



Curtin University

# Attraction and Retention of Women in the Minerals Industry

Stage One Report for the Minerals Council of Australia

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

In 2007 the Minerals Council of Australia (MCA) released the report *Unearthing New Resources attracting and retaining women in the Australian minerals industry*. The report detailed findings of research that had been undertaken to examine the attitudes and experiences of women towards working in the minerals industry. The report included a range of recommendations which were seen as providing practical information about steps that could be taken by companies and the industry to improve the level of women's employment in the minerals sector.

Subsequent reports have continued to highlight women's under representation across the full range of occupations and at more senior levels in organisations within the resources sector as well as more generally across the Australian economy. For example, the 2010 census of women on boards and in executive positions in the top 200 ASX listed companies showed that women held just 2.5% of board chair positions and comprised only 8.4% of board director positions. Only 4.1% of the line manager roles that are considered to be the pipeline positions to key executive appointments including that of chief executive officer were found to be held by women (Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency 2010).

More recently the MCA has identified a number of issues which include the ongoing low representation of women across a range of occupational categories; the low representation of women in senior roles; the retention of women in the sector; the apparent patchy nature of change across the sector, the expected skills shortage and the masculinist image/culture of the mineral sector.

In response to these issues in 2010 the MCA commissioned further research to determine

- The extent to which current structures and processes have improved attraction and retention rates for women in the minerals sector
- The extent to which progress has been made against recommendations in the *Unearthing New Resources* report
- Any further structural barriers to increasing women's participation in the minerals sector
- The key characteristics of an appropriate model for the ongoing attraction and retention of women in the minerals sector

Stage one of this research consisted of a targeted review of reports listed under the mining category that had been submitted to the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency (EOWA) to identify initiatives and reported progress that is focussed on increasing the attraction and retention of women across the sector. In addition reports submitted by universities were also examined to determine if any specific initiatives that are directly

relevant to the sector had been reported. Other key reports (for example from the Chamber of Minerals and Energy WA, the South Australian Chamber of Mines and Energy, the Queensland Resources Council, the Women in Mining Network and Engineers Australia) have also been examined to determine what progress is being made.

This report details the findings from Stage One of the research project. The next section of this report describes the methodology used to examine relevant reports and key literature. This is followed by the findings of this review. The report concludes with some initial suggestions for further areas to explore in Stage Two of the research project.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

EOWA is a Commonwealth statutory authority whose role is to administer the *Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999*. As part of the requirement of the Act organisations that employ 100 or more people need to establish a six step workplace program to remove barriers to women entering and advancing in the organisation. Organisations need to report their progress on an annual basis. Organisations may request a waiver from reporting if they have been compliant with the legislative requirements for the previous three years. As a result of the waiving provisions in the Act it is somewhat difficult to gain an overall picture of the sector in any particular year or to undertake year to year comparisons as the picture may alter quite dramatically depending on which companies are reporting in any particular reporting period.

Key reports were examined to determine the range of strategies that have been identified included and to determine, if possible the effectiveness of the strategies. The Reports that were examined included:

- *Unearthing New Resources attracting and retaining women in the Australian minerals industry* (Minerals Council of Australia and Australian Government Office for Women 2007)
- *CREW revisited in 2007 the Year of Women in Engineering An update on women's progress in the Australian engineering workforce* (Mills, Mehrtens et al. 2008)
- *Attraction and Retention of Women in the Western Australian Resources Sector* (Chamber of Minerals and Energy Western Australia 2008)
- *Gender Pay Equity and Work Practices in the Minerals & Metallurgy Sector* (Australasian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy and Women in Mining Network 2009)
- *Women in Science in Australia: Maximising Productivity, Diversity and Innovation* (Bell 2009)
- *Australian Census of Women in Leadership* (Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency 2010)

- *Women in the South Australian Resources Industry Survey* (Eckermann 2010)
- *Leading Practice Principles for the Attraction and Retention of Women in the Minerals and Energy Sector* (Queensland Resources Council 2011)

## 2.1. EOWA Reports

All company reports submitted to EOWA for the 2009/10 reporting period that were designated as mining were examined. This was a total of 78 company reports. In addition 62 reports from 2006 were also examined to determine if there had been improvements in the number of women employed within the resources sector.

Each report was examined to determine

- The range of strategies that were reported
- How the reported strategies mapped against the recommendations in the *Unearthing New Resources Report*
- The number of women employed, the level at which they are employed and the types of roles they occupied.

## 3. REVIEW OF EOWA REPORTS

### 3.1.1. Companies reporting to EOWA in 2006 and 2010

A total of 62 companies from the mining sector reported to EOWA in 2006, increasing to 78 in 2010. The greatest representation of companies was from the Metal Ore Mining subdivision of the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC) classification of the companies in the mining sector division (Table 1).

**Table 1: Number of companies from ANZSIC subdivisions of the mining sector reporting to EOWA in 2006 and 2010.**

ANZSIC Subdivision	Number of Companies	
	2006	2010
Coal mining	16	16
Oil and Gas Extraction	7	12
Metal Ore Mining	29	32
Other Mining	3	3
Exploration	1	2
Other Mining Services	6	13
Total	62	78

The group classification shown in Table 2 below provides further details of the sectors within which the reporting organisations operate.

**Table 2: Number of companies from ANZSIC group classifications of the mining sector reporting to EOWA in 2006 and 2010.**

ANZSIC Group Classification	Number of Companies	
	2006	2010
Bauxite	1	2
Black coal	12	11
Coal mining	4	5
Copper Ore Mining	3	4
Gold Ore Mining	7	10
Iron Ore Mining	2	3
Metal Ore Mining	8	3
Metal Ore Mining n.e.c.	5	3
Mineral Exploration Services	1	1
Mining	0	3
Mining n.e.c.	1	1
Mineral Sand Mining	2	2
Nickel Ore Mining	1	3
Oil and Gas Extraction	7	12
Other Mining	2	2
Other Mining Services	5	9
Petroleum Exploration	0	1
Services to Mining	1	1
Silver-Lead-Zinc Ore Mining	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>78</b>

As would be expected the majority of the reports were from Western Australia, followed by Queensland then New South Wales, with the smallest number of organisations reporting from Tasmania.

There was considerable variation in company size as can be seen from Table 3 below.

