

ECU challenges the status quo for women – Now and beyond.

Department of Local Government and Communities coordinated a series of talks entitled “Women in STEM and Trades – Opportunities Now and Beyond” as part of the annual Skills West Expo on 12 August 2016. Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Strategic Partnerships), Professor Cobie Rudd presented on the importance of challenging the existing status quo by promoting the shift of women into non-traditional industries and increasing awareness of opportunities available to girls in trades training.

Lead of the Athena SWAN initiative at ECU, Professor Rudd spoke of the need to rethink the stereotypes around us.

“Gender difference between workers in the trade and non- trade occupations is an opportunity to improve gender balance”

Participating in the Science in Australia Gender Equity (SAGE) Pilot of Athena SWAN in Australia, ECU will look at the journey of female STEM students from tertiary education into male dominated STEM trades. Committee for Perth’s 2015 *Filling the Pool* report notes that experience in operational roles requiring STEM skills will be regarded as almost a pre-requisite to reach senior roles in the future.



Professor Rudd stressed the importance of competency-based training to ensure greater choices for the future. VET programs form part of many valued career paths and options are reduced for those lacking skills in STEM.



Picture: Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Strategic Partnerships) talks with students at the ECU Skills West Expo stand, 12 August 2016.