



Australian Women in Resources Alliance
Strength through workforce diversity

AWRA e-Mentoring Case Study: Caoilin Chestnutt and Holly Withington

A business development manager for Anglo American, Caoilin's commercial experience and technical background as a geologist has seen her in-demand as a returning AWRA e-Mentoring Program mentor. Her mentee, Holly, is an up-and-coming database and modelling geologist undertaking an MBA.



MENTOR - Caoilin Chestnutt

Based: Brisbane, QLD

Role: Business Development Manager

A geologist by profession, Caoilin first gained technical expertise in mining before joining a commercial business development team at Anglo American where she is responsible for mergers, acquisitions and divestments.

Why did AWRA e-Mentoring appeal you?

The real appeal is the interaction with people and how every different relationship teaches me something about myself, opens my mind and keeps the ideas fresh.

The AWRA e-Mentoring Program is ideal in its flexible approach, opening the opportunity to those in remote locations or others whose work/life load has proven difficult to get involved in more traditional programs.

What makes a good mentor?

A willingness to listen, being flexible, open and honest with a positive attitude. For me the role of mentor is largely as a sounding board but the motivation needs to come from the mentee herself.

How was Holly to mentor?

Mentoring Holly was easy. She's motivated, positive, hard-working and smart. In the past year, she's stepped up her role, enrolled in an MBA and I look forward to seeing where she lands in five years.

What can mentors gain from the experience?

I think for many of us, after reaching the midway point in your career it can be easy to plateau or the momentum eases in terms of learning or career progression.

But interaction with this new wave of successful women lifts the motivation and inspires me to stretch further. With every mentee I've learnt something new and made friendships along the way.

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MENTEE - Holly Withington

Based: Ipswich, QLD

Role: Database and Modelling Geologist

A database and modelling geologist with New Hope Group since 2011, Holly stepped up to act in the additional role of senior exploration geologist in 2015, covering coal and mineral exploration and resource evaluation. During the AWRA e-Mentoring Program Holly also commenced post-graduate study and is progressing towards a Master of Business Administration (MBA).

Why did AWRA e-Mentoring appeal to you?

I had been looking for a fresh perspective from an external mentor for a long time. As I'm not based in Brisbane city, I can't physically meet with people all that often.

The AWRA e-Mentoring Program is designed to bridge connections for those who are remotely located. The materials provided as well as the Chronus software platform allowed me to connect with my mentor on a regular basis and fit around my work/life commitments.

How was it being mentored by Caoilin?

I couldn't have asked for a better mentor. Caoilin has had a strong influence in me finding direction and reaching goals over the past year. And even though the formal program is complete, she has kindly offered to provide mentoring assistance going forward.

What did you learn from the AWRA e-Mentoring Program?

The program taught me the importance of setting many achievable goals over a smaller timeframe. By recognising these milestones you can gauge your development and keep track of meeting each step in the path to success.

Having a mentoring partnership that's focused on your development allows you to progress very quickly. I learnt a lot about myself during the program, and have a refreshed view on where I want to take my future."

I've already recommended this program to a number of women in the industry from recent graduates to those with several years' experience and all have gained something from it.

Do you have any advice for would-be mentees?

Firstly, establish what you want out of the program, and then ask your mentor what else you may be able to achieve. The program format is designed to help you get the most out of it, but it's also flexible to allow you to tailor it to fit your needs.

Remember that your mentor has a wealth of experience behind them – ask questions, seek feedback and input. Also take advantage of the opportunities to participate in group cohorts with other mentees and provide feedback to the program co-ordinators to further develop the program.

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