**Table 3: Company size of mining sector organisations reporting to EOWA in 2006 and 2010.**

Company size	Number of Companies	
	2006	2010
Number of employees		
<100	1	5
100-250	18	13
251-500	17	16
501-1000	10	17
>1000	9	14
>2000	7	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>78</b>



### **3.1.2. Limitations to the Use of EOWA Reports for Assessing Changing Industry Practices**

Some limitations to using the EOWA reports as a source of evidence for quantifying the impact and uptake of recommendations of the Unearthing New Resources report were encountered. Whilst the reports met the requirements of the legislation and provided information regarding the activities that had been undertaken during the reporting period much of the information was at an aggregate level or was described in broad terms such that it was difficult to determine the specificity of the particular initiatives. In particular it was often difficult to determine if a particular strategy being reported was specifically targeted at women. As noted earlier organisations can apply to EOWA for a waiver from reporting which can result in delay in initiatives being reported.

Additionally whilst there is a report proforma that is provided by EOWA there is considerable variation regarding how the required information is reported. This also makes comparisons across the sector challenging.

For example, the sample public report form provides a table for presenting data on the composition of a company's workforce. The sample table includes seven categories of different organisational roles (board, senior executives, senior managers, managers, admin staff, sales staff and service staff). However, each company customises the table, and the number of categories used by individual companies in 2006 reports ranged from 1 to 16, and in the 2010 reports ranged from 4 to 19 categories. This variation makes it difficult to collate data on women's representation in various roles in a systematic and complete way. For example, the figures in this report on the representation of women in professional roles are representative only of the companies who chose to include a category for professional staff in their staff profile table.

Another major limitation to the use of these reports is that it is an incomplete sample of the industry, since it doesn't include information from companies receiving exemption from EOWA reporting. It may be that companies receiving exemption are performing better in terms of women's representation than those who are still reporting, and as such progress may be underestimated. Alternatively, companies not required to report may feel less pressured to focus on addressing women's representation, so their omission from our study may have the effect of overestimating progress in women's representation.

Further limitations include the annual time frame of reporting, such that some companies may only elect to report back on the initiatives they've implemented in the year of reporting,

whilst others may also include initiatives implemented in previous years. The sample form provides prompts on the information the organisations might choose to include in their report. However, if information on a particular policy or strategy isn't included in a report, it is ambiguous whether the policy or strategy hasn't been implemented, or whether it has been implemented but remains unreported. For example, 19.2% of companies in 2010 reported including an EO statement in their employment advertisements. However, it's possible that a number of the remaining 80.8% of companies do use EO statements, but have reported it in previous years. Thus the number of companies using EO statements may be underestimated by sampling the EOWA reports. Another limitation of EOWA reporting is that the companies don't always report under the same name each year, for various reasons including name changes, mergers and takeovers. This creates difficulty in identifying whether companies reporting in successive years are the same or different companies.

Despite these limitations, the EOWA reports provide a wealth of information on some of the strategies being implemented to increase women's representation in the mining and resources sector. In this report, we've collated separately information and data from all the reports submitted in 2006 and all those from 2010, to provide a comparison for assessing progress. Since some of the companies reporting in 2006 were different from those reporting in 2010, some of the apparent changes in women's representation may result partly from differences in the companies reporting.

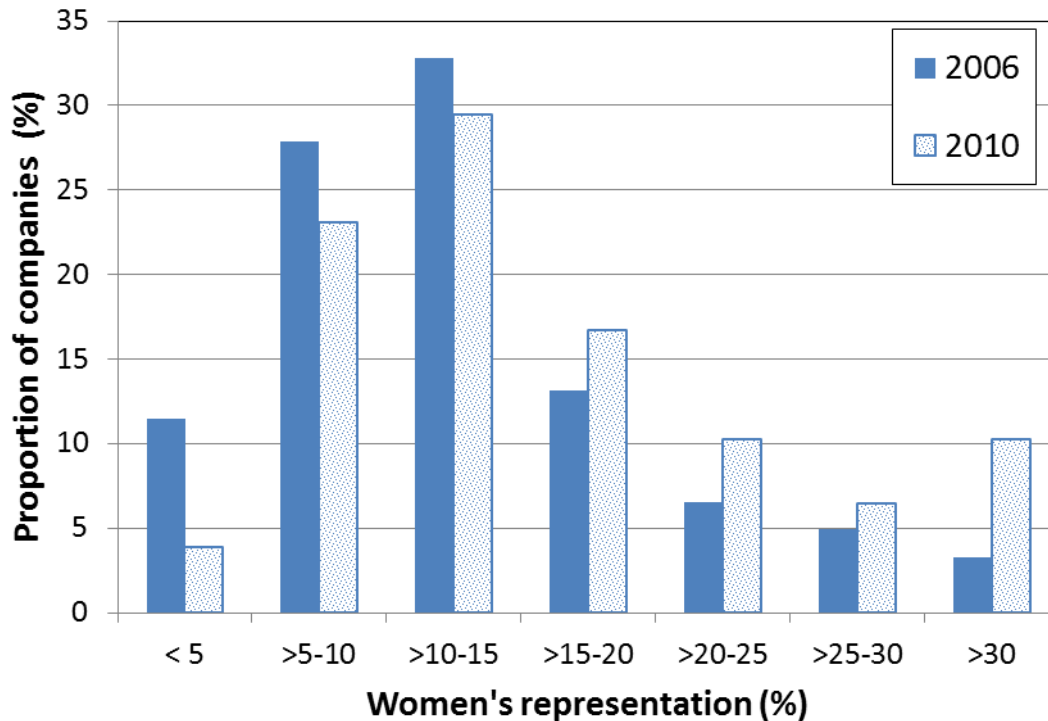
### **3.2. EOWA Reports – Workplace Profile**

Of the companies reporting to EOWA in 2006, 25.8% didn't fully complete the workplace profile (ie. provide a breakdown with some detail on the percentage of women at different levels or in different types of roles in the organisation) compared with only 7.7% in 2010. In 2006, only one didn't report the overall representation of women in their organisation. In 2010, all companies reported the numbers of women and men employed in their organisations, so some basic statistics on women's representation were able to be extracted and recorded for each organisation.

#### **3.2.1. Women's representation in the total workforce**

The total number of staff represented by the EOWA reports was 55,309 in 2006 and 95,506 in 2010. The overall representation of women in these totals was 12.4% in 2006, increasing to 14.8% in 2010. The representation of female employees ranged from 2% to 38% of the workforce in the companies reporting to EOWA in 2006. By 2010, both the minimum and maximum representation of female employees had increased to 3.8% and 66.7% respectively. It should be noted that 66.7% female representation is from a small

organisation – less than 20 people and that women are over represented in administrative positions. The average female representation in all companies reporting was 13.1% in 2006, increasing to 17.3% in 2010.



