



AUSTRALIAN STEEL INSTITUTE

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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# **New pathways open for women in steel**

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Women are increasingly turning to non-traditional pathways such as steel for careers, drawn by operational and social advances.

Welcoming International Women's Day today (March 8), Australian Steel Institute (ASI) chief executive Mark Cain said 50% of ASI staff were now women.

"ASI is a proud supporter of inclusive work cultures where women's careers thrive and their achievements are celebrated," Cain said.

ASI founding member steel producer BlueScope agrees.

"It's an exciting, dynamic industry at the cutting edge of change for women," according to Queensland chapter president of the National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC) and BlueScope Qld specification manager Sheree Taylor.

"Historical perceptions of the industry are changing: we have world-class safety standards, a culture of trust and respect and are investing in emerging, responsible steel technology," Taylor said.

BlueScope's promotion and profiling of steel jobs now focuses on gender-neutral attributes, including problem-solving, skills training, job security and career advancement.

Success of the job program has seen a five-fold increase of women at an operational level since 2016 across BlueScope Australia.

BlueScope is also a signatory to the HESTA 40:40 Vision initiative which seeks to achieve gender balance in executive leadership across all ASX200 companies by 2030.

Taylor said one of the keys to attracting more women into manufacturing and steel is at the school level.

"It is fantastic to see careers advice at schools now increasingly showcase the exciting opportunities for women in manufacturing – across both trade, operator and professional roles. However, there is still more to do to support women into these careers so they can add to the industry and reap the benefits of secure employment and a fulfilling career."



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Site services contract controller for ASI founding member InfraBuild Wire Emma Mellows said the IWD 'Embrace Equity' theme powerfully resonated with her.

"Outside of work, I actively mentor young people, including young women, encouraging and supporting them to follow paths leading to technical roles describing industry as an exciting, stimulating, versatile and satisfying career option," Mellows said.

"Not long ago, my 7 year old son was shocked to hear that men were electricians too, because his mum was one. His view was that it was entirely normal for women to be in trades – I'd love to see that level of acceptance normalised more broadly."

Mellows said she had worked in a variety of heavy industries in her time (coal, power supply and steel) and had never felt more accepted and encouraged than she did at InfraBuild.

ASI company secretary Christine Nicholls said IWD was a time for businesses to look beyond equity in terms of equal pay to considering what makes women different in the workplace and how that can translate to equity in a practical way.

The Australian Steel Institute (ASI) is the peak body representing the Australian steel industry.

ASI provides marketing, education, advocacy, sustainability and technical leadership for 500 companies and 5,000 members.

Its founding members are BlueScope, InfraBuild, Liberty Primary Steel and Stramit Building Products. Steel generates 100,000 jobs and \$29b in revenue in Australia.

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*For more information on this press release or to talk with Mark, Sheree, Emma or Christine, please contact ASI marketing and communications manager Steven Andrew on 0473 480 964 or [stevena@steel.org.au](mailto:stevena@steel.org.au).*