Chapter 1:
A summary of strategies

The mining, construction and utilities industries have historically been perceived to be a 'man's domain' and the representation of women has remained low across all levels. In Australia, organisations in these industries have struggled to not only attract women to consider and apply for jobs, they have also had challenges in retaining the women who have chosen to work with them.

However, the impetus for change is growing and there is now a focus on increasing the representation of women in these industries. The drivers for this change are multi-faceted and span commercial and business benefits, changing demographics and a cultural shift to social equality.

The organisations that embrace these changes, and actively develop and implement strategies to recruit and retain women, will reap the economic benefits of gender diversity and equality and be the most competitive and sustainable in the long term.

Women are underrepresented in these industries

Women represent almost 46% of all employees in Australia[1] and in many sectors there is a growing pipeline of women in leadership roles. The Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA), formally known as the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency (EOWA), reports that in 2011 over 33% of managers in reporting organisations were women.[2] Industries that have the greatest representation of women at all levels include health care, education and training and retail trade.[3]

In industries described as 'male-dominated', including mining, construction and utilities, the picture is very different. Not only are women underrepresented in leadership and managerial roles, they are also underrepresented across all levels of the organisation. This underrepresentation is particularly evident in roles that have been described as 'non-traditional' ie roles that are operational, technical and in the trades.

Women's representation in Australia

- **All industries:**   45.7% of employees   33% of managers
- **Construction:**   11.8% of employees   16% of managers
- **Mining:**   15.1% of employees   13% of managers
- **Utilities**:   22.6% of employees   16% of managers.[4]

To achieve substantive gender equality and the resulting economic benefits, Australia needs to increase the representation of women and to strengthen the pipeline of female talent within all industries, including those that are currently male-dominated.

The benefits for increasing representation in Australia are clear

- **Economically it is a worthwhile investment.** According to Goldman Sachs, narrowing the gap between male and female employment rates in Australia could potentially boost GDP by 11%.[5] In addition, the Grattan Institute reports that an increase in female labour force participation rate from Australia's current level to that of Canada (62.4%) would increase Australia's economic growth in the next decade by $25 billion.[6]

- The current composition of the workforce means that women may be employed in roles where their productivity is not maximised. If the gender productivity gap was minimised by increasing the number of women in leadership positions, the level of **economic activity** in Australia could be boosted by 20%.[7]

- Economic incentives such as these would also have **flow-on effects** for the wider community. It would for example, assist in addressing the problem of pension sustainability by lifting the longer term levels of retirement incomes, thereby reducing the dependency ratio, lifting household savings rates and increasing tax received by the government.[8]

The benefits for the organisation are also clear

There is a skills shortage in Australia and 45% of Australian employers are having difficulty filling key positions in their organisations. Employers have the most difficulty finding skilled trades people, engineers and sales representatives, all of which have remained at the top of the local skills shortage list since 2006. With little movement in these figures in the last five years, Australia ranks fourth in the world in talent shortages, well above the global average.[9]

Attracting and retaining underutilised sources of talent, including women, is key to addressing this skills shortage. This is particularly true in industries that have relied traditionally and historically on men to fill roles, including the mining, construction and utilities industries.

A critical mass of women at all levels of the organisation, including senior management, has also been linked to higher organisational performance:

- Engagement has been convincingly linked with productivity, profitability, employee commitment and retention. According to cumulative Gallup Workplace Studies, organisations with inclusive cultures do better on several indicators than those that are not inclusive, **with 39% higher customer satisfaction, 22% greater productivity and 27% higher profitability.**[10]

- In comparing the top 25 percent of companies in terms of share of women in executive committees against companies that have all-male executive committees, McKinsey found that the former companies exceeded the latter **by 41% in return on equity and by 56% in operating results.**[11]

- Catalyst reported that Fortune 500 companies with 3 or more women on the board gain a **significant performance advantage** over those with the fewest women. These advantages include an increase of 73% return on sales, 83% return on equity and 112% return on invested capital.[12]

We need to address the current barriers for women

Feedback from interviews and roundtables with employees in the mining, construction and utilities industries highlighted that a number of barriers, some of which are historical and cumulative, must be addressed to increase women's representation. These barriers include:

- **Lack of family role models:** From the very start, women are not exposed to career paths in the mining, construction and utilities industries as early or as often as men. Many men learn about potential roles in these industries from their fathers or other male relatives. However, women are not likely to come across these opportunities until later in life if they do not have access to male role models in these industries. In addition, this exposure is more likely to occur in formal settings (ie recruitment information sessions) than from the more in-depth, personal connections that may be made among men.

