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# FEMALE ROLE MODEL TOOLKIT

**MAY 2023**





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## INTRODUCTION

From 1966 to 1977 a landmark study was conducted with primary school pupils in Australia, Canada and the United States, asking 4,807 pupils to draw a scientist. Just 28 of 4,807 students drew a female scientist. In other words, 0.6% drew a female and 99.4% of the pupils drew a male scientist, and the 28 pupils who drew female scientists were all girls<sup>1</sup>.

The experiment was replicated multiple times in the decades since, with a meta-analysis published in 2018<sup>2</sup>. In the latest research 72% of the pupils drew a male scientist. More specifically, 55% of the girls and 95% of the boys drew a male scientist.

While this indicates that some progress has been made, the findings highlight how ingrained limiting gender role norms still are. This underlines how critical it is to increase the visibility of female role models, particularly those flourishing in professions historically dominated by men.

Research suggests that positive role models are very effective motivators<sup>3</sup>. This is especially important for gender equality. Motivation for women to strive for professional success has long been hindered by gender bias across a wide range of professional fields. Female role models are important to provide a much-needed counter point to the male-centric gender norm and motivate women to succeed.

"It's hard to be what we cannot see," Dr Nina Ansary wrote in an account of worldwide gender disparity featuring remarkable women throughout history<sup>4</sup>.

Similarly, providing female role models who are leaders in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) has been shown to significantly increase girls' interest in pursuing those fields<sup>6</sup>.

When girls witness the success of female role models who are like themselves, it inspires them. Female students, for example, are more likely to major in STEM when they are given a female professor rather than a male professor<sup>5</sup>.

According to research into benefits of role models<sup>7</sup>, role models provide three primary benefits to women:

- a) Role models act as behavioural models of the attitudes and actions required to succeed.
- b) Role models present what is possible beyond the stereotypes, thereby expanding horizons and showing possibilities.
- c) Role models motivate women to be more ambitious and strive for greater heights.

**It is important for organisations in the Australian resources and energy industry to fully utilise the benefits of female role models to counteract gender stereotypes and biases.**





## ROLE MODELS VS MENTORS

Mentor and role model are terms that are sometimes used interchangeably. Although they are similar in many ways, there are considerable differences between them.

A role model is "a person who someone admires and whose behaviour they try to copy"<sup>8</sup>.

By contrast, a mentor is "a person who gives a younger or less experienced person help and advice over a period of time, especially at work or school"<sup>9</sup>.

In general, role models do not have to be individuals you know, nor do they have to know you. They may be observed, appreciated and imitated from afar.

Mentors, on the other hand, function similarly to personal role models. Mentors are trustworthy persons with greater knowledge and wisdom than the other person who advise that person with regard to certain problems or aspirations. There is a two-way voluntary developmental relationship that is marked by mutual trust and respect.

Mentors want you to succeed, whereas role models may not be aware of who they are inspiring.

Mentorship is a fairly involved and often formalised process, including promoting the program, recruiting and matching mentors and mentees, guiding them and measuring outcomes of the relationship. For a successful mentorship, most importantly, a good mentor-mentee fit is required, which is usually achieved via a formal matching program.

Below are a few examples of female mentoring programs in the resources and energy industry:

- [Women in Mining Mentoring Program](#)
- [QRC/WIMARQ Mentoring Program](#)
- [Women in Oil and Gas Mentoring Program](#)
- [Women in Oil and Gas Reverse Mentoring Program](#)
- [Clean Energy Council Mentoring Program](#)
- [International Women in Resources Mentoring Programme \(IWRMP\)](#)
- [Women Offshore Mentorship](#)
- [STEM Women Resources and Opportunities - Mentoring](#)
- [Women in Energy - Industry Outreach - Mentorship Award](#)

**Role models are an effective means for an organisation to inspire and motivate their workforce.**





## CASE STUDY

### AWRA e-Mentoring Program

The Australian Women in Resources Alliance (AWRA), created by AREEA, developed, launched and facilitated an e-Mentoring Program in 2013 that at the time was the only national mentoring program in Australia for women in the resources and energy industry available via an online platform.

The unique online program allowed women in the resources and energy industry to be mentored by experienced industry mentors, both men and women, regardless of their location.

Participants were given the opportunity to learn from and share knowledge with others who have a different set of skills, experience, expertise and perspectives while sharing common interests. As it was a virtual program, participants connected in almost any location, at a time that suited them, rather than having to schedule face-to-face meetings.

Once matched to a behaviour-based set of criteria, mentors and mentees undertook online training to assist them to better understand the online platform and their roles and responsibilities within the mentoring relationship. Participants were provided practical resources including a handbook and toolkit in addition to ongoing support from the AWRA team. Participants were matched for a formal nine (9) month program.

Support was provided to both mentors and mentees to ensure equal contribution to the mentoring relationship, although mentees were tasked to make meeting arrangements. The length of the program assisted participants to progress their goals and establish a productive and rewarding relationship with their mentoring partner, which often continued beyond the formal nine-month period.

The e-Mentoring program received extremely high levels of satisfaction and outcomes. An impressive 22.6% of survey respondents indicated that participating in the AWRA e-Mentoring Program was 'one of the best things I've ever done', while 87.5% of participants that completed the program achieved the goal they set when they commenced the program.



**The AWRA  
e-Mentoring Program  
was 'one of the best  
things I've ever done'  
according to 22.6% of  
survey respondents.**

### Program Feedback

#### Mentors:

"It was a fulfilling experience – as a mentor I learned a lot about how to coach effectively, how to draw out a person's inner goals and also their own preferred way to achieve those goals. I created a clear, non-judgemental space in which my mentee charted the course of her future."

"Thanks for the hard work in making this available particularly for remote people – if we can make the journey easier, we will entice and retain more diversity into this industry and it needs it."

#### Mentees:

"Thank you so much for this opportunity. It gave me a new perspective to myself and my career plan, has pushed me to set and achieve new goals and given me a fantastic mentoring partnership with who I will remain in contact with."

"This has been a very beneficial programme in which I have re-gained confidence, been provided with external support and guidance to better approach/deal with situations in a non-bias open forum. I would highly recommend participation to others."

"Being able to communicate with someone outside of the company who has had the same background really helps as the mentor can understand my situations and projects. My mentor has given me some very valuable guidance and suggestions from her own experiences which has helped me in my decision making."

