When I was asked to write something about being a woman in engineering for International Women's Day, I was a little hesitant. After all, it's no big deal - it's just another day and I'm never one to try and draw attention to myself. Then I got to thinking about it; thinking about the board meetings and the training sessions I had been to as an engineer or a female middle order manager. Where were all the women at these sessions? I am still most often the only female in a room full of men or at best one of three women. And I thought a bit more about my experiences in the industry and in the workplace over time.

I have had my share of detractors over the years with comments made directly to me or accidentally via email. And this is from men and women who thought I was not experienced or knowledgeable enough about the industry. Was it because I was a female in engineering? Or was it because I was significantly younger than them? Probably a combination of both but I like to view these experiences as challenges and I prefer to believe I have 'grown' from such situations.

Gladly, I can say the negative experiences are far outweighed by the positive experiences. I have had a strong group of supporters who are willing to help when I ask for it, and mentor me formally and informally. Obviously it's important to have supportive superiors which I've been lucky enough to have throughout my career but I've also had the added bonus of being involved with IPWEAQ where I get to catch up with members on a regular basis and don't feel as if I'm treated any differently to any other member.

So for me, being a woman in engineering has had its challenges but it's been such a rewarding experience. I've had immense personal and professional growth during my time in this male dominated industry and I wouldn't think of swapping professions. So should we celebrate International Women's Day? Absolutely! Let's celebrate the ongoing achievements of women and of course all their supporters. Just don't ask me to stand up and make a speech!

DID YOU KNOW?

Worldwide, women continue to contribute to social, economic, cultural and political achievement. But progress towards gender parity has slowed in many places.

The World Economic Forum predicted in 2014 that it would take until 2095 to achieve global gender parity. Then one year later in 2015, they estimated that a slowdown in the already glacial pace of progress meant the gender gap wouldn't close entirely until 2133.

More than 700 female engineers are now registered with the Board of Professional Engineers of Queensland (BPEQ), a 30 per cent increase since this time last year.