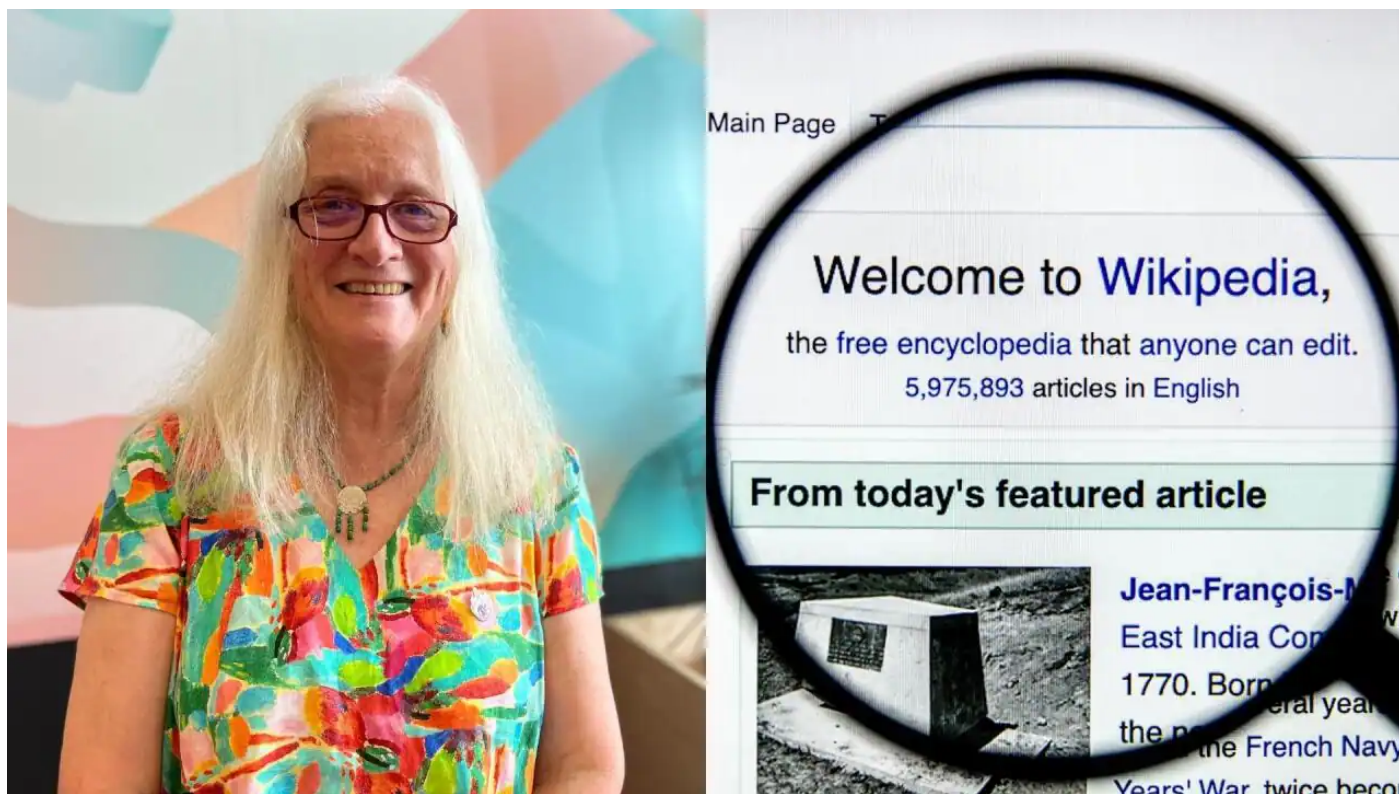


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Annie Reynolds has written 427 profiles of women on Wikipedia since 2017. Source: Supplied, Getty

Australia

This Australian has written 400 profiles of deserving women on Wikipedia. Here's why she's 'obsessed'

She's spent five years and more than 1000 hours writing about 427 women. Annie Reynolds says there's nothing she would rather do with her time than build profiles about Australian women on Wikipedia.

 5 min read

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By Rayane Tamer

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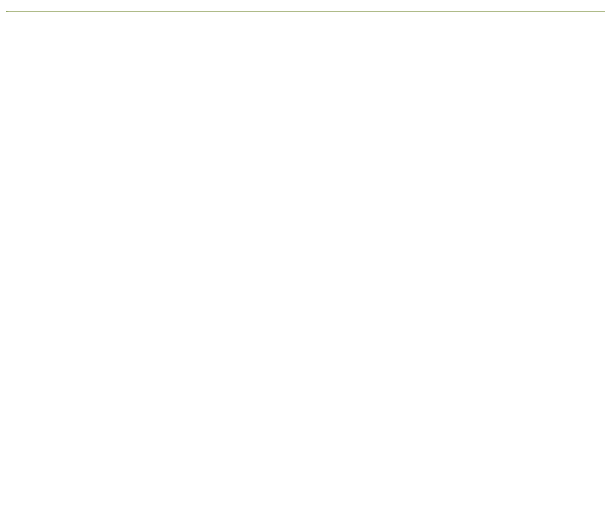
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Women's Rights

Annie Reynolds is writing the wrongs of a stark statistic concerning the world's largest online encyclopedia.

