



Top mentors for women in IT

Eight high-profile technology chiefs have committed to mentoring women in the field, signing up for the Women in IT Executive Mentoring Program set up by Dell Australia in 2005. Women comprise only 20.5 per cent of the IT workforce, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Worse, the proportion of women studying computer science is declining from an already low 25 per cent. IT chiefs at Woolworths, Ernst & Young, Westpac, Centrelink, Deloitte, the NSW Department of Education and the federal Department of Finance and Administration have agreed to tackle hurdles hindering women from becoming executives, including a lack of management experience, exclusion from informal networks and negative stereotyping. The program, facilitated by consultants Orijen, matches an executive with a female IT professional for coaching, profile development, access to cross-organisational networks and defining a career path. "As IT professionals, we have a role to play in encouraging women's participation, not just for the numbers but because there is a wealth of skills that we need in our changing environment," says Westpac chief information officer Simon McNamara.

AGNES KING

