



# March 2017



## A Message from our President

This month I was honoured to present at the Diversity Practitioners Association, Queensland Women's Week event: What works at work: propelling women into leadership! Attendees included organisation influencers, diversity practitioners, current/ future woman leaders and those simply passionate about gender equality.

Nine expert presenters delved into topics contributing to empowerment and support of women in leadership roles. Topics included talent attraction, flexibility, pay equity, networks, inclusion, targets/quotas, professional development and mentoring with practical and effective steps to overcome these issues.

I spoke to the powerful impact mentoring can have on a career, what is mentoring, why it's so important especially for women, what makes a good mentoring relationship and qualities and attributes of good mentors and mentees. My advice: BE BOLD... take control of your career and seek out a mentor to make yourself a better you!

On 19 April we will be holding our [2017 Annual General Meeting](#). This free event is a great opportunity, particular if you are new to WiT to come along and network with our board, committees and many of our members. We will also be launching our 2017 WiT Awards so hoping to see many of you there!



Thank you to everyone who contributed to our 2017 Annual Survey, we were ecstatic with the number of contributors and the honest and open feedback provided. Our Board will now spend the next couple of months analysing the data and highlighting and implementing improvements to the organisation. All those who completed the survey went into the draw to win 2 tickets to our 2017 WiT Awards and the winner this year is KATHRYN TURNER from Urban Utilities. Congratulations Kathryn!



*Kristy Simpkin*



## WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT MENINGOCOCCAL MENINGITIS WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR WiT BEGINNINGS

Sonja Bernhardt founder of Women in Technology in 1997 is an Australian technology industry identity, Chief Executive Officer of multiple award winning software development firm ThoughtWare Australia and has voluntarily contributed significant efforts to the technology industry. This earned her a prestigious Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in 2011.



Sonja holds three management and information technology related degrees including an MBA, is a published author, including an international book on "Women in IT in the New Social Era". She was a past presenter of a long running weekly technology show on Australian National ABC radio.

Sonja's passion for technology and encouraging people to take up technology studies and careers is globally recognized and now in semi retirement Sonja is taking that passion to the high seas as a technology enrichment speaker on multiple cruise liners.

We asked Sonja about the start of the WiT organisation in 1997.

"A life-threatening bout of Meningococcal Meningitis in late 1996 resulted in me thinking of the fascinating women I knew who were involved in technology, yet did not know each other. I promised myself that on recovery I would do something about it."

In early 1997 two events reminded Sonja of her promise.

"I attended an AIIA event I felt overwhelmed by the sea of "men in suits" and shortly after a fabulous tech woman, Jane Reid (formerly Hoepner), took me out to lunch and after lunch I literally ran back to work determined to make it happen!"

"I called the IIB (information Industries Bureau), where Brian Cordiner advised that, the night before, CEO Liz Manning had assigned funds at a meeting specifically to 'do something about' women in technology. And WIT was born."

"The IIB pulled together the initial group and granted \$5,000 worth of funds, and so we began the journey that led us to WiT's 20 year anniversary this year.

WiT has flourished from 10 founding members in 1997 to over 5,000 members & affiliates due to the tireless dedication of the many volunteer board and chapter members who have written on the pages of the WiT Story. We thank you for your contribution and we write the next chapter.



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## QUT IHBI PARTNER WITH WiT AGAIN IN 2017 - SPONSOR OF OUR LIFE SCIENCE RISING STAR AWARD

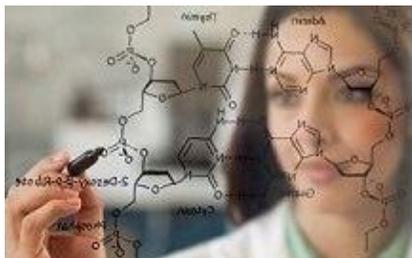
We are very grateful to have QUT's Institute of Health and Biomedical Innovation (IHBI) on board with us again as sponsor of our 2017 WiT Life Sciences Rising Star Award. We enjoy a long standing relationship with IHBI and they should be acknowledged for their support of women in the organisation and for the great work that they do in improving health in our community and globally.

QUT IHBI is a multidisciplinary health and biomedical research institute devoted to improving the health of individuals and communities through research innovation. Experts in a broad range of disciplines use the latest technologies combined with innovative thinking to bridge the gap between health priorities and research advances.

Elizabeth Kerr, Institute Manager said that IHBI has always been committed to supporting the next generation of researchers, and is proud to be associated with the WiT Awards.

"The WiT Life Sciences Rising Star Award enables us to recognise and celebrate the significant contributions made by women to the life sciences industry through research excellence and a focus on translational benefits to Queensland and the wider community." Elizabeth said.

Remember if you are an employee of QUT IHBI you are entitled to be listed free of charge under their membership and receive all member benefits. If you are not already listed simply email [admin@wit.org.au](mailto:admin@wit.org.au) to arrange. [Read more.....](#)



WiT Life Sciences

## WiT LIFE SCIENCES COMMITTEE CALLING FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST TO BECOME A COMMITTEE MEMBER

The Life Sciences Committee was formed in June 2005 and supports its members' advancement by providing access to relevant and valuable activities, networks and information. The Life Science Committee seeks to be known as:

- providing relevant & valuable events, workshops and networking opportunities for members

- an industry leader by advocating for the best in life sciences through communicating independent and balanced views, promoting the industry & interests of women working in it
- an organisation for women and men
- being in an alliance with other relevant life sciences groups
- embodying Professionalism; Empowerment; Innovation; Inspiration and Leadership

Please express your interest via email on [lisa.crowley@wit.org.au](mailto:lisa.crowley@wit.org.au).



## WIT LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS WITH QUALITATIVE RESEARCH SKILLS

WIT is looking for volunteers that have qualitative research skills to assist with thematic analysis of our Annual Survey data. Someone with skills in using NVivo would be particularly useful.

In depth analysis of the survey data will help WIT refine its strategy for the future. If you are interested please email us on [secretariat@wit.org.au](mailto:secretariat@wit.org.au) for further information.

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