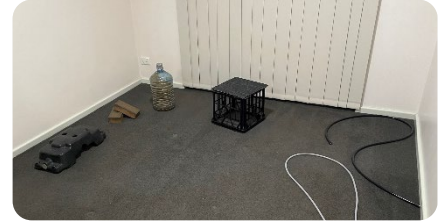


“A day in the life of a Graduate Engineer”

by Vanessa Senna

4:50 am – WORKOUT

I begin each day with exercise using makeshift "gym" equipment that I have collected from the site, such as bricks, concrete fence feet, sand to make weights and more. Then I stretch and meditate for a few minutes before having breakfast. For breakfast, I either have a smoothie or yoghurt and granola. Sometimes on fly-out days, I wake up earlier and treat myself to a full-cooked breakfast.



7:00 am – PRE-START

The daily pre-start meeting kicks off at 7 am. The crew is briefed on allocated tasks, identifies major hazards and subsequent controls that will be in place, and finally discuss the works planned for the day. The supervisor attends and provides support on any general site notices. Then the crew raises any work or housekeeping issues before starting our workday.

For a bit of fun, we finish off every pre-start with the Project Manager reading each team member's star sign from the local newspaper that he buys every day! After a good laugh, we can start a safe day on site.

7:30 am – COST TRACKING

My first task for the day is updating the cost tracking and receipting the invoices received from the previous date. My second task is to prepare the weekly report, send it to my managers for review, and then forward it to the client before the meeting. The weekly report is submitted to the client to inform them of progress, any issues, working conditions, health and safety, personnel, and plant on site.



8:30 am – COFFEE TIME

This is the most important time of the day (-: Every day a team member from the site office takes their turn to buy coffee from a different coffee shop. It's mandatory! Even if the team member is not on-site, they get their coffee delivered to your desk. Everyone knows they need to pay forward when it's their turn!

This is also the time I water my little plant. I love spicy food and any type of chilli, so my colleague gave me a cayenne chilli plant to grow on-site during the project. We are excited to see how big it will be by the end of the project. Hopefully big enough to make chilli curry for everyone!



9 am – INTERNAL MEETING

We have a weekly informal meeting with all the engineers and supervisors to discuss the plan for the week ahead. We cover any issues and milestones to accomplish during this swing and for the next one.

10 am – CLIENT MEETING

Now is the time for our weekly client meeting to review works commencing, project progress and completion updates, and where we raise any potential hurdles that may impact project progress. This is where we also discuss any technical queries. I like these meetings as it helps me understand how variations and cost management work, and the impact on overall project delivery.

11 am – PROCUREMENT

There are always items that need procuring on-site whether that be scope-related items such as drainage pipes, concrete, or small consumable items such as tools. This task often involves looking at design drawings to calculate the quantities and referring to standard documents to obtain the material specification/grade. Then, we need to contact suppliers for pricing and raise a purchase order for the expense. Coordination and follow-up emails are often required to get the materials delivered to the site when required.

12:30 pm – LUNCH

Time for some more food. I usually just sit down and eat lunch in the crib room and have a chat with a few of my colleagues. On Sundays, we usually have a later start and have time to make a BBQ brekky with the crew on-site. It is a wonderful time to connect with the team and strengthen the relationship between us. Or sometimes we just go to a pub for lunch.



As good engineers, we all should know how to use the basics of excel. To practice this, we have created an excel spreadsheet with all Pubs in Kalgoorlie. The team's goal is to visit all those pubs and try and rate their Chicken Parmi. That is why I need to work out every day :)

1:00 pm – SITE WALKOVER

I try to get out of the office every hour to walk around the site. This helps me keep on top of the progress and gives me a chance to take photos for the weekly report and keep progress photos of the work.

During this time, quality checks can also be conducted to inspect that the work is constructed as per the design drawings and specifications. Some days I will have to conduct task inspections which include checking existing and potential hazards and allows me to listen to the concerns of workers and supervisors.





2:00 pm – GRADUATE PROGRAM

Since I have been part of the graduate program from Engineers Australia, we have some webinars and training sessions to attend a few days per month. Usually, I like to take this time to keep up with my e-Learning and assessments from the program and self-study reports.

4:00 pm – FOLLOW UP EMAILS

I normally take this time to follow up on any emails received throughout the day.

5:00 pm – HOME TIME



Done for the day! We leave the site and head back to our accommodation around 5:15 pm. Most nights I either go to kickboxing classes or do some form of exercise. Occasionally, you will see me at the pub for a drink and playing pool with some of the crew.



7:00 pm – DINNER

I cook my dinner at my accommodation, but I must confess that most of the time I am lazy and just make popcorn (I love popcorn) or I invite myself to go to my boss's house to have a free dinner there. They cook way better than me.



8:00 pm – WIND DOWN

The last hour of the day is “me-time” where I will wind down by watching TV, drawing, or chatting with friends and family back home.

The team I have been working with has been immensely helpful. I have the pleasure of working with an excellent project manager and project engineer, supervisor, and subcontractors who have been looking out for me since day one. I can say that I am learning a lot from them.