### Benefits of e-Mentoring

Benefits of e-mentoring include support, advice and guidance given to women seeking assistance in both career and personal development who might otherwise not be able to access mentoring due to cost, geographic location and/or changing work schedule/roster. This is especially valuable where a mentees' workplace doesn't offer this support and guidance.

e-Mentoring provides access to an effective and time-efficient structured program supported by a proven mentoring process.

This is a unique benefit with opportunity to build industry-wide networks through engagement with individuals outside of their immediate working group, organisation and/or location, along with benefits of being connected to a national industry advocacy body.

For mentors, there is the additional benefit of developing leadership skills, becoming knowledgeable of the benefits of mentoring and passing this knowledge on to other people.

There are also benefits for industry and employers which include a cost-effective development opportunity to attract, retain, develop and support women currently working in or entering the resources and energy industry, and for senior employees to act as mentors or undertake senior leadership mentoring.

## RESEARCH CORROBORATES IMPORTANCE OF FEMALE ROLE MODELS

There is an ample evidence base for the importance and efficacy of female role models.

Research has revealed that men and women adopt gender roles in childhood, mostly based on their exposure to media and popular culture; and media representations frequently depict men and women in traditional gender roles, which can have a detrimental influence on women's STEM career choices<sup>11</sup>.

Exposure to and interactions with role models who demonstrate counter-stereotypical notions and practices may encourage adolescents to accept a broader range of roles for women and men, with the relationship between adherence to stereotypical gender roles and adolescents' educational and occupational aspirations established via a literature review<sup>11</sup>.

In an experiment to increase the number of women majoring in economics, introductory-level students were introduced to accomplished female role models who studied economics at the same institution<sup>12</sup>. The intervention nearly doubled female students' enrolment in economics.

A body of experimental research indicates that women avoid competition. In a laboratory experiment, researchers examined how watching female or male role models compete and achieve influences women's and men's competitiveness<sup>13</sup>. The researchers discovered that watching a female or male role model improves women's competition while having no effect on men's competitiveness. Furthermore, having a female role model was found to boost women's self-esteem.

A research study demonstrated the importance of female role models in women's performance. Students were requested to deliver a speech with either posters of Hillary Clinton, Angela Merkel, or Bill Clinton on the back wall or no poster at all. Female students who delivered their speeches with a female role model poster on the wall gave substantially longer and better speeches, as rated by objective panel judgement and subjective self-rating. The male students' speaking performance was not affected by the posters. This provides evidence that female role models have a significant impact on women's performance.

Women are underrepresented in STEM careers. Recent research evaluated a role-model intervention in which female volunteers talked to girls about their careers<sup>6</sup>. Results show that the higher the counter-stereotypical character of the sessions, the stronger the relationship between expectations of success in math and the choice of STEM.

Ultimately, research  
corroborates the  
importance of  
female role models.





## CASE STUDY

### Newmont Supporting the International Women in Resources Mentoring Programme for the Fifth Year

Newmont has been a proud sponsor of the International Women in Resources Mentoring Programme (IWRMP) since its inception in 2018, as part of our commitment to the growth and talent of our workforce.

The IWRMP is an annual cross-company program intended to promote and empower women as they progress their careers, to overcome professional challenges and build confidence for achievement and industry leadership. The six-month-long training offers tailored online programs and the opportunity to network with over 70 mentors across the industry.

For Newmont, a key strength of the program is its emphasis on inclusion and diversity – particularly its aim to reduce cross-cultural barriers. Through mentor-mentee partnerships, talented, driven mentees and senior industry leaders invest in the future of women in mining.



"I have loved my involvement in the International Women in Resources Mentoring Programme. This is my fifth year and I have met and grown with some amazing women who I remain in regular contact with. The program is so mutually beneficial and whilst I trust my mentees benefit, I always learn and develop over the four months. I am looking forward to another strong mentoring partnership where I can support someone with their development and hope they can also challenge my thinking."

**Suzy Retallack** // SVP, Health, Safety and Security



"Mentorship can be such a critical tool for personal and professional development, both for the mentee and the mentor. I hope to leverage the collective knowledge and experience of my mentor and this year's cohort of inspiring, strong, capable and driven women to continue to grow myself and my team so that together we can reach our full potential, while also increasing the power and presence of women at all levels in the resources industry. I'm very excited to be a part of this unique program – and be part of building a stronger network of women and allies supporting women in the resources sector."

**Meghan Cartwright** // Mine Superintendent



"The structured nature of this program provides the mentor and mentee with a guided path to achieve clearly defined objectives. This is not about casual chats – it's about identifying the mentee's goals and supporting the mentee to develop a plan to achieve them. As a mentor, not only do I enjoy empowering other women in the resource industry to succeed, but I also glean much insight into my own development."

**Jayne Finch** // Manager, Mining Infrastructure



"The IWRMP provides opportunities to contribute to lifting up women who are already making a difference in our industry. As an IWRMP mentor, I am inspired by the women with whom I have worked and I've been lucky enough to build long-term relationships. I certainly get as much out of the program as any mentee does."

**Briony Coleman** // Director, Legal Compliance, Permit and Assurance



"I'm excited and honored to have been selected to participate in this program. I'm looking forward to interacting with other strong women and mentors through this process to develop my leadership skills. I'm currently expecting my first child and Newmont has been supportive of my participation in the International Women in Resources Mentoring Programme. It's encouraging to be a part of a diverse company that empowers their employees to develop while maintaining a work-life balance."

**Janice Wallgren** // MTS Superintendent



"I continue to be blown away by the generous development opportunities provided to me by Newmont. I look forward to further opportunities of exposure and development with world-class mentors across a diverse range of countries and businesses in the resource sector, and to embarking on this journey of growth and guidance so that I can become a better leader and pay it forward to my team."

**Rachel Manger** // Mine Production Superintendent

## QUALITIES OF FEMALE ROLE MODELS

The book *The Meaning of Success: Insights from Women at Cambridge*<sup>15</sup> lists an overview of role-model traits based on the characteristics that successful Cambridge women valued most in themselves or in those they admired. These are traits that are likely to be valued by colleagues and that indicate behaviours that are most obviously associated with the definition of success.

These characteristics are not meant to make a list that requires every item to be checked off before a person can be declared successful. Instead, it may assist individuals and organisations consider what traits they value the most and how they might create the environment for those qualities to flourish.

