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Women's Day at the Gaiety

Zeehan, TAS - On Friday, March 8th, the WIMnet Tasmania Branch, in collaboration with the West Coast Heritage Centre and the Zeehan Neighbourhood Centre, came together to host a special International Women's Day event against the picturesque backdrop of the mining town of Zeehan. The event attracted 120 eager attendees.

Themed "Inspire Inclusion," the event welcomed a diverse array of participants, embodying the spirit of unity and empowerment. Liz Sayster of Rural Health skilfully guided the proceedings as the Master of Ceremonies.

One touching moment came from Makenzie Royle of Zeehan Primary School, who delivered a heartfelt Acknowledgement of Country, paying tribute to the traditional custodians of the land.

Highlighting the remarkable contributions of local women, guest speaker Chris Wilson, artist, adventurer and the first female to work in an underground mine on Tasmania's West Coast shared her story and insights. Chris (pictured

at right), recounted her journey in the male-dominated mining industry, shedding light on the challenges she faced. Chris' story, one of inspiration and resilience was reflective of the times, engaged the audience and drew much admiration.

Mrs. Mandy Leedham, Chair of West Coast Heritage Centre, convened a panel featuring local female figures: Harjort Kaur, Metallurgist at Catalyst Metals; Brooke Stevens, Doctor at North West Regional and Mersey Community Hospital; and Christa-Lee Johnstone, serving as an Area Maintenance Assistant at Hydro Tasmania. Each offered glimpses into their respective fields and their views on progress towards gender equality.

The event coincided with the launch of the 2024 Women in Resources and Manufacturing Awards, overseen by the Tasmanian Minerals, Manufacturing, and Energy Council (TMEC). Mr. Ray Mostogl, TMEC's Chief Executive Officer, officially announced the awards, aimed at highlighting the

accomplishments of women working in resources, mining, and manufacturing, and encouraging other women to pursue careers in these industries.

Notably, the event drew a diverse audience, including many male attendees, signalling a collective commitment to gender equality and inclusivity. Minister for Women, Jo Palmer, conveyed an encouraging video message to female attendees, commending the achievements of past award winners and finalists while expressing admiration for the nominees' dedication.

Throughout the morning, attendees were treated to a display of historical dress collections belonging to local West Coast residents Margaret Coulson and Janice Dunstan, accompanied by moving narratives. A sumptuous morning tea, catered by five local businesses, fostered networking opportunities.

Reflecting on the day's success, organisers expressed gratitude to dedicated volunteers, including Lyn O'Grady, Christeena Jones, and Kayla Ling, whose efforts ensured the smooth

execution of the event.

The event served as a reminder of both the progress made towards gender equality and the journey ahead, with a determination to continue championing inclusivity and empowerment.

Elizabeth Youd
Acting Chair
WIMNet Tasmania