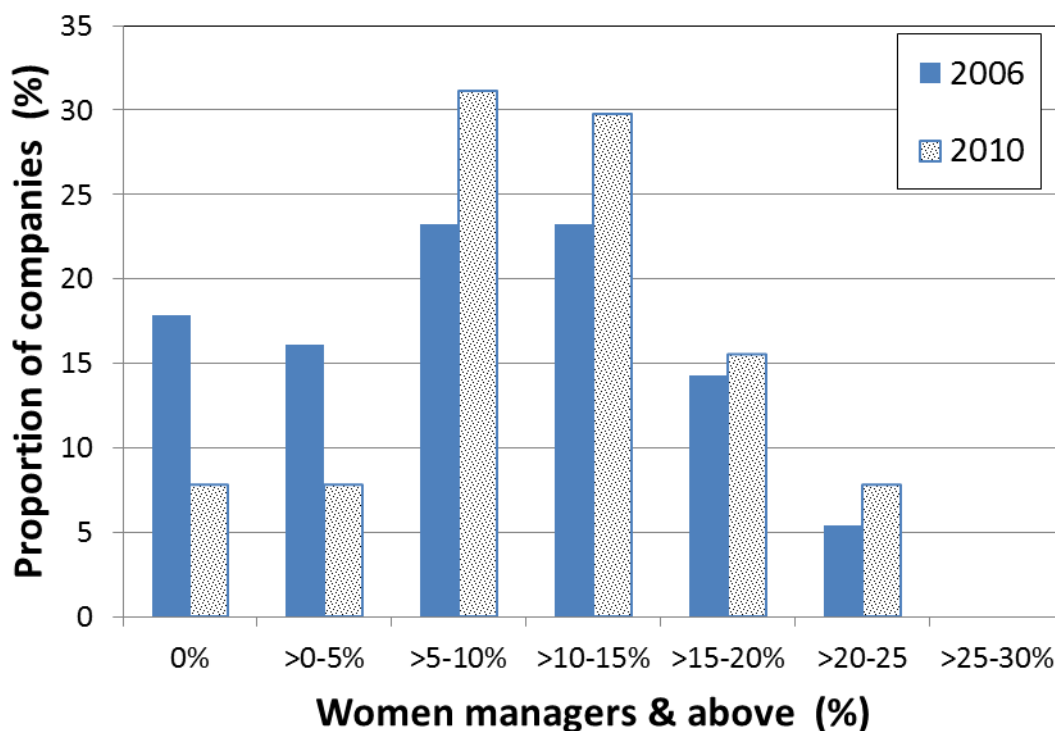
**Figure 1: Women’s representation in the workforce of companies reporting to EOWA in 2006 and 2010.**

The trend of increasing representation of women in mining sector companies between 2006 and 2010 is shown in Figure 1. In 2006, 72.1% of companies reported 15% or less of their total employees as female, whilst 27.9% had greater than 15% female representation. However, by 2010, the proportion of companies with 15% or less female employees declined to 56.4%, with 43.6% of companies having greater than 15% female representation. The most notable changes between 2006 and 2010 was a decrease in the proportion of companies employing less than 5% women from 11.5% in 2006 to 3.5% in 2010, and an increase in the proportion of companies employing greater than 30% women from 3.3% in 2006 to 10.3% in 2010 (Figure 1).

### 3.2.2. Women’s Representation in Management and Executive Roles

A large proportion of companies in both 2006 (90.3%) and 2010 (98.7%) reported data which enabled an analysis of women’s representation in management and more senior roles such as executive, company directors and CEO. The data revealed an increasing trend in representation of women in management and executive positions in between 2006 and 2010

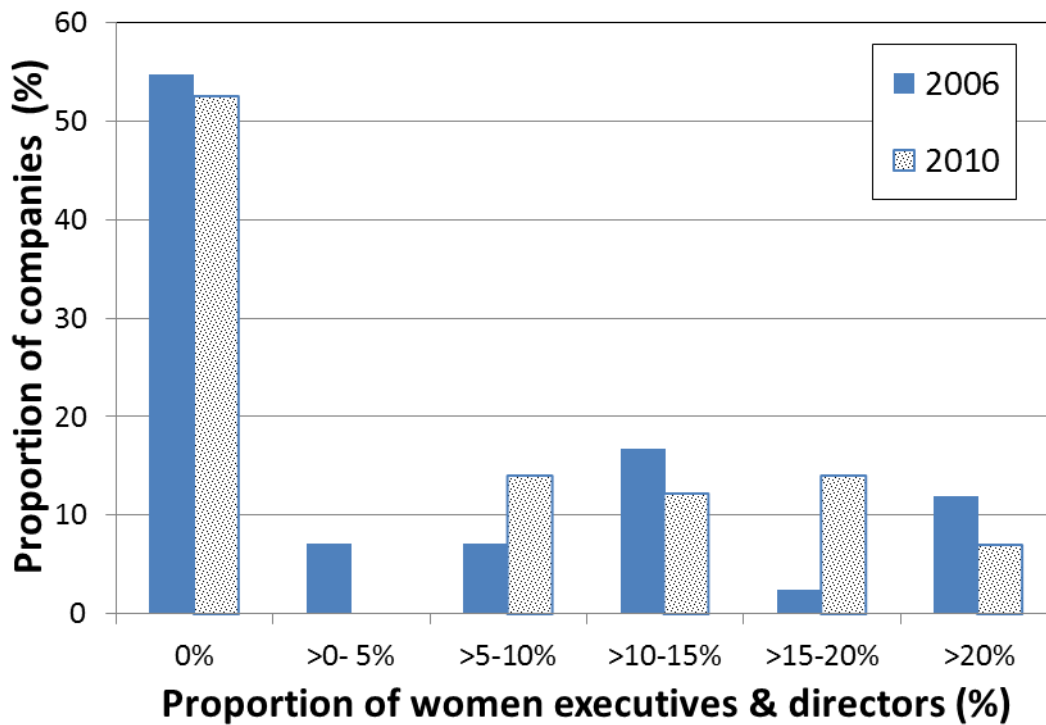
(Figure 2). The average representation of women in management and more senior roles in companies reporting to EOWA increased from 8.9% in 2006 to 11.9% in 2010. However, in 2006, 17.9% of companies reported having zero women in management or more senior roles, compared with 7.8% in 2010 (Figure 2). In 2006, 33.9 % of companies reported having 5% or less of women in management or more senior roles, decreasing to 15.6% in 2010. Correspondingly, the proportion of companies reporting greater than 5% of women in senior roles increased from 66.1% to 84.4% in 2010. However the range of women’s representation in senior roles remained unchanged from a minimum of 0% to a maximum of 25% in both years. Thus 25% appears to remain a critical threshold for women’s representation in senior roles.