The list contains a number of important qualities for female role models<sup>15</sup> such as integrity, relationship-focus, leadership and authority, inclusive mindset, pioneering attitude, being accessible and fallible, strong work ethics, high levels of competence, good prioritisation skills, well rounded personality, confidence, authenticity and resilience.

Given that female role models are all about modelling success and leadership of women, it comes as no surprise that the list of top qualities of female role models shares many items with the list of top qualities of an excellent leader.

Kouzes and Posner, authors of a seminal leadership textbook that is now in its sixth edition, note the following four characteristics of exemplary leaders: honesty, competency, an ability to inspire, and being visionary, which overlap with the earlier list of role-model traits. These principles are founded on two fundamental beliefs: first, that leadership is a relationship, and second, that leadership is a talent that can be studied, practised, and mastered by anybody willing to put in the time and effort<sup>16</sup>.



People want their leaders to be capable, effective, and experienced; and respectively, these are also considered desirable role-model traits. Leaders as well as role models set an example to others and are well-versed in their work, have a high level of competence, exemplary work ethics and a passion for their topic.



Honesty and integrity are important traits in this context. People want to follow those they can respect and trust, and this is equally true for role models and leaders. Good role models are known to do the correct thing even if it is unpopular. They also exhibit kindness, courtesy, honesty and fairness. Female role models benefit from self-awareness and insight into their belief systems, as it allows them to remain consistent in their behaviour and true to themselves. They know who they are, and what they stand for. They have a strong sense of self and are at peace with themselves.



Good leaders as well as role models have a clear vision of where they are going. They have the imagination and creativity to view things differently and overcome challenges. They can motivate others to share their enthusiasm. Role models are influential change agents who generate respect from male and female employees. They are cool under pressure and prepared to make difficult decisions when necessary.



Role models and leaders alike have a pioneering spirit, are inventive, think beyond the box, do things differently and are willing to take chances. This implies taking risks, which necessitates skilled risk management. Role models push the boundaries and break new ground. They are paving the way and demonstrate what is possible, particularly for women. They demonstrate that there are a multitude of paths to achievement from a variety of backgrounds.



Excellent communication and collaboration skills provide an advantage. Being good connectors and collaborators with the ability to engage people, they prioritise well and create time for relationships.



Role models are empathic and generous in terms of assisting and developing others. They empower others to act. If individuals feel more empowered, they will better reach their full potential. Role models – and good leaders in general – encourage and provide positive feedback, recognizing people's accomplishments raises motivation and confidence.



Female role models are committed champions for gender equality and more inclusive workplaces. They encourage women's growth and are invested in diversity issues beyond gender.



Despite their achievements, female models remain approachable human beings, are upfront about their flaws and are eager to learn and improve. They manage to merge their personal and professional lives well and make time for family and friends.



Finally, given the often-hard work of being a trail-blazing role model, a beneficial trait is resilience. This includes the capability to work under difficult conditions and with difficult individuals, capable of dealing with failures and recovering from setbacks.

In what is termed the 'add-on principle', women valued and regarded as successful role models typically exhibit not just one of the above attributes in abundance but rather a rich and rounded accumulation of multiple of these characteristics<sup>15</sup>.

However, the 'add-on principle' has a negative connotation since it implies that someone must achieve an extraordinary level of attainment before being considered a female role model.

**It is important to resist the idea of having to attain extraordinary achievements and all desirable role-model traits before stepping up to be a role model. Similarly to perfectionism and imposter syndrome, this prevents people – often females – from achieving their full potential.**



## ROLE MODEL INTERVIEW

**Jacquie Kelly**  
Operations Maintenance Coordinator  
at Shell QGC



**Jacquie Kelly** // // //  
Operations Maintenance  
Coordinator, Shell QGC

**How did you become a role model, and which personal characteristics, personal development, and activities have contributed most to your success? Have things changed for you since winning the award, and is there any particular advice for women aspiring to be role models?**

My name is Jacquie Kelly, and I am an Operations Maintenance Coordinator at Shell QGC. My 20-year journey in the industry has been both fascinating and rewarding, beginning with an E&I trade in pharmaceutical plant construction and leading me across continents to explore operations in power generation and oil and gas. Throughout my career, I have advanced to leadership positions, where I now leverage my experiences in non-traditional roles to make the industry more inclusive and welcoming to women.

My resilience, determination, and commitment to lifelong learning have been instrumental in challenging gender biases and driving my success.

Along the way, I have been inspired by the incredible female trailblazers who have paved the way for women like me to build on their foundations. While it's humbling to think of myself as a role model, winning the 2023 QRC / WIMRQ Exceptional Tradeswomen / Operator / Technician in Queensland Resources award has made me recognise the responsibility that comes with this recognition. As a result, I now have increased visibility and opportunities to inspire and mentor more women in our industry, fostering a more diverse and equitable workforce.

**How has being in a STEM-related profession, where underrepresentation of women is particularly strong, influenced your career and your trajectory as a role model?**

Being in a STEM-related profession where women are significantly underrepresented has presented both challenges and opportunities throughout my career, shaping my trajectory as a role model. In the early stages, I encountered difficulties such as inadequate working conditions and a lack of basic facilities, which negatively impacted my experience. The absence of female role models and the prevalence of stereotypes often left me feeling isolated and sometimes diminished my self-esteem. Additionally, I observed that advancement opportunities and promotions were often granted to those who shared similar backgrounds or interests with the hiring managers.

However, by being resilient and believing in myself, my unique perspective and creative problem-solving abilities allowed me to stand out and contribute valuable insights in various situations. As more women entered the industry, I embraced the opportunity to become a mentor and role model for the next generation of female workers. By drawing on my own experiences and overcoming challenges, I can now inspire and support others in their journey towards success in STEM fields.

**What is your advice to other women to set themselves up for success? Any special advice for women in STEM?**

My advice to other women seeking success is to believe in themselves, embrace challenges, and continuously invest in personal and professional growth. Developing a strong support network, including mentors, sponsors, and peers, can be instrumental in navigating obstacles and achieving success in any field.

For women in STEM, it is particularly important to stay updated on the latest advancements and trends in their fields, as well as to actively seek opportunities to contribute to ground-breaking projects. Don't hesitate to take on demanding roles or projects, as these experiences can be transformative and demonstrate your capabilities.

Additionally, work towards fostering an inclusive environment by challenging the status quo and supporting diversity initiatives. By doing so, you will not only contribute to your own success but also pave the way for future generations of women in STEM.

