

# INFRASTRUCTURE WOMEN IN FOCUS



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 Isobel Oldfield from Stantec as our next Woman of Focus.**



**ISOBEL OLDFIELD**  
**ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENTIST**



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

I am an Environmental Scientist on the Urban Planning and Environment Services team at Stantec New Zealand, a global engineering consultancy firm. My work is predominantly focused on assessing water quality and undertaking contaminated land investigations. A lot of the work I do feeds into assessment of environmental effects to support consent applications.

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

I started working for Stantec (formerly MWH) seven years ago shortly after I graduated university. In that time, I have had the opportunity to travel and work across New Zealand and overseas. I have also had the support to pursue other passions, like my active role in the Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand (EIANZ) where I am currently the Vice-President (NZ) of the Australia and New Zealand Board. I have also been actively involved in promoting diversity within Stantec as a member of their Asia Pacific Diversity and Inclusion Committee and leading the Reach@Stantec diversity group across New Zealand.

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

I have been working on a contaminated land assessment for a major dredging project. This involved a desktop assessment of all the properties located adjacent to the river reaches covered by the project. The aim was to identify any potentially contaminating current or historic activities to determine potential impacts, including on proposed bank works. As part of the project, I also investigated a historic closed landfill located by the banks of the river. I worked with our engineers to determine the most appropriate option to maximise hydraulic gains while minimising the potential impact on the environment from disturbing this closed landfill. I have enjoyed finding out more about the landfill and how we managed waste historically (the landfill operated from 1920s – 1950s). This project has also given me the opportunity to work collaboratively to find the best solution to a difficult problem.

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

The hardest job I have done has also been one of my most enjoyable roles. In early 2016 I was fortunate enough to be given the opportunity to join a Department of Conservation long-tailed bat monitoring programme for six weeks in Fiordland National Park. It was an unforgettable experience where I spent time in a beautiful part of the world while interacting with one of our amazing native species. The only catch was the hours! We would wake up just before dawn so we could be out near the colony of bats we were tracking before sunrise. We would track the bat back to its roost and mark the tree before returning to our base for breakfast. After eating we went back out to set up a tree trap outside the roost hole. We would then make our way to the trap again after dinner and wait until night had fallen and all the bats had left the roost and been caught in our trap. We then had to weigh, measure and tag any previously untagged bats. This usually lasted long into the evening or until early the next morning, after which we'd awake at dawn to repeat the process. Even though I didn't get a lot of sleep during those six weeks I would love to get involved in that kind of work again.

#### 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?

I am fortunate to work for an organisation that is committed to promoting all forms of diversity. I have seen the diversity of our offices grow since I first started with Stantec in 2012. Being able to work collaboratively with a wide range of people helps bring new ideas to the table so we can get the best solution for a project. One of the advantages of working for a global company is the chance to connect and work with colleagues all over the world. I was lucky enough to take part in a training course held in our office in Pune, India. As part of the course I met an Indian colleague who leads the gender diversity group in our Pune office. We now regularly catch up to share ideas and help each other's diversity groups continue to be a success.

To learn more about opportunities for a career with Stantec click [here](#).  
Or, you can connect with Isobel on [LinkedIn](#).

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