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**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**Top Queensland women ready to fill gaps on tech boards**

Tech-savvy Queensland women such as Della Churchill are setting themselves up for success in the boardroom as Australia’s largest public companies appoint females to their boards at an increasing rate.

Although the percentage of women on ASX 200 boards has hit 30%, there are still five boards in the ASX 200 without female directors and Ms Churchill is keen to help fill the gap.

Ms Churchill, the lead experience designer at Readify, is about to graduate from a Board Readiness Program offered by Women in Technology (WiT), the peak industry body for women in technology and life sciences within Queensland.

In addition to feeling empowered to ask questions fearlessly and sharing boardroom ‘war stories’, Ms Churchill says she also learnt about the usefulness of pre-meeting diplomacy to produce an outcome, the responsibilities of being a board member and the importance of sound preparation for meetings.

“Diversity of board memberships is important and healthy, but it goes beyond the binary of women versus men. That said, encouraging and equipping smart and capable women to take on board positions expands our collective corporate culture,” she says.

Alice Peterson, 29, a project manager at PricewaterhouseCoopers, has her sights on being a board director for a non-profit or in the aged-care industry, preferably a company that is both. She has nothing but praise for the WiT course and says, despite being one of the younger attendees, she still felt as though her voice was heard and was important.

“It’s a safe community and the smaller groups are very supportive. While there were a lot of women present with decades of experience, I was never made to feel less than them. I was always given a voice,” she says.

Ms Peterson says boards weren’t just lacking in women, they were lacking in diversity in regard to multiculturalism, disability, gender and age. She also believes younger people can bring a new perspective to the board table because ‘we are quite good at thinking about future trends and how they will affect society’.

“I think there can be a really nice relationship where younger people who have the confidence to give it a crack are mentored by older groups of people who can take them under their wing and give them a go,” she said.

Co-President Joanna Field said, over the past 10 years, WiT’s Board Readiness Program has empowered hundreds of women to apply their personal and professional skills and become a board director.

“This innovative and unique program is effectively building the calibre of candidates available for board selection in Queensland. Women are also given the chance to showcase their recently acquired skills to some of Queensland's highest profile organisations,” she said.

As well as one-on-one mentoring, practical workshops, and facts and knowledge about becoming a director, women of all ages are given personal guidance on how to market themselves and expert advice on positioning their executive profile.

One of WiT’s many success stories is Faith Rees, the founder of SixPivot and Cloud Ctrl. Since completing the program in 2008 she has soared to great heights, including creating two startups, becoming a board member, working on various advisory committees and sharing her knowledge and expertise as a mentor.

“I think it’s extremely important that women are encouraged to take on roles as board directors. I have sat on a couple of boards that have been male only, with the exception of myself, and the dynamic that I bring to the table changes the conversation, the language and the diversity of thought. It is critical that boards ensure they have a cross section of skills which includes different opinions and cultural understanding,” she said.

**A graduation ceremony for the WiT Board Readiness Program is being held on July 19 from 12-2.30pm at PwC, Level 23, 480 Queen Street in Brisbane**.

The prestigious event includes an industry lunch to introduce graduates into the business community, WiT co-presidents Joanna Field and Claudia Giurgiuman will be there to congratulate this year’s cohort.

**ABOUT WiT**

As one of Australia’s most respected and active technology industry associations, Women in Technology (WiT) is dedicated to supporting, developing, recognising and promoting the achievements of women in the technology industries through advocacy, networking events, breakfasts, professional development, mentoring and our prestigious WiT Awards.

WiT was founded in 1997 by a small group of Queensland women who came together to share their aspirations and find understanding and solutions for the unique challenges they faced as female pioneers in technology. It now has more than 6000 members from all branches of science and technology. To learn more about WiT visit [wit.org.au](http://wit.org.au/)

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