**imarg**  
Women in Mining & Resources Queensland

Jacqueline Kelly receiving  
the Queensland Resources  
Council Resources Award for  
Women - Exceptional Trade/  
Technician/Operator in  
Queensland Resources

WINNER  
Jacqueline Kelly



## MOST IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS OF A FEMALE ROLE MODEL

EU Women conducted a Female Role Models poll, to investigate what characteristics people believe a good female role model should possess<sup>17</sup>. The below word cloud illustrates the overall findings, with the size of each word relative to the number of votes received; the top three traits were Intelligent, Determined, and Strong.

It was also observed that participants appeared to apply these standards to themselves more stringently than to others, potentially leading to unhelpful performance pressure<sup>18</sup>.



This word cloud illustrates the most important characteristics of a female role model, from the results of the EU Women's Female Role Model poll.



## CASE STUDY

### Sodexo Australia's women in leadership speak to gender equity from the top down



**Taryn Petersen** // // // // Executive Director, IFMS (Rio Tinto)



**Tammie Evans** // // // // Brand & Communications, Corporate Social Responsibility and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Director



**Toni Gore** // // // // Human Resources Director



**Abhi Shan** // // // // Chief Financial Officer



**Jana Bartlett** // // // // Operations Director, Mining West

In a landscape where gender equity is at the forefront of discussion across all sectors and institutions, it is no longer enough to 'be inclusive' through passive gestures of wearing a purple ribbon or hosting a morning tea in recognition of International Women's Day.

This day originated in 1911 as a date of recognition to acknowledge the injustices, inequity, and barriers that around half of the world's population was born into. It's now a celebration of the progress made, and ultimately a commitment to real change in areas where it matters most. To achieve this change, every bit counts.

From allyship for your female colleagues, as well as playing an active role to call out inappropriate or biased behaviour, this action 'starts with the every day'—a sentiment reflected in the tagline of Sodexo Australia (Sodexo), leading facilities management and catering company.

Recognising the critical role of diversity in the workforce and leadership team to

drive success and systemic change, Sodexo pledged to work towards achieving at least 40% of its leadership team represented by women by 2025. Currently, women make up 60% of Sodexo's board, 44% of all management, and 55% of the overall workforce.

AREEA had the pleasure of speaking with five women who currently sit on Sodexo's Country Leadership Team: Abhi Shan, Chief Financial Officer; Jana Bartlett, Operations Director, Mining West; Tammie Evans, Brand & Communications, Corporate Social Responsibility and Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Director; Taryn Petersen, Executive Director, IFMS (Rio Tinto) and Toni Gore, Human Resources Director.

As individuals who have achieved success in a competitive and historically male-dominated environment, these leaders have shared many of the same universal experiences of women; imposter syndrome at a job promotion, doing the same role for less pay, male counterparts being celebrated for traits that are reprimanded in women.

The challenges these women have overcome are only one small facet of what unifies them. The larger (and more important) aspect is their whole-hearted belief that by leading from the front, setting the example, and empowering their teams, real change and gender equity can be achieved.

AREEA sat down to discuss 'embracing equity' with these leaders.

#### ////// What does 'gender equity' mean to you?

To me, when we work towards equity, we work towards a world where everyone has equal access to opportunities, resources, and influence. We work towards a better world where no one is held back by their race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or any other factor outside of their control.

Equity is not just a moral imperative—it is essential for creating a strong and thriving community. When we ensure that everyone has an equal chance to succeed, we create a more prosperous, innovative, and resilient society. To achieve this, we need to check our own biases and prejudices, listen to the voices of all communities, and raise awareness through sharing experiences to take deliberate action.

The rewards of equity are immense and far outweigh any discomfort associated with standing up for it. When we work towards equity, we create a more just and compassionate world where individuals are empowered to reach their full potential.

**Taryn Petersen** // // // // Executive Director, IFMS (Rio Tinto)



### ////// What has been your biggest career challenge?

An observation I have made throughout my career has been the difference in expectations between female and male performance, particularly in terms of behaviour. Where I have been called 'bossy', my male counterpart is 'assertive'—and the list goes on! By and large, women are labelled and placed on the extremities. As such, I feel a lot of women work harder to overcome this hypocrisy.

When I was younger, I made the decision to prioritise my career over starting a family, as I was determined to achieve certain milestones I had set for myself before I could give the same energy to raising a family—it never seemed possible to do both. My ambition never fully aligned with the societal 'norm'.

As a result, I found myself overcompensating in work. I remember a specific instance where I told myself it was easier to pour myself into my role rather than coping with a particularly disruptive personal situation. Of course, this led to burnout. This was something I had to experience to learn from. If I don't prioritise myself—that is my physical, emotional, and mental health—I cannot bring my healthiest and happiest self to work, and all the battling I did to prove my worth would be for nothing.

My experience has definitely driven my desire to make change and contribute to a workplace that removes these challenges for everyone, especially women—and as Sodexo Australia's Brand, Communications, CSR and DEI Director, I am fortunate to be in a position to do exactly that. From our gender-respect policies and bystander training, to the tailored female leadership programs and parental leave policies, there is a tangible groundswell around us.

**Tammie Evans** // Brand & Communications, Corporate Social Responsibility and Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Director

### ////// How does a business account for parental leave?

When retiring, women experience lower superannuation to draw from than their partners due to the pause of superannuation payments during maternity leave. This is something that could be changed if businesses promoted and supported improved secondary carer leave, as well as paid superannuation contributions during this leave.

At Sodexo, we are fortunate to have partnered with Grace Papers who have supported the development of our parental leave policy, as well as actively contributed to coaching our team on how to maximise parental leave. Personally, I found the 1:1 coaching I received vital to my return to office and settling back into the swing of things. The confidence I found, even as a leader in the business, to pick up and carry on empowered me to manage my parental duties and leave in a way that respected my priorities and responsibilities.

**Toni Gore** // Human Resources Director

Parental leave is not a 'one size fits all' system, so it is important to have a flexible way of implementing it to suit everyone involved.

### ////// How can women support other women?

Relationship building. I believe investing time and effort in people and relationships cultivates a strong team and positions anyone to lead. If your team can trust you and lean on you for support (and vice versa), you can accomplish your individual, team, and company goals. This is the essential leadership skill that will positively impact all individuals—and it is not limited to women.

