

Dear Public Works Professional

As a kid and growing up I never quite knew what I wanted to be or do with my life, however I always had a passion for engineering. At school I was always the only girl in my science and technology classes who actually found things interesting and fun - in fact my nickname was Brains because I always had my head in a book or was learning something new – and when I got to uni I was one of only about a dozen young women in a class of over 100. I definitely had some people tell me that I couldn't be an engineer, however that just made me want to succeed even more! I couldn't be happier with the choices I made to get where I am today!

Today I'm a Graduate Civil Engineer working for a Local Government organisation, a council. I work in the Public Works sector because I'm passionate about making a difference and contributing to the community in which I live. Working for the Council also means that I get to work on a variety of projects, across a variety of areas and with all sorts of other professions. And in doing this, I get to shape the future of the built environment, the foundations of our societies and the future that generations to come will enjoy; and that is pretty inspirational.

Let's face it, engineering, and particularly public works engineering is a pretty awesome job and I want to inspire other people to join in the fun and become engineers.

Recently I joined Young IPWEA because I saw it as an opportunity to network, to meet people just like me with similar, but diverse experiences and to share those experiences and help each other with real-life matters. It is a way to gain industry knowledge and learn about new ideas, apply new technologies and learn about professional development opportunities like the recent career development workshop at the IPWEA NSW State Conference.

IPWEA is leading an engineering culture change and I am excited to be part of it. We are raising the profile of engineers by finding ways to get engineers to the decision-making table. From meetings with key government agencies and policy makers to making submissions to public inquiries, IPWEA takes every opportunity to raise the issue and deliver the message that public infrastructure is too important to leave its stewardship to chance.

And, IPWEA is working to ensure engineering becomes more inclusive with more female engineers, more engineers from diverse backgrounds and we want to embrace engineers with disabilities. Young IPWEA can work together to transform the profile of our industry.

So, what can you do?

Firstly, visit www.pocketsally.com to learn more about engineering and the recognition of engineers, public works and women in engineering (and join IPWEA NSW while you're there).

Highlight the work we do for our communities by taking a photo or video of your project – **make sure I'm in it!** – using either the hashtag #pocketsally or tagging *Pocket Sally* on your favourite social media platform, share it with the world.

And finally, encourage your friends, peers and colleagues to do the same: get their own Pocket Sally and spread the word.

What lessons have I learned in my short career??

One of the biggest things I've learnt as a young female engineer is that it's ok to be different. Never underestimate the power of diversity. I embraced my differences and became strong, confident and, a better engineer. It's not easy, and there are some people out there that will always give you a hard time, but it's up to you how you choose to deal with it. I found a way to embrace my differences as a strength. So can you!

Thanks,



Pocket Sally