- **Stereotypes and bias starting at school:** Career decisions are reinforced with the educational choices made during school and post-secondary education. Given this role stereotyping, there is gender segregation in education subjects, with girls more likely to consider education and careers in the humanities or social sciences rather than engineering or technical fields. The Harvard Implicit Association Test (IAT), which has tested more than a half million people globally, has shown that more than 70 percent of test takers associated 'male' with science and 'female' with arts.[13] Such implicit beliefs directly influence parents' (and other family members and friends) decisions to encourage or discourage young girls from pursuing science and engineering subjects and careers. This may then be reinforced by teachers.

- **Negative perception and lack of awareness:** Even with the 'right' education, relatively few women are choosing to consider and apply for roles within male-dominated industries. Part of the reason is a negative perception of the industries or anecdotal feedback from others about a negative experience. Another factor is a lack of awareness of the opportunities and the career paths that are available within these industries.

- **Stereotypes and myths about women in the workplace:** Organisations within these industries are not addressing the stereotypes and assumptions about the sort of work women can do, have the skills to do, their potential performance and their commitment to their careers. These stereotypes and myths about women's lack of ability and aspiration, and the roles women should do (such as caring and motherhood) are then used to justify the activities of organisations that exclude women from recruitment and development activities.

- **Workplace culture:** Male-dominated industries are perceived to have a masculine or 'blokey' culture that is non-inclusive and has a higher tolerance of behaviours that could be viewed as sexual harassment, bullying and discrimination. This leads to a perception that jobs within these organisations would be a challenge at every stage of a career, not just at senior leadership.

- **Perception of (and actual) gender specific bias:** These industries are perceived to have a bias against women in relation to recruitment, development and career advancement, particularly in roles that are non-traditional and at the senior leadership level. This perception is then reinforced by the low percentages of women that work in these industries.

- **Structural issues:** These industries, particularly mining, have a culture of long hours and many don't offer flexibility and work-life balance. This is particularly true for roles where workers need to fly in to remote locations. There is also a perception that organisations in these industries fail to offer workplace facilities and uniforms that are inclusive of women.

A toolkit to increase the representation of women

This toolkit is designed to assist leaders in organisations to develop and implement constructive and sustainable strategies to increase the representation of women in non-traditional roles in male-dominated industries.

This toolkit provides practical suggestions and examples of different kinds of workplace strategies and mechanisms across four areas: attraction, recruitment, retention and development of women. These examples have been drawn from current practice both within Australia and internationally, and through desk based research, interviews and roundtables with employees, HR practitioners, peak bodies and industry groups, and leaders from organisations in the mining, construction and utilities industries.

The research highlighted that many organisations within male-dominated industries, as well as peak bodies and industry groups, are already developing and implementing innovative strategies to increase the representation of women. Some of these strategies suit small organisations, while others are more suitable for larger organisations.

Regardless of the number of employees, these strategies to attract, recruit, retain and develop women can assist to:

- Ensure there is recognition of women (half of the population and potentially the workforce) and the skills and experience they contribute at all levels of the organisation.

- Embed a diverse and flexible approach that recognises and responds to a diverse workforce, where each individual, regardless of gender, has their different needs met.

- Deliver an integrated approach that ensures positive outcomes for both the organisation and employees.

- Change the organisation's culture to embrace diversity and flexibility as an ongoing commitment to the entire workforce – not just 'special treatment' for women.

This toolkit details what can be done to develop a gender diversity strategy within male-dominated industries. It also contains examples of what organisations, peak bodies and industry groups within these industries are implementing to increase the representation of women. Not all strategies and mechanisms will suit all organisations or workplaces. Organisations will need to consider what is appropriate for their workplace, staff and business needs.

Share your views…

You can print the toolkit in a single document. However, we have also designed the toolkit to be on-line and interactive. We hope you will 'virtually network' with others to share your views on which strategies have worked, and which ones haven't. We also hope you will share any other ideas you have to increase the representation of women in these industries.

Wherever you see a hardhat you can click on it and it will take you to the discussion area of the toolkit.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Leading organisations have an *integrated gender diversity strategy*:

Leading organisations in male-dominated industries recognise the need to develop an integrated strategy to increase the representation and retention of women in non-traditional roles. Within the strategy, these organisations also recognise the benefits of having unique mechanisms to attract, recruit, retain and develop women at all levels of the organisation.

Some of the organisations reported multiple principles and practices to ensure their strategy was succesfully designed and implemented. Some of these principles and practices are in the table below.

An integrated gender diversity strategy:

- **Lead from the top** with the CEO and senior leaders supporting the clearly articulated vision for gender diversity across the organisation, with a specific focus on increasing the representation of women in non-traditional roles.

- Establish a **Diversity Council** with the CEO and Executive leaders tasked to endorse the gender diversity strategy and to monitor delivery against action plans.

- Establish **accountability, targets and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)** and link gender diversity, with a particular focus on increasing women in non-traditional roles, to the performance and remuneration outcomes of leaders.

