



February 2017



A Message from our President

Well 2017 has well and truly arrived and we have hit the ground running with a little more excitement in our step as we celebrate the **20TH ANNIVERSARY OF WOMEN IN TECHNOLOGY!** Be on the lookout for upcoming newsletters featuring stories from the past



Launching Women in Information Technology are Sonja Bernhardt, left, and Joanne Sherman. Photo courtesy of The Courier-Mail.

Women eating IT for breakfast

By GLENDA SLINGSBY
Policy Coordinator
Office of Women's Affairs

Last month more than 130 women attended the first of the 'Women in Information Technology' (WIT) breakfasts in Brisbane.

Founder, Sonja Bernhardt, the professional services manager for Queensland software and services company Mincom, said the professional network was set up to encourage more women into the information technology field and to support those already in it.

Mrs Bernhardt said she got the idea for the group after noticing she was one of only a handful of women at most information technology functions.

She said the group would provide opportunities for mentoring, public speaking and access to information services.

She said WIT proposed to go into secondary schools to promote information technology as a career option for women.

Guest speaker at the breakfast was Queensland Law Foundation Technology Services Manager Joanne Sherman who set up the computer-based legal information project called THEMIS.

Office of Women's Affairs Executive Director Meredith Jackson said many women were proving they had exceptional knowledge and skills in information technology, placing them at the leading edge.

"We have been very happy to support the formation of this group."

Mrs Jackson said.

"It's a great example of women working together to achieve gains."

Mrs Jackson said there were a number of information technology groups for women across the nation and it was pleasing to see the formation of one in Queensland.

"This group is not just concentrating on the south east corner. I particularly encourage women from rural and regional areas to participate," she said.

To find out more about the WIT group phone Anne McGill on (07) 3405 5111. While you're on line check out all the latest information at the office of Women's Affairs website at <http://www.qldwomen.qld.gov.au/owa>

like this gem!



February saw the first session of our Mentoring Program hosting 20 eager Mentees commencing their mentoring journey (pictured left).

We also held the first of our ICT City Series Breakfasts with a sold out session with Wendie Lee, General Manager IS Solutions Delivery at Super Retail Group. (pictured right with L-R Bec Langdon (WiT) Barbara Shaw (Qld Gov) Wendie Lee (Super Retail Group and myself)



After some intensive planning we have an exciting 2017 planned but to assist us in providing the best possible outcomes to our members we would be grateful, if you haven't already done so, if you can complete our [2017 Annual Survey](#). We use these survey results as a basis for our coming year to ensure we are on track with our offerings and to incorporate additional events and programs to respond to our member needs.

We will also be holding our 2017 AGM on 19th of April, 2017 (bookings opening soon for this free event) and look forward to sharing with you some exciting new plans, new board positions as well as launching our spectacular 2017 WiT AWARDS! So make sure you save the date!

We look forward to a successful 20th year and invite you to actively take part in this journey with us.

Kristy Simpkin

Acting WiT President



WOMEN IN STEM AWARDS EVENT

The Government's [Queensland Women's Strategy](#) highlights the importance of women and girls entering male dominated industries such as STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths). As part of the [World Science Festival](#) program there is a great opportunity for women, particularly young girls to be inspired and hear first-hand what can be achieved.

We encourage you to attend the following event as part of the World Science Festival Brisbane 2017. **Sunday 26 March 2017 3:30-5pm UNDER THE MICROSCOPE: Pioneering Women of Science Concert Hall, QPAC.**

This inspiring special event will include the presentation of the 2017 Queensland Women in STEM prizes: a national competition recognising pioneering women in the fields of science, technology, engineering and maths making a difference for Queensland, supported by the Queensland Government Office for Women and of Queensland's Office of the Chief Scientist.

