2019 is flying by and before we know it, we’ll be half way through the year. In this first part of the year we have focused on how we can build and expand on current initiatives for our aspiring professionals to better connect them with the public works sector. One area where we have increased our presence is with universities across Queensland.

As an industry association, we recognise the importance of connecting educational institutions with our sector. Our sector is at risk in multiple ways: we have an ageing workforce which is much older than other sectors, fewer students are taking up engineering and our sector is relatively unknown or poorly understood by emerging generations. This gives further incentive to the expansion of our initiatives.

Our connections with universities are needs focussed and designed to demonstrate tangible results through collaborative partnerships benefitting students and the sector alike. Part of our engagement strategy will be to attend university student engagement events to promote public works engineering as an exciting, desirable and attractive career option to students. Where possible, we will invite councils and sector representatives to collaborate with us to showcase real-life opportunities, stories and challenges. Our first recent engagement was with the University of the Sunshine with other institutions soon to follow and we sincerely thank Craig Young and Michael Whereat from Sunshine Coast Council for exciting students with their stories of life engineering for public works.

The Futures Challenge continues this year and we invite universities to nominate their final engineering students to present their final year theses at our Annual Conference. This gives students an opportunity to interact first hand with our delegates, promote innovative ideas and build on their professional networks and presentation skills. Previous years have been highly successful and we’ve been impressed not just by the quality of the projects presented but by the exceptional presentation skills of the participating students.

In support of our new university engagement program, we are pleased to announce that we will offer complimentary memberships to full-time civil engineering students and related disciplines. By making a connection with students through a membership offering we hope to raise awareness of the sector, provide support for aspiring professionals through our publications and globally recognised Knowledge Centre and initiate industry connections much earlier in their careers. With the challenges in securing the best talent, waiting until post-graduation to introduce the sector as a career of choice will likely
be too late. Our community is a vibrant, exciting and supportive one which we want to share with students.

We are continuing with our high school engagement working again with the Dream Big project and Founder, Jessica Kahl. We have also engaged with our four Ambassadors to gather information and ideas on improving our involvement with emerging professionals, both from a membership perspective as well as delivery of specific initiatives to support this cohort in our sector.

At this year’s Annual Conference, we will be once again host a welcome function specifically for those under age 35 following on from the success of last year’s inaugural event. Last year, the U35 Welcome Lunch also provided an opportunity for our younger professionals to meet and engage with their Conference Buddy – a senior member who offered advice on the conference program and connected our U35s with their contacts in the sector.

We encourage recent graduates and members under age 35 to submit an abstract for delivery at any of our conferences. A complimentary registration is awarded for all successful submissions as we are keen to showcase upcoming talent.

There was a strong presence at the SWQ Branch Conference in Gatton earlier in the year with 191 delegates and we encourage employers to send their graduates and emerging professionals to these valuable learning and networking opportunities. We offer a 50% discount on registrations for members under age 35 attending our branch conferences.

NEW Student Membership Benefits

✓ Access to industry-specific content in our globally-recognised Knowledge Centre including papers and videos of presentations delivered at conferences and symposia.
✓ Access to our quarterly e-journal, Engineering for Public Works, valued for its technical and industry-relevant content.
✓ Receive regular newsletters with the latest happenings in our sector including jobs, placements and other opportunities for students and recent graduates.
✓ Special student offers to attend our conferences and networking opportunities.
✓ Join us for a special Meet & Greet at our annual conference specifically for members under age 28.
✓ Join us for various opportunities and initiatives in our university engagement program.

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