

Who are the women involved in STEM?

“ What I wanted to be when I grew up

A doctor or an engineer.

I always wanted to help people, and as an engineer I am certainly doing that by making sure the road infrastructure is well maintained, and that any project that involves my management is beneficial to the community.

Professional

Top-level responsibilities

As the Senior Project Engineer, I manage the development and construction of various road and bridge projects within the Hunter Region. Part of my role is to ensure that the work undertaken has a minimal effect on the community and environment.

Day-to-day work and skills

Project management skills, communication skills, conflict resolution skills and negotiation skills.

Personal

Current location and community

Newcastle, NSW

My interests and hobbies

Reading, travelling, spending quality time with family and friends, exercising and leading a healthy lifestyle.

I am passionate about

Mentoring other women within the industry, and promoting engineering to school-age children. I have a strong desire to encourage more females to study and stay in STEM, to protect the future of Australia's innovative community.

What I would say to 16-year-old me

Try not to worry about what people think of you. Always be true to yourself, be authentic, try your hardest at everything you do and don't put too much pressure on yourself. Be kind, thoughtful, and compassionate and treat everyone with respect. Always go with your gut feeling and do what feels right for you. You are amazing.



Jo Withford

Senior Project Engineer

Transport for NSW

HSC subjects: Engineering Studies, Maths, English, Modern History

I was awarded a Co-op Scholarship to study civil engineering at UNSW. I was able to gain practical experience while undertaking my degree.

After graduating, I travelled and worked around Australia for a couple of years.

My first job was being a site engineer on a large construction site in Sydney. It was very valuable experience, even though it was challenging and difficult being a female in a male-dominated area.

I want to continue to share my passion with other girls and encourage them to follow in my footsteps and not be intimidated by the 'blokey' culture of a STEM career. Further, I seek to influence the middle-management decision-makers to be more broad-minded in their approach to managing particular challenges that a working mother faces.