**Figure 2: Women’s representation in management and executive roles in companies reporting to EOWA in 2006 and 2010.**

A smaller proportion of companies in 2006 (67.7%) and 2010 (73.1%) reported data which enabled the interpretation of the representation of women as directors, CEOs and executives. The proportion of companies reporting zero women in director, CEO and executive roles was similar in both years at 54.8% in 2006 and 52.6% in 2010 (Figure 3). However, the number of companies reporting zero representation of women at these levels increased from 23 companies in 2006 to 30 companies in 2010. The company average representation of women at these levels decreased from 9.9% in 2006 to 7.5% in 2010. Further analysis of the data for companies reporting in both 2006 and 2010 is warranted to

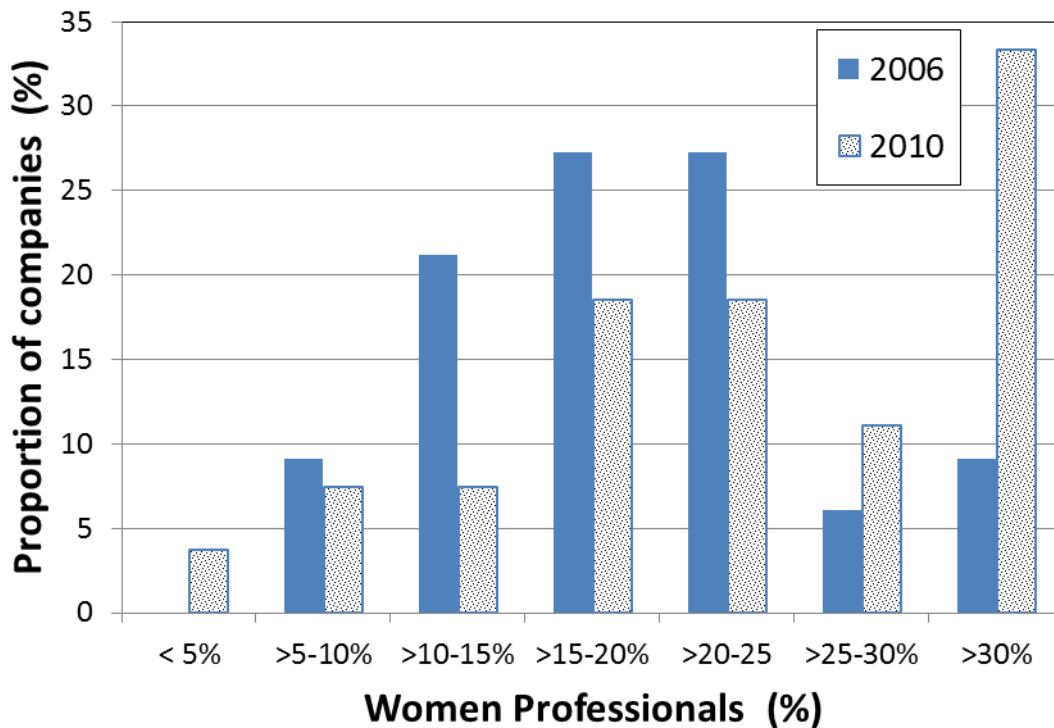
investigate whether there has been a real decline in the proportion of women at director, executive or CEO level. The trends reported above may relate to differences in companies reporting in each year.



**Figure 3. Women’s representation in director, CEO and executive roles in companies reporting to EOWA in 2006 and 2010.**

### 3.2.3. Women’s Representation in Professional Roles

The proportion of companies reporting data which enabled an analysis of women’s representation in professional roles increased from 53.2% of companies in 2006 to 69.2% in 2010. The company average representation of women in professional roles increased from 19.6% in 2006 to 24.2% in 2010. However, the number of companies reporting 5% or less women in professional roles increased from 0% in 2006 to 3.7% (2 companies) in 2010 (Figure 4). Of these 2 companies, 1 company didn’t report to EOWA in 2006, and the other didn’t report the proportion of women professionals in that year. So we cannot ascertain whether or not the proportion of women in professional roles in these companies has changed. The proportion of companies employing greater than 25% of women in professional roles increased from 15.2% in 2006 to 44.2% in 2010, with a large increase in the proportion of companies employing greater than 30% women in these roles which increased from 9.1% in 2006 to 33.3% in 2010 (Figure 4).



**Figure 4: Women’s representation in professional roles in companies reporting to EOWA in 2006 and 2010.**

### 3.2.4. Women’s Representation in Administrative Roles

The number of companies reporting data allowing analysis of the number of women in administrative roles was relatively high for both years at 69.4% of reporting companies in 2006 and 78.2% in 2010. As might be anticipated, data from EOWA reports indicated a high representation of women in administrative roles in both years. The company average representation of women in these roles showed little change at 73.7% in 2006 and 75.2% in 2010. The proportion of companies reporting >40 to 60% of women in administration roles decreased from 25.6% in 2006 to 4.9% in 2010 (Figure 5). However, the representation of women increased in all other categories (<20%; >20-40%; >60-80% and >80-100%) (Figure 5).