Her obsession with Wikipedia started at the Women's Write Wiki group at the Women's Library in Newtown, in Sydney's inner west.

There, she came to terms with two truths: she had a lot of free time and there just aren't enough women recognised for their achievements.



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Free online encyclopedia Wikipedia boasts 10 billion views in one month alone, it's the home to more than 6 million articles and two edits are made to the site every second all around the world.

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On it, you can find two million biographies of anyone and everyone with a notable accolade or two - but only 19 per cent of them are of women.

So, for the past five years, Annie has made it her hobby to chip away at changing that statistic. In fact, she says she is "obsessed" with writing Wikipedia profiles.

Since 2017, she's spent more than 1000 hours writing 427 profiles of notable women. Around 362 of them are Australian, and the rest of them are mostly New Zealanders.

"There is so much to do. There are so many deserving women who need profiles ... there aren't enough hours in the day to make as much difference as I'd like to make," she told SBS News.

From women on the Queen's Birthday Honours List, esteemed writers and accomplished scientists to Olympic athletes, Annie has had her hands full trying to give women their due online.

MaryAnn Bin-Sallik, the first First Nations person to receive a doctorate from Harvard University, Queensland Greens MP Amy MacMahon, and World War Two nurse Zelma Huppertz, are among the few distinguished women she's written about on Wikipedia.

Asked why she spends her time writing articles for free, Annie's response was frank: "Because I can. Would I be knitting? How would I fill my time?"

And at 68 years of age, she has no plans to slow.

"I don't think my tenure will be done until I can't see to write or something prevents me from tapping or talking," she said.

She's since joined an initiative called Women in Red, a global movement aimed at closing the gender gap on Wikipedia. Names written on the site with no articles attached are coloured red. Women in Red's mission is to change as many red names to blue as possible.

Annie said she's always cognisant there is much more work to do, describing herself as a "new kid on the block" compared to the likes of British physicist Jess Wade, who's written more than 1,750 Wikipedia profiles of female scientists.

"My 427 is a minor achievement compared with people like Jess Wade," she said.

Now, as well as writing and editing profiles, Annie helps young women who have witnessed the "red name" problem to push the movement forward.





Annie Reynolds (second from left) is part of a larger project aimed at closing the gender gap on Wikipedia, attending edit-a-thons to encourage young volunteers to continue the movement. Source: Supplied / RockySu

