



SAP's Pledge for Parity



At SAP Australia Business Women's Network event in our North Sydney office held on the 7th March, John Ruthven, President and Managing Director, welcomed customers, partners, colleagues, friends and students as he made a #PledgeForParity for International Women's Day and encouraged attendees to make a pledge. SAP's recent FITT membership was promoted to the audience on the welcome screen and on flyers to encourage the mentoring opportunities and member benefits.

The unfortunate truth is that progress towards parity has slowed in our industry of late. In some areas, it has regressed. InnovationAus.com's James Riley captured this reality in a headline earlier this year – [The grim reality of women in tech.](#)



In November 2015, SAP Australia was awarded Employer of Choice for Gender Equality citation status and John accepted a role as a pay equity ambassador for the Workplace Gender Equality Agency.

John expressed his #PledgeForParity – he said, “I’m committed to continued evaluation and resource to support our diversity and inclusion programs at SAP ANZ, as we strive to attract and retain the very best talent. This is my #PledgeForParity on International Women’s Day.”

Our meeting was opened by Loreto Normanhurst students, Brittany and Georgia with the acknowledgement of country. The girls shared their stories through our CSR partnership with AIEF.



John outlined how SAP are challenging unconscious bias in our leadership training and recruitment processes, and approach to look for talent outside of those with traditional IT qualifications to bring increased levels of innovation to our customers.



Topics of the presentation and discussed included programs SAP has designed to remove barriers for the equal participation of women in our business and, more importantly, to put resources behind them to ensure we retain our talent. The first guest speaker – MindModelling’s Nesan Naidoo – shared his expertise in the field of gender intelligence. His personal story of growing up witnessing grave disparity in apartheid era South Africa, which led to his personal #PledgeForParity at a young age, was sobering. Nesan’s years of experience working with organisations such as the Gender Intelligence Group allowed him to provide us with the steps we should be taking in the corporate world to address disparity. Nesan took questions from the audience and enjoyed meeting students

from Auburn Girls High School who returned to SAP following a three day Work Inspiration workshop to inspire girls in a career in ICT.



Nesan's advice coupled meritocracy importance and quotas with a collective responsibility leadership style to build a gender intelligent company. It's not a function solely for HR, but for the collective executive team to lead.

Following Nesan we heard from Fabian Dattner, founding partner of Dattner Grant. A leadership expert who drives parity in practice, Fabian outlined the deep complexity she sees in the gender debate today. Women and men share the mission of change and women's contributions must be celebrated. Fabian said, "Leaders must possess a genuine intention to change – without this, the true commercial outcomes that a diverse and inclusive workforce brings will never be realised."



During the closing Q&A Segment, led by BWN Executive Sponsor Gina McNamara, the audience sought the advice of panellists on approaches to address parity.

