

## CHERYL FRANKIS

### ASSET MANAGER

*The first female worker at Electrix Taupo*

After moving from Zimbabwe to New Zealand, Cheryl Frankis found school boring and repetitive. Her parents allowed her to leave, on the condition that she would get a job.

A taster course with Infrastructure Industry Training Organisation Connexis (formerly ESITO), proved that Electricity Supply was what Cheryl wanted to be doing. After the course she sent her CV to many companies and following an interview, was offered an electrical apprenticeship with Electrix Taupo.

Cheryl found she had the advantage of greater attention to detail in a male dominated industry. Being female also taught her to be innovative with tasks and techniques to get the same outcome as the men, despite not having their strength or size. Being the only woman and the youngest onsite was a big change for the guys, who took bets on how long she would last, with the longest bet being 3 months. She was there for 7 years.

When Cheryl was working on the tools, a typical day would involve an early morning drive to site which could take up to an hour and a half depending on where she was in the country. Then health and safety aspects would be checked before the work would start - wiring panels, testing current transformers and voltage transformers. Cheryl's team took their jobs seriously, but had fun at the same time.

When Cheryl reached technician level she enrolled in a Diploma in Engineering Electro Technology. She wanted to embark on a new challenge and use her diploma, so she started as the Operations Engineer for The Lines Company Limited in Te Kuiti. Now Cheryl works as an Asset Manager as part of a Network Strategy team. She's involved in evaluating network risk, asset management planning and implementing strategies that cover optimum results for customers, life cycle of assets, mitigating and limiting risk, reviewing strategies and making sure health and safety practices and procedures are correct. She is also currently 15 months into a 24 month Masters in Business Administration.

Working for a network gives Cheryl so many different challenges and she's never doing the same thing day to day. Her favourite thing is to make a difference for the customer in



terms of the quality of supply they get from the network, challenging herself to be innovative and not stick to norms.

Cheryl's advice to anybody entering the industry is to not hold yourself back because of your gender, because the industry won't either. There are no limits to what you can do.