



Annual Report 2023

Working to **empower women** in STEM to unlock their potential

What's inside

Introduction.....	3
Message from the Chair.....	5
Message from the General Manager.....	5
Our impact.....	6
Looking ahead.....	9
Our Board & governance.....	12

Acknowledgement of country

We recognise and acknowledge that Aboriginal People of mainland Australia and related island communities and Torres Strait Islanders as the First Peoples of this Country.

We acknowledge the respective Traditional Owners on whose countries we live and work, and Elders, past, present and emerging. We pay tribute to First Nations People enduring stewardship of this country. We honour and thank them for their ongoing contribution to our culture and society, to protecting our unique natural environments, to technological, scientific and digital innovation, to building a thriving economy and creating a sustainable future for all Australians.

This acknowledgement is integral to the process of healing, recovery, and development of relationships and our shared future with The First Peoples of Australia.



Introduction



Our vision and mission is to advance, connect and empower women in STEM to unlock their potential.

Women in Technology (WiT) is one of Australia's biggest communities that support women in across all fields of science and technology. As a not-for-profit organisation, we exist solely to create opportunities for our members and provide a dynamic platform to empower women from all disciplines to unlock their career potential.

For more than two and a half decades we have helped women find the inspiration and support they need to achieve their aspirations and, in doing so, we are helping our community take full advantage of the outstanding talent, energy and capacity they bring to our emerging digital economy.

WiT fills an important niche in the professional support resources available to women, helping to nurture, guide and support them during their whole career. We were the first organisation to bring women from all disciplines, all ages and all career levels together in a single, inclusive group.

Today, our community network brings together women and the champions of change who support them. Our community includes more than 11,500 corporate and individual members, affiliates, and over 60,000 online supporters – and our numbers continue to grow.

Industry and government invested substantially in schools and universities to encourage and equip young women and girls to pursue careers in STEM. WiT builds on these pathways offering enrichment programs and support for women as they start their careers, as well as women facing the unique challenges of returning to work, those in middle levels wishing to advance and senior women taking on high level leadership responsibilities.

WiT focuses on the common ground shared by women in all areas of technology, providing collegial support and helping them build the confidence and skills to succeed in the workplace. This is critical to recruitment, retention and growth of female talent and leadership in STEM careers. The broad remit also distinguishes us from the many discipline-specific organisations, technical interest groups that have emerged in recent years.

WiT operates in Queensland where technological innovation plays a key role in the state's economic future and the demand for talent is creating new opportunities for women. But our reputation extends nationally and many of our development programs have been emulated by both commercial and not-for-profit groups around the country.





Chair's message

As we reflect on 2023, it feels like a lifetime away. WiT by its nature is a forward-thinking organisation. Each year we look to re-calibrate the strategy against the economic, social and market conditions and adapt the calendar and events to meet the current and emerging needs of our constituents. The annual report is a time to look back on a prior year through a governance lens, but also to use as a point in time to communicate important ideas to our community.

This year more than ever I feel the shifting tide of social and economic conditions, with institutions commencing complex discussions around the many aspects of the gender gap beyond just the wage gap. There is a growing acknowledgement of broader issues including physical health, mental health, pay inequality, social structures, unpaid work and violence against women. The question we continue to ask is; What role can we play in making progress? While many of these issues lie outside our domain, they are inherently linked to our core values.

WiT is a unique organisation in our constituents come from three distinct sectors of government, corporate and education. Each of these sectors have unique aspects that would usually not coalesce in a single group, however they form the fabric of our members and partners. Their diverse needs coming together at the centre of a Venn diagram against our pillars of Advocate, Connect, Empower and Thrive, a unifying rally cry.

This report details many of the activities, events, people, networking, educations and a myriad of other events we held in-person, online and remote. What it can't capture is the moments of magic that occurred throughout the year in the hearts and minds of each of you. In the tiny moments of action that take us forward to a better outcome for all women, and as a result, the broader community. At the heart, we are a safe space for women. The result will be healthier communities through better outcomes for women. We continue our work every day to create and nurture this space.

A heartfelt thank you to our partners and sponsors, the operations team, our current and past Board Members, Committee Members, volunteers, finalists, winners, mentors, mentees, judges, speakers, alumni and guests who participated in our community this year. Together we truly are stronger. Let's focus on the future and be the change we seek by continuing to lift each other up and inspire excellence in ourselves and others.

Kelly Wilkes
Chair



General Manager's message

Managements key focus for 2023 was continuing to bolster the Strategic Thrive Pillar of our 2022-2024 Strategic Plan. With continuing growth the resourcing and funding of the organisation still remains the highest priority to provide a foundation for further expansion and enable us to deliver to our members.