This is calling out bias, challenging injustice, and knowing when to engage in transparent and honest conversations. I also believe mentorship is another important pathway for women to utilise to enhance their professional skills and extend their leadership responsibilities. Be proactive with opportunities or activities that allow your paths to cross; that may mean volunteering for an initiative, seeking advice or a mentor relationship, or introducing yourself at an event. As a leader, at any level really, the difficult step is to make the time. Don't put it off, and don't rush it. Plan and prepare, and ensure you choose the right mentor dedicated to investing in you. When seeking feedback from your mentor, focus on the areas that take you outside your comfort zone—this is where your growth takes off.

As an organisation, we recognise the need for collaboration to achieve equity, and promote the participation of the Sodexo team in our global SoTogether network which is more than 14 years old. Made up of 23 gender network groups over 46 countries, the network promotes inclusivity through a bias-free culture designed to support, encourage and allow everyone—regardless of their gender—to excel in the workplace and reach their full, individual potential.

**Taryn Petersen** // Executive Director, IFMS (Rio Tinto)

### ////// How can businesses invest in the professional development of its women?

It is important for women to strive for leadership roles, not only to level the playing field but to ensure that there is more diversity at the table. As such, businesses must invest in the professional development of its workforce to empower women to back themselves to go for leadership roles.

Something Sodexo does particularly well in this space is our SheLeads program. This program provides women with the resources to advance their careers through mentorship with senior leaders in the business and address barriers to progression. Since 2015, we have had more than 500 participants complete the program.

**Toni Gore** // Human Resources Director

Having grown up in Asia in a culture where women tend to be placed as second choice, we aren't told we can lead and aren't given the resources needed to step into these places. When reflecting on the importance of women investing in their professional development and striving for leadership roles, I believe in the importance of setting an example.

As a society, we need to challenge and change the narrative of 'traditional' leadership, to get to the point where women in leadership is not a novelty. By shifting the conversation to having the right people in the right roles, diversity will naturally emerge and advance individuals as well as organisations.

**Abhi Shan** // Chief Financial Officer



### ////// How integral have role models, mentors, or active managers been to your career?

As women in business, I feel we naturally gravitate towards other women when it comes to identifying and approaching mentors. In my experience, I have been blessed with both male and female mentors who shared their belief in my ability and invested their time in my development. Without opening myself up to taking on critical feedback—or even conversing with my mentors—I wouldn't be half the professional I am today.

Having someone in your corner, who identifies and champions your capabilities before you even see them yourself is something you can never underestimate. I have been very lucky to have had people willing to push me to challenge myself to keep on taking new growth opportunities.

**Jana Bartlett** // Operations Director, Mining West

I am in the fortunate position to confidently say that I have had many, many role models in my life. Perhaps the role model in my life that has had such a lasting and propound impact has been the matriarchs of my family.

A widow and mother of three, my grandmother put each of her children—including my mother—through university, while still finding the time to raise me. She was a university lecturer, and would make a daily 123km commute via bus to and from our home, still finding the time in her day to cook for the house, and tutor myself and my aunt. Even as a child, it seemed she had millions of conflicting tasks, but she managed them all with a grace that I work to emulate every day. She never cut corners, saw all her commitments through, and did it without ever uttering a complaint.

My can-do attitude and work acumen comes from my mum, who as a single parent and 4-foot-eight Asian woman built her own business off the back of her hard work and self-belief. I easily regard her as one of the most successful people in my life.

**Abhi Shan** // Chief Financial Officer



Tammie Evans - Stop Hunger Servathon activities

### ////// What advice do you have for women emerging into their careers?

Take opportunities to support the women around you. In a male-dominated industry, it may feel that you're 'pegged against' the only other female in the team, but they are your peer. Openly challenge bias and lift each other up. Offer advice, speak the truth, and share your challenges.

I began my career working in a very different industry than planned, but throughout that time—and ongoing—I have had progressive male managers and successful female leaders who have supported my development and set the example for me as a leader. Be a role model to the next generation.

**Tammie Evans** // Brand & Communications, Corporate Social Responsibility and Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Director

Never stop learning! Early in your career, it's important to sharpen your skill set, grow your expertise and get exposure to as many different projects, teams, and people as possible. Treat every challenge as a learning opportunity. Always observe, and learn from the people around you.

Take the chance to build your resilience and confidence—particularly if you are gearing up to be a leader. Think beyond serving your own success and career progression. More broadly, look at the success of your team and your own success as one and the same.

**Taryn Petersen** // Executive Director, IFMS (Rio Tinto)

I have always worked in a traditionally male sphere; now in energy and resources, but in financial spaces when I was younger. I believe it is always daunting to step outside of your comfort zone but we can't develop without coming up against challenges. My advice would be to know your worth and what you bring to the table.

One of the biggest arguments I have heard against women in leadership, or professional industries, is that we let our emotions get the better of us. But what makes us 'female'—our empathy, compassion, and sincerity—are the traits that are now taught in leadership courses. Being successful in a male-dominated industry is about being as 'soft' as you have to be hard. Embrace yourself and let your instincts guide you.

**Jana Bartlett** // Operations Director, Mining West



Taryn Petersen and team on site, joined by JP Dimech (AREEA Board Member) and Keith Weston (Managing Director Sodexo Australia).



## ACTIONS TO INCREASE VISIBILITY OF FEMALE ROLE MODELS

### Highlight Women

According to the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA), 22.3% of CEOs in Australia are women, only 20% of boards have gender balance, and only one in four companies have a gender-balanced leadership team<sup>18</sup>.

Men are twice as likely to be in the top earning bracket compared to women, and women are 1.5 times more likely to be in the lowest earning bracket than men<sup>18</sup>.

Given those figures, it's no surprise that gender stereotypes prevail, and men are seen as more likely to be successful and in a position of authority than women<sup>19</sup>.

Having visible female role models is critical to empowering women and attaining gender parity<sup>4</sup>.

To counteract the lack of visible female role models, organisations can highlight women's presence in all fields.

### Highlight Early Career Women

Women may feel they have to achieve a higher standard than their male colleagues before considering stepping up, applying for promotions or becoming active as a role model.

A study looked at why women are less likely to pursue science careers than men; the researchers found that women were less likely to attempt a career reputed to require 'brilliance', compared to men<sup>20</sup>. One interpretation is that it is a lack in confidence that makes women less willing to consider tasks seen as requiring high ability.

