



WIT

WOMEN IN
TECHNOLOGY
ADVANCE // CONNECT // EMPOWER

9 March 2020

MEDIA RELEASE

QUEENSLAND WOMEN'S WEEK: SOCIAL IMPACT AND A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE THROUGH MENTORING

Gloria Vega and Julia Huynh are true believers in the power of mentoring, eagerly drawing attention to its importance during Queensland Women's Week.

The two were first paired up early last year as part of the Women in Technology (WiT) Mentoring Program and the sessions have helped spur Ms Vega to launch a new social enterprise onto the global stage.

"The WiT mentoring program was the catalyst I needed to bring my dream to life," said Ms Vega, who combines her role as Sunwater's Portfolio Strategy Manager with her role as leader of the new charitable foundation called Acude.

"The WiT program gave me the confidence and tools I needed. I then worked with Julia, my mentor, to sharpen up my enterprise model, as well as balance personal and professional needs. The program gave me an opportunity to tell my story to a community who really supported me and wanted me to achieve my goals."

Ms Vega formed Acude to connect Australians and Latin Americans, using the Latin American mastery of social connection to help overcome isolation issues in Australia, and linking Australians with foundations that help break cycles of poverty in Latin America. The enterprise has been designed to create new perspectives for Australian children, connecting them with disadvantaged communities, locally and abroad.

Later this year Acude plans to start offering vibrant school holiday programs as immersion projects to cultivate empathy towards other cultures.

As a result of the mentoring program, Gloria entered and won the University of Queensland's Global Engagement Latin American Colloquium competition, which aims to advance Latin American and Australian relations through entrepreneurship and innovation.

Ms Huynh, who has been coaching and mentoring individuals and businesses for over a decade, said that her biggest passion was helping people and organisations 'realise and reach their potential'.

"It's a personal addiction to what I call the 'lightbulb moment' - when you're talking to someone and the light goes on in their eyes and you know they suddenly get it. That moment is very special to me," said Ms Huynh.

"When I first started participating in WiT's networking events, I was really drawn to the strong-minded community of women who work in both professional and technical settings and who aren't always celebrated. For me it was just very validating that not only are you encouraged and supported to rise and to shine, but here are a bunch of other women, and some men, who are in the same situation, saying forget the patriarchy, it's time for us to really step up."

WiT Co-President Dr Claudia Giurgiuman said the mentoring program aligned perfectly with the 2020 Queensland Women's Week theme, "**Celebrating our diverse community of strong women**".

"This year's theme is particularly relevant because it aims to empower and inspire Queensland women to embrace their unique qualities and show how diversity enriches and strengthens our communities," Dr Giurgiuman said.

"We often think of mentoring as something young people look for at the start of their career, but that isn't the case with WiT.

"Here we have two amazing and successful career women who have worked closely together to launch an exciting new initiative. It shows how, through mentoring and supporting each other, we can make change happen."

Dr Giurgiuman said more than 400 mentors and mentees had successfully completed the WiT Mentoring program, a structured 12-week course which pairs the knowledge and experience of mentors with mentees looking for guidance or support in navigating their career, or to fulfil their personal dreams and aspirations.

"The program fosters an inclusive and supportive environment aimed at the growth-seeking professional," said Dr Giurgiuman.

"We know so many women have the ambition and focus to achieve success but sometimes they need the support and encouragement of a mentor to think about issues in a different way, explore ideas and tap into a network of amazing people.

"We greatly appreciate the sponsorship of this program we receive from the Queensland Government as well as the ongoing support we have received from Microsoft in hosting associated events."

For over 23 years, WiT has been breaking new ground to empower, advance, and connect its members – a community of 7,000 professional women representing all branches of science and technology.

To learn more about the WiT Mentoring Program, [click here](#).

MEDIA NOTE – To interview Ms Vega, Ms Huynh or Dr Giurgiuman, contact WiT Media Deanna Nott on 0422 504540 or email media@wit.org.au

ABOUT WiT

Women in Technology (WiT) is one of Australia's most respected and active technology industry associations, dedicated to supporting, developing, recognising and promoting the achievements of women from all science and technology disciplines. The organisation delivers professional development, advocacy and networking, including exclusive mentoring and Board Readiness courses, and the prestigious annual 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. The community now has more than 7000 members and more than 21,000 supporters. To learn more about WiT visit wit.org.au.