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Women in STEM careers encouraged to become workplace leaders

Finding out why women are not moving into management roles in the resources sector and implementing strategies to overcome the inequities will form part of a project being undertaken by local industry organisation, Resource Industry Network.

Resource Industry Network has been awarded a grant to deliver a program that will address the gender gap in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) careers in our region.

Local consultancy firm, The Life Approach, assisted RIN with the successful funding grant application in the first round of the \$8 million Women in STEM and Entrepreneurship (WISE) grant program under the National Innovation and Science Agenda.

The program will focus on community perceptions, workplace culture and leadership to encourage women to further their STEM careers into management positions.

RIN Manager Adrienne Rourke said RIN was delighted to receive \$86,600 in WISE funding to implement the program.

“As part of the project, we will develop toolkits and courses, provide coaching and implement strategies addressing gender inequity in STEM fields in the Mackay region.

“The project aims to increase the representation of women in STEM fields and leadership in the region by changing community perceptions, workplace culture, the make-up of leadership groups and educational attractions for girls.

“We will first undertake some research to find out exactly what the impediments are to women progressing into management roles and then use that information to develop the tools needed to address the issues.

“This might be training for employers as to how they can assist more women into senior positions or courses for women on how to be senior managers,” Mrs Rourke said.

The Life Approach co-founders Karla Steen and Jarrah Steen will also assist to deliver the workshops once they have been developed.

Women are underrepresented in STEM related studies and professions. Only one in four IT graduates and fewer than one in 10 engineering graduates are women.

Women occupy fewer than one in five senior researcher positions in Australian universities and research institutes, and are less than half the overall STEM workforce.

The Life Approach is a strategic business consultancy and career mentoring firm created to support women of all ages.

Resource Industry Network is an industry body representing the engineering and heavy manufacturing sector in the Mackay Isaac Whitsunday region.

RIN is one of 24 organisations in Australia to receive a share in the \$3.9 million first-round of WISE grants.

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