

MEDIA RELEASE

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Reach new heights with WiT's Board Readiness Program

If you are a tech-savvy woman keen to upskill and improve the diversity on Australia's boards, this could be the program for you.

Women in Technology (WiT) has just opened applications for its 2020 Board Readiness program, which has been successfully turning out graduates for a decade.

WiT Co-President Joanna Field said that the Board Readiness program had empowered hundreds of women to advance their personal and professional skills and become board directors.

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

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

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

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

Although the percentage of women on ASX 200 boards hit 30% late last year, there are still seven boards in the ASX 200 without female directors. Tech-savvy Queensland women such as Della Churchill are keen to help fill the gap. Ms Churchill, who is the Director, Customer Strategy & Experience Design at Deloitte Digital Australia, graduated from the 2019 WiT Board Readiness Program.

In addition to feeling empowered to ask questions fearlessly and sharing boardroom 'war stories', Ms Churchill said the program taught her about the usefulness of pre-meeting diplomacy to produce an outcome, the responsibilities of being a board member and the importance of sound preparation for meetings.

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

Alice Peterson, 29, a project manager at PricewaterhouseCoopers, has nothing but praise for the WiT course and says, despite being one of the younger attendees, she still felt as though her voice was heard and was important.

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

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

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

If you are keen to apply for the WiT Board Readiness program, you can access the application form [here](#).

ABOUT WiT

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

WiT was founded in 1997 by a small group of Queensland women who came together to share their aspirations and find understanding and solutions for the unique challenges they faced as female pioneers in technology. It now has more than 7,000 members from all branches of science and technology. To learn more about WiT visit wit.org.au

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