



Evyenia Kontakos (Third Year Welding Apprentice at ASC).

### Women In Welding Profile: Evyenia Kontakos, Welding Apprentice, ASC

ASC third-year welding apprentice Evyenia Kontakos admits it was competitive to win a place in ASC's apprenticeship program but now knows why.

"We are given time to learn and all the facilities and tradespeople to learn from," said the 23-year-old. "As soon as I started, we spent time in the welding school and were then trusted to go out and work with tradespeople on the boats (submarines)."

Following school, Evyenia tried a few different jobs including working in a fish processing factory. She jumped at the chance to compete for an adult apprenticeship at ASC, earning a place in the welding program.

ASC welding is among the most demanding and quality tested in the country. Every weld on an Australian submarine must be of a very high quality, to ensure the safety of the submarine and crew in service.

In 2018, Evyenia was part of the team that re-furbished the MGR Hull Stiffening support jig on HMAS Collins – a steel structure that ensures the submarine retains its shape to support the hull as a large roof section is removed as part of deep maintenance.

"All the butt weld tests for the Collins stiffening jig came back showing no defects – so it was a great result for us," says Evyenia. "As for working within this trade area, I'm not the only woman in the fabrication team and there are no disadvantages working at ASC towards women at all."

According to ASC, Evyenia is highly skilled and reliable and was recently trained to weld the high tensile steel of submarine hulls. She passed with flying colours and will be putting those skills into practice later this year on a real submarine in deep maintenance.

Evyenia is one of 54 apprentices employed by ASC, with 34 based at their facilities in South Australia, and another 20 based in Western Australia.

#### Describe your job.

As a third year apprentice, I have worked on a wide range of projects from small workshop tasks to the pad weld of the 100-section hull cut. This was a major welding task, involving up to 15 welders working in three shifts around the clock using advanced equipment.

#### What inspired you to choose a career in welding?

What attracted me to this career is that I like hands-on work where there is a high level of skill required. It is also a versatile job and work opportunities are high in Australia and overseas.

#### Why do you think women should consider a career in welding?

Women with an interest in a hands-on trade should consider this career path, as it is a challenging and rewarding career.

#### Do you have any advice for women considering a career in welding?

Concentrate on learning the trade as well as you can.

#### Have you found working in a traditionally male-dominated industry difficult?

As a woman in an industry with a high representation of males, I have experienced little or no difficulties in fitting in or working in a team.

#### What is the most interesting project you've worked on?

The most interesting project I have worked on was the simulated hull sections, which were fabricated and welded. All aspects of this project were new, and I learned a variety of skills in boilermaking and fabricating.

#### Who has inspired you professionally?

During my first stages of study at Noarlunga TAFE SA, my two lecturers were my biggest inspiration to continue this career path. My lecturers have worked all over the world, in so many different and extreme work places all related to fabrication and welding, but they were very committed to the success of their students and passing down their knowledge.

#### What do you believe is the biggest challenge for the welding industry at the moment?

The biggest challenge for the welding industry in South Australia is growing the number of skilled tradespeople to meet the needs of several exciting shipbuilding projects in the years to come.

#### What do you believe is the biggest opportunity for the welding industry at the moment?

The biggest opportunity as a welder or boilermaker is the sheer volume of upcoming naval work in South Australia.