



Women in focus at special event

Women from across the oil and gas supply chain are invited to the ever-popular AOG Women High Tea, as part of this year's conference and exhibition.

It brings together leading women and men from across the oil and gas industry for an afternoon of networking and inspiration.

The event will include a keynote speech and an insightful panel discussion to explore the opportunities and challenges experienced by women in the sector.

High-profile panellists will include journalist Narelda Jacobs, Chief Executive Officer of the WA Chamber of Commerce and Industry Deidre Willmott and INPEX General Council and General Manager Commerce Jodie Hatherly.

US Consul General in Perth Cynthia Griffin is the keynote speaker for the event and will facilitate a lively discussion on women in the workforce.

"These are exciting times for women in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math," Ms Griffin said.

"From our web-based research and discussions with folks in the field, female participation in the oil and gas sector rose to 23.5 per cent in the year to May 2014, according to Australian Women in Resources Alliance.

"Oil and gas companies are actively recruiting women, with many launching internal goals for gender diversity among senior leadership."

Ms Griffin added that resources companies were making a concerted effort to encourage women to firstly get into and secondly return to the workforce.

"To encourage female participation in the sector, oil and gas companies are increasingly offering flexible work packages, parent-friendly rosters, female-appropriate uniforms, onsite childcare, gender-inclusive work environments, extended maternity leave and couples' onsite housing to redress some of the perceived challenges of working

in remote environments," Ms Griffin said.

"The discussion at this year's High Tea will centre on the opportunities and challenges experienced by women in this traditionally male-dominated sector. Panellists will share their individual experiences working in oil and gas."

Ms Griffin offers attendees tips on how to make the most of this networking opportunity.

"My number one tip for networking at this type of event or any other type of event is to mingle and meet new people, or reconnect with folks that one might have met at last year's inaugural event or elsewhere within the industry," she said.

"At networking events I urge young people to avoid just talking to their friends or colleagues and instead encourage them to reach out and meet new people.

"I always advise folks to be prepared with business cards and be prepared to introduce themselves to speakers who may have resonated with them."

WA Chamber of Commerce and Industry Chief Executive Officer Deidre Willmott is one of the participating panellists in this year's event.

"The oil and gas industry in Western Australia offers many opportunities for women and has been working to address the barriers to women's participation which are common in many sectors," she said.

"My advice to the women I mentor is that you must make time to build your networks. Too often, women will diligently work away at their desks and miss out on the chance to connect with colleagues and industry peers.

"As your career progresses, you will need the support of your colleagues and peers, so it is important to invest in those relationships now."

The event takes place on Friday 13 March from 1pm to 4pm. Individual tickets are \$89, while a priority table package for a table of 10 is \$1100. Last year tickets sold out in



advance, with 502 people signing up to attend.

“These types of events are excellent forums for women to meet with their peers, to share their own experiences and to hear how others have tackled and overcome barriers to move ahead in the industry,” Ms Griffin said.

“Hearing about real-life experiences, rather than just text-book scenarios, is invaluable for women at all stages of their career.”

Attendees will also have the chance to win an 18K white gold Australian South Sea Cultured Pearl and Champagne Diamond Pendant, worth \$2000, thanks to Pearl Sponsor Willie Creek Pearls.

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