

Attraction and Retention of Women in the Western Australian Resources Sector - Business Summary

Introduction

In recognition of the low numbers of women within the minerals and energy sector, Australian industry bodies have undertaken a number of initiatives aimed at promoting and supporting strategies to increase the attraction and retention of women. During 2007 the Western Australian Chamber of Minerals and Energy Inc (CME) commissioned the Attraction and Retention of Women in the Western Australian Resources Sector report to build on recent research and initiatives of the Queensland Resources Council (QRC) and the Minerals Council of Australia (MCA) relating to the employment of women in the resources sector. The project was overseen by a CME reference group convened for the purpose.

The aims of the project were to:

1. Identify current strategies utilised to attract and retain female employees by Western Australian Resources sector companies
2. Establish a set of positive practice principles to guide the further development of Western Australian resource companies' diversity policies and practices.

The project was expanded in 2008 with the inclusion in the report of three practical tools extending its usefulness for management and supervisors. The additions comprise an audit tool for HR personnel to assist in assessing and planning their company's approach to increasing the attraction and retention of women, an A4-sized handout targeted at Frontline Supervisors entitled *Women in the Workplace: The Whys and Hows*, and the current document, incorporating a summary of the research findings, case studies, and the business case for increasing diversity.

The report's findings were informed by a survey of 22 member companies of the CME People for the Future Committee (PFC) and the Executive Council, together with a review of the relevant literature. The surveys were conducted by interviews with Human Resource or similar personnel, or in one instance with a site General Manager. A number of companies provided additional comprehensive written data. All data were then classified and collated under a number of themes which were used to establish the Positive Practice Principals. A number of positive practice case studies were also identified.

Findings

The Numbers

Participant companies report a gradual increase in the number of females in their workforces, with current figures ranging from 10% to 28%. The average is 19% with some increases in non-traditional areas.

Workplace Culture and Communication emerged as overarching themes. It is clear that companies that are succeeding in this arena are those that are led from the top with a clearly articulated vision for workplace diversity.

Although there is recognition by each of the companies of the importance of gender diversity in the workplace, the low participation of women in the WA minerals and energy sector, particularly in non-traditional roles, reflects a number of challenges to the sector that need to be addressed. These include industry image, workplace culture, and the need for a structured approach and commitment of resources to increasing gender diversity. For example, while a small number of companies have long standing diversity policies and practices which they have successfully implemented for a number of years, others are in the initial stages of formulating whole of company approaches, and yet others have few proactive strategies and these are often applied in an ad hoc manner. Those companies with an ongoing structured commitment to gender diversity are more likely to have higher proportions of women in their workforces.

The Business Case for Gender Diversity

There is recognition that successful company diversity policies and practices are associated with improved business performance, by reducing costs and increasing profitability on a number of levels through:

- Access to a broader recruitment pool
- Improved attraction and retention of employees
- Improved corporate public image as a preferred employer because of demonstrated commitment to a harassment free workplace and implementation of work/life balance initiatives
- Improved workplace behaviours

- Higher workplace morale and company loyalty
- Improved decision-making and more creative problem-solving
- Improved productivity, and
- Improved safety and equipment handling.

There is also recognition that increasing the diversity of the workplace, and in particular the participation of women, is part of the social licence to operate and the "right thing to do" so that the resources sector workforce more accurately reflects the wider population.

Positive Practice Principles

The following Positive Practice Principles were developed from the data provided by the companies and are presented as a framework and checklist for a structured approach to increasing gender diversity. It is recommended they are used in conjunction with the following documents from the report:

- *Positive Practice Principles, General Indicators of Good Practice and Examples of Strategies and Policies Table* (Report pages 8-12)
- *An Audit Tool for HR personnel: A checklist to assist in assessing and planning the company's approach to increasing the attraction and retention of women*
- *Women in the Workplace: The Whys and Hows*. An A4-sized handout targeted to Frontline Leaders in the resource sector.

