NSW Women in Mining
A snapshot

A survey by the NSW Minerals Council
March 2014
This is our Women in Mining logo. The colours are outlined below.

The CMYK version of the logo should be used in print at all times, unless otherwise stated by the printer. Any of the colours used to create the logo may also be applied to copy headlines or used to draw attention to important information. Which colour to use is entirely up to the designer, however it is preferred that just one colour is used and not several, as this can leave the artwork feeling disjointed and messy.

For brand consistency, please ensure that the correct Pantone®, CMYK and RGB colours are applied to all artwork.

Each logo execution has a stand-alone, landscape and portrait option. It is at the discretion of the designer to choose the one that best suits the communication.

Note: Reverse logo is for use only over photography or backgrounds where the logo may be lost.
Foreword

According to ABS data, women make up just 10.32% of the NSW mining workforce. This is clearly a big challenge for our industry.

To get a better understanding of the best ways to meet this challenge, the NSW Minerals Council has undertaken a survey of mining companies and women working or that have worked in mining in NSW.

We asked about a range of issues, including working conditions, career opportunities, balancing work and raising a family, and the barriers to entry for women entering our mining workforce.

The responses showed there is a group of women in NSW who are passionate about where they work and what they do, from operators and administrators through to trades and engineers, including some that are emerging in important leadership roles.

The survey also found that while women currently working in the NSW mining industry would recommend our industry to other women, many don’t think enough is done to promote mining as a career of choice for women. The results also show a low overall percentage of women in our industry, and a limited number of women in Board and Executive roles.

Those surveyed have suggested a range of proactive measures to increase the number of women in mining. Some of these measures are already being implemented by the NSW Minerals Council and its member companies. An example includes our yearly NSW Women in Mining Awards acknowledging the achievements of women in mining and the work of mining companies in encouraging and retaining female participation.

In response to the survey results the NSW Minerals Council will expand its diversity and advocacy efforts to help grow the participation of women in mining, especially in non-traditional roles. Actions will include further research, more collaboration between our member companies, and working with government to deliver policy change where appropriate. We’ll also continue to host the annual NSW Women in Mining Awards to acknowledge the achievements of women in the NSW mining industry.

Recently we signed a Memorandum of Understanding with AusIMM to bring together our two existing networking groups to give our women in mining more opportunities to connect with one another, learn from one another and develop their careers. We’ve formed WIMnet NSW, which will have a leading role in bringing women together through networking events in mining regions.

This survey gives us the data we need to set a benchmark to measure our performance in the future. Women already make an important contribution to our industry. We want to build on this in the years ahead through the policies and actions needed to promote diversity and recruit and retain women in our industry.

Stephen Galilee
CEO
NSW Minerals Council
What the survey told us

9% of our full-time employed workforce is female

The biggest proportion 30% of women are machinery operators or drivers

Women only represent 0.5% of our people at the Board or Executive Management level

90% of companies surveyed offer flexible working arrangements

72% of companies surveyed offer paid parental leave on top of government schemes

93% of women working in mining would encourage others to join the industry
Survey findings

What our member companies said

We’ve surveyed some of the leading mining companies in NSW to find out where our women are working and what they’re doing, as well as what is already being done to attract and retain women in our workforce.

How many women work in mining in NSW?

Understanding how many women work in the NSW mining industry is an important first step for us. The Australian Bureau of Statistics reports that 10.32% of people currently working in mining and related industries are women. This correlates closely with the results of our survey which found that 9% of our member companies’ full-time equivalent workforce is female.
What our women do

There is a real mix of roles that women undertake in mining, showing that even though there is a low percentage of women in mining, they aren’t just working in traditional roles such as administration. In fact, non traditional roles, such as machinery drivers and operators, make up 30% of our full time equivalent employees followed by professionals at 24% such as engineers, geologists and other experts.

Breakdown of the roles undertaken by women in mining.
What our member companies are doing

The NSW Minerals Council represents the leading mining and exploration companies and associated suppliers in NSW with a membership of around 100. Understanding what initiatives our members are currently undertaking individually is vital to help us guide the industry in the future.

“We believe the involvement of women in our workplace and workforce is not only creating diversity across Glencore’s Coal Assets Australia, but also contributing to our competitive advantage by enabling us to draw on broader skill sets, experience and expertise.” – Glencore
Our leading mining companies tell us that despite the small number of women at some sites, there are already a large number of diversity initiatives in place.

90% of companies surveyed offer **flexible working arrangements** such as job sharing, part-time work, flexible hours and home-based work.

72% of companies surveyed offer **paid parental leave** in addition to the government schemes.

63% of companies provide personal protective equipment and **clothing suitable for women**.

Women in Mining groups are being established within companies and at individual mine sites for networking and mentoring.

A number of companies surveyed are already holding or are willing to engage in diversity training on topics such as unconscious bias and inclusive leadership.

