



PETER WALLIS

**BHP mining engineer
Nyah Teiotu**

Nyah digs deep to help Indigenous women

MACKENZIE SCOTT

Mining engineer Nyah Teiotu wants to see more young Indigenous women like her getting into the field by studying STEM subjects at school and university.

Currently based at a mine at Blackwater, in central Queensland, for resources giant BHP, Ms Teiotu is helping to mentor and train young women wishing to enter the profession.

The Wemba Wemba woman, who hails from Derby in the Kimberley, is in a unique position to do so, being the first female Indigenous mining engineer to have worked at the company.



"I've worked in mining for about eight years now. I know that, in mining, women make up only 16 per cent of the workforce, and I'm pretty sure construction is lower," Ms Teiotu, 33, said.

"One of the reasons was ... we just don't have enough girls coming through the pipeline. But the industry has changed for the better. It's a more inclusive work environment, for sure."

First securing a degree in civil

engineering from the University of Queensland in 2011, Ms Teiotu decided to further her education and become a mine engineer with the help of a AIEF-BHP tertiary scholarship. She completed her studies in 2016, giving birth to her daughter in her final year.

Since then, she has taken a hands-on role organising the AIEF-BHP tertiary workshop to give back to the next generation of Indigenous students. Ms Teiotu's team is 30 per cent female, which is a lot higher than in other companies in the same field.

She is also passionate about helping young Indigenous children learn the benefits of STEM subjects (science, technology,

engineering and maths) and has created her own range of early-childhood engineering toys to teach kids about civil works.

Called STEM Kids Stars, the toys features wooden male and female workers of colour and is designed to improve rates of female engagement in STEM subjects.

"Through primary school and high school, girls just aren't as interested in the subjects that you need to study go into engineering, such as physics or calculus maths," Ms Teiotu said.

"In an inclusion and diversity committee at BHP, it was pointed out to me that we might need to go even younger to get girls interested in STEM."