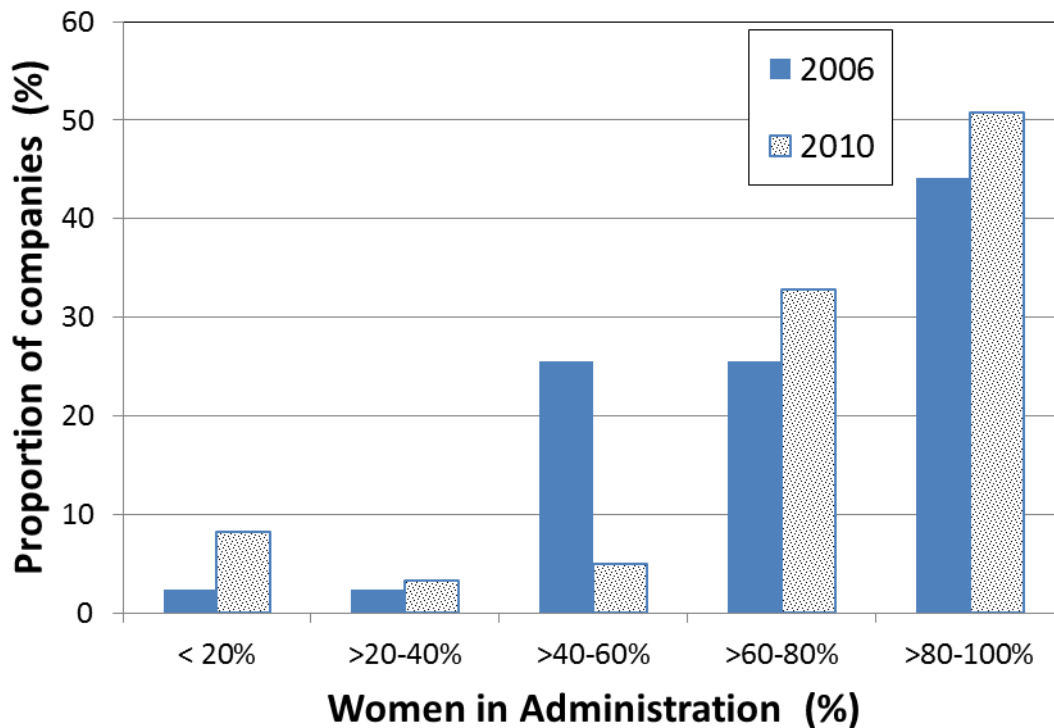
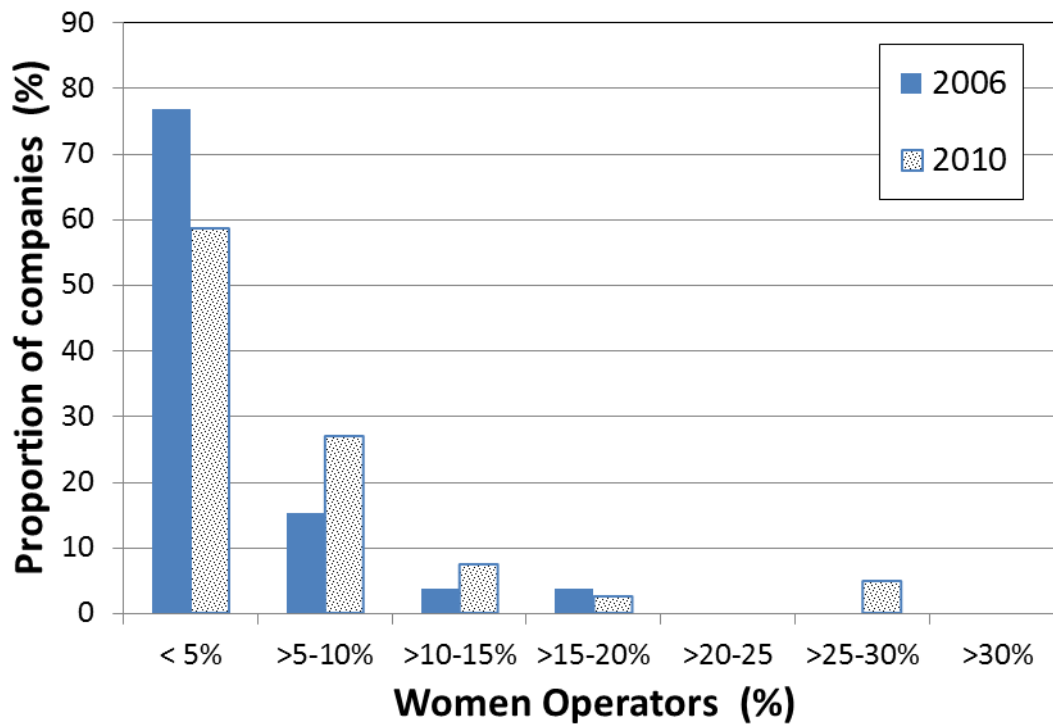


Figure 5. Women’s representation in administrative roles in companies reporting to EOWA in 2006 and 2010.

### 3.2.5. Women’s Representation in Operators Roles

The proportion of companies reporting the representation of women in operator roles was quite low at 41.9% in 2006 and 52.6% in 2010. The average representation of women in these roles was very low in both years, with a company average of 3.9% in 2006, increasing to 6% in 2010. The majority of companies reporting in both 2006 (76.9%) and 2007 (58.5%) indicated that women represented less than 5% of employees in operator roles (Figure 6). However, there were some signs of improvement with the proportion of companies reporting a representation of greater than 5% in operators roles increased from 23.1% in 2006 to 41.5% in 2010.



**Figure 6. Women’s representation in operator’s roles in companies reporting to EOWA in 2006 and 2010.**

### **3.2.6. Women’s Representation in Traditional and Non-traditional Roles**

Figure 7 shows the company average representation of women in various roles in companies reporting to EOWA in 2006 and 2010. The figure is included to contrast and compare the representation of women in both traditional and non-traditional roles within the mining industry. The figure shows a clear distinction between the rate of women’s participation in traditional and non-traditional roles, with women maintaining high rates of representation (>70%) in administration roles in which they have traditionally been well-represented. In sharp contrast, women’s average representation for all roles was less than 20%, and their representation in management, executive and director’s roles (traditionally occupied predominantly by men) was even lower. Women’s representation in professional roles was greater than in other non-traditional roles for which data was available, but their participation was still considerably less than 50 percent. Women’s representation was smallest in operator roles, also traditionally male roles within the industry.



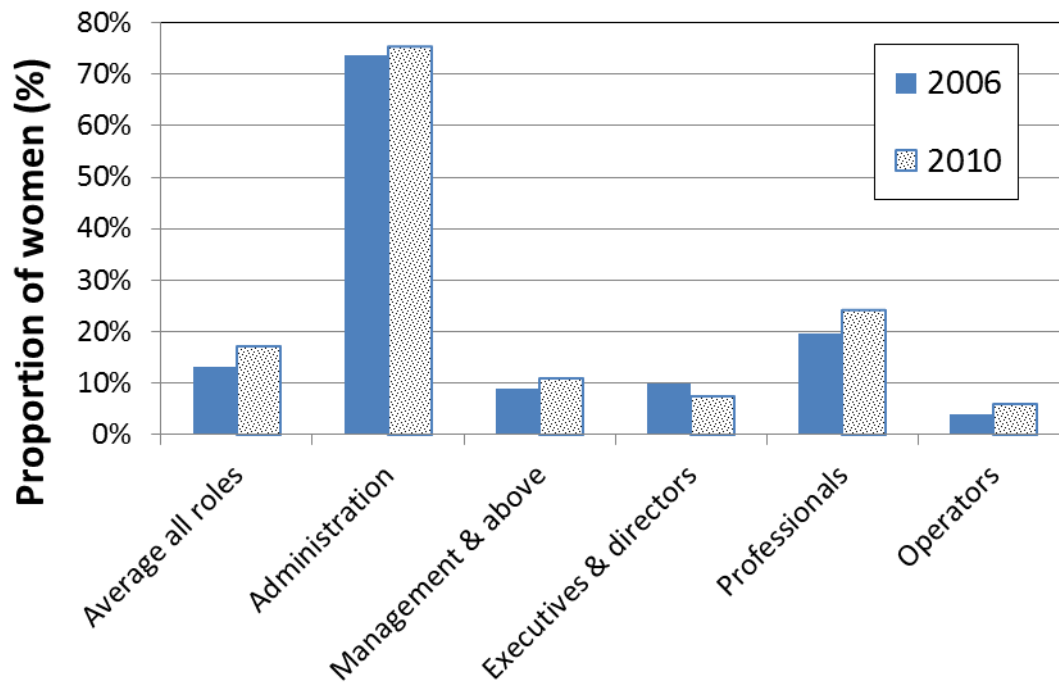


Figure 7. Women’s representation in various roles in companies reporting to EOWA in 2006 and 2010.

