



## **NAWIC QUEENSLAND MALE ALLIES PROGRAM**

Construction continues to be the most male-dominated major industry in Australia, where the proportion of women working in the sector has risen encouragingly over the past 3 years (15% in 2021 compared to 12% in 2018),\* though still displays a significant gap.

Additionally, a University of NSW study has found, "Men's capabilities as construction professionals are assumed; women's capabilities are frequently questioned, singled out or discussed. Women need to demonstrate they are better, not just equal to men. Men view actions to address gender equality as providing women with an unfair advantage. It underscores the need for more systematic and objective selection in opening up equal opportunities for women in the industry."

Beyond supporting education pathways and providing mentoring and networking opportunities to create equal opportunities for women in the industry, NAWIC is also working to drive cultural change within the workforce environment through a variety of initiatives.

One such initiative is the Construction Industry Male Allies Mentoring Program, which has been funded by CSQ and developed in partnership with emberin - global leaders in diversity and inclusion programs.

It is the highlight of NAWIC QLD's Passport to Diversity Strategy and is aimed at men in the industry who want to go beyond talking about greater gender equity in construction.

"This is an industry first initiative that is focusing on supporting a cultural change and providing skills to current leaders on how to adapt to the changing workforce environment as it diversifies," says NAWIC Queensland committee member Radmila Desic.

The Male Allies Mentoring program is a commitment to 5 x 30 minute online modules over 10 weeks, working group discussions and measurement of the actions participants take as a result of what they have learned.

The philosophy underpinning the program is that many men want to support gender balance in the industry, but often don't know how and what to do. The program helps men who are already champions become vocal, more confident advocates and also help the sceptics move to a better understanding and action.

Phil Diver, CEO and Company Secretary at the Construction Training Centre (CTC) is one of the 39 participants in the Male Allies Pilot Program that is currently being delivered.



“The Male Allies Program is an excellent and informative self-paced learning program to gain a better appreciation for gender-based issues and how these may be used to advance female participation in the building and construction workforce and to embrace real inclusion once those numbers increase. For me it’s about stretch. While always advocating for inclusion and equity in the workplace the Male Allies Program sets down some challenges and is a call to action which I’ve taken to wholeheartedly and set myself some ambitious targets. These necessarily have meant discussions with colleagues which have continued the discussion which can only be a good thing. Being on the Program has helped me keep wanting to push the boundaries.”

CTC already has many other policies in place including:

- Generous and case by case leave for domestic and family violence;
- Accredited breastfeeding room and breast feeding policy;
- Differential super – meaning we pay our female staff more than the male staff;
- Transgender inclusive toilet;
- Special arrangements for endometriosis sufferers;
- Signage around domestic and family violence awareness;
- Flexible working hours;
- Free gymnasium membership;
- Time off for meditation;
- Access to our sleep centre; and
- Men's health messaging.

“It’s so amazing to see people like Phil wholeheartedly embracing the program,” says Radmila. “It shows that even for companies as amazing as CTC there is always room for continued improvement. We really appreciate male allies such as Phil who are proudly leading the way on gender equality.”

NAWIC hopes that with more programs such as this, the steps towards true gender balance can be reached in the construction industry within the current workforce generation.

\* The 2021 CSQ Report