

# TLI Connect

## High Visibility of Women at Coles

In an industry traditionally dominated by men, a group of female managers at the Forest Lake Coles Distribution Centre (DC) are standing out for all the right reasons.



*Coles DC Manager, Jo Hammond and her team made quite an impact in Hi-Vis at the Queensland Trucking Association's International Women's Day Breakfast in 2014.*

DC manager, Jo Hammond, is thrilled to be bucking the trend with strong representation of women at all levels in the business. 'We have 600+ team members at the Coles Forest DC from 34 countries around the world. Using our Level One Management training program, we have been able to identify talented staff and progress them into leadership roles as supply chain professionals'. When asked what stood out about this group of women who applied to be part of the program, Jo states, 'They've all come through the ranks. They all started out as casuals, they've worked as team members, they've packed, they've loaded. They get it, they know it!'

Team managers Kirsty, Jennifer, Simone and Nicole are enthusiastic about their roles, despite the challenges. 'Currently, I have 280 staff reporting to me and a pick volume of 152,000 cartons that need to be out the door today,' says Kirsty who's been with Coles for 11 years. 'A lot of people just see a warehouse and think it's just trucks and boxes but we are so much more. When you work here you're coming into a family. My daughter is in Year 10 and she always tells her friends "You know all the groceries your mum and dad buy every week? My mum supplies all of it!"'

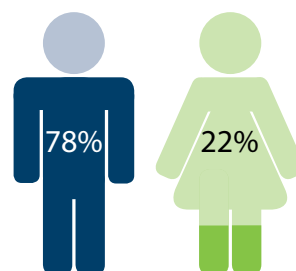
Jennifer and Simone started their journey to Coles as fruit pickers in New Zealand. 'We came from \$12.50 an hour. I would never have imagined earning \$30+ an hour without a trade and having an opportunity to earn a bonus on top of that! We have everyone from tradies to teachers to accountants out on that floor picking because they couldn't make that sort of money in their old jobs'.

It hasn't all been smooth sailing for this group. After 15 years at Coles, Nicole left briefly to support family members. 'I had a lot of issues trying to get back into this industry after leaving. I was knocked back saying I didn't have enough experience! As an experiment in my last lot of applications I shortened my name from Nicole to Nick and actually got quite a few call-backs for interviews. It proved to me that we have a long way to go as an industry'.

But these high performing women are positive about the opportunities for the next generation of female supply chain professionals. On reflecting, Jo says, 'Historically I think that's one of our challenges being women. I used to always say I was in the right place at the right time, it's taken me a long time to go, no, I was actually very good at what I did'.

And there's no shortage of answers when the group was asked how they'd promote working in transport and logistics. Nicole quips 'Its free gym membership! If you want to build in a fitness regime into your work, get a job in warehousing'. But the most ringing endorsement came from Jennifer who said 'when people ask, what do you do for a living, my husband says "Oh my gosh she loves her job, don't ask her about it she'll never stop talking!"'

The Transport and Logistics industry is often hidden as a career option, yet it plays a key role in getting us from A to B, it brings our food to our supermarkets, our technology to our households, our medicines to our hospitals, it is all around us. We are always looking to raise the profile of transport and logistics and there is no doubt that with more women like this team at Coles, the future visibility of industry is in very capable hands.



### Did you know?

Almost 80% of workers in the Australian transport and logistics sector are men.