Moreover, research has shown that women are less competitively inclined, avoiding competition both due to lower confidence levels and a more non-competitive disposition<sup>21</sup>.

In addition, women have been found less likely to apply for jobs unless they feel that they are 100% qualified and are ticking all the boxes<sup>22, 23</sup>. By comparison, men are more prepared to take risk and apply for what amounts to stretch-placements, where they only meet 60% of the required criteria.

Related to the above are the findings that women are reluctant to self-promote, largely due to underestimating their performance and because the concept of self-promotion makes them uncomfortable<sup>24</sup>.

It is unfortunate that this lack of confidence prevents women from stepping up and seeking leadership roles, given that women have been found to objectively score better in most leadership skills<sup>25</sup>.

The above research on leadership skills also found that the gap in confidence is more pronounced for early career women, with women underrating and men overrating themselves until the ratings merge around age 40<sup>25</sup>.

Visibility of female role models at early stages of their career may inspire women to believe in themselves more and raise their confidence sufficiently to step up before they feel they have achieved perfection.

Stories of women who have taken risks and achieved success despite initial failures, might encourage women to step up earlier.





### Highlight Diverse Female Role Models

Not all women want to be CEOs or hold senior positions, and not all women enjoy corporate environments.

Highlighting only women who have achieved the C-suite or founded a billion-dollar firm might backfire if they are thought to be unattainable.

Similarly, highlighting only role models of a certain demographic will discourage those who don't match that description.

Research found that 60% of aspiring young females report not being able to find female role models who they can relate to<sup>31</sup>.

Diversity, in all of its manifestations, is important.

Women require a variety of role models with diverse backgrounds, stories, personalities, and opinions that they can relate to.

### Highlight Women with Family Responsibilities


The Think Male – Think Manager paradigm<sup>26</sup> persists. Although there have been some reports of decreasing gender bias in this context<sup>27</sup>, more recent research shows it is still pervasive, with broad stereotyping and bias continuing in society<sup>28</sup>.

A related concept is the Fatherhood Advantage – Motherhood Penalty paradigm, that affects women in leadership positions with caring responsibilities<sup>29</sup>.

Some nuances in the above research notwithstanding, gendered norms of viewing caring responsibilities, are still pervasive; as a result, professional women who are mothers or other carer types face a higher complexity of demands and contradictory societal pressures than males<sup>30</sup>.

This makes career progress more difficult for women and holds back women from striving for leadership positions.

To support women in carer roles, it is important to have strong female role models who demonstrate the capacity to balance professional and family duties.



**Seeing women hold both leadership roles and caring responsibilities will help to mitigate gender bias and help women envision themselves as future leaders.**

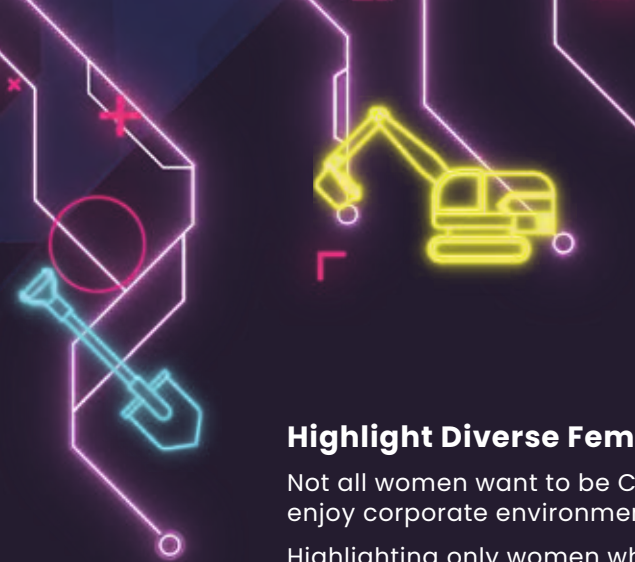
### Highlight the Need for Female Role Models

McKinsey's predicted that gender parity would contribute \$12 trillion to the global economy by 2025<sup>32</sup>.

This makes a compelling case to highlight female role models.

But there are not enough diverse female role models. Females often lack the confidence to be held up as a role model.

Women are also less likely to be mentors<sup>33</sup>.



**To increase the pool of female role models for the new generation of female leaders to be inspired by, it is important to highlight that women need to step up to be the role models they themselves had or wish they had.**





## ROLE MODEL INTERVIEW

**Daisy Ambach**  
**Senior Project Engineer at Glencore**



**Daisy Ambach** **Senior Project Engineer at Glencore**

### How did you become a role model? Have things changed for you since you won the Queensland Resources Council Exceptional Young Woman in Queensland Resources Award?

The journey of becoming a role model means different things to different people. In my view, a role model isn't necessarily someone that is "chosen" by a company. It can be someone who you know, work with closely, or who you have seen from afar who does something that you admire.

I've been lucky to have been surrounded by many fantastic leaders and role models; from those who are strong advocates for a particular cause and lead the way in making change to those who see you're having a bad day and take the time to offer support. When someone does something that inspires me or makes a positive difference to my day, I feel valued and feel like what I do matters. I think it's important for everyone to come to work and feel this way, which is what fuelled my passion for diversity and inclusion.

When I moved to Mount Isa, I rolled up my sleeves and got involved. I met other passionate people and together we reignited WIMARQ's North West Region's brand. We have organised events to create awareness around this cause; created events to break barriers between operators and professionals; the regions and the city; work and family. We have gone into schools to talk about Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) and showed students around the mine site. I have connected female colleagues and friends with professional development programs and mentors to help them navigate their careers and make them feel it is possible to be a leader in the mining industry, regardless of gender or background. In my case, getting involved with the diversity and inclusion cause in these ways has given me a lot of recognition.

Winning the award has been an incredible experience. I have had many people reach out to hear my story about how it is possible to make a difference and be the drivers of real change.

### What personal characteristics, personal development, and other activities have most helped you to become successful and a role model? Any particular one you think is an absolute must for women wanting to be role models?

Reflecting on myself and other women in the industry, I know we can be prone to self-doubt and things like imposter syndrome. I struggle with this from time to time and I think the best thing that has helped me was taking moments of courage, or as a friend once put it to me, "it only takes 15 seconds of courage". Giving yourself the opportunity to have those moments, particularly when challenging the norm or when having tough conversations, helps women practice risk taking which ultimately increases confidence as a role model.

