

Celeste Salter is a Metallurgical Engineer from UNSW. She graduated with a first class honours in 1989 and completed a PhD at UNSW in Textile Technology in 1996. She won many awards at university for high achievement and also held the Sandvik Scholarship Award throughout her undergraduate studies. She worked briefly for Comalco Rolled Products soon after graduation and then worked for CSIRO Wool Technology as a Project Scientist and CSIRO Minerals as a Research Scientist until 2000. She formed a consulting company, Zynergy Pty Limited, in 2000 and now provides advice and project management to the iron ore mining industry in Western Australia.



What led you to choose Engineering as a career?

I wanted to do something useful with my life, something that would make a difference in society. When I was 15, I became inspired by an Electrical Engineer, a woman who was mid career, at a Girls in Physics talk. She talked passionately about what could be achieved by women with an engineering degree. While I don't remember her name, it was her enthusiasm that spurred me on to look into engineering as a career option.

What is it about Engineering that inspires you?

Solving problems. Sounds simple, but is always a challenge. Finding that win-win solution, and knowing that I worked to the best of my ability, and hopefully stretched my own learning along the way.

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

I always feel good at the successful completion of a project. No specific high points, but I was very pleased when my doctoral thesis work was used by industry. It validated that the research was useful.

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

Since becoming a consultant, isolation has been a challenge. Meeting with other women engineers, with longer careers, has put a fresh perspective on how to address the issues that confront us specifically in the engineering workforce.

How have you managed your work and family commitments?

In more recent years I have taken on a lot of non-engineering activities, and find that the skills in project management are needed to successfully ensure the goals I want to achieve in all aspect of my life have the time and resources available.

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

Make connections with other women and men while you are at university, and build on those connections. Join groups and meet others who have the same interests as you, as well as learning how to deal with tricky work situations and how to manage family and workloads. If you are thinking of becoming an engineer get as much info as you can (there is never too much!), try work experience, meet women engineers through programs like WIE in Engineers Australia, University WIE groups, Girl Savvy Program, Ellementory, university open days etc.