

leaders in industry

Two women at the forefront of Queensland's residential building industry have been recognised by HIA at an inaugural event.

HIA has developed, over many years, a large network of business partners among our membership. These partners are typically women, and partners of the contractors running small, family owned businesses. The contribution these partners make to the Queensland home building industry is substantial, and recognised in HIA's annual awards program.

Now, HIA Queensland has hosted the inaugural HIA Recognition of Women in the Industry event to acknowledge the role that many women are playing in leading the future of Queensland's home

building industry. HIA's aim was to demonstrate in a tangible way that women should aspire to leadership positions in the industry, which is still very male-dominated.

The industry must do everything it can to encourage women to join it at all levels, to help ensure that there is an adequate supply of skills to meet the future demand for housing in the state. Queensland simply cannot afford to ignore the contribution that half the population can make to the ongoing health of the industry and its contribution to the economy.

The HIA Recognition of Women in Industry event was held on 31 July 2015 at the Victoria Golf Club, Brisbane. More than 150 members and industry representatives attended, including Pino Monaco, national vice president; Ron Dwyer, immediate past national president, and chair of the HIA Charitable Foundation; past president

Jill Lee, and members of the HIA Qld Executive Committee.

The HIA Recognition of Women in the Industry event recognised women who have inspired, motivated, achieved results, and lead by example. Two women in particular who exemplify success and professionalism are Chris Cameron and Debbie Johnson, who were speakers for the event.

Award winners

HIA is proud to provide the opportunity to raise the profile of professional women within the industry, as well as promote and encourage excellence.

In the lead-up to this event HIA received nominations for a 'recognition of achievement' award to acknowledge outstanding achievements of women working in industry. HIA was delighted with the response and the calibre of nominations received for this recognition.

Recognition of Outstanding Achievement

Ruiwen Kong, B.Eng, M.Eng, and construction solutions engineer with Cement Concrete & Aggregates Australia (CCAA) was the inaugural recipient of the Recognition of Outstanding Achievement.

In nominating Ruiwen for this recognition, CCAA lauded her unique technical qualifications in materials engineering, as well as her versatility – from being on site for concrete pours, providing technical advice to architects and builders about the application of concrete, though to lecturing at university.

'As a woman in civil engineering I quite often get doubted, so this was a

Left: The short-list of nominees included: (L-R) Back row: Carrie Hall, Sandra Lysaght, Sonia Woolley, Alison Sayce. Middle Row: Jenny Marshall, Ros Hemley, Dell Hubbard. Front Row: Maree OShea, Donna Harvey, Ruiwen Kong, Sue Dewar, Maria Schandl, Nicole Cox. Not present Dee Bounds, Leigh Caldwell.





real honour to be nominated and have my work recognised,' she says.

Ruiwen migrated to Australia nine years ago, after studying her Masters in Civil Engineering and living in Singapore for eight years, and completing her Bachelors degree in material engineering in her native city of Shanghai.

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'When I moved it was a bit of a challenge for me as I didn't know anyone and I didn't know a lot about the industry,' she says. But in winning the award, she hopes to provide great encouragement and inspiration for other women in the housing industry.

'The culture at HIA is very healthy, and I thank especially the people working at HIA Queensland for organising this event.'

Achievement in Building Solutions

Sue Dewar is state design and planning manager with Lendlease Communities (Australia) Limited.

Sue was nominated by Lendlease after developing a new approach to producing consistent and quality

outcomes for building on sloping land – outcomes that benefit builders, but more importantly their customers. The ideas informed a design manual which has been adopted nationally by Lendlease.


'It was a big surprise and I was really overwhelmed,' she says. 'I like that we now have a girls' club within the industry.'

Winning the award means she can not only continue her passion for innovation and housing affordability, but also explore new ideas with the support and confidence of her team.

'It gives me greater credibility, too, that I have been nominated by my peers,' she says.

As for the future: 'The industry is on the cusp of major change and I think housing and community models will evolve quickly and dramatically in the next 20 years. It's fabulous to be in the industry at this time to explore all of the new options.'

HIA thanks Jill Lee and Stylemaster Homes for their generous support in donating raffle to help raise funds for the HIA Charitable Foundation.

This inaugural event would not have been possible without the generous support from our major partner, HIA Insurance Services, as well as support from Stylemaster Homes, the Stoddart Group, and the Queensland Building and Construction Commission. 

Speakers



Chris Cameron, Director, Rockcote

Thanks in part to Chris' entrepreneurial and business achievements, Rockcote has helped to

make the construction industry a more female friendly place and to further recognise the role of women as key decision-makers in the home building and renovation process. Chris is a champion for sustainable development and business practices and a pioneer for women in the construction and manufacturing industries.

Chris has received numerous awards and accolades, including from the Australian Financial Review & Westpac Bank Top 100 Women of Influence Awards, Telstra National Business Woman of the Year Awards (AUST), Premier's Award for Leadership in Business Sustainability, Australian Business Women's Network Hall of Fame, United Nations' Association of Australia World Environment Day 'Szencorp Green Building Award', and more.



Debbie Johnson, Director, Building Suncoast Green

Debbie has had more than 40 years in the development industry, starting out as a

building designer and becoming a medium-rise building contractor in the 1990s. She now works throughout Australia as a development consultant for several national clients. She has become increasingly involved as an industry representative, working to achieve improved industry outcomes with local and state government bodies.

Debbie is the past Queensland regional president for HIA, a director on the Q Leave Board, a director on the Sunshine Coast Financial Services Board, and has served as both the chair and a referee for the past 12 years on the Building and Development Dispute Resolution Committee.