



Zoe Gill is promoting maritime diversity in the Pilbara

# Women testing the water

A new enterprise in Western Australia is helping to bring women in maritime roles together and attract more women into the sector writes **Zoe Gill**

## 2019 IS SUCH AN EXCITING YEAR

for women in maritime. With so many activities happening around Australia, and around the world, we have a chance to think globally and act locally. This means putting effort into providing exciting and informative sessions at the local level that promote women in maritime. On April 17, the first networking event for the Pilbara Women in Marine group took place, named Women Testing the Water. The Pilbara Women in Marine group is an initiative of Smashed Glass, a support and development enterprise for women, and this was the company's first event.

## SUPPORT AND FRIENDSHIPS

As founder of Smashed Glass, the Pilbara Women in Marine initiative is one that I am quite passionate about. I work within the marine industry and I am grateful for the many amazing people that I have met and worked with since making the career

change to marine a number of years ago. The support, opportunity and friendships I have encountered continue to amaze me. I believe it is important to approach diversity in the marine environment from a holistic view. Pilbara Women in Marine is a small way to share such an exciting, diverse and dynamic industry with fellow mariners (both male or female) and provide a network and opportunity to connect.

## WORKING IN PORT HEDLAND

In Port Hedland there has been a visible and steady increase in the number of women working in maritime. However, there is still more that can be done. This event was created with the intention of connecting women within in the Pilbara

marine industry and promote the marine industry to others who might be curious. On April 17, 2019 around 35 women joined Smashed Glass at the Empire Bar, Esplanade Hotel, Port Hedland. The group came from a number of marine companies, along with a diverse mix of women who work in both the shore side and water side aspects of the marine industry. Tug masters, mates, HSEC professionals, schedulers and support staff were amongst some of the professions in attendance. One participant, Clare Ellis said, "having a room full of likeminded women who I could relate so many stories with was a great networking opportunity". Another participant Vera Dwyer said that it "was a great evening of networking with women in the marine industry and from other sectors in a comfortable and welcoming environment".

## MAKING CONNECTIONS

While a large portion of the attendees were from the marine industry, the event was open to all women in the Pilbara who worked either on the water, in shore side positions or were interested in a possible career in maritime. This gave a number of women who might have been thinking of a maritime career the opportunity to meet women in the industry and learn more about potential careers and opportunities within the Industry. Even though Port Hedland is a small geographic location several women who attended were meeting people for the first time. With such a fantastic turn out Smashed Glass has already commenced planning for the next event to be held towards the end of June.

## EMPOWERING WOMEN

The Smashed Glass event is an example of a local initiative that supports the global activities surrounding the 2019 world maritime theme of "empowering women in maritime". The company works by the

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ethos "if you can't see it, you can't be it", in promoting and showcasing the many women in maritime roles. This is essential to empower and encourage women in this sector. What can you be doing to promote diversity, encourage women in maritime and "smash the glass"? ■

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