but that's what got me in to where I am now today. If there is a barrier, overcome it don't let it stop you!

## WIE Winter Gala Dinner

On the 5<sup>th</sup> of August 2018, the Sydney division of WIE hosted the annual winter gala at the Establishment Ballroom in Sydney. This was a glamorous evening with all dressed in their best to enjoy the networking and delicious 3-course meal.

The theme for this year's event was "Balancing the masculine to counter disruption". The keynote speaker for the evening was Kristyn Haywood, who shared her knowledge and experience on the topic 'gender diversity'. Her insightful presentation left the audience in no doubt that valuing a balance of feminine and masculine approaches to work, achieves business prosperity. And that right balance brings greater collaboration, higher engagement, and more satisfied customers.

Overall it was a wonderful evening and the national WIE team would like to thank everyone who attended.



Picture: The National WIE team with Marlene Kanga (President-Elect World Federation of Engineering Organizations and former National President Engineers Australia)



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