### 3.3. Recommended strategies from Unearthing New Resources Report

The *Unearthing New Resources Report* contained a number of recommendations for action. Many of these were focused at a sector or industry level. The key areas covered by the recommendations are listed below (see full report for a detailed list of recommendations).

Key areas included:

- Industry Leadership
- Attraction strategies
- Recruitment strategies
- Workplace policies, systems and processes (including attraction and retention of Indigenous women)
- Retention strategies (including workplace culture and career development).

The 2010 reports were examined to see if reported strategies could be mapped against key recommendations from the report. Given the broad nature of many of the 2010 reports this proved to be challenging as insufficient detail was available to facilitate accurate mapping of

the strategies. However some key themes did emerge from the 2010 reports. These are discussed below.

### **3.3.1. Industry Leadership**

As might be expected the EOWA reports were a poor source of evidence for industry leadership in contributing to increasing women's representation in the resources industry. However, relevant examples of industry leadership found in the reports include companies hosting women in mining and resources events and networks. Other companies reported implementing strategies they had developed as part of internal organisational plans aimed at increasing the number of women employed, the range of occupations within which they were employed and the levels at which they were employed indicating that the report has had impact in some organisations.

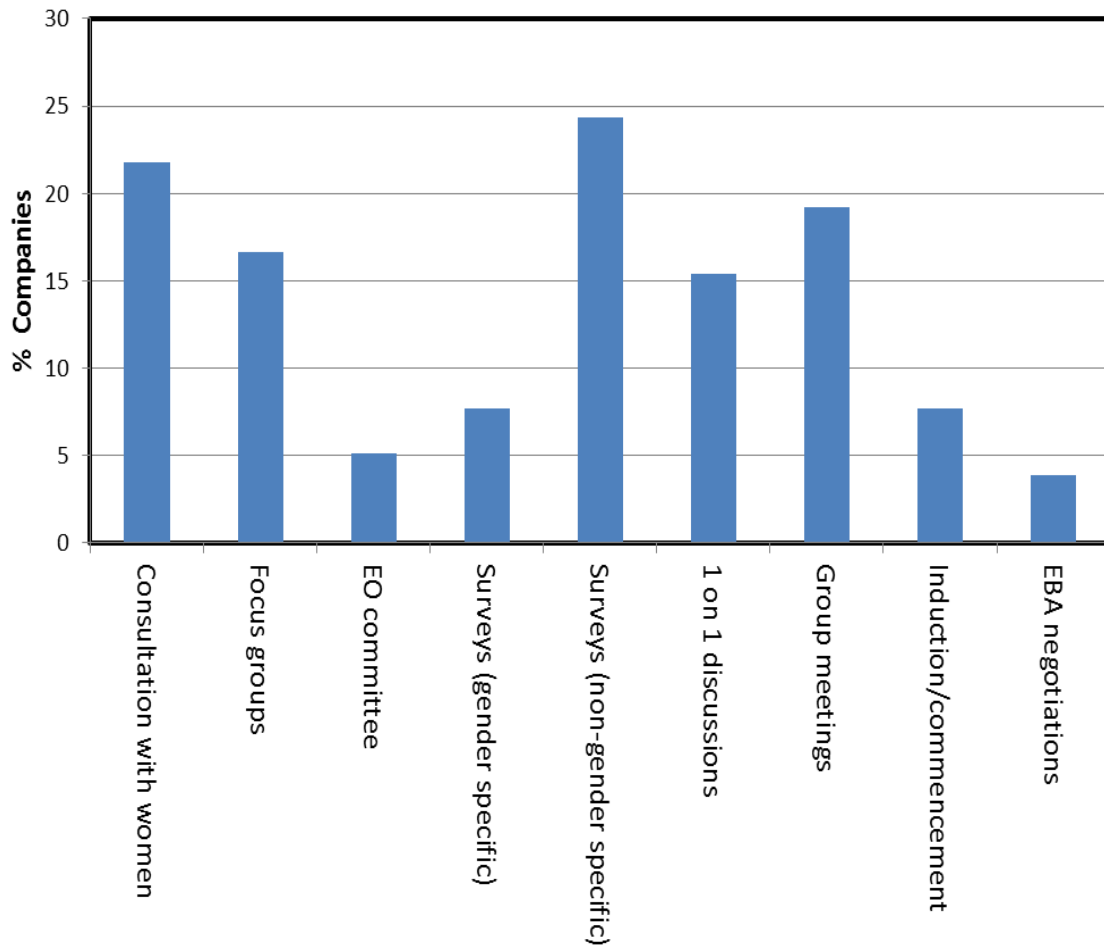
### **3.3.2. Attraction and Recruitment**

In 2010, 70.5% of companies reported that they recruited new staff, and 65.4% of companies reported that they recruited women. Of all the companies reporting in 2010, only 42.3% gave information on their recruitment strategies. The majority of these respondents (i.e. 28.2% of companies) reported that their recruitment was merit-based. A number of companies (33.3%) reported providing scholarships, support for vacation students or graduate programmes, but few reported programmes such as these as being specific to women. However, 23.1% of companies reported using gender-specific recruitment strategies. Examples included ensuring that women were represented in the recruitment shortlist for all manager level positions, and setting targets for female workforce participation. Another example included rebranding to increase focus on attracting women into non-traditional roles through redesign of a company website, the main source of recruitment advertising. Others featured images of women in media releases to the local press and in internal and external advertisements. Advertisements outlining company values and culture and promoting diversity and work-life balance were also noted. Other companies targeted university career fairs and industry events promoting benefits such as paid maternity leave, career planning and flexible work conditions. One company evaluated its external recruitment consultants based on the diversity of shortlisted candidates they provided. One of the more frequent gender-specific recruitment strategies was to include an Equal Opportunity statement in job advertisements, reported by 19.2 % of companies in 2010. A number of companies (44.9%) reported that they identified recruitment-related issues, but these weren't always gender-related issues. Of the companies reporting in 2010, 20.5% reported that the global financial crisis had impacted negatively on recruitment.

