

Leith Mitchell

Leith Mitchell is the Director of Mitchell Services, and until recently was IBM's Growth Markets Diversity Recruitment Leader. She is a passionate champion of diversity, flexible working and mindfulness.

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BY LEITH MITCHELL / SEP 18, 2015 9:53AM / / (0)

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Much has been written recently about the lack of women in Australia in [Technology](#) & [Life Sciences](#) careers, with Australian women comprising less than 20% of the Australian ICT workforce. Structural, cultural, interpersonal and personal **barriers** all contribute to issues in attracting and retaining women in the male-dominated fields of tech and science. The fact that there are so few women there are leads to a sense of **distinct isolation**.

[Women in Technology](#) (WiT) is an industry body working hard to raise the profile of women in technology and life sciences. At a gala dinner in Brisbane last month, the winners of the 18th annual Women in Technology Awards were announced. The awards are designed to showcase the amazing achievement of Queensland women in technology and life sciences.

Over 300 people attended- myself included - inspired by women making a difference in technology and life sciences careers. There were over 30 finalists, with the winners listed below:

Cutting-edge nanomedicine researcher Michelle Tianqing Liu from QIMR Berghofer was awarded the joint Rising Star Award with Dr Melina Georgousakis from the Franklin Women/ National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance, recognised for her extensive health and medical research in the field of vaccine development.

Professor Pamela Russell, from the Queensland University of Technology, was the winner of the Life Sciences Outstanding Achievement Award. Pamela was the first to treat autoimmune disease using cyclophosphamide therapy and is internationally recognized for generating bladder and prostate cancer models for study.

The Sue Wickenden Entrepreneurial Award went to Karen Sanders from Real Serious Games. The company uses advanced visual technologies to assist industries to plan, communicate and teach complex or high risk concepts.

Dr Tafline Ramos from KJ.Ross & Associates received the Professional Award for her vital role in international standardisation for software and systems engineering.

Rio Tinto Quality Manager Heidi Uytendaal received the Infotech Outstanding Achievement Award.

The University of Queensland's Kerrie Wilson was awarded the Life Sciences Research Award for the major influence her research has had on conservation policy internationally.

Angie Jarrad received the PhD Career Start Award for her research on the development of antibiotics to fight gut pathogens.

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Gillian Fisher from the Eskitis Institute for Drug Discovery at Griffith University received a highly commended in PhD Career Start category. Gillian started studying science at the age of 40 and is now a nationally recognised researcher in the field of adult stem cell biology, cell and molecular therapies and parasitology and antimalarials.

Leigh Ellen Potter, School of ICT, Griffith University received a commendation for her research in user experience, emerging technology, and project management.

Kate Richards was awarded the WiT Volunteer of the Year for her ongoing contribution to WiT and advancing, connecting and empowering women in technology and life sciences.

Women in Technology president Fiona Hayes said "the professionalism, intelligence and ambition of these women is just extraordinary. Pioneering lifesaving medical research, developing vaccines and medicines, driving global conservation and running successful and innovative businesses these women are leading the way in technology and life sciences."

Nominations for the 2016 WiT awards will open in July next year.

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