

Women in Technology win with board readiness program

Women in Technology (WiT), a not-for-profit organisation based in Brisbane, has received the exciting news that one of its flagship programs, WiT Board Readiness, has been named among 109 global 'best practice' programs by the EU-funded project PRActising Gender Equality in Science (PRA.G.E.S).

WiT president, Anne-Marie Birkill, said of the accomplishment, "We are very pleased that Board Readiness has been included among such a prestigious cohort of similar programs. This is a great outcome for a volunteer-lead organization, and a credit to the wonderful team of women who developed and contributed to the program over the past few years.

"While the Board Readiness has been singled out in this way, this is the standard to which we aspire for all our programs and events."

WiT's Board Readiness program focuses on the need to promote board diversity including a focus on the inclusion of technology capability. The Board Readiness program was developed by WiT in 2002 and is designed for women who have the desire to apply their skills as executive and non-executive directors.

The program has generated an enormous amount of interest from government, industry, other associations and executive members.

Ms Birkill said, "Women are dramatically under-represented in the Board Rooms of Australia, the WiT Board Readiness Program seeks to contribute to turning this situation around by equipping women with the skills to take on board roles, and the tools to navigate their way into the Board Room."

The PRA.G.E.S project consists of a coordinated set of actions, lasting 21 months. The main objective has been to take stock of programs and initiatives found in specific institutional settings (such as universities, institutes, faculties and departments, but also networks, associations and science and technology-related enterprises) aimed at promoting gender equality in science and technology.

To achieve this objective, a necessarily complex path was followed. A preliminary survey of programs implemented in Europe, North America and Australia was carried out and then over 1,100 representatives of institutions, organisations and networks which had promoted these programs were contacted.

First-hand and web-based information on a set of programs was collected. Finally, by adopting a benchmarking approach, a database was created providing a description and short assessment of 109 selected programs, including the WiT Board Readiness program.

"Along with the wonderful feedback we receive from our members, this sort of recognition makes it all very worthwhile",

said Ms Birkill, who is chief executive officer of i,lab and has led WiT as a volunteer for many years.

With over 400 members and 1600 subscribers throughout Queensland, WiT is one of the leading technology industry associations for women in Queensland. Since its inception in 1997 WiT has been a pioneer in the development of industry development programs such as:

- Board Readiness
- ICT & Biotech Awards
- Getting Back to IT
- Biotech Research Grants
- CIO Pathways
- Professional Development workshops

WiT is also the first technology industry association to bring together members from diverse technology disciplines. The introduction of its Women in Biotech Chapter in 2005 has highlighted the common ground shared by women in all areas of emerging technology. WiT membership ranges from students through to senior executives and is not limited to women only. This means catering our services for multiple targets audiences.

WiT prides itself on delivering innovative ways of developing skills including:

- Workshops
- High profile speaker inspirational events
- Major networking events
- Mentoring

www.wit.org.au