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Big industry scholarship for small town mining student

Growing up in the small mining town of Mudgee in New South Wales, Kara Newbury had a dream to one day play a leading role in the minerals industry. That dream is a step closer thanks to a \$16,000 Women in Engineering Scholarship awarded by Thies Pty Ltd and the Minerals Council of Australia (MCA).

The Bachelor of Engineering (Mining) student who is studying at the University of New South Wales was selected for the award from 117 applicants – the highest number in the history of the scholarship.

“The opportunity to become an ambassador for women who wish to enter the mining industry is something I greatly appreciate,” Kara said.

“Growing up in central west New South Wales inspired me to pursue a mining career. I hope that by promoting the industry I can leave a similar impression on other women who haven’t had the opportunity to experience life in a mining town, and for those who have, to show them how beneficial a career so significant to Australia’s economy can be.”

In 2009, construction, mining and services company Thies, in partnership with the MCA, invited students from across the country to apply for the scholarship.

Now in its third year, the award is open to all female undergraduate engineering students studying in Australia and provides \$8000 per annum for the final two years of study. It aims to advance the role of women in the engineering industry.

Thies’ Executive General Manager for People, Safety and Environment Simone Wetzlar congratulated Kara and said that as part of the scholarship Kara would encourage more women to enter the profession.

“We were delighted to receive so many applications. It not only highlights the strength of female talent in the industry but also the importance of awards such as this in encouraging and supporting our next generation of engineers,” Ms Wetzlar said.

As part of the scholarship, Kara will undertake work experience at a Thies mine.

“I will complete my degree during the next two years and will undertake work placements during university breaks,” Kara said.

“Following this, I hope to be selected into a graduate position as a graduate mining engineer where I will gain experience in both operational and technical roles.”

Kara successfully transitioned from a public school in the country to university life in the city, taking a gap year and working three part-time jobs in order to save money for university.

“I have always been supported by others in the industry and they are extremely welcoming of women who have an interest in following a career in this sector,” she said.

“I want to work in the mining industry because it offers so much more than many other industries. The potential for international travel and employment is very appealing to me along with the chance to be able to work in places many can only dream of.”



MCA Assistant Director for Vocational Education and Training Rosemary Waghorne said the partnership between Thiess and MCA had identified the next generation of talented female engineers.

“We will encourage these young women to represent their profession and be ambassadors for the industry,” she said.

“We would like to congratulate Kara who has overcome many challenges to follow her passion. She has an inspiring story to tell and I hope that other young people will be motivated by what she has achieved.”

Thiess offers a range of engineering scholarships including the Thiess Engineering Scholarship in Memory of former Managing Director Roger Trundle who passed away in 2007. In December 2009, University of Queensland graduate Joseph Gattas, who completed his studies with the assistance of this scholarship, was awarded Australia’s most prestigious postgraduate award to study at one of the world’s leading universities.

The civil engineer was one of eight Australians to receive a General Sir John Monash Award for 2010, which recognises academic excellence, leadership and community service. Joseph will use his scholarship to pursue a Doctor of Philosophy in Engineering Science at the University of Oxford.

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For more than 75 years, Thiess has been helping to build our nation. The Snowy Mountains Scheme, Sydney Harbour Tunnel, Melbourne’s \$2.5 billion EastLink project and Brisbane’s Airport Link \$4.2 billion are just a few iconic projects to bear the Thiess brand. Likewise, Sydney’s newest rail link, the Epping to Chatswood Rail line. A commitment to delivering great outcomes for clients has allowed the company to expand throughout Australia and into New Zealand, Indonesia, India and most recently the Middle East.

Thiess has an annual turnover of more than \$6 billion and \$16.1 billion dollars of work in hand. With over 16,000 employees, it has become one of Australia’s leading and most trusted construction, mining and services companies.