

## INTREPID PATHWAYS—JOSIE FOURIE

### PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND

#### **Formal qualifications**

Bachelor of Engineering (Chemical) with Honours

#### **Current professional role & responsibilities**

I am the Well Testing Coordinator working in the Drilling and Completions function at Woodside. Well testing involves the installation of temporary production equipment on mobile drilling rigs so that new wells can be produced for short periods of time to enable data gathering, samples etc.

#### **Current employer**

Woodside Energy is Australia's largest listed oil and gas company and a leading global LNG producer.

#### **Overview of career in the industry**

I started in the industry in 1997, completing my final year research project at Esso Australia in Melbourne over a period of 9 months. In 1998 I commenced worked at Esso as a graduate engineer in well engineering and then onshore gas projects. In 2001 I relocating to Western Australia to work for Woodside Energy. I have worked at Woodside for 9 years in various roles including Well Engineering, Safety and Governance and Gas Development Forecasting and Strategy. I have been in my current role since 2006.

### EXPERIENCES WORKING IN THE RESOURCES SECTOR

#### **Was working in the resources industry what you expected it would be when you were studying/training?**

In many ways it is better. Since I completed my studies, there has been a resources 'boom', particularly in upstream oil and gas, which has resulted in significantly more investment and therefore more exciting projects to work on, than may have been available when I just graduated.

#### **If at any time you left the industry and came back, why did you leave, how long were you gone for and what motivated you to return?**

I have not left the industry although I did take maternity leave for 1 year. I have been able to return to a flexible role that enables me to work part time and from home.

**What is the single most risky step you have ever taken your career? Did you find it paid off? Is there anything you would have done differently?**

The biggest risk was taking a non-technical role in the HSE function for 18 months followed by another role outside of well engineering in gas strategy. It was difficult in the short term – I had to take a pay cut (lost some engineering allowances) and had to develop a reputation from scratch both times. In the HSE role, the manager I was going to work for moved to another role right before I started and the new manager changed my role, as well as making other significant organisational changes. I took on supervisory responsibilities and was probably not ready for this at the time. In the longer term it did pay off, as I made good contacts throughout the company and have a better understanding of the company in general, and the industry and regulatory issues. This knowledge has helped me since returning to a technical role. The main thing I would do differently would be to have a good mentor in place to provide support and advice throughout the transition.

**What would you say have been the most significant 'step changes' in your career pathway, and how have you adapted to these?**

The most significant step change was relocating to Perth and changing companies in 2001. It has been great to be part of Woodside's growth over the past 10 years. The other step change was to come back to my core technical role in Well Engineering after 3 years in non-technical roles. I have adapted to these changes by using existing networks and becoming better at learning through listening to others.

**Have you ever been in a supervisory or senior management position? If so, what are the pros and cons of being in such a role?**

I have had some supervisory experience. The positives are that it is good to coach and achieve success through others, good personal development opportunities. It can be difficult dealing with poor performance and having more administrative tasks (performance reviews, budgets etc).

**If you undertook any additional formal study whilst in the industry, did you find it useful in progressing your career?**

I have completed some additional study via University short courses. However I find learning via industry courses, conferences and networking to be more useful.

**What have you found most rewarding about the industry and what would you most like to get out of your career in resources in the future?**

Good investment into training and development and an exciting project portfolio to work on.

**WORKING LIFESTYLE****What are your current work/accommodation arrangements?**

Capital city based (with limited travel)

**Do you have a preference for any particular working arrangement? What have your experiences with different types of arrangements been like?**

I prefer my current arrangement because of family commitments. I have worked on an offshore rotation (rig) and also in city based roles that required regular offshore travel. This was suitable at the time as I did not have family commitments.

**What changes or compromises have you had to make in order to balance family or other responsibilities or interests with a career in the industry? Have you found the right balance for you?**

I am currently working part time in the same role I did before going on maternity leave. If I did not have family commitments I may have moved on to another role and be more aggressively pursuing career opportunities. I am willing to accept that my career won't progress as quickly at the moment as my family commitments are important and there will be other career opportunities in the future.

**Has your employer been open to negotiating changes to your role or roster to accommodate non-work interests or responsibilities?**

Yes, very much so. I have been able to retain the same position with part time and work from home capabilities that means I can manage my family responsibilities while still meeting the business' needs.

**BEING FEMALE IN THE INDUSTRY****What challenges have you experienced by virtue of working in an industry that is predominantly male? Do you feel you have had to adapt to 'fit' the industry?**

There are many challenges although there have been significant improvements in the time I have worked in the industry. In order to move past them you have to have resilience, be adaptable in work style, and be respectful and professional even if others are not. I have learned to work with many different types of people and adapt my work style accordingly. I have also learned not to take things personally and be more 'up-front' with others.

**Do you feel that you faced any obstacles or discrimination by virtue of your gender in your career and if so, how did you address these issues in order to continue to progress?**

There has been some minor negative discrimination at times, but I don't believe this has affected my career. I have let some issues pass by without reaction but chosen to take up certain issues if I feel they are significant. I went into engineering in the first place because I received a 'Women in Engineering' scholarship – so in fact benefited from positive discrimination at the very beginning of my career.