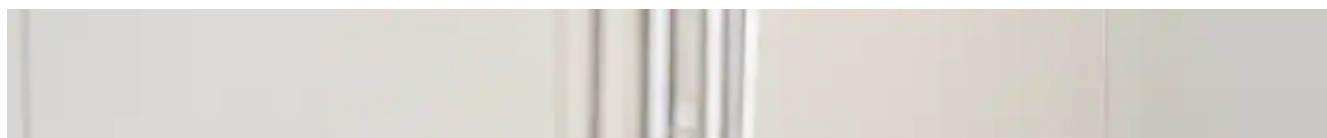
Women in STEM recognise women in STEM

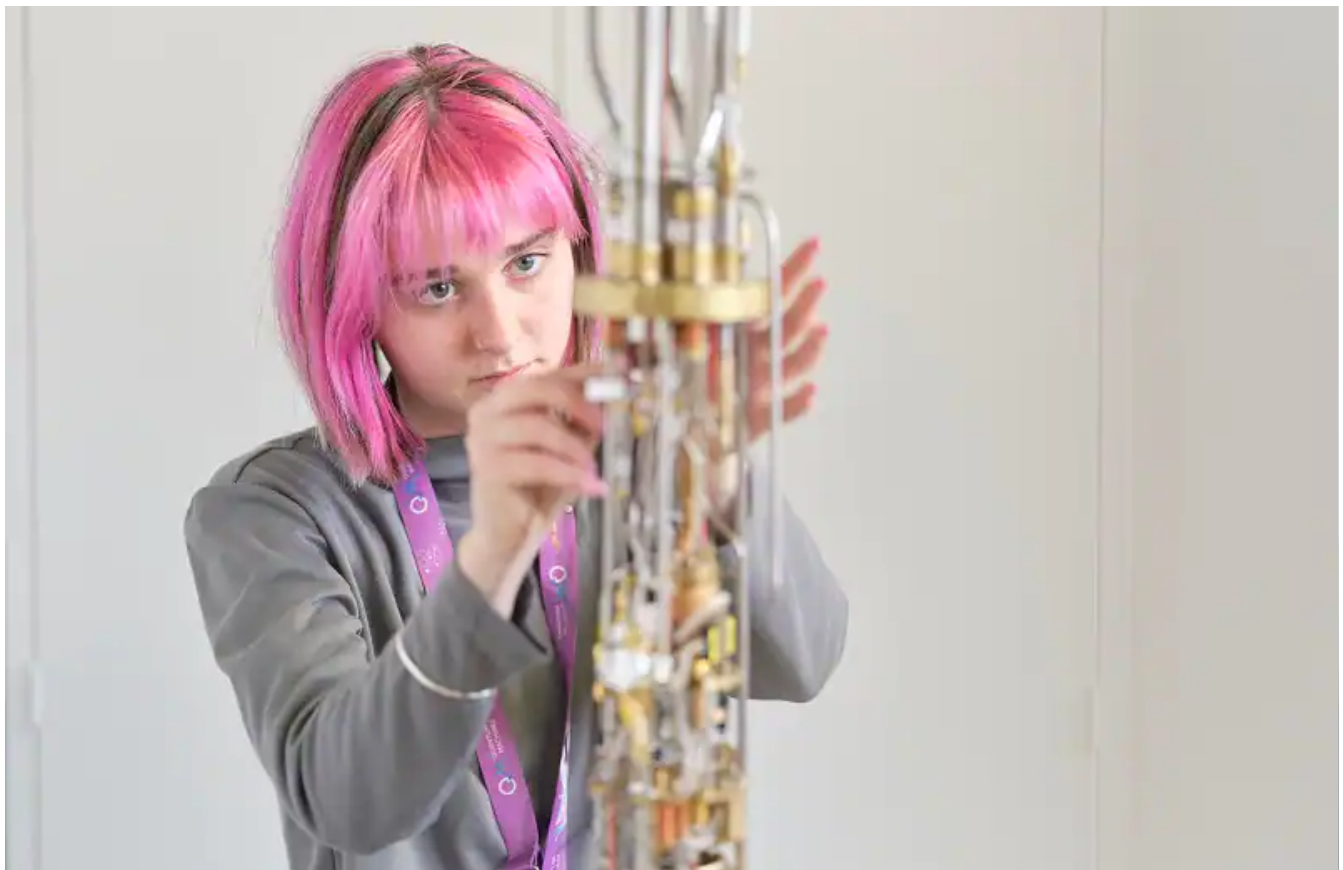
Last week, more than two dozen volunteers gathered in a room in Sydney to participate in a Wikipedia 'edit-a-thon', aimed at writing profiles of women in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) who deserve their due.

In two hours, the group - mostly women - created nine new articles about women and edited 22 existing profiles to add more information about their accolades.

It's the third annual edit-a-thon, organised by Diraq, a quantum computing start-up aimed at elevating the status of women in STEM.

One of the organisers and quantum engineer, Alexandra Dickie, said the event was hosted by women in STEM to applaud the ignored women in their industry that deserve to be remembered.





x Source: Supplied / UNSW / Richard Freeman

"There's so much innovation and there are so many changes that happen in our society due to things in this field that get created and you're excluding 50 per cent of the population from that," she said.

One of the profiles Alexandra wrote as part of the edit-a-thon was about [Sue Fletcher](#), who won the Office of the Order of Australia in 2021 for her distinguished work in neurological science.

Other STEM professionals who are now featured on Wikipedia include biomedical engineer [Anne Simmons](#) who was awarded the Order of Australia medal in 2013, ocean professor [Zanna Chase](#) and African-American software engineer [Jakita Thomas](#).





Volunteers gathered at a co-working space in Sydney, joined by Wikipedia experts like Annie, to write and edit articles of women in STEM. Source: Supplied

Annie attended the edit-a-thon to help new writers learn the ins and outs of Wikipedia, with the hopes they continue the legacy of propelling esteemed women forward online.

"It's a terrific effort ... I'll be looking out for them and seeing how I can help them and guide them."

Alexandra said their annual edit-a-thon encourages a sense of "camaraderie" that helps women stay in a field that can feel isolating.

According to the federal government's 2021 STEM Equity Monitor, women made up only 28 per cent of the STEM workforce in 2020. In 2019, 31 per cent of men were enrolled to study STEM-related degrees - that's more than triple the amount of women in the same year.

"[The edit-a-thon] is about attracting women into this field and making sure that they stay and that they feel they feel celebrated," she said.

"Because we introduce all these young women to Wikipedia, maybe they'll be inspired in their own time that you know when they see a notable person, and they go, Oh, actually, I know how to write Wikipedia, but also maybe I can just quickly write one up and submit it now."

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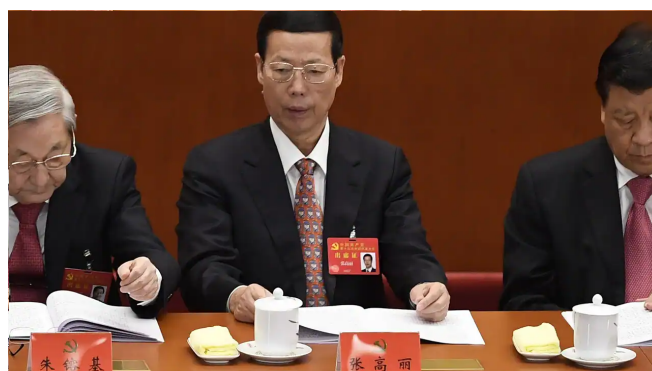
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