2023 saw:

- Appointment of operational committees dedicated to supporting operational functionality
- Creation of Board level Strategic Committees to support the Board with Strategic initiatives
- Reinvention of our operational team to include specific skillsets required to move forward
- Review and implementation of our processes, systems and technology to improve efficiencies and support growth

2023 saw economic downturns that have impacted on WiT but our team are incredibly agile and resilient and always work tirelessly to underpin organisational operations to support Members, ensuring we adapt to change and continue delivering value to our members.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to serving our members and the broader community. We will continue to innovate and evolve, staying ahead of the curve and adapt to changing circumstances. Our focus remains on delivering the best possible outcomes for our members and making a positive impact for Women in STEM.

I take this opportunity to thank you our amazing team for your passion for vision and your commitment to our members first philosophy. I would also like to thank you our members, sponsors, partners and community for your support and trust. Without your continued loyalty and commitment, we would not be where we are today. We always value your feedback and welcome any suggestions as we strive to provide the best possible experience for you. Remember this is YOUR Organisation!

Lisa Cawthorne
General Manager

Our impact



Professional & personal development

Our events feature thought-leaders and inspirational role models, to career-based learning experiences and social networking. Creating opportunities to connect, collaborate and learn from others is crucial for building strong relationships and supporting individual career development. In 2023 we delivered over 50 events and programs for our members and the broader community and impacted over 2000 women.

- **Step Up Professional Development Programming:** educational programs and webinars delivered to over 90 participants.
- **Board Readiness program:** our 2023 program empowered 12 female leaders across STEM with the tools, network and voice to confidentiality transition to the board table.
- **CALD Program:** our CALD program empowered 65 CALD women and worked with 19 corporates to support CALD women in their organisations.
- **Board Communications:** Our interactive 3-hour introductory course on board reporting. In 2023, we empowered 25 participants with increased confidence to report to their boards.
- **ConnectWorks:** more than 420 members and guests joined us for our 4 annual ConnectWorks events to connect with the STEM community.
- **Inspiring women in STEM:** more than 400 members and guests joined us across 5 events showcasing leading women in STEM.

Mentoring

Hundreds of mentees and mentors have successfully completed the WiT Mentoring program, a structured 12-week course which focuses on helping women achieve their personal career goals. Alumni continue to be connected via a dynamic community of practice that offers ongoing online and offline interaction.

Recognition

The annual WiT Awards are the premier showcase for women in STEM in Australia. The gala presentation attracts hundreds of guests who come together to celebrate the outstanding achievements of Queensland women across the spectrum of science and technology.

The Awards attracted over 300 nominations, 123 applications, 33 shortlisted applicants, 32 finalists and 17 awardees. The Gala Dinner hosted over 800 attendees and 68 corporate tables as well as celebrating our 26 year anniversary!

Community membership

WiT membership continues to grow year-on-year. The organisation now has more than 11,700 members and affiliates with more than 50,000 government, corporate and individual supporters registered with our various channels. Members come from all technical disciplines – including all branches of ICT, medicine, engineering, environmental sciences, research, academia, business, industry and government.

Advocacy & influence

The backing of WiT's diverse and inclusive membership gives the organisation a strong voice in policy and decision making at both a state and national level. WiT is frequently asked to speak at community and industry events, or to contribute to Government discussions and forums, where it continues to advocate on behalf of women in all fields of science and technology.

Information

WiT's extensive social networks are an important source of news and information on matters of significance to its broader community. They provide a platform to recognise challenges and achievements and showcase female role models and an accessible, safe forum for advice and support. The annual WiT survey keeps a finger on the pulse of attitude and opinion in the community.



Contribution

WIT works closely with many other women's networks, startup incubators, universities and technical interest groups actively promoting events and opportunities of interest to our community.

Our Partners and Sponsors

2023 Powered By Partners








Looking ahead



Our 2022 - 2024 Strategic Plan

Although women have made significant career inroads over the past two decades they are still under-represented in many STEM professionals and in senior leadership positions across government, industry and academia.

Change is possible, and it's happening but too slowly. Our 2022-24 Strategic Plan guides our focus areas in helping to help overcome these barriers by encouraging women to build their capability and support each other. We seek to unlock the potential of women in STEM by helping to drive transformative, systematic and sustained change and providing opportunities for women to establish the skills, confidence and networks they need to claim their rightful place in our technology-driven world.

