

# INFRASTRUCTURE WOMEN IN FOCUS



**In challenging times when everything seems so uncertain, it is important to maintain some routine and stability in our lives. Please find below the next profile from our regular Woman of Focus series. This time, we profile WIN member Hannah Bryce - plus Hannah shares her top tips for surviving and thriving in the COVID-19 lockdown.**

**Stay home and stay safe everyone!**

*WIN NZ has been established to increase the visibility of women in the infrastructure sector. Every month we profile a different woman working in a different part of the industry. If you would like to be profiled, or would like to nominate someone to be profiled, please answer the questions below and send your picture through to [Tara](#).*

**We'd like to introduce Hannah Bryce from GHD as our next Woman of Focus. Hannah is a member of the WIN Canterbury Network.**



**HANNAH BRYCE**  
SENIOR LEGAL COUNSEL - ASIA PACIFIC



**1. What company or organisation do you work for and what is your role there?**

I lead the APAC Legal Function at GHD, a global, employee-owned consultancy providing advisory services across the markets of water, energy and resources, environment, property and buildings, and transportation. My role is to provide legal advice and support to our businesses across Asia Pacific including New Zealand, the Pacific Islands, the Philippines, China and Chile. This includes providing advisory services, leading legal and commercial negotiations, managing claims and disputes and commercial upskilling and development opportunities for our business leaders.

**2. Tell us about your career background and how you got to this position/role?**

I have a Law Degree from Victoria University and a Science Degree in Physical Geography from the University of Canterbury. Deliberately steering away from pure law and "The Big Four", I chose to start my career with Opus (now WSP) in the research facilities as well as working on procurement of, and compliance with, R&D funding contracts. After the publication of my research into the impact on privacy torts from changing city design, I had an opportunity to move into a more "traditional" legal role – working in-house in the ANZ National Bank Shared Services Team. Working across a range of legal and contractual spaces and supporting a huge number of commercial teams, the role taught me the importance of making your advice useable, and understandable by your client. While working at ANZ, my client, Telecom (Spark), asked me to move across to their Commercial Legal Team. It was here I learnt how to stand my ground and how to help my clients understand our risk exposures, as well as how to apply a commercial lens to legal advice and consider the "big picture" strategy of

the organisation. The sales teams at Spark also taught me the power of eternal optimism and not to be afraid of exploring creative legal solutions. After a brief break to have time with my first child, I re-entered the engineering world with a Legal Counsel role at MWH (now Stantec). Working for the Asia Pacific General Counsel and with one other local solicitor, to support our businesses across New Zealand, Australia, Taiwan, Singapore, China and Fiji. Five years at Stantec building my industry knowledge and constantly challenging myself has given me a fantastic basis to lead the GHD APAC legal experience – a role which I accepted in late 2019.

**3. Tell us about a project you are currently working on and why it interests you?**

I am currently involved in the positioning and development of complex commercial relationships between several consultants, to develop a separate entity and deliver a hugely exciting and technically challenging project to a client with a relatively conservative risk appetite. This project is interesting because it requires me to commit to building a strong relationship with the third parties. It requires problem solving abilities to identify competing requirements and interests of the third parties to work together to develop a united team to negotiate with the client to achieve an outcome acceptable to all parties. I love being part of a team and finding a solution that is a true win/win. I also love the opportunity to provide true value and support to my technical businesses and allow them the confidence to deliver their client solutions in a considered and understood risk profile.

**4. What's the hardest job you've ever done and why?**

As cliché as it sounds, the hardest job I have ever done is the mum-gig. Learning to balance your time and your attention between your little people and your professional demands has challenged me and taught me the importance of efficiency and truly made me understand the saying "don't sweat the small stuff". Learning "how to mum" has challenged me to recognise my usually structured, high achieving, driver approach to situations is not always the best, and (surprisingly) has given me other strategies I can use in working with difficult clients or negotiation situations.

**5. Can you think of one example where your "diversity" has materially affected the outcome of a work situation or project, either positively or negatively?**

Often being one of the only "non-techies" in the room means I bring a new perspective to the engineering technical teams. By asking the "obvious" questions to try and understand the risk profile and our legal requirements, I often inadvertently provide an alternative way to consider the issue. By asking for basic technical explanations and understanding, we can end up exploring the intended delivery and the actual risk exposures that are material and applicable, rather than old-held perceptions or concerns that might no longer be relevant.

**6. And finally, what is your top tip for surviving and thriving in the COVID-19 lockdown?**

Uncertainty and constant change is hard, there is no two ways about it, but among the angst and worry of COVID-19 there are opportunities for us to flourish - as individuals, as organisations and as a country. For me, survival means controlling the controllable and acknowledging what is beyond control, continuing to check in on and connect with others (waving the #lawyerofthepeople flag as hard as I can), and constantly reminding myself that this is an adjustment period and less than perfect is perfectly normal. And how do we thrive? We think about why we are doing this and who we are doing it for and take that holistic energy into all of our future thought processes. We look for silver linings in everyday lockdown life that we might not have previously appreciated and take that ability to find the positive into all our hard circumstances. We learn new technological skills and multitasking hacks and take these new efficiencies and abilities to adapt with us as we continue on our journey. We keep asking people if they are OK, and we build a stronger team with our connections and communities. And then we remember all the lessons we have learnt during this period, and we take them proudly with us and use them on all our forward journeys.

Stay safe, stay home and be kind New Zealand.

#StayHomeNZ

To learn more about opportunities for a career with GHD click [here](#) or you can connect with Hannah on [LinkedIn](#).

