



The capacity attendance at the Mitsubishi Electric event.

Inclusion and Diversity gathers momentum

While much of the narrative in recent years has focused on construction being a male dominated, non-inclusive industry, recent events point to an improved situation. Of course there is still a great deal to do but it is encouraging to see that the emphasis has changed from one of negativity to proactive leadership.



This was very much in evidence at the Women in HEVAC event held recently by Mitsubishi Electric in partnership with Tech Refrigeration. The impressive speaker line-up included Colleen Keyworth, Director, Women in HVACR on a link from the US; Ruth Gill, Technical Engineer, Crystal Air; Laura McMahon, Director, Lawler Sustainability and CIBSE Ireland; Jacinta Caden, Vice-President Technical Sales, USystems; and Valerie O’Keeffe, CEO, ClarityVP.

While they each made brief presentations to the capacity attendance, the real benefit resulted from the interaction between the panel members themselves, and how they encouraged the attendees to engage and participate in a broader discussion forum.

Equally refreshing was the positive nature of the lively conversations that ensued. While challenging issues were highlighted, the tone was all about meeting them head on, acknowledging the significant gains that have been made, and using them to create even greater momentum for further change.

This message was mirrored a few days later at Architecture & Building Expo, the show held in tandem with the RIAI Annual Conference. Here the panel members comprised Carole Pollard, RIAI, Laura McMahon, CIBSE Ireland and Ishani Banerjee, Engineers Ireland. Moderator was Dr Kevin Kelly, Chair of the CIBSE Inclusivity & Diversity Committee with Michael Curran, Chair, CIBSE Ireland, making the introductions and summation.

It is apparent from both events that there are serious challenges facing the sector with regard to recruitment because of anxiety surrounding inclusion and diversity. However, they also highlighted the positive changes that have already taken place, and the determination of more and more people to meet these challenges and bring about change. ■

Left: At the Inclusion & Diversity event were Dr Kevin Kelly, Carole Pollard, Laura McMahon, Ishani Banerjee and Michael Curran.