The Positive Practice Principles are:

Workplace Culture

- Lead from the top with a clearly articulated vision for workplace diversity
- Provide an environment where women feel comfortable, safe and supported

Recruitment and Selection

- Support the recruitment of women through positive action
- Establish employment targets

Monitoring, Evaluation and Response

- Establish accountability and targets
- Have a wide range of monitoring and reporting systems for internal accountability including both metrics and attitudes

EEO

- Apply a structured and comprehensive approach to EEO

Work/Life Balance Initiatives

- Implement and model work/life balance initiatives

Career Paths, Training and Development

- Develop and regularly review career paths for all employees, particularly women

Work Environment

- Provide a physical working environment which is appropriate to the needs of a diverse workforce

Communication

- Ensure all communication is structured, consistent, appropriate and accessible

Fly-in/fly-out (FIFO)

- Develop strategies to support FIFO workers
- Provide a safe and comfortable environment for women, both at work and in the camp/village

Industry Image

- Employ ongoing strategies to promote a positive and diverse industry image

A range of innovative strategies across the aforementioned categories were reported by the companies as being used to increase gender diversity and support women in their workplaces. These include amongst others: unique advertising campaigns; zero tolerance of sexual harassment and workplace bullying; monitoring and tracking female job applicants; monitoring gender pay gaps and pay equity; comprehensive EEO training and processes; career support for pregnant employees; provision of appropriate PPE and uniforms for females; paid maternity/parental leave; women's workplace networking/mentoring support; workplace committees to consider female issues; women's web pages on the company intranet; whole of company gender diversity strategies visibly endorsed and practically supported from 'the top'; childcare initiatives; and FIFO roster options.

Industry Initiatives

The industry initiatives provided on the following pages illustrate that despite the challenges faced by the resources sector, there are many successful strategies currently being undertaken by a number of companies to support diversity within their workplaces. **The challenge is for all companies to place diversity high enough on the list of priorities that structured, well-communicated policies and strategies become the norm.**

Further examples of industry initiatives can be found in the report.

Industry Initiative 1

Woodside Energy Ltd's Gender Diversity Strategy

In 2005 the CEO and Board of Woodside approved the Gender Diversity Strategy with the key objectives being to:

- Target the recruitment of women into senior positions
- Develop women to compete for senior positions
- Customise the employment offer for women
- Visibly demonstrate commitment to Gender Diversity

Key policies are communicated at induction, accessible via the intranet, reviewed and updated regularly with changes communicated to employees.

Strategies include:

- Formation of the Gender Diversity Advisory Group (GDAG) comprising the CEO, a Board member, senior female employees and an external representative to assist and provide advice to the CEO and Leadership Team in achieving the objectives of the Gender Diversity Strategy.
- Setting of annual key diversity initiatives by the GDAG (e.g. Childcare, Career Path/Progression and Appropriate Behaviour) based on staff survey results and Diversity statistics.
- Research by Career Path/Progression Taskforce into barriers to women progressing in the workplace.
- Reporting of diversity statistics and initiatives by the CEO to employees at Diversity Briefings.
- Bi-annual review of gender parity in remuneration and short term incentive payments.
- Targeting the recruitment of women into senior positions, as part of the Graduate Recruitment Program and into non-traditional roles (eg Petroleum Engineers and Production Technologists).
- Participation in a variety of annual benchmarking surveys.
- Identification and raising the profile of top female talent, including formal succession plans for key management positions.
- Personal Development Plans for employees and access to training and development opportunities based on those Plans.
- Women of Woodside (WOW), an internal networking group which supports women and aims to empower them to move forward and realise their full potential in contributing to Woodside's business.
- Women in Drilling Group formed to examine specific issues facing women within the drilling and completions environment.
- Informal mentoring facilitated by HR personnel.
- Various seminars and workshops targeted at women (eg Power, Influence and Networking seminars).
- Flexible work options including part-time employment, job sharing, modified start and finish times, working from home, extended leave arrangements and transition to retirement.
- Regular review and communication of policies (eg increase in paid parental leave from 6 weeks to 12 weeks).
- Annual Contact Officer training sessions and information sessions for Supervisors/Managers.
- 'Small Treasures' booklet to provide information to employees prior to commencing, during and when returning from maternity leave.

Evidence of effectiveness of gender diversity strategy

- Statistical analysis indicates that real progress is being made in the areas of recruitment and promotion as per the objectives of the Gender Diversity Strategy. For example, over the past seven years the number of women occupying professional and senior management positions has risen from nine in 2000 to 46 in 2007.
- A recent staff survey identified that employees felt positive about diversity at Woodside.

Industry Initiative 2

Internal Appointment Guidelines

One company has developed a set of guidelines for internal appointments within the organisation. These are specifically designed to support female employees by offering them experience in front of high level panels and the opportunity for individually tailored support.

The guidelines include:

- Including women with potential in the selection process
- Including at least one woman on the short list for senior positions
- Using a designated process to investigate the reason why if a woman is not appointed
- Developing a plan to address factors contributing to why the woman was not appointed including individually tailored support to increase opportunities for future success.