PURPOSE	Unlocking the potential of women in STEM				
PILLARS	ADVOCATE	CONNECT	EMPOWER	THRIVE	
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	Powerful advocate for equality of women in STEM	Build an active and engaged community of women in STEM	Provide the tools and support for career success	Build a strong and sustainable association	
STRATEGIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute to government policy to advance the position of women in STEM. Inspire change within companies to advance the position of women in STEM. Change public perceptions of women in STEM. Optimise research to create practical, evidence-based, outcomes and initiatives that advance women in STEM. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate meaningful connection with peers. Create a thriving online tribe of women in STEM. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver useful and timely insights. Provide access to education and event opportunities. Recognise and reward excellence. Provide access to career support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure strong and sustainable funding streams. Effective staff resourcing. Drive member growth and engagement. Optimise technology to deliver value. Practice great governance. 	
OUR VALUES					

Our short & long term objectives

The 2022-2024 Strategy for WiT is centered around the four key Pillars of **Advocate, Connect, Empower and Thrive**. WiT will continue to deliver a broad program of events and strategies to:

- Be a powerful **advocate** for the equality of women in STEM.
- Build and **Connect** an active community of women in STEM.
- **Empower** women by providing the tools and support for career success.
- Built a strong and sustainable organisation with members that **thrive**.

Over the next 12 months the objectives are:

1. Completion of the transition to a Company Limited by Guarantee
2. Alignment of the Annual Awards categories to the WiT values
3. Adoption of a broader application process for the Annual Awards to improve our ability to recognise Women in STEM
4. Establishment and recruitment of Board and Project Committees aligned to the Strategic pillars and right sized for the new company structure to deliver better services for members and outcomes for partners
5. Review all levels of Membership to ensure we are delivering value, ensuring members can fully leverage all benefits of the WiT ecosystem
6. Enhance and optimise technology use and improve systems to future proof the business for growth including the use of data and insights to better serve our members with streamlined operations and personalised communications
7. Continue to deliver education, training and networking opportunities for our members
8. Complete an annual review of the 2022-2024 Strategy to assess progress, prioritise remaining initiatives and identify KPIs aligned to the strategy

Over the next 3 years the objectives are:

Advocate - Contribute to Government policy with the aim of advancing the position of women in STEM. Inspire and influence change within the business ecosystem to better integrate women and improve representation at all levels. Be a voice for Women and have a seat at the table where decisions are being made.

Lead - Position WiT as the experts on Women in STEM by creating opportunities for practical, evidence-based research, initiatives and programs through partnering with universities, government and research bodies.

Connect - Create a thriving tribe of women online and in person that is amplified through an expanding network of chapters in new geographies delivering contextualized and relevant offerings aligned and governed in accordance with the WiT values.

Empower - Provide access to education and events that address the structural challenges facing women in STEM. Recognise and reward, motivate and inspire excellence through sharing stories and evolving the WiT awards.

Thrive - Secure strong and sustainable funding streams and identify new high value offerings that will ensure stable operational delivery of programs that serve the WiT community.

Our Board & governance



Our Board

WIT is a public company limited by guarantee. As supported by members at the 2022 Annual General Meeting, in 2023 WIT transitioned from an incorporated association to a public company limited by guarantee to strengthen organisational governance and better facilitate entity growth.

Under this arrangement and WIT's Constitution, the Board - placed with ultimate responsibility for the governance of WIT - consists of no less than five and no more than ten Directors.

The primary role of the Board is to set the objectives, strategies and policies for WIT and to ensure that its management demonstrates proper, efficient stewardship and commercial practices which are in keeping with WIT's mission and purpose. This is achieved by:

- developing and approving WIT's strategic direction;
- selecting and appointing the General Manager, and monitoring their performance;
- monitoring financial and non-financial performance, risk management, governance arrangement and the integrity of reporting;
- approving decisions affecting WIT's capital, including approval of new business initiatives;
- ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements;
- informing and monitoring Board level policy positions.

Number of meetings

	Eligible to attend	Attended
Iyari Cevallos, Chair to	13	12
Kelly Wilkes, Chair from	13	13
Janet Hou	7	6
Alison Stokes	6	3
Bronwyn Venus	13	10
Petria Skitek	13	10
Rowena Beckworth	13	11
Nadine Fiers	13	12
Kelly Addison	13	12

Board's Committees

We have four Board Committees:

- **Audit & Risk Committee:** assist the Board in fulfilling its financial reporting, risk management, external audit and control management.
- **Nomination & Governance Committee:** assists in overseeing WIT's strategic and corporate governance focus through Board effectiveness, operational performance and corporate entity matters.
- **Membership & Advocacy Committee:** assists in overseeing WIT's strategic focus for its members, ensuring an enduring value proposition, sustainable operational growth focus, key improvements and advancement of WIT's advocacy agenda.

