

## **Science , Technology, Engineering , Maths ( STEM )**

One of the topics mentioned more than ten times at the recent Commission on the Status of Women ( CSW ) was the need to get more women into STEM fields.

Now I have some first-hand knowledge in this area. I was good at maths and science at High School and at an early age decided to do an Engineering degree. I studied at the University of Tasmania, in Australia from 1968 to 1972. There were 200 undergraduates there, at that time, with only one young lady. We did all we could to encourage women to study engineering. I worked as a professional engineer for sixteen years , in Australia , and never met a lady engineer in my field of work..

When my younger daughter did not know what to study at University, I suggested she do engineering. She was accepted at Glasgow University, got a scholarship with a large civil engineering firm, with a guaranteed job . She worked on a building site the first summer and the design office the second summer. She did not like either and did not complete her studies.

In Scandinavia, where gender equality has been pushed more and longer than any other countries, there are now less women in the STEM fields. Its very simple, women are more than capable of working in STEM, however they choose not to.

As a foot note, I was once in New Zealand for work, and noticed a lady mechanic in a Toyota dealership. She was the first one I has seen, this being the early 1980s. I asked the service manager how good she was, he said she was terrific as she did not break things on the cars like the lads did. So, women are more than capable of doing these jobs, but not many like dirt under their fingernails.

This will be the subject for the CSW next year, more moaning and groaning about how few women do STEM. Its easy to work out , they are just not so interested in there things. My own wife who was a physiotherapist once told me the most significant thing she did in her life was raise our two daughters, it was NOT her career as a physio.