Industry Initiative 3

Families

One company has a dedicated site on their intranet for families. This site has user friendly pages for employees considering pregnancy. It has sections for both **employees** and their **supervisors** so all can be fully informed of the company policies. Links on the Home Page include:

- **First Steps** - separate links to helpful information on the first steps to be taken for employees and supervisors
- **Parental Leave Network** - puts employees in touch with other employees who are willing to share their maternity/paternity leave experiences
- **Flexible and Part-time Working** - a link to relevant policies
- **Short and Long Term Unpaid Leave** - a link to the relevant policies
- **Child Care Opportunities** - explains company child care policy and includes links to various organisations and assistance options.

Industry Initiative 4

Keeping in Touch - The Chevron Way

Chevron has a 'Keeping in Touch' program for employees while they are on parental leave. This is organised on a case-by-case basis between the employee, their supervisor and the company depending on the particular circumstances. Depending on personal preference employees are able to negotiate the amount of interaction they would like to have with the company whilst they are on parental leave.

The company offers employees access to a one day workshop 'Preparing and Returning from Parental Leave' to assist employees to manage their work/life balance and prepare for taking parental leave and returning to the workplace.

The seminar offers advice on:

- Strategies to better manage personal and career goals
- Strategies to assist the launch back into career
- Organisational strategies to help get family members in and out the door on a daily basis
- Strategies for preparing the family and child for childcare.

Perth based employees have access to a carer's/lactation room which can be booked for family visits and can be used for:

- Mothers returning from maternity leave who are breast feeding
- Spouses/partners of employees or employees on parental leave who would like to visit their spouse or work colleagues and need a room where they may bring their child(ren) into the office
- Staff who are feeling ill and need a rest before leaving work for the day and
- Staff who wish to conduct stretches in a relaxed environment.

The room is equipped with a fridge, a microwave, bowl, sink and washing facilities for the sterilization of equipment, a changing mat, a reclining comfortable chair, posters on the walls and a CD player with CDs to create a more relaxed environment, a rubbish bin, a first aid box and a telephone.

Industry Initiative 5

Childcare Matters - BHP Billiton Iron Ore

A BHP Billiton Iron Ore (BHPBIO) Social Impact Assessment identified lack of childcare as a key issue for the Pilbara Region. A subsequent feasibility study identified a number of solutions which have resulted in the proposed short and longer term initiatives.

Short Term

- Grants of up to \$10,000 for residents to set up a Family Day Care business in Newman and Port Hedland to service BHPBIO employees with applications for licensing to be received by the Childcare Licensing Standards Unit (CCLSU) by November 30 2007 (launched in September, 2007).
- Partnerships with local providers to develop additional childcare places and give BHPBIO employees priority placement.

Medium to Long Term

- BHPBIO to investigate building 120 place childcare centres in Newman and Port Hedland with the proposed opening in late 2008.
- BHPBIO to continue engaging in partnerships and sponsorships of community based childcare programs and initiatives.

Industry Initiative 6

Chevron's Women's Network

As a way of supporting diversity and inclusion in the workplace Chevron Corporation fosters a number of officially recognised employee networks. Focused on the following dimensions of diversity: gender, race, sexual orientation, age, disability and nationality, each is open to any employee who supports its mission, vision and objectives.

Chevron Australia hosts local branches of the Women's Network and the XYZ Network and has established an Indigenous Network. Chevron Australia's branch of the Women's Network was the first branch to be established outside Chevron's North American operations. Formed almost eight years ago to proactively engage and develop its members to create and enable the talent needed to drive success for themselves and Chevron, the network is dedicated to enhancing leadership skills, developing career growth and work/life balance as well as providing networking opportunities for their members. The network is well supported with both male (approximately 20%) and female members.

The network is managed by a committee, the chair of which has to be on the leadership team. An annual planning day is held to plan the following year's activities. The network collaborates with similar networks externally to organise joint functions that provide opportunities to attract high profile speakers and allow further networking.

Industry Initiative 7

FIFO Female Friendly Initiatives

- A site based women's committee
- Option not to share a room back-to-back with a male
- Individual mini sanitary disposal units in all en-suite rooms
- Adequate numbers of separate male and female ablutions in all work areas
- Consideration of the timing of rosters and female cycles
- Both male and female medicos
- Beautician and such like visitors to site
- Female physiotherapists and fitness consultants
- Strong security presence in the village
- Consideration of the location and facilities of rooms allocated to women
- Alignment of couples' rosters even if on different sites