### **3.3.3. Workplace Policies**

#### ***Consultation***

Companies reported a range of different strategies for consulting with female employees (Figure 8). Of all the companies reporting in 2010, only 21.8% identified methods of consultation that were specifically targeted at women. The most commonly-reported method for consultation was through staff surveys (24.4%), though only 7.7% of companies reported that they implemented surveys specifically for women in their organisation. The second most frequent method of consultation (19.2%) was through group meetings such as toolbox meetings or regular meetings between managers/supervisors and staff, though these meetings generally didn't involve gender-specific consultation. 16.7% of companies reported that they used focus groups for consultation, and these were occasionally reported as specifically for women. 15.4% of companies reported consultation through one on one discussion between managers or HR representatives and employees in the organisation, and some companies included performance evaluation and career planning meetings as a consultation process. In reporting, this one on one mechanism for consultation appeared to be rather more ad hoc than a specific, formal process for gaining feedback from women in the organisation. 7.7% of companies reported consulting with women at induction or commencement, and 5.1% and 3.8% respectively through Equal Opportunity (EO) committees or Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA) processes.



**Figure 8: Proportion of companies reporting different strategies for consultation with women.**

***Promotion, transfer and termination***

Of the companies reporting to EOWA in 2010, 78.2% reported that they promoted or transferred staff, and 51.3% clarified the types of roles that these transfers and promotions involved. 65.4% of companies reported that they promoted or transferred women, and 64.1% quantified the number of women they promoted or transferred. A proportion of the companies (60.3%) reported that some employees left through resignation, retirement or termination, and 53.8% of companies quantified the number of women that left. 64.1% of companies reported conducting exit interviews. Only 17.9% of companies quantified the number of men or women acting in higher level positions. Of all the companies reporting only 11.5% reported gender-specific promotion or transfer practices. Examples of such practices include ensuring a diverse interview panel, introducing a formal talent review process, establishing selection criteria with a decreased emphasis on years of experience which can disadvantage women applicants. Another strategy was to implement a programme to increase the visibility of internal career opportunities and career development activities and

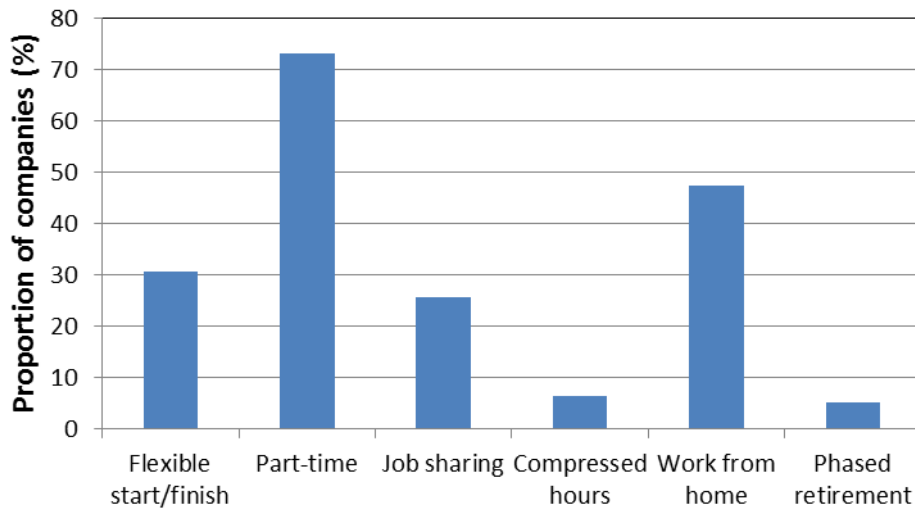
paths. Another company reported using senior women as role-models in manager training programmes. Of all companies reporting in 2010, only 21.8% noted any gender-specific promotion, transfer or termination issues. A small proportion of companies (2.6%) reported global financial crisis impacts on promotions, transfers and terminations.

### ***Training and Development***

A large proportion (93.6%) of companies reporting in 2010 provided professional development or training for staff. A number of these (44.9%) quantified the number of women receiving developmental opportunities. A large number of companies (44.9%) reported that their training programmes were for both male and female employees, and only 6.4% of companies reported gender-specific programmes or practices. The practice of succession planning was reported in 45% of companies, but very few companies noted gender as a consideration in this planning. Only 15.4% of companies reported a formal mentoring scheme, and again these were generally not gender-specific programmes. Of the companies reporting in 2010, only 20.5% noted any training and development related issues. Only 34.6% of companies reported formal performance assessment or career review processes.

### **3.3.4. Flexible work**

A very large proportion (93.6%) of companies reported providing flexible work options for their employees (Figure 9). However, only 29.5% of the companies quantified the number of staff accessing the range of available options. Staff were employed part-time in 73.1% of companies in 2010, and 47.4% of companies offered the opportunity to work from home. 30.8% of companies reported that they offered flexible start and finish times, and 25% reported providing job-sharing opportunities. Only a small proportion of companies reported offering compressed hours (6.4%) or phased retirement (5.1%). In reporting the available flexible work options, companies generally didn't distinguish between the accessibility of these options for staff employed in office-based roles compared with those in site-based roles. They also didn't generally distinguish between availability for employees in Fly-in-Fly-Out (FIFO), Drive -in-Drive-Out (DIDO) and rostered roles, or between regional and remotely based employees compared with those based in metropolitan areas. However, some reports did refer to the difficulty of accommodating flexible work options for employees in particular situations such as FIFO or other rostered roles. Some companies recognised the importance of paid maternity leave in retaining women, and 41% of companies offered paid maternity leave. Of all the companies reporting, only 23.1% noted any work organisation issues in the 2010 reports.



**Figure 9. Proportion of companies reporting various flexible work options for employees.**

### **3.3.5. Conditions of service**

Of all the companies reporting to EOWA in 2010, 28.2% reported that they revised their conditions of service and 34.6% reported a process of salary review. 39.7% of companies reported that their conditions of service were the same for all employees irrespective of their gender (e.g. that their salary scales ensured that male and female employees employed at the same level received the same remuneration). 33.8% of companies reported conducting a pay equity review, and 25.6% of companies reported a gender pay gap. 7.7% of companies reported a zero gender pay gap, though some of these companies didn't appear to consider that women consistently being employed at lower levels of the organisation might constitute a gender pay gap. Only 16.7% of companies identified issues associated with conditions of service in their reports to EOWA.

### **3.3.6. Harassment and Sex-based Harassment**

In 2020 reports, 79.5% of companies reported communicating harassment policies to staff, with communication most commonly reported through EEO and/or bullying and harassment education as part of the induction process (61.5% of companies). 12.8% of companies reported revising the policies and procedures for dealing with harassment in the 2009-2010 reporting period, and the same proportion (12.8%) reported that employees were aware of company grievance procedures. 35.9% of companies reported having contact officers. Over half (55.1%) of the companies indicated whether or not they had received any complaints, and 23.1% reported that there had been one or more complaints in that year. 12.8% of

company reports indicated that any complaints had been dealt with successfully. Only 14.1% of companies identified any issues related to harassment in their reports.