Attend for a privileged gaze through the lens into the lives of some of the world's most celebrated female scientists. Learn how driven and exceptional women forged their way to the top of the science profession through personal revelations of success, perseverance, Eureka moments and confessions of events they would rather forget! Get your tickets [HERE!](#)

[Vote now for the 'People's Choice Award'](#). View the inspiring stories of women in STEM making a real difference for Queensland. To cast your vote go to [Women in STEM](#), select 'Entries', watch the videos and cast your vote. One vote per person. **Voting closes 3 March 2017.**



EMPOWERING WOMEN FOR TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Women in Technology received an invitation to participate in a roundtable as part of the Australia Awards Executive leadership program Mongolia - Empowering women for transformational leadership. The leadership program brought together Mongolian women and men from urban and regional areas who worked in Education and Science in Ministries, Universities, Schools and Non-Government Organisations. The focus of the workshop was leadership journey and gender equity and the panelists were invited to discuss what leadership means to us, our leadership journey, the people that had inspired us, what it took to become a leader, and to talk about what we do to empower others.

A common theme of the importance of mentorship permeated the discussion. At one point, one of the Mongolian woman, having listened to the discussion summed everything up by sharing a Mongolian saying reflecting on what is needed to live a meaningful life. The literal translation is

"write a book, plant a tree and have a child"

The saying really resonated with the group and the panelists in the context of transformational leadership; Write a book - tell your leadership story, Plant a tree - mentor others and Have a child - leave a legacy.

To me Women in Technology plays an important role in helping women and men develop their leadership skills through its mentoring workshops, events and career development programs. It was a real privilege for me to be able to share Women in Technology's philosophy and activities. Who knows, these dynamic Mongolian women and men may set up their own version of Women in Technology....story by Alison Rice (WIT Board Member)



WIT ACTING PRESIDENT KRISTY SIMPKIN TO SPEAK AT QUEENSLAND WOMEN'S WEEK DIVERSITY PRACTITIONERS ASSOCIATION EVENT

Queensland Women's Week recognises and celebrates the achievements of Queensland's women and girls. Everyone has a role to play in creating a supportive and inclusive environment where women and girls can succeed.

This year, to celebrate the QWW theme of "**Queensland Women: Be involved. Lead the way**", the Diversity Practitioners Association are excited to hold a TED Talk style event: What works at work: propelling women into leadership!

Whether you are an influencer within your organisation, a diversity practitioner, a current or future woman leader or simply passionate about gender equality, this event is not to be missed!

Nine expert speakers will each delve into a topic which contributes to empowerment and support of women in leadership roles. You will walk away with not only an understanding of the spectrum of challenges organisations face in supporting women to leadership, but practical and effective steps that the organisation and you as an individual can take to overcome these. [More info.....](#)



DIARY OF ELLE - CYBER SAFETY CAN BE FUN!

As a past WiT Board Member we at WiT are so incredibly proud of the new initiate by Nina Du Thaler in writing and publishing the book series, Diary of Elle to inform and inspire children's awareness of cyber-safety through fun stories in diary-format. Starring Elle and her friends, each book in the series of seven allows children to learn about different cyber-safety concepts through the experiences of other children.



Nina Du Thaler began working in the IT industry long before authoring her first book. She started with hands-on jobs, making sure that the computers of her colleagues were working properly and managing the implementation of new systems. Twenty-odd years, many online hours and several promotions later, she now works as the Chief Information Officer (CIO), responsible for the IT environment within a large company in Australia.

In her professional roles, Nina realised that "experts" in the industry rather than technology itself can make IT difficult, using buzz words like "cloud", "virtual" and "firewall". This challenged her to make IT more accessible - both for her fellow executives & more recently her daughter & friends.

She made an interesting observation that she can sometimes get away with providing incomplete or ambiguous answers as a professional, but it does not work in a kids' world. Children appear to be more straightforward: they understand or they don't, they question and analyse without boundaries. If they don't understand, it is generally due to a lack of clear explanation or describing concepts in adult ways, rather than the intellect of the child.

Additionally, as a mother, she has experienced first hand positive and negative impacts technology can have on children. They use it easily and without hesitation, but they are unaware of potential consequences and we have not equipped them with the skills to deal with these challenges. This realisation made Nina decide to combine her knowledge in IT and parenthood, into a unique combination of fun products so children can learn from other children's experiences.

Elle's books are available as e-books and paper books. [More info.....](#)

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