

Laing O'Rourke Inspiring STEM+ Programme

The Inspiring STEM+ Programme is a first mover initiative to disrupt the way the Construction industry understands the gender diversity of its people.

Gender diversity continues to be an ongoing challenge within the Construction industry and requires a long-term strategy to evoke significant change in balancing the gender gap. The latest Government data confirms there is currently 17% female representation across the Construction industry in Australia, which is only just above the lowest ranked industry of Mining with 16.7% female representation. This trend continues, with the Construction industry having the lowest-ranked representation of female managers across all industry sectors in Australia with just 12.1% representation.

To play their part in correcting this gender imbalance, Laing O'Rourke created their Inspiring STEM+ Programme. The aim of Laing O'Rourke's Inspiring STEM+ Programme is to encourage more female students into STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) courses at university and ultimately careers in construction and engineering.

"This forms part of our long-term strategy to drive change and ensure a balanced representation of both men and women within the construction industry," says Laing O'Rourke General Manager of People, Helen Fraser.

The Inspiring STEM+ Programme is comprised of a series of modules delivered over a 2 year period, with one module arranged each school term in coordination with other school activities. Each module runs for two hours outside school hours.

The modules are open to consultation and design input from the other Inspiring STEM+ contributors, sponsors and partners.

"Now entering into our fourth year of running the program, we have grown to a cohort of some 100 girls, with the program being run across sites in Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth and two in Sydney," says Ms Fraser.

"The program has certainly come a long way from an idea that was developed by two graduates and their manager working on the 100 Mount Street project in North Sydney."

"Given the success of the programme we are really looking forward to expanding the program nationally, as projects and opportunities present themselves."

The Inspiring STEM+ Programme is currently available to other Laing O'Rourke projects and their delivery partners to continue the vision of driving greater gender balance across the Construction sector.