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Swinburne alumna honoured in hall of fame

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Swinburne University of Technology alumna, Denise Rejda, has been inducted into the World Council and Assembly on Cooperative Education (WACE) Hall of Fame for her participation in work-integrated learning programs and an outstanding career in the engineering industry.

The WACE Hall of Fame recognises exceptional individuals who have matured into their careers through work-integrated programs such as Swinburne's Industry Engaged Learning (IEL), which allow students to experience the real work environment while studying.

As part of a Bachelor of Engineering (Mechanical), Ms Rejda experienced IEL by undertaking an Industry Based Learning (IBL) placement at GM Holden prior to graduating in 1998.

Ms Rejda's IBL placement allowed her to become the first female to join the Body Structures Group at Holden and to break new ground in the male-dominated engineering industry. Later, she was the first female to work in engineering at Pivot Limited, the first female to manage Aftersales Readiness at Holden and the first woman to be recruited into an Asset and Site Management role at Mecrus Group.

"My IEL experience at Swinburne had a significant impact on my career, giving me an important starting point and the opportunity to break into a challenging industry," Ms Rejda said.

"I am now eager to take on students for IBL placements and final-year projects because I know how important IEL is and where it can take you.

"Students bring different perspectives to tackle our engineering problems and often develop novel solutions to help increase our efficiencies. As an employer, IEL is an opportunity to access the best of the best."

Ms Rejda now forms part of the Industry Advisory Committee for Swinburne's Faculty of Engineering and Industrial Sciences and is a valued alumna and industry partner.

Swinburne's University Professor of Industry Engaged Learning, Mike Clements, said that experiential learning is an important element of Swinburne's vision for the future.

"As educators, our role is to teach, inspire and develop tomorrow's leaders and Industry Engaged Learning is often the first step in this developmental trajectory.

"IEL helps our students gain confidence, knowledge and skills to be more productive and effective in the workplace. It prepares them for the many challenges of industry, whether it be adjusting to workplace culture or breaking new ground, as Ms Rejda has done."

Based at the University of Massachusetts in the United States, WACE is an international organisation dedicated to advocating work-integrated education programs within industry and educational institutions.

Read more about [IEL at Swinburne](#).

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