- **Partnership & Funding Committee:** assists with WIT's value proposition to partners and alliances, and maintains focus on financial sustainability, including reviewing and making recommendations on new or diversified funding streams and grant applications.

Our people

As a small organisation, we pride ourselves on fostering a supportive and collaborative culture. Our operations team consists of two and a half FTE staff members, including a General Manager, Membership Manager, Events Manager and Marketing Manager.



Board Members



Kelly Wilkes
Board Chair

Kelly grew up in Perth, Western Australia and had the luxury of a free range childhood, moving to Sydney in her teenage years. Travelling extensively in her youth, she has had a wide variety of experiences, opportunities and setbacks. Kelly has spent the last 20 plus years working in a variety of IT and business roles ranging from Insurance and Banking to Government and Education, from global giants to a 3-person technology start-up in Australia, Sri Lanka, Africa, Europe and the US. She is currently the Vice President of Operational Excellence for Vela Industries Goup. Kelly is passionate about using what she has learnt to help people work better together and enable them to realise their full potential.

Appointed: April 2022 (appointed Chair from May 2023)



Iyari Cevallos
Director, Membership &
Advocacy Committee Co-
Chair

Iyari has over 15 years of global experience managing unique and complex engagements in the resource, banking, telco, energy and tourism sectors. She has a proven record of delivery in operational performance, digital transformation change, governance and risk management in both the public and private sectors. As a passionate leader in fast paced and evolving environments, she has been fundamental in influencing and leading positive change, contributing to a more equitable, just and sustainable society. Iyari is a regular speaker at corporate enterprise level conferences and is frequently called on as a lead facilitator for engagements aimed at blue sky thinking, strategy development, innovation or cross network industry think tanks.

Appointed: April 2022 (appointed Chair to May 2023)



Janet Hou
Director

Janet was trained as a doctor in China and an epidemiologist in Australia. She is currently employed as an Associate Prof in Epidemiology at UQ Poche Centre for Indigenous Health. Janet has been a passionate community volunteer, including Board Member of Queensland Chinese Associations of Scientists and Engineers Council (2006 -2016), Chair of Chinese Community Crime Prevention Consultative Committee in Queensland (2010-2014), and President of Queensland Chinese Forum (2010 – 2014). Janet’s leadership roles include Director of international research development between institutions in Australia and Asia, Medical Affairs Director in a USA company, Project Manager in QLD Health DG’s Office, and Academic Dean in a private institute of higher education in NSW where Janet chaired the Academic Board.

Appointed: April 2022

Resigned: May 2023



Alison Stokes
Director

Alison Stokes is the CEO and Co-Founder of a health tech startup *Beyond The Clinic* – a technology solution revolutionising the way healthcare is provided to achieve better outcomes for both patients and providers. With more than 15 years of experience in healthcare management, sales, marketing, business development and clinical practice, Alison has a well-rounded strategic understanding of clinical problems and the technical solutions required to drive efficiencies and improve patient care outcomes. Driven by her entrepreneurial mindset and innate ability to challenge the status quo, Alison is fast becoming a trailblazer for *female* entrepreneurs in the health tech space.

Appointed: April 2022

Resigned: April 2023

Board Members



Bronwyn Venus

GAICD MICDA

Director, Partnership & Funding Committee Chair

Bronwyn was a senior researcher for more than 30 years with organisations including CSIRO, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries and the University of Queensland. She is passionate about the agriculture and food industries, and now heads the partnerships and grants program for Sugar Research Australia (SRA). Bronwyn brings industry and legislative knowledge and insight (particularly with relevance to the agriculture sector), along with an excellent working knowledge of the research and academia sectors. As the Head of Partnerships and Grants for SRA, Bronwyn's focus is on identifying partnerships to support the delivery of SRA's innovation and commercialisation agenda, building long-term, strategic partnerships aligned with the delivery of transdisciplinary systems and solutions to address industry priorities.

Appointed: April 2022



Petriea Skitek

Director, Membership & Advocacy Committee Co-Chair

Petriea returned home to start a new initiative here in STEM in Australia from 20+ years in Japan where she had her own food, educational and consulting business supplying services to peak government bodies, leading international hotels, supermarket chains, marketing industries and independent schools both in Australia and Asian regions. Petriea has a depth of experience on boards starting with Australia-New Zealand Chamber of Commerce Japan (ANZCCJ), International Working Women's Association (IWWA) and ending as a specialist in international policy and a planning consultant over 8 yrs for the World Association of Cooks Societies (WACS 63 member nations) and the Asia Continental Director (15 countries). Petriea is currently a volunteer member for Zonta International, Brisbane South, an organisation of professionals that empowers women through service and advocacy that aligns alongside UN women for strategy and delivery.

