

## Award marks the change in Sabina's world

Emily Roberts, [9 March 2010](#)



Sabina Shugg ... inaugural winner of the Chamber of Minerals and Energy of Western Australia's Women in Resources Champion award.

IN THE words of Margaret Mead, "never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has". This has been the motto of Sabina Shugg, the founder of Women in Mining Western Australia (WIMWA) who was this week named Women in Resources Champion at the inaugural Chamber of Minerals and Energy of Western Australia's Women in Resources Awards.

Shugg, a mining engineer who works for Momentum Partners, has tirelessly worked at developing the successful network of women in the resources industry which now boasts more than 1000 members who meet every couple of months to listen to a speaker and network. The foundations of WIMWA were based on Shugg's desire to encourage women to increase their presence in the industry, provide a strong network for women, and for the industry to recognise the need to increase the number of female employees.

"I think that as individuals and as a group we need to do what we can to make this industry a better place to work," Shugg said.

"Since the inception of WIMWA in 2003 I have personally gained a lot of experience and knowledge about the industry and its people. I have also gained a lot of satisfaction from the success of the group and the frequent positive feedback from the various events that are held. Many people have changed career direction, got new jobs, found mentoring relationships, made new friends and decided to stay in the industry longer because of the WIMWA group.

"I think it [WIMWA] has helped legitimise the idea of 'women in mining' which once was scorned – and let's face it, still is in some circles. At the end of the day the industry needs to make the most of the human capital available to it and the females in this industry are a resource to make the most of rather than being let slip away."

Shugg was born in Norseman, and moved with her family (her father was a geologist) to Wiluna, New Zealand and Kalgoorlie before heading to Perth for high school. After trying university, she left to work in Kalgoorlie as a 'fieldy' in exploration in 1987 and did a short stint with Pancon Exploration in the Paddington area before getting a job as an assay clerk at the new Jubilee mine south of Kalgoorlie where she worked for the next seven years.

"This was the start of a 14-year career with Normandy Mining in its various guises," Shugg said. "It was a time of opportunity. If you had the right attitude you could make the most of these opportunities. It was a busy time in terms of exploration and mining at the site and I was quickly promoted to rostering all the fieldies and coordinating the sampling and core processing.

"I then worked as a survey assistant and mine clerk before being promoted to mine surveyor - all a case of the right attitude and the right place and time. It was busy times and qualified people were hard to find. I then had the chance of filling in as pit supervisor which I continued to do when I left full-time employment to start studying mining engineering full time at WASM [Western Australian School of Mines]."

After graduating Shugg moved to Cue in WA's Murchison region where she worked at the Golden Crown underground mine and honed her skills as a "skippy" as well as in timbering, bogging and airlegging.

"At the end of this time I transferred to a FIFO [fly-in, fly-out] role at Golden Grove, also in the Murchison region of WA, where I had a number of roles over the next four years culminating as alternate underground manager. During my time at Golden Grove I completed firstly my shift boss ticket and then my underground manager's ticket."

She was the first female to get out and use these tickets in WA.

Shugg transferred to Big Bell as underground manager, then Mt McClure and Bronzewing, also as underground manager. She then moved out of FIFO, starting with Newcrest in Perth on the Telfer underground mine feasibility study.

"I spent 3.5 years in this role and gained valuable feasibility study experience," she said.

"I then spent 18 months with Snowden before taking the opportunity to work with Momentum Partners which was at that time a very young management consulting firm. In parallel I had been slowly working my way through an MBA at UWA so it was a perfect time to capitalise on this."

Shugg says she has been fortunate to have had many people influence her career.

"Firstly, Jeff Archer at Jubilee was fantastic to work with and very encouraging," Shugg said. "Next that comes to mind is Glen Grindlay and Bruce Anderson from my Golden Grove days. I have enjoyed working with Carl Adams since those days too and today enjoy being part of Momentum Partners which he founded and is the MD. I thought Adrian Pratt was a great influence during my time with Newcrest and I also learnt a lot from Bruce Price.

"Viv Snowden was a fantastic inspiration particularly whilst I was at Newcrest and Snowden - she is a great proponent of 'it's all about attitude'.

"Karen Field is someone I have known for many years and from her example it has always been good to know that women can make it to the top. More recently I have met many other fantastic roles models including Erica Smyth [chair of Toro Energy]. I have to say that any time you get a group of women from the resources sector together you have a pretty good bunch of people. Along the way, I have worked with so many fantastic people that just accepted you as you are and you all got on with your jobs. That's how it should be."

Shugg says the mining industry offers endless opportunities, and having the right attitude and getting out and meeting people in the industry help enormously to capitalise on prospects.

"I remember when I was at Big Bell and Normandy had sold it so I was going to be needing a new job and I was at a seminar and met Peter Hepburn-Brown and during my conversation said to him in a joking manner, 'any jobs going with Great Central Mines' (as Normandy had bought it by then) and then a couple of weeks later he was ringing up Mark Cutifani and saying 'what about Sabina for that underground manager job at Mt McClure'. I don't think that you want to be too pushy but getting out there and throwing ideas out there is often a good thing.

"I think women need to shout their own praises more than they do - men are much better at this. I think it is important to get out of situations or roles where you aren't happy - life is too short."

Aside from her mining career and WIMWA responsibilities, Shugg is also actively involved in animal welfare. She is on the executive for Animals Australia, and is the president of Stop Live Exports

(aka PACAT). She also supports Animal Management in Rural and Remote Indigenous Communities (AMRRIC) and Poundwatch in Perth.

Other awards winners from the CMEWA awards were Erica Smyth - Women in Resources Lifetime Achievement Award; Kellie Parker (Rio Tinto) - Women in Resources Outstanding Woman Award, and Woodside Energy - Women in Resources Company Initiative Award.

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