

**Name: Gaye Francis, Deputy Chair & Awards Co-ordinator, Victoria.**



### **Education, Experience & Achievements**

I started my engineering career as a risk engineer with R2A in May 1998 after graduating from the University of Melbourne with a chemical engineering degree. In the 13 years since joining R2A, I have gained a diverse range of project experience working with both private and government clients across a wide range of industries including road, rail, marine, mining, aviation and water.

In 2005, I became a partner and director of R2A. As a director, I am involved in all aspects of the practice and oversee the consulting stream.

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

I had always been interested in maths and science at school but decided to study engineering after listening to a presentation by a female engineer at school in about year 9 or 10.

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

I think engineers have the opportunity to make a difference to the society in which we live. It is a diverse profession with endless opportunities to contribute. As a due diligence consultant, it is very satisfying to assist a project or organisation to solve difficult risk issues allowing them to proceed. Many of our projects focus on safety. The work that we do often improves and/or ensures safety which in turn makes a difference to the society in which we all live.

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

The high point of my career to date would have to be becoming a partner and director of R2A. This allows me to not only develop my technical skills but also my leadership and business skills.

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

Starting out in industry and establishing yourself is always difficult but you have to work hard,

prove yourself by being patient and earning the respect of others which takes time.

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

To me, a balance between work and social/family life is very important but to do this you need to be organised and true to what you want from life. Whilst at work, I work hard and put in 110%, however, outside of work is my own time (although as a director and partner it is sometimes difficult to switch off!) Although it would be very easy to allow work to creep into your private life time, I try and not take work home with me at night or on weekends. I love to travel and make sure I take annual leave every year and head away (usually overseas) with no laptop - this does wonders for the soul. I also think that it is important to have interests outside of work that allow you to relax and unwind whether it is exercise, catching up with friends or even chilling out with a book.

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

I would say to anyone considering engineering as a profession - 'go for it'. The profession is so diverse and the opportunities especially at the moment are amazing. Also don't let the discipline that you study limit what you do. One of the good things about engineering is that it has a logic behind it that can be applied to all types of issues - it is a way of thinking and problem solving.