

# Narelle Palmer

## Regional Manager

## Programmed Energy & Resources

Being a modern day, working woman, has not come without its challenges. Throw in working in a male dominated industry and the challenges can be amplified even further. My journey has not been linear – it's involved stepping forward, back, sideways and changing businesses to suit my burning desire to succeed. Succeed at what – sometimes I am still not even sure. One thing that I am passionate about though; is leading people and sharing my story to provide other women with the same opportunity I once was.

Having started my journey as an admin trainee in the electrical industry; I quickly found out how curious I was. I wanted to learn “all of the stuff” – even the things that I didn't need to know, because they would make me better. I was pivotal to transforming our small service team into one with contracted works, long term customer benefits and great cash flow. We grew our team from 5 headcount, to a fleet of 40 vehicles. I was pretty much running the show by the time I was 22. The business enjoyed that – so much, that they let me sit in my box to rot in the corner and do all of my good work there! It would hurt them too much if I were to do something else. I volunteered to become an apprentice, thinking that was the only possible pathway to be a Project Manager (which looked like fun) – apparently a 7-year plan was also not on the cards for me.

Needless to say, my journey continued outside of that company...where I even had a General Manager once say to me “you will never be a Project Manager if you aren't an electrician, and you will need to work twice as hard to prove yourself.” What? Sorry? That was highly motivating! I already had proven myself, twice over – running rings around many I worked with. All was needed was someone to believe in me. That came at a time of transformation at Programmed. The head of the Victorian PET business at the time (Keith Elliott), phoned me and offered me the chance to break down the barriers. I project managed, I delivered rollouts to Tier 1 customers, where I was often the only female in the room. We supported a large scale service and strategic realignment project for the National Service team and I earned a seat at the ELT; where the team provided me with overwhelming support – I'd like to think, because I knew what I was doing and was good at my job; I'd be one of two women at the table – all whilst having 3 children to support and a household to run.

I now sit as a Regional Manager for our Industrial Maintenance team, where I'm leading large portfolios with little to know female representation. Joining the team, was another opportunity provided by Daniel Zammitt – where he recognised the value of what I might be able to bring to the

table; again, another opportunity. My goal will be to become a member of the ELT in this business too; when the time is right.

In 2026 I will give perspective, alternate views, compassion and soft skills to foster strong relationships. When opportunities present themselves for women; I will continue to advocate for their roles – even when they seem non-traditional or unconventional. I want to be someone that provides that “one opportunity” to another woman that can shape a brighter future for their career, through showcasing their skills in ways they may not have been able to otherwise!