- Implement a **transparent monitoring and reporting system** which tracks female-specific data and is reported against regularly. Use this data to assess the impact of policies, practices and strategies.

- Conduct **employee surveys** to find out what is working and what is not working with existing workplace culture and policies. Disaggregate responses based on the gender of respondents and the type of role, including those that are non-traditional.

- Invite **men to co-develop the strategy** and get their perspectives and participation for buy-in, co-ownership and lasting success for increasing women in non-traditional roles.

- Ensure **pay equity** (both fixed and variable pay) at all levels of the organisation and ensure this is regularly monitored through a transparent audit process.

- Monitor **turnover by gender** and undertake exit interviews (on departure and one year after departure) to understand reasons for resignation.

- Implement **policies to change workplace culture** to be more inclusive. Change behaviours and attitudes about roles women can do by challenging assumptions and stereotypes about male-dominated roles and workplaces.

- Embed the **gender diversity strategy** within all key Human Resources processes including the end-to-end talent process. Inject scrutiny at all critical decision making points within the talent process.

- Develop a **communication plan** to share the vision, strategy and action plan to achieve gender diversity with all employees and with all key external stakeholders.

- Publically **promote the benefits of gender diversity** and aim to be a recognised leader in having a sustainable and inclusive culture.

The rest of this chapter summarises the different types of strategies and mechanisms organisations in male-dominated industries are implementing to increase the representation of women in male-dominated industries.

Chapters 2-5 provide more information on strategies to attract, recruit, retain and develop women in non-traditional roles, and examples from a number of different organisations.

Chapter 6 provides links to a number of resources and useful information.

Organisations are implementing *attraction strategies* to:

- Address the negative perceptions some women hold about male-dominated industries, including mining, construction and utilities.
- Promote the benefits and career opportunities that exist within these industries.

These attraction strategies include, but are not limited to:

Job advertisements that attract women to apply:

- **Display diverse images and use inclusive language** and other visual cues in job advertisements to attract women to non-traditional roles.
- **Locate advertisements broadly and where women will notice them** including in fitness centres, in print media, on internet sites and the online forums women are regularly accessing.
- **Advertise to the key influencers on the career decisions of young women** including mothers, friends, career advisers and teachers.
- **Use women's voices for radio, television, video and internet advertising** to send a strong signal the organisation wants to attract female employees.
- **Focus on the 'brand' of the organisation and career opportunities** and create a value proposition that is attractive to women.
- **Offer a female contact for questions** to give potential female applicants the opportunity to ask questions to women employed in non-traditional roles.

Cases and content that inspire women to believe the opportunities:

- **Use diverse images and inclusive language** in marketing materials and on the corporate web to attract women to non-traditional roles.
- **Provide information on the full range of career opportunities available to women,** including opportunities for **flexible work practices** and other available care strategies and encourage women to apply for both corporate and non-traditional roles.
- **Publish profiles and case studies of women in non-traditional roles** to provide role models potential applicants can relate to and be inspired by.
- **Promote achievement of individual and corporate awards focused on women** to recognise participation and success in 'leading practice' awards.
- **Sponsor awards and awards events** to enhance the organisation's profile and to promote women's accomplishments within non-traditional roles.

Engagement activities that broaden the pool of potential applicants:

- **Engage with primary and secondary schools to raise awareness of opportunities for girls** by creating teaching aids and sponsoring competitions, work experience and camps for girls and providing careers guidance.
- **Engage with TAFE, colleges and universities** and provide careers guidance, scholarships, internships and vacation employment for women.
- **Partner with local communities, clubs and skills based networks** to market the opportunities and non-traditional career paths that are available to women.
- **Sponsor and offer an apprenticeship program** to young women and promote the career opportunities available in non-traditional roles.

Organisations are implementing *recruitment strategies* to:

- Consider if existing recruitment mechanisms are delivering a diverse and appropriate balance of skills, talents and attributes.
- Broaden the capabilities required for non-traditional roles, which in turn, increases the pool of potential candidates.
- Establish an inclusive and rigorous interview and selection method which is based on meritocracy.

These recruitment strategies include, but are not limited to:

Diverse and well-trained recruitment teams using merit based processes:

- **Establish recruitment targets for women, both shortlisting and interview targets** and explain the process and rationale to all employees.
- **Share targets with recruitment and labour suppliers** and encourage them to partner to achieve these targets.
- **Monitor the composition of recruiting teams** and ensure they are gender diverse and include women from non-traditional roles.
- **Train recruiters to recognise stereotypes and unconscious bias** about the sort of work women can do and the myths about women in non-traditional roles.
- **Adhere to a documented, transparent and standard recruitment process focused on meritocracy** from the resume screening phase through to final offers.
- **Offer women the opportunity to display their skills** during the recruitment process instead of relying solely on interview questions.
- **Centrally track women candidates** and the effectiveness of attraction strategies to reach them.

