

Women at work

Skills shortage – is there a more used phrase in the mining industry? No, we don't think so either. But it's a reality, which is why the Australian Mines and Metals Association wants more women in mining. By **Alison Middleton**

As the skills and labour deficit continues to impact on Australia's thriving mining and resources sector, employers and industry groups are turning to Australia's female population to bridge the gap with the launch of a national mentoring initiative.

AMMA is leading a drive to encourage more women into the resources sector, with strategies and initiatives underway to boost female participation to 20% by 2020.

In response to the skills shortage, AMMA has launched the Australian Women in Resources Alliance (AWRA), a partly federal government-funded initiative dedicated to the attraction and retention of women in the resources industry.

Industry representative bodies including the Minerals Council of Australia and the Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association have come on board. Mining, oil and gas, construction and engineering employers are supporting the alliance's drive to create organisational change and ultimately help close the skills gap.

More than 200 mentors will assist, support and advise women in their career path during the AWRA e-mentoring program, which is due to be launched in September.

AMMA executive director of industry

and AWRA spokesperson Minna Knight said practical tools were being designed to help employers break down cultural and operational barriers to women employees.

"We created AWRA in conjunction with the federal government," she said. "It's a program that will go on indefinitely and it aims to increase the pool of talent in terms of women that our resources clients can recruit from."

"AWRA will facilitate the increased attraction and retention of women in the resource and allied construction sectors and provide employers with a major competitive advantage – strength through workforce diversity.

"Women have an essential role to play in the mining boom and as an industry, we need to effectively attract and retain them.

"One of the proven tools to either attracting women in the industry or keeping women in the industry is mentoring. One of the key initiatives that AWRA will be rolling out is a national mentoring programme.

"We'll be calling for women and men to put their hands up to mentor women, with the objective of either attracting them into the industry and retaining them, providing them with advice and assistance about their career trajectory, and progress and engagement.



The Australian Women in Resources Alliance hopes a new mentoring initiative will help attract and retain women in the resources industry.

"It will consist of direct places. There will be opportunities for quite a few hundred direct mentoring relationships, which AMMA will facilitate. Our initial goal is around 210, but the sky is the limit. If employers jump on board with it, we could be looking at thousands of women being mentored."

Access to child care, a lack of confidence and job advertisements not reaching a female target audience are all issues AWRA is hoping to tackle.

A key objective is not only raising the representation of females in resources employment, but continuing an upward trend.



alison.middleton@aspermont.com

END TO END HEAVY DUTY AUTO ELECTRICAL

If it's big, loud, expensive and operates in the harshest environments imaginable then PJL Diesel Electric have the expert advice and heavy duty auto electrical equipment you need to keep it running safely and reliably 24/7.

STARTERS, ALTERNATORS, DC MOTORS & PARTS

HEAVY DUTY LIGHTING

SAFETY EQUIPMENT

WIRING AND ACCESSORIES

NATIONWIDE SUPPLY & SUPPORT

For more information please call PJL Diesel Electric on **1800 814 332** or get online at www.pjldiesel.com.au to find out more.

SYDNEY BRANCH
NOW OPEN!