

2007 - Year of Women in Engineering

'Women: the keystone in Engineering'

The Council of Engineers Australia has declared 2007 as the Year of Women in Engineering. The objective of the year is to increase awareness amongst the profession, industry and wider community of the role and contribution of women to engineering and to showcase their achievements. Our vision, that engineering be a sought after profession that offers a sustainable and fulfilling career for women.

Women engineers currently represent less than 10% of the engineering workforce in Australia- one of the lowest participation rates of women across all professions. Ensuring more women join the profession and remain in it is vital from a social equity viewpoint and also provides a means to increase excellence and to address the skills shortage. 'Women: the keystone in engineering' - they bring an abundance of diverse skills and strength to the engineering team.

The *key messages* for the year are:

Engineering needs women

- Attraction of women to engineering will have benefits to the profession and the wider community

Women are good for engineering

-The profession and community will benefit from an inclusive team as diversity realises better use of talent, increased workplace understanding, enhanced breadth of awareness in leadership positions, enhanced creativity and increased quality of team problem-solving.

Engineering is good for women

- Women complete the picture of engineering. For the profession to be a lifelong career for women, support frameworks and policies for work-life balance and flexible arrangements are needed.

The world needs women to be Engineers

- Women engineers bring health, wealth and safety to the community and society. Women are also equal consumers of technology and their input into the design process is critical.

The Council of Engineers Australia and Women in Engineering (WIE) National Committee have invited all Divisions, Directorates, Societies and Colleges, interest groups and business units of Engineers Australia to be a part of this special year. Activities are being planned that incorporate a focus on women, create networking opportunities, provide occasions that addresses retention and diversity, and profile leading women members.

National activities for the year include;

- Symposium hosted by the Honourable Ms Julie Bishop, Federal Minister for Education, Science and Training, tentative date 30th March, The focus of the symposium is to encourage more girls into science and engineering. Participants will be invited professionals, students and potential mentors
- Managing diversity workshops developed by the WIE National committee to be delivered in all division and is co-supported with the Centre for

Engineering Leadership and Management. The first workshop will be delivered in Western Australia on 1st March 2007

- National Conference for Women in Technology Professions hosted jointly with APESMA, Engineers Australia and the Women In Engineering National Committee
- World Federation of Engineering Organizations (WFEO) World Congress on Urban Infrastructure in Developing Countries New Delhi, India 12-16 November 2007, Women in Engineering delegation
- Update of the Careers Review of Engineering Women (CREW) survey scheduled for publication in the 3rd /4th quarter 2007. The CREW project was first undertaken in 2000 to investigate the issues surrounding women's retention, satisfaction and progression in the professional engineering workforce.
- Publication of the second edition of *Engineering a Better Workplace – A Diversity Guide for the profession* in 1st quarter 2007
- GenX² event to be jointly hosted by Women in Engineering and Young Engineers committees in Divisions with a focus on generational and gender exchange
- International Institute of Women in Engineering (IIWE) Scholarship for a penultimate year female engineering student to attend the IIWE workshop in France in July 2007. Submissions called in Feb 2007

The WIE National Committee is a dedicated and passionate group of women who love their work and recognise the unique aspects they and other women, bring to their profession. The committee is representative of women in various stages of their careers, from various disciplines, has a near-even mix from industry and academia, and brings together women with differing family commitments and cultural values. With strong support from National President Rolfe Hartley and with National Deputy President Julie Hammer's presence as the council representative on the committee, the result is a well rounded team to focus on the issues women face studying and working within the field of engineering in Australia.

The Committee is very excited that Women in Engineering will be brought to the forefront for Engineers Australia in 2007, allowing us the opportunity to showcase the achievements of women in the profession, as well as highlight to the profession and others about the issues of concern to WIE that may be limiting the career progression of women engineers and preventing other women from entering the profession. For further information on the year and if you would like get in contact with your local representative on the WIE National Committee please contact Gabrielle Cusack GCusack@engineersaustralia.org.au project manager for 2007, Year of Women in Engineering.

Dr Rebecca Gravina
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