The other thing that has been extremely helpful has been mentors and sponsors. I have found mentors through professional development programs such as the QRC/WIMARQ Mentoring Program as well as through informal chats by the water cooler at work. Both have helped me focus on my own development as well as opened doors for me. I would encourage anyone, regardless of gender, to seek out a mentor. Sometimes it can be your boss, your friend's boss, someone you meet at a networking event or a colleague you meet in the lunch room/crib; as long as it's someone you trust and feel like you have a connection with them. And it's totally okay if it's not the first person you think would be a good mentor, sometimes you have to shop around.

### Being an engineer, you're part of the STEM professions, where underrepresentation of women is particularly strong. How has that influenced your career and trajectory as a role model?

As an engineer, I have had a diverse set of roles from really technical roles simulating process plants to site-based roles supporting operations, to my current role as a project engineer. That in itself has been very exciting as I have had the opportunity to learn something new on a daily basis. Engineering is a profession that lends itself to many different types of jobs and career trajectories, and I would encourage anyone who is curious about building a better world to consider a career in engineering and STEM more broadly.

Whilst I graduated with almost 40% females in my chemical engineering class, women only represent 22% of the workforce in Queensland's resources sector. These numbers have increased significantly over the last decade, however, there is still a lot of work to do to get to gender equality. This is something the industry recognises with a lot of professional development programs, leadership courses and scholarships targeted at women and diversity leadership. I have had several opportunities like these which have helped breakdown barriers for me in my career.

### What was/were your biggest challenge(s) in becoming/being a role model and how did you overcome those?

Challenging my view of what a role model is has been one of my obstacles on this journey. When I think of a role model, I think of someone who is confident; someone who can balance priorities well; someone who is efficient; someone who somehow always gets it right. It's this image of a perfect person that is not real because role models are humans too. Sometimes they have bad days with struggles; sometimes they make mistakes and have to learn from them. When I began to understand this, becoming a role model became something I felt was within my reach.

A big part of this discovery has also involved working on my own self-doubt. In general terms, I have found men tend to speak their mind more easily whereas women tend to ask for permission before sharing their views. When you are the only woman in the room, sometimes this can make you feel like the odd one out. It can make you feel vulnerable, and make you question whether you are good enough to be there. I learned to work through this self-doubt with my mentors and peers from programs like the Queensland Resources Council (QRC) /Women In Mining and Resources Queensland (WIMARQ) Mentoring and our Women in Mining network at work. Talking through moments of self-doubt with someone who I can trust and who has been able to give me the tools to build on this has been the best way to overcome this.



**////// What is your advice to other women to set themselves up for success? Any special advice for women in STEM?**

My advice might feel like it's from an inspirational poster, but to me, this simple advice has helped me a lot in my career:

1. Never stop dreaming big because nothing is out of your reach. If you're having a day where it feels that way, don't tell yourself it is impossible. Ask yourself "what would it take?" and start writing your plan for success.
2. You've got this and surround yourself with people who'll remind you on days you forget.

**////// What female role models have you had, what females have inspired you growing up and throughout your career? How has that helped you in your career?**

My mum has been one of my biggest female role models. We lost my dad unexpectedly when I was fairly young, so my mum had to take the role of two parents, raise two kids, keep up a full-time job, all while working through the grief of losing her dear husband. My mum has taught me a lot about resilience and being able to do what needs to be done, regardless of gender roles, because she had to as a single mum. It's made her the superhuman that she is today.

Coming from a family of artists, I didn't have a lot of exposure to STEM at home, let alone females in STEM. Artists, however, are naturally very curious which I luckily inherited. I had a few fantastic teachers at school, both female and male, who taught me the pleasure of learning and fostered my curiosity into the areas of STEM.

It wasn't until I joined the resources sector where I learned the importance of female role models. I have been inspired by a few female leaders in my organisation including our HSEC General Manager, Maryann Wipaki, and the WIMARQ North West QLD President, Tanya Cambetis, both who have achieved incredible things and made a difference at Mount Isa Mines. Seeing them be successful in our organisation and share their experiences is encouraging for younger women in the industry like myself to see what paths could exist for us in the future.

**////// What do you do to increase your reach and visibility to the female audience (to be most effective as a role model)?**

WIMARQ has been a fantastic way to engage with females both in and outside of the mining sector. It's been a fantastic way to network with other females in the industry and empower each other to achieve our career goals. I am also engaged with the Women in Mining Network at Mount Isa Mines and connect the group to tools and professional development programs. I also mentor several graduates who have joined the industry as well as high school students through the Mount Isa Mines Girls for Mining Mentoring Program.

**////// What do you do to help fellow female role models increase their reach and visibility?**

I share the wins of fellow female role models through my networks such as LinkedIn. I also connect colleagues and peers to role models in the industry, particularly if I know they are looking for some career advice or looking for some inspiration. I am lucky that through my position at WIMARQ, I also have the opportunity to invite role models to speak at our events to help increase their exposure to our network in North West QLD.

**////// What do you do to encourage females to raise their confidence to speak up and take initiative etc?**

The most important thing is to be there and listen when a female colleague shares with you a concern or a challenge. I ask them what they would like to see change and what they think it would take. I encourage them to make a plan and follow through. I am also persistent and follow-up with them to see how they are going with what they spoke to me about. Sometimes some light social pressure can go a long way in helping others realise their confidence!

**////// What would you say is most important for organisations to do to increase the visibility and reach of female role models and encourage women to step up?**

I think there are three key steps organisations can take to increase female role models and their visibility.

The first is to acknowledge and celebrate the achievements of women in your organisation. Events such as International Women's Day are such a fantastic platform to do this. It also facilitates conversations around gender diversity and inclusion, and is an opportunity for personnel in the workforce to connect with the issue and collaborate on how to break barriers for women in male-dominated sectors.

The second is encouraging mentoring for women (as well as men) in your organisation, particularly as they progress through their career. Mentoring is such a fantastic way to develop skills and confidence, as it facilitates an open environment for mentees to share their challenges with someone who can be their sound board. It's also an enabler for building networks which can help further increase the reach of female role models, particularly for those who are more comfortable in a one on one setting.

I think something organisations can do better is making mentor training available to their leaders, so that when someone comes to them looking for guidance, they know how to respond and help that person.

