

## Peyi Pey Guo MIEAust



### Education, Experience & Achievements

Current employment: Civil & Environmental Engineer, Connell Wagner, Central West Region, Adelaide Office

Bachelor of Engineering (Civil & Environmental) (1<sup>st</sup> Class Hons.), The University of Adelaide

Undergraduate work experience, Connell Wagner, Central West Region, Adelaide Office

Website maintenance and database development, for The Office of Senator Natasha Stott Despoja

Co-operative Research Centre for Water Quality and Treatment, (CRC WQT) Summer Research Scholarship 03/04. *Modelling Toxin Degradation*

Co-operative Research Centre for Water Quality and Treatment, (CRC WQT) Summer Research Scholarship 04/05. *Modelling Reservoir Dynamics – Investigating the growth of *Cylindrospermopsis* in North Pine Dam*

Summer Research 2006, The University of Adelaide with the Schools of Civil & Environmental, and Chemical Engineering. *Investigation of the biodegradation of plastics in landfills*

Finalist for the Craig Gilbert Leadership Award, 2006

Dean's Certificate of Merit, 2003 - 2005 for the Bachelor of Civil & Environmental Engineering

Engineers Without Borders, South Australia Chapter, Secretary 2005 - 2006

Women in Engineering, Engineers Australia, South Australia Division Committee 2004 – current

### What led you to choose Engineering as a career?

Engineering is a unique profession, embodying a broad range of traditional disciplines. In many respects, engineering is as much about applying the sciences as providing effective consideration of the geographical and sociological facets of engineering based projects. Pursuing engineering was an opportunity to put into practice the ideals I value; including that of service and social responsibility.

### What is it about Engineering that inspires you?

Engineering is about problem solving, and that is not limited to pure consideration of technical facets of a problem. It is an opportunity to holistically accommodate the interests of the broader community, considering environmental, economic and social qualifiers amongst a technical solution which will have a profound impact on the workings of our communities for years to come.

**What has been the high point in your career to date?**

As a graduate, the extent of my professional experience has only been small. But one of the greatest aspects of being a graduate in the current climate is the opportunity to work on some of the most progressive and innovative infrastructure projects of the current time. One of the most enjoyable aspects of engineering is putting the theory into practice, and incorporating an active appreciation for the natural variability and idiosyncrasies of each project context.

**What has been your biggest challenge so far and how have you solved it?**

Whilst there is no one specific challenge that I would consider the 'biggest', one of the challenges has been learning the administrative ropes of consulting. It has demanded amongst other roles people management, financial tracking, and scheduling, all of which may be required in a single task. There is no one 'right' answer. I have found the benefits of being resourceful, both of existing examples and of other people's knowledge – to ask questions! As a female in a male dominated environment, I have had the benefit of a work environment and team who very openly appreciate and support the interests of both females and males alike. Moreover, I have found that enthusiasm and a willingness to learn are respected attributes of any personality

**How have you managed your work and family commitments?**

The transition between student and professional life has been a significant one, particularly its affect on work-life balance. I have learnt to manage and maintain healthy balances through appreciating several factors. These include the importance of each one of my commitments, with consideration for career and personal aspirations, and priorities at the present time. By understanding these factors, I can prioritise and schedule my time accordingly. Admittedly, it takes much iteration is to strike a balance – which is maintained until a commitment or priority changes!

**Do you have any advice for women who are considering engineering as a career, or for those who are already Engineers?**

Engineering is a very rewarding profession, providing an array of opportunities to contribute to culturally significant projects and affect the operations of our community. While it is a technical profession, engineering is also about engaging people and working in teams. Women have the potential to become successful engineers. There are many challenges that women still face in a male-dominated profession, but the cultural attitudes of the workplace are changing. By exercising initiative, offering constructive criticism and supporting equal opportunity everyone (females and males alike) can influence and facilitate change in the workplace. I hope this encourages more females to adopt engineering as their chosen profession, because ultimately it is the women who are empowered with the experience to offer suggestions that improve our profession.