### **3.3.7. Pregnancy, Potential Pregnancy and Breastfeeding**

Many of the companies (74.4%) reporting to EOWA in 2010 indicated that they had a parental leave policy, and 61.5% reported that staff commenced or returned from parental leave in 2010. 65.4% of companies indicated that they made flexible work options available for women returning from parental leave. 34.6% of companies discussed breastfeeding facilities in their reports, but only 24.4% identified that breastfeeding facilities were available at their workplaces. Only 16.7% of companies noted issues associated with pregnancy, potential pregnancy or breastfeeding.

## **4. REVIEW OF INDUSTRY AND PROFESSIONAL ORGANISATIONS REPORTS**

There have been a number of public reports that have been examined attraction and retention issues relating to women in the resources sector. These include reports by the Queensland Resources Council, the Western Australian Chamber of Minerals and Energy, and the South Australian Chamber of Mines and Energy. The Australasian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy has examined gender pay equity. Engineers Australia has examined the attraction and retention of women engineers within the engineering profession and the Federation of Australian Scientific and Technological Societies has examined women in science in Australia. The Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency conducts a biennial census on women in leadership roles in the top two hundred ASX listed companies. Thus there is a range of data relating to women working in a range of non-traditional areas of employment.

The report commissioned by the Western Australian Chamber of Minerals and Energy *Attraction and Retention of Women in the Western Australian Resources Sector* built on the work reported in the *Unearthing New Resources* report. Its focus was on the strategies being used by the resources sector in Western Australia. An audit tool for human resource staff to assist in assessing company planning, a handout for frontline supervisors on women in the workplace and information on the business case for diversity were also developed as part of the project. Twenty-two organisations were surveyed. Key themes that emerged were workplace culture and communication, industry image was also highlighted as a significant barrier to women's participation. Workplace culture and industry image were identified as key

issues and lack of communication was identified as a possible contributing factor to women leaving the resources sector in the *Unearthing New Resources* report. The Western Australian Chamber of Minerals and Energy report noted that whilst all companies aimed to increase gender diversity few companies had specified targets. The range of strategies that were identified as good practice generally mirrored key recommendations in the *Unearthing New Resources* report.

The South Australian Chamber of Mines and Energy (SACOME) conducted the women in South Australian Resources Industry Survey. The aim was to determine the female workforce across the resources sector in South Australia. Fourteen organisations participated in the survey which covered demographics, movement of females in the industry and maternity leave. One of the interesting findings from this survey was that neither operational conditions nor workplace culture were identified as reasons why women resigned from their organisation. When respondents were asked to comment on issues faced by female employees operational conditions and job flexibility (which were mainly related remoteness of mining sites) were identified as the top issues. The *Unearthing New Resources* report identified the need to improve work environments focusing on fly-in-fly-out operations.

The Queensland Resources Council (QRC) recently released the 5<sup>th</sup> edition of leading practice principles for the attraction and retention of women in the minerals and energy section. The report titled *Women Seeing Themselves in Resources* is part of the QRC's Women in Resources Action Plan. The leading practice principles are

- Providing a cultural and physical environment where women feel comfortable, included and valued
- Employment and promotion practices that encourage female participation and retention
- Investigating innovative solutions for the provision of flexible working arrangements (for men and women), which take into account such matters as employees' child care commitments and work/life balance, while also meeting operational requirements
- Promoting and monitoring effectiveness of attraction and retention initiatives for women.

The report provides a number of case studies to illustrate best practice of the leading practice principles. Strategies that are reported align with key strategies recommended in the *Unearthing New Resources* report.

The Australasian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy in conjunction with the Women in Mining Networking Committee conducted a survey into gender pay equity and work practices in



October 2008. Key findings included that the majority of male and female respondents were of the view that pay was the same for comparable roles but women reported less transparency in salaries in their workplaces. Workplace culture was identified as a driver of the gender pay gap and gender stereotypes were seen as a reason for the gender pay gap. Lack of negotiation by women, lack of knowledge regarding negotiation and perceptions about restrictions on pay negotiations were offered as further reasons for the gender pay gap.

Sharon Bell's report for the Federation of Australian Scientific and Technological Societies (FAST) found that there had been minimal changes between 1995 and the current report released in 2009 with respect to women's representation in specific areas and at senior levels of science, engineering and technology. Bell notes the findings from the 'Women in Professions Survey Report' undertaken by the Association of Professional Engineers, Scientists and Managers which found that women were less likely to be employed as full time professional scientists and more likely to be at lower classification levels. The key recommendations related to advancing the agenda, scientific career paths, institutional cultures and decision-making, evidence and evaluation, and leadership.

The Careers Review of Engineering Women project was initiated by the National Committee for Women in Engineering in 1999. In 2007, the year of women in engineering, an update on progress was undertaken. The 2007 report noted that the first report listed nine recommendations and that most of these still applied nearly a decade later. Also noted was that whilst some organisations had implemented the initial strategy recommendations others lagged behind. The current recommendations include equity and diversity management training and the development of performance targets; addressing sexual harassment, discrimination and bullying; and setting targets for improvement including the collection of gender disaggregated data.

The reports demonstrate that there are a wealth of strategies that have been identified to assist organisations attract and retain women. The reports examined suggest there is some reason for cautious optimism. More women are employed in the resources sector and across a broader range of positions. There are examples of best practice that provide some insights into how strategy has been implemented in a range of organisations. Identifying specific targets is difficult as is discussion regarding the effectiveness of the strategies. For example a number of the reports indicate that policies have been developed to address issues that have been identified as impacting on the attraction and retention of women. However there is little comment regarding how the effectiveness of these policies is measured. Anecdotal evidence for example, suggests that in some organisations reporting of harassment and

discrimination is believed to impact of future career progression. Likewise accessing flexible work arrangements has been informally noted by some as being seen as an indication of lack of career focus or ambition.

Notwithstanding a reported focus by many organisations women remain under represented in decision making positions and there is evidence to suggest that the rate of change is in many instances exceedingly slow. Despite that reports on progress are required under legislation and that there have been some sector wide reports and reports that have focussed on specific on particular cohorts consistent and comparable evidence of change across the sector is difficult to discern.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

The review of reports submitted to EOWA indicates that there has been an increase in women's representation between 2006 and 2010. However, the data suggests that women remain over represented in administrative roles and continue to be under represented in senior management roles.

Examination of the EOWA reports as well as sector and professional organisations reports have made it possible to identify key areas that align with the recommendations listed in the *Unearthing New Resources* report. However, it is difficult to determine the effectiveness of the strategies that have been implemented.

Stage 2 of the project will focus on gathering specific detail regarding strategies that are being used to improve attraction and retention rates in mining sector organisations.

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