

18 November 2011

Inspiring Women Inspire Our Workforce

Over 40 female Kwinana Industries Council member employees were treated to two prominent and inspiring speakers at the launch of the KIC Women's Networking Forum in Henderson this week.

Mayor Carol Adams, Town of Kwinana and Rowena Smith, Head of Resource Planning and Development at BHP Billiton addressed the forum, providing participants with insight into how they have made their mark in traditionally male dominated environments.

Both speakers outlined their early lives and family expectations and although they had very different experiences and opportunities, their message to the women present was similar – pursuing diversity in the workforce makes good business sense. Women contribute greatly to an organisation not only technically but in terms of being great communicators and having the ability to build strong relationships.

Ms Adams has been Mayor of the Town of Kwinana since 2006, and for many years prior was the only female Councillor with the Town of Kwinana.

She has raised her two daughters as a single parent, while studying for her law degree and until recently, worked full time in her own law consultancy. This year she decided to commit to Mayoral duties on a full time basis.

Ms Smith obtained a degree in commerce majoring in management, and started her career in the resource sector in an operational role in Gladstone, Queensland. Following a rapid move through the ranks, she moved to Kwinana as General Manager of the Kwinana Nickel Refinery. Ms Smith now juggles full time work with two small children and a husband, who also works full time.

Hadi Birch, KIC Workforce and Education Committee acting chair said it was extremely encouraging that KIC members recognised the importance of their female employees and supported their staff attending the forum.

"Investing in strategies that develop and sustain a diverse workforce is high on everyone's agenda. Many businesses are facing potential skills shortages and the looming retirement of many long term employees," said Mrs Birch.

"Networking, information exchange and peer support are important aspects of utilising and enhancing the skills of our emerging leaders."

The forum is the first of what the KIC hopes to be regular opportunities for local KIC member female employees.

The forums aim to provide an avenue for participants to get together to share knowledge and information as well as being able to develop supportive and engaging networks.

For more information about the KIC Women's Networking Forum contact Wendy Cooke at KIC on (08) 9439 6223 or email wendy.cooke@kic.org.au
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Photo: (left to right)

Hadi Birch, KIC Workforce and Education Committee acting chair - Rowena Smith, Head of Resource Planning and Development at BHP Billiton & Mayor Carol Adams, Town of Kwinana