

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Bowens celebrates women in trade;  
announcing inaugural Margaret Hickey award**

The market leader in providing timber and building supplies, [Bowens](#), a fourth generation, family owned company has unveiled [The Margaret Hickey Award](#). To be announced at their annual [Women in Trade](#) event March 25, the award recognises female role models who are working towards advancing the interests of women in the construction industry.

The Margaret Hickey Award has been developed to celebrate women working in construction, while encouraging the next generation of women in trade. Named after the first ever woman employed with Bowens in 1913, the [Margaret Hickey Award](#) recognises a pioneer who aided in kickstarting female representation in Bowens. Margaret Hickey worked as an Office Manager during her tenure with Bowens.

Since then, Bowens has actively employed and supported women within the industry, recognising that in order to enable growth in the industry there needs to be more female representation. Construction offers key employment opportunities to new tradespeople - however, currently, only 2% of the national workforce are women<sup>1</sup>. Bowens is committed to the support of women in trade as they build an environment that encourages more women to pick up the tools.

The award will be presented to a tradeswoman who is a positive role model, having achieved great things in their trade career. Inspiring those in attendance, a panel event will explore issues impacting female participation, while educating listeners on the vast opportunities for females in trade. Speakers on the day include:

- **Monique Burns** – Master Builders Association of Victoria, Legal Manager and Associate Legal Counsel
- **Bardie Somerville**– at Cowan Build Construction, Fourth Year Carpentry Apprentice and Public Figure
- **Melissa Manson** – 2019 The Block Contestant and Contracts Administrator
- **Chelsea Symes** – Bowens, Internal Sales and ex Cabinet Maker
- **Vesna Brown** – Bowens, Head of Human Resources

**John Bowen, Managing Director of Bowens**, said “As a fourth generation, family run business, Bowens have created a welcoming environment that is inclusive to all. We have actively sought to attract and retain a vast representation of Australian talent across the business by encouraging and supporting participation and career growth.”

“Currently, Bowens employs 145 women across our 16 stores and HQ positions, but more can be done to encourage new talent to the industry. As a growing business, we recognise the labour shortage impacting our work and see it as a key opportunity to encourage females to pick up the tools and benefit from the current growth. By initiating this conversation, Bowens recognises an opportunity to continue to make construction a safe and welcoming career path for all Australians as we enable Australians to build better.”

**Bardie Somerville, a carpenter with Cowan Build Construction**, says: “In sharing my career via social media, I’m trying to inspire, connect with and support other women in the construction industry. I love receiving messages from followers encouraged to consider a career in trade, asking where to start and how to get going. Representation is the biggest driver of uptake and I’m thrilled brands like

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.vic.gov.au/victorias-women-construction-strategy>

Bowens continue to provide a voice to females in trade. Building is a creative and rewarding industry, full of opportunity for all Australians. I implore women across Australia to consider a career in trade.”

The Margaret Hickey Award nominations close Sunday the 13 March 2022, with shortlisted nominees and winners invited to the annual Bowens Women in Trade Event. The winner will also receive a feature on the cover of the Bowens Builders Bulletin Publication, lunch and mentoring session with one of Bowens’ ambassadors as well as a ticket, travel, and accommodation expenses to the HIA National Conference and HIA-CSR Australian Housing Awards (held from 21-23 April 2022).

To apply for the Margaret Hickey Award visit: <https://www.bowens.com.au/nominations-open-the-margaret-hickey-award/>

To register for the Women in Trade event visit:  
<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/women-in-trade-event-tickets-244788578227>

**Media interested in attending the event are encouraged to outreach via the details below.**

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### **About Bowens**

Bowens is a fourth-generation, family-owned Australian business supplying the largest variety of quality building supplies in the country for over 127 years. Bowens supports all trade customers with industry trained, experienced sales representatives helping with onsite advice and product support, ensuring no down time occurs and that materials arrive on time and in full. In addition to delivery and click + collect services, Bowens operates across 16 stores throughout Melbourne and regional Victoria. For more information visit [bowens.com.au](https://www.bowens.com.au).