Appointed: April 2022



Rowena Beckworth

GAICD, MBA and BEng(Aero)

Director, Deputy Board Chair, Audit & Risk Committee Chair

Rowena is a company director, business leader and management professional with diverse industry experience. Her executive leadership appointments have included corporate strategy implementation, business services integration and Reconciliation Action Plan sponsorship. She has more than 20 yrs experience in leadership, project management and engineering roles spanning aerospace, defence and construction sectors. Throughout her career, Rowena has been a leader and advocate for advancing organisational commitment to diversity and inclusion through culture and systems that enable participation, parity and progression of people from diverse backgrounds and circumstances. Rowena is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and holds a Masters of Business Administration and a Bachelor of Aeronautical Engineering, as well as a number of other post grad qualifications.

Appointed: April 2022 (Audit & Risk Committee Chair September 2022 - April 2024, Appointed Deputy Chair October 2023)



Nadine Fiers

GAICD, LLB (Hons)

Director, Company Secretary

Nadine has over 10 years' experience delivering best practice corporate governance. Cognisant of the role that corporate governance plays in shaping operational and strategic performance, Nadine is passionate about identifying opportunity and realising it for long-term sustainability and success. Nadine has qualifications in corporate governance and law, and is currently the Assistant Company Secretary of an ASX listed top 150 enterprise software company.

Appointed: May 2023 (casual from December 2022)

Board Members



Kelly Addison

CPA, B.Bus (Acc)

Director, Treasurer

Kelly is an accomplished CPA with over 20 years' experience in Finance and Software Implementation. She has a proven track record of leading successful finance teams across multiple industries, including listed companies and not-for-profits. Kelly's passion for innovation and emerging technology has been a driving force throughout her career. She has a deep understanding of how technology can enhance processes and create efficiencies and is constantly exploring new ways to leverage technology to improve outcomes for clients. Over the past 8 years, Kelly has focused on innovation projects, software design and architecture within the legal industry. Her expertise has enabled her to develop cutting-edge solutions that have improved operational efficiency and delivered significant value to her clients.

Appointed: May 2023 (casual vacancy from December 2022)

Thank you to our **Audit & Risk Committee** members for your commitment to supporting **WIT's vision**

Membership & Advocacy Committee

- Iyari Cevallos**, Committee Co-Chair
- Petria Skitek**, Committee Co-Chair
- Anna Harrison**, Committee Member
- John Pynakker**, Committee Member
- Kimberley Randall**, Committee Member
- Rosie Atwell**, Committee Member
- Yas Grigaliunas**, Committee Member

Partnership & Funding Committee

- Bronwyn Venus**, Committee Chair
- Tamara Leahy**, Committee Member
- Ankita Sareen**, Committee Member
- Lisa O'Connell**, Committee Member
- Anthea Dare**, Committee Member

Audit & Risk Committee

- Rowena Beckworth**, Committee Chair to April 2024
- Kelly Addison**, Committee Chair from April 2024
- Maria Buchsteiner**, Committee Secretary
- Lauren McCleary**, Committee Member
- Glenn Tomai**, Committee Member
- Kate Bowden**, Committee Member

Noms & Rems Committee

- Kirsten Kiel-Chisholm**, Committee Chair from February 2024
- Nadine Fiers**, Committee Chair to February 2024
- Kelly Wilkes**, Committee Member
- Aunty Roma Pregarc**, Committee Member
- Kate Drew**, Committee Member

Operations Team



Lisa Cawthorne

General Manager



Katie Watts

Community Manager



Rashelle Leahy

Marketing & Comms Manager



Christy Ward

Event Manager

INSPIRING EXCELLENCE

We celebrate our success and achievements to inspire the next generation of leaders.

WE LIFT EACH OTHER UP

Incredible things happen when we support, guide and trust each other.

WE ARE THE CHANGE

We challenge the status quo by advocating for women in STEM with courage and respect.

STRONGER TOGETHER

We leverage the power of our network to foster professional relationships and partnerships.

FUTURE FOCUSED

We embrace change and learning opportunities to advance the skills and careers of our community.

Thank you

Without the support of our Members, Partners and Sponsors the work we do to advance, connect and empower women in STEM to unlock their potential would not be possible.