“Mentoring programs are identified and facilitated dependant on the career path or skills required for the employee.” – Thiess
Survey findings

What our women in mining said

Listening to the many outstanding women working in our industry already was a priority – so we asked them to share what they like and dislike about our industry and how they think the industry can improve.

Over 170 women responded (88% are currently employed and 12% have left the industry for a range of reasons) providing an important snapshot of our industry today.

We need to change our language around mining, it is exciting, progressive and should be a career option for women. – Georgia Maw, NSW mining industry employee

62.3% of our women have been employed in their current role for 1–5 years.

93% would encourage other women to work in the NSW mining industry.

71.4% say more should be done to encourage women to consider a career in the NSW mining industry. 66% say that promotion should happen while girls are in high school and university.
NSW Women in Mining Awards

The NSW Women in Mining Awards Dinner is an annual event that acknowledges and promotes the contribution and achievements of women in the NSW mining industry.

It has been established by the NSW Minerals Council to recognise groundbreaking efforts by individuals and showcase the companies that are working to retain and grow female participation.

It is part of our efforts to help develop a sustainable network for women in the NSW minerals industry, address a shortage of women in non-traditional roles through a better policy framework and to provide guidance and inspiration to women in mining.

Case study

Coal & Allied’s ‘Pathways4Girls’ and ‘Women in Mining Breakfast’

Coal & Allied was the winner of the Outstanding Initiative category at the first NSW Women in Mining Awards in 2013, recognising the company’s efforts to mentor, coach and support women wanting to enter the industry.

The company launched The Pathways4Girls forum in Muswellbrook, and the Women in Mining breakfast in Singleton, two Hunter Valley communities where the company operates, to inspire local girls and show them that they can be part of an industry that has traditionally been male-dominated.

Girls from schools including Muswellbrook High School, St Joseph’s Aberdeen, Scone High School and Merriwa Central School all heard from female mine workers in roles including from female employees including community relations, environmental management, geology, business analysis, human resources and engineering. And they were given personal insights through one-on-one sessions.

Through its efforts and by winning this award, Coal & Allied is helping to raise awareness about the potential for women of all ages in our industry. The company is committed to continuing these programs to encourage greater diversity in the region’s mining workforce.
Case study
Winner of the 2013 NSW Women in Mining Aspiring Star Award

Alix Thornhill was in the final year of a Bachelor of Mining Engineering degree at the University of Wollongong when she won this award. She worked at the company’s Mangoola mine in the Hunter Valley with the technical services team as an assistant drill and blast engineer during her studies and was a scholarship winner at the company.

During her time at university, Alix did an excellent job expanding her university’s ‘Women in Engineering’ program that helps teach high school girls about opportunities in engineering. It started as a half day program in 2010 for schools in the Illawarra region and Alix took it to the next level the following year by travelling to rural schools to promote engineering, using practical and real-life engineering examples to show that it is an accessible and achievable career option.

Alix is now continuing her career as a Graduate Mining Engineer at Orica.

Case study
Winner of the 2013 NSW Women in Mining Outstanding Woman Award

Described by her work mates who nominated her for our Outstanding Woman Award as “relentless”, Liz Watts says she always knew she could achieve her goals through hard work and perseverance.

She joined Xstrata Coal in 2007 and became the company’s first female operations manager in January 2012. She now has the responsibility of managing the Glendell site, with its workforce of 380 employees and contractors and a $200 million operating budget.

To gain her current position Liz qualified with a Bachelor of Mining Engineering (Hons) from the University of NSW and of the 70 other graduates in her year she was the only female. She joined Coal & Allied as a graduate, gained experience in a number of different operational and technical roles while also gaining her Open Cut Examiners Certificate of Competency and Open Cut Mine Manager’s Certificate of Competency.

Her advice to others interested in a career in mining is to be passionate and committed about achieving outcomes – and the opportunities will come.
Case study
Winner of the 2013 NSW Women in Mining Rising Star Award

Gabrielle is the first woman to join the team at Anglo American’s Drayton mine as an automotive electrician and has been awarded for her efforts to raise the profile of women.

Originally enrolled in nutrition and dietetics at university, after two years of study Gabrielle decided she wanted to do something different and applied for an apprenticeship with Anglo American. She said she hasn’t looked back.

Gabrielle appeared in a feature story in local paper the Singleton Argus in 2012 to encourage more women to consider careers in the resources sector and since this time has spoken at Women in Mining expos, careers fairs and high schools across the Hunter Valley. When a new female apprentice came onboard in 2012, Gabi became a mentor for her and has carried on doing this since.

“Over the course of my career, I would like to use my role as a woman in the workshop to change perceptions about women working in non-traditional roles and see the percentage of women working in these environments increase over time,” Gabrielle said.
Join the NSW Women in Mining Network, WIMnet NSW

WIMnet NSW organises events and initiatives across the state to increase the professional development and networking opportunities for women.

Whether you live in Sydney or a mining region, stay connected with us online. Join the NSW Women in Mining Network, WIMnet NSW and follow us to find out about our next event near you.

Search ‘NSW Women in Mining’