

Women build up networks

GREG ELLIS

A NEW group called South Coast Women in Building and Construction (SCWIB) is running the first in a series of bi-monthly breakfast forums for 2015 on Wednesday.

Founded by Maxine Wiseman, of Woonona, SCWIB was formed to build industry specific educative forums, events and networking opportunities for women working in the local building, construction and allied trades.

Mrs Wiseman has more than 25 years' experience in the construction industry.

"I used to have my own design and construction business in residential building," she said.

"I was very much involved in the industry associations and found from there the need to build more of a network for women who work in the building industry. I was involved in some of the mentoring programs that were state based and so when I moved down here a few years ago I felt that there was a need for a network for women who work in all aspects of the building industry."

SCWIB started as a fairly low-key network in mid 2014 but is becoming more active in 2015.

Every two months this year a forum is being planned in different locations and at different times of the day to give encouragement to women in the construction industry.

Sue Wilson, of six-year-old business Lifestyle Aluminium,



Business at breakfast: Sue Wilson, of Lifestyle Aluminium, Virginia Wren, of Illawarra ITEC, Maxine Wiseman, of SCWIB, and Di Buttenshaw, of DiSigns.

Picture: GREG ELLIS

said she came both to network and gain knowledge from the information shared.

"I know in the Illawarra there are just so many small businesses with women," she said.

"I would have liked something like this years ago. It is good for networking, support and to benefit from other women's knowledge. And it is good for ongoing education and in keeping up with all the latest information and legislation."

Di Buttenshaw, of Fairy Meadow-based signage and graphic business DiSigns, said she had been attending for six months and did not want to miss a single event because she felt so comfortable in the SCWIB networking environment.

"It is nowhere near as confronting as walking into a seminar full of men," she said.

"It is not always just women who are there, there are blokes too, but it is a good mix."

Wednesday's forum is a breakfast being hosted by Illawarra ITEC and features a

guest speaker from NSW Fair Trading.

Mediation Services and Compliance Home Building Service director Lynelle Collins is speaking about major changes to home building laws.

Ms Collins has a trade in fitting and machining and a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering.

She worked in the civil, building and maintenance arena for about 15 years and will also provide some insight into the many challenges and successes she has encountered throughout her career.

Mrs Wiseman said anyone was welcome.

Illawarra ITEC business development manager Virginia Wren said the forum would be held in the newly refurbished training rooms at Coniston, and she will also provide an overview of services available to small businesses at Illawarra ITEC.

It starts at 7.30am and costs \$10.

Registrations can be emailed to maxine@scwib.com.au or on 4244 0130.