



We have interviewed our Partner, National Association of Women in Construction in New Zealand!

We recently interviewed Auckland Chair of NAWIC, Jenny Parker on her thoughts on the construction industry.

1. Who is NAWIC?

We are a non-profit association of women who work either in the construction industry for business organisations who provide services to the construction industry. Our members include quantity surveyors, project managers, suppliers, planners, designers, architects, engineers, tradespeople, recruiters and lawyers.



2. What is the role of National Association of Women in Construction in particular to the New Zealand construction industry?

Our vision is to be the leading voice for women in the New Zealand industry. We see a huge opportunity for woman in this sector, yet recent experience shows that the majority of female school leavers still consider the industry as men only. NAWIC looks to encourage females to think about this sector when looking at their career pathways going forward. An increased gender balance general diversity benefits the industry as a whole, as well as to industry outputs.



3. What do you think about the construction industry in New Zealand in 2016?

Exciting yet challenging times for everyone. As a whole I think the construction industry is a massive boost to the economy with significant projects already underway, both commercially and in the residential sector, we are seeing growth never previously experienced in NZ. There are cracks starting to show, however, as demand hikes the prices of building materials due to supply versus demand in residential housing, particularly in Auckland. Issues regarding quality, rushed jobs to meet deadlines are starting to reflect the consistently high pressure on builders. Skills are limited yet here we have a huge percentage of the population not even aware of the opportunities this wonderful market sector can offer them.

4. What is the percentage of women working in construction industry in New Zealand currently? Do you think the number will increase substantially next 5 years?

Whilst the number of women involved in the industry has almost doubled in the last 15 years and is now around 17%, there is still plenty of room for improvement. There are almost 10,000 apprentices in training and 12 percent are women.

5. What are the challenges for women professionals to enter construction industry? What are the reasons behind?

The many girls I have spoken to at school level and also tertiary level don't seem to understand what the construction industry can offer them, nor what they could offer the industry. A lot of education inside and outside the classroom should be given to inspire girls to consider this industry. Many girls are not encouraged by their family members or schools, nor do they have role models to look up for guidance. Construction is not the "done thing" to do, and I think a bit more education and understanding needs to be given industry wide.



6. What can the women professionals do to overcome the challenges?

Think, act like and BE examples for future generations in the roles they play. There are some amazing female pioneers in the industry and we need to be generating some excitement and interest in following in their footsteps. Speak up and encourage dialogue in your work place to shine light on any hidden issues.

7. Do you think sexism exist in the construction industry? If so, how could the industry improve the situation?

From my understanding and talking to people in the industry, I believe there are still cases of sexism in the workplace. If we had role models for the girls and women to look towards for guidance, that would be hugely beneficial. The industry does benefit from having women in the place. If you look at other industries including IT, sports, entertainment – women are still being paid less for the same work – why would the construction industry be any different?

There are many issues faced in the industry and some are not unique to women – discrimination happens all the time. We as NAWIC aim to listen to women in the industry and help overcome some of these issues for the betterment of us all. Women don't want to be treated any differently in construction. All women want is the opportunity to demonstrate their passion, and skills and their commitment to the team and task at hand.

8. Coming to Auckland Build Expo 2016, what are your expectations?

Our expectations are to increase awareness of our organisation, as well as connecting with all people within the sector to understand the benefits of a diverse workplace. We look forward to talking to men about the bottlenecks in their particular sector and see how we could work together. We are here to support where we can through information sharing and networking.