Lastly, I think it's vital for organisations to engage with the future workforce - young people. Encourage your personnel to go into local schools or universities and have a presence at their career days. Another idea is hosting family days in the workplace and encourage staff to bring in their kids to work. This is an excellent way for kids to meet role models from the industry. If this inspires just one person to choose a career in STEM, it has made a difference!





## ACTIONS FOR FEMALE ROLE MODELS

### Encourage Women to Speak Up Confidently

Research has shown that male school children are more likely than female schoolchildren to interrupt during class and are less likely to be interrupted themselves<sup>34</sup>.

This translates to adults and into professional environments, with men being more likely than women to interrupt during meetings but are less likely to be interrupted themselves<sup>35</sup>.

In addition, women tend to be more apologetic than men<sup>36</sup>. When speaking up, women more often apologise, soften criticism, use disclaimers and express thanks than men<sup>37</sup>.

To assist women in finding their voice, female role models can demonstrate how to speak up confidently during meetings, avoiding disclaimers or apologies.

When female role models notice women engaging in apologetic speech, they should explain how it weakens the message a woman is attempting to convey.

**To assist women in finding their voice, female role models can demonstrate how to speak up confidently during meetings, avoiding disclaimers or apologies.**

### Encourage Women to Actively Resolve Conflicts

Women are frequently trained from childhood to focus on nurturing others and focus less on their own needs<sup>38,39</sup>.

As a result, women and men learn different communication strategies that persist into their professional lives and can even be seen in top management teams<sup>40</sup>.

This means that women often do not learn how to communicate their needs and manage disagreement effectively.

Moreover, women are less favourably disposed towards competition and what they interpret as competitive behaviour<sup>21</sup>. As such women may avoid providing feedback in order to avoid being perceived unfavourably.

To assist women to improve conflict resolution skills, role models can emphasise open communication and encourage women to proactively resolve conflict.

**Mentors can help by role-playing challenging talks in one-on-one mentoring exercises to improve conflict resolution skills.**



### Encourage Women to Take Ownership of Their Success

Women are frequently given less credit for their accomplishments and are held more accountable for their failings. This dynamic starts in childhood and continues into maturity.

This is especially detrimental, given that internalising success is a key aspect of developing self-confidence. From an early age, girl children who are confident in their talents are more inclined to take the initiative. Girls that are frequently misjudged by others and themselves have their confidence eroded.

Moreover, when girls are commended on their successes, they prefer to deflect praise or belittle their achievements<sup>38</sup>.

Women also have a tendency to undervalue their own abilities and ascribe their achievement to outside sources such as luck or assistance from others<sup>44</sup>.

Women frequently feel less self-assured and less willing to take on new projects because they give themselves less credit for their abilities. The confidence difference begins early: girls' self-esteem diminishes 3.5 times faster than boys' between primary and high school<sup>45</sup>.

Female role models should search for opportunities to applaud women's accomplishments and recognise their skills.

Finally, role models should speak out if they see other women avoiding praise.

**Role models can model owning success; it will help women to feel more comfortable if they see that it is acceptable to own their accomplishment.**

### Motivate Women to Pursue Their Dreams

As indicated, women are less likely to take chances because they lack confidence to attempt a career reputed to require 'brilliance', compared to men<sup>20</sup>. Women are less likely to apply for jobs unless they feel that they are 100% qualified and meet all the criterias<sup>22, 23</sup>. Moreover, women are reluctant to self-promote<sup>24</sup>. They are less competitively inclined, avoiding competition<sup>21</sup>. Women are also more likely to underestimate their leadership abilities<sup>25</sup>.

All of this adds up to making it less likely for women to pursue and achieve their dreams.

Seeing other female role models pursue and achieve their dreams might be helpful for women to overcome some of the above hurdles.

Role models can discuss moments when they ventured outside of their comfort zone and how fantastic it feels when they succeed and how much they learned when they didn't succeed.

**When hearing women claim they're not ready, role models can gently push back and tell them that it's a chance to learn and develop.**

### Honour Female Leadership

As they grow up, leadership messages for girls and boys are significantly different. Traditionally, society expects men to lead, so when boys exhibit a tendency to do so, we cheer. Conversely for women to be polite and communal, so when girls speak up or take the lead, they frequently meet opposition. As a result, girls frequently worry that assuming a leadership role may make people angry or make them laugh<sup>43</sup>.

It's no surprise that early on girls are less interested in leadership than boys—a pattern that persists throughout adulthood<sup>46,47,48</sup>.

It is interesting to note that more than 80% of female executives participated in competitive sports as children<sup>49</sup>. This aligns with research that girls who participate in extracurricular activities learn leadership abilities that will serve them for the rest of their lives<sup>43</sup>.

Female role models can assist women to develop leadership skills and inclinations by discussing their own experiences in taking the lead, and by recognising and applauding female leaders in their life and in general.

**If a female role model hears a woman being called bossy or aggressive, they can step in and explain that she should be praised, not chastised, for demonstrating leadership abilities.**



## CASE STUDY

### AREEA's National Bright Future STEM Program

Bright Future  
STEM Program

#### Providing Inspiring Female Role Models from the Resources and Energy Industry to Girls Aged 9-12

Demand for Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) skills is increasing in the future resources and energy workforce, with significant growth forecast over the next 20 years creating a multitude of employment opportunities for the next generation. However, study in STEM areas has been stagnating at best, even declining<sup>51</sup>.

AREEA's Bright Future STEM program counteracts this trend by engaging children (aged 9-12, particularly girls) at an early age to build the next generation of STEM professionals. The program showcases the diversity of career opportunities within the resources and energy industry and the importance of choosing to study STEM subjects.

This unique program introduces students to STEM role models from the resources and energy industry who highlight what they love most about their rewarding STEM careers. The program also provides hands-on, interactive activities and experiences that are all relatable to the real world.

Designed by AREEA and delivered into primary schools across Australia, the Bright Future STEM program is aligned to the Australian National STEM Curriculum and encourages problem-solving, critical thinking, communication, teamwork and fun.

Through STEM industry role models promoting the diverse and rewarding future STEM employment opportunities in the resources and energy industry, and participating in hands-on, STEM based activities, students are inspired and encouraged to pursue an interest in STEM careers.

AREEA launched the national, school-based Bright Future STEM program in 2019. Since its inception, the program has reached over 10,000 students nationally.

For more information on AREEA's National Bright Future STEM Program, please see <https://www.brightfuturestem.com.au/>





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