

MEDIA RELEASE: Construction industry works to #BreakTheBias

8 March 2022

Construction is one of South Australia's top industries, with around 74,000 people directly employed in positions ranging from labourers to engineers, underpinning the state's economic recovery.

But it's also the nation's second most male-dominated (behind mining).

International Women's Day is recognised globally and celebrates the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. This year's theme is #BreakTheBias by calling out bias, smashing stereotypes, breaking inequality, and rejecting discrimination.

The Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) is working to break the bias that creates obstacles for girls and women pursuing trades and long-term careers in the construction industry.

Amid one of the most significant skills and labour shortages in the past 20 years, the CITB is stepping up its efforts in partnership with industry and training providers to achieve greater representation of women in construction.

This includes building on the success of last year's first all-female Try A Trade program to grow participation in pre-apprenticeship (Certificate II) trades courses among secondary school students.

The CITB's Try A Trade is an interactive way for students to find out more about the construction industry. Its expansion to include a female stream is in part a response to a growing interest from girls in traditionally male-dominated fields, and a way to encourage more to consider a trades career.

But there is still a long way to go to increase the number of female apprentices and trainees to ensure there is a diverse and well-trained workforce for the state's current and future jobs.

CITB Presiding Member Maree Wauchope leads a diverse board that includes Amanda Price-McGregor, who has more than 20 years' experience in infrastructure planning, strategy development, project execution and development approvals in the public and private sectors, and Hickinbotham Design director Ruth Vagnarelli, who has been involved in some of South Australia's largest private residential developments.

Ms Wauchope, the chief executive officer of Barunga West Council, has been involved in the construction industry for 20 years, both in government helping deliver major projects, and in the private sector managing civil and building works.



“Today I want to acknowledge and celebrate women in the construction industry, and encourage women who are thinking about a career in construction to make the move,” Ms Wauchope said.

“There are many of us that have already proven females can have a very successful career in what has traditionally been a male-dominated industry.

“Not only can you have a great pathway in life with many career and personal development opportunities, you can also be part of building something great, which is deeply rewarding.”

There is no shortage of opportunities, Ms Wauchope said, pointing to a raft of major infrastructure works on the horizon, including the 10-year Torrens to Darlington project, which will require 1000 construction workers by the end of this year, rising to a peak of 5000 in 2026.

“Any female that wants to be part of an industry that offers job security associated with a strong pipeline of work should seriously consider entering the construction industry,” she said.

The South Australian construction industry has a vibrant and talented network of women employed in highly skilled, highly paid jobs across a variety of trades and sectors, and there is plenty of room for more.

“We look forward to celebrating International Women’s Day with the community and continuing to educate, inform and support men and women as we work to break the bias to recruit, train and retain more women in construction,” Ms Wauchope said.

Find out more:  [Women in Construction](#)

About the CITB: The CITB is a whole-of-industry led organisation that provides support to attract, train and retain South Australian building and construction workers by providing leadership in training and skills development. Learn more [here](#)

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CITB Presiding Member Maree Wauchope strikes the IWD 2022 pose.

Will you help break the bias? Cross your arms to show solidarity.

#IWD2022 #BreakTheBias

