



## Women's Participation in Mining: What Can We Learn from EOWA Reports?

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### Abstract

*Various stakeholders associated with the mining sector have voiced concerns over current or projected skill and labour shortages that might affect output and productivity within their industry. In this context, policies that facilitate the recruitment and retention of women have been discussed as presenting an opportunity through which to address labour shortages and, in doing so, to enhance equity by improving women's employment in Australia's most highly paid industry. In this paper, we use information contained in company reports to the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency (EOWA) to assess recent reported actions by the mining industry to