Broaden capabilities and pool of potential candidates:

- **Broaden the skills and experience required** for non-traditional roles to increase the number of potential candidates.
- **Expand the pool of potential candidates** for non-traditional roles and include local women, older women and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.
- **Establish leadership capabilities** that focus on the capabilities and skills that are genuinely required to lead in these industries.
- **Support women to re-enter the industry or to move to non-traditional roles** after periods of extended leave or time in corporate roles within the organisation.

Interaction with candidates to achieve a positive recruitment experience:

- **Obtain feedback from women applicants at each stage of the recruitment process** and use this process to create a positive experience for applicants.
- **Provide feedback to all candidates who request it** to discuss their strengths and areas for improvement.
- **Offer an induction program and buddy system** that starts from the job offer stage and assists women to form relationships, build networks and transition successfully to the organisation.

Organisations are implementing *retention strategies* to:

- Ensure the value proposition presented during the recruitment process is maintained at all stages of employment and career development.
- Change the organisation's culture to embrace diversity and flexibility as an ongoing commitment to the entire workforce – not just 'special treatment' for women.

These retention strategies include, but are not limited to:

Workplace culture that is inclusive and embraces diversity:

- **Lead from the top** with the CEO and senior leaders supporting the clearly articulated vision for gender diversity and increasing women in non-traditional roles.
- **Communicate the business case and strategy for gender diversity** to all employees within the organisation.
- **Build awareness and provide training** about stereotypes and unconscious bias.
- **Engage senior leaders as role models** for work-life effectiveness and valuing results over face-time and long hours.
- **Promote internal reward and recognition programs** for leaders and role models of gender diversity.
- **Participate and sponsor industry awards and gender equality awards** to display commitment to gender equality.
- **Promote the gender diversity of the team in client bids** acknowledging the competitive advantage this brings relative to other suppliers.

Working environment that meets the needs of all employees:

- **Survey employees and seek feedback** on what employees value within the workplace.
- **Provide a physical working environment that caters for both men and women** including uniforms, equipment and facilities.
- **Monitor and ensure pay equity for both fixed and variable pay, and under all types of wage-setting mechanisms,** and make the review process and results transparent to all employees.
- **Implement policies that foster an inclusive workplace,** including a carers strategy and paid parental leave.
- **Embed and mainstream flexible work practices** that take into account the needs of the individual employee balanced with business objectives.
- **Promote and display zero tolerance for sexual harassment, bullying and discrimination**.

Ongoing support for employees and families:

- **Provide on-site and off-site support for employees** including Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) representatives and access to an Employee Assistance program.
- **Provide support for families of employees** including online support, site visits, family days and inclusion in social events.
- **Implement a 'keep in touch' program** for employees who go on extended leave.

Organisations are implementing *development strategies* to:

- Implement a transparent and merit based approach to all talent processes including promotion and succession.
- Ensure women are accessing the development required to reach their career potential within the organisation, including in non-traditional roles.

These development strategies include, but are not limited to:

Senior leaders who are engaged in development:

- **Ensure senior leaders participate in the development process** to reinforce the priority of development within the organisation and the benefits of including women.
- **Engage senior leaders as role models for development** and profile their career paths, particularly senior women in non-traditional roles.
- **Offer mentoring programs for women and reverse mentoring for senior men** to be mentored by junior women.
- **Implement a formal sponsorship program** that matches senior male leaders in the organisation with high-potential women.

Development that promotes the career advancement of women:

- **Offer informal and formal opportunities for women to network** with other women within the organisations and include men within these networks.
- **Provide time and resources to participate in and host external networking groups.** Integrate women clients into events to increase the networks of women within the industry.
- **Offer structured leadership development programs** focusing on required leadership capabilities.
- **Encourage opportunities for women to move to non-obvious career paths** by providing retraining in non-traditional roles.
- **Offer flexibility in the time and location of training** to make it accessible to employees.
- **Provide support to partners** to facilitate employee participation in training programs out of hours and in different locations.

Merit based and inclusive talent process:

- **Monitor the composition of talent teams** and ensure they are gender diverse and include women from non-traditional roles.
- **Train leaders engaged in the talent process to recognise stereotypes and unconscious bias** about about the sort of work women can do and their potential success in male-dominated roles.
- **Create a process that acts to challenge decision making** during discussions about talent that uncover bias and stereotypes.
- **Set targets to ensure women are participating equally** in on-the-job development including special projects and senior 'acting' opportunities.
- **Monitor advancement and fall-offs of women's representation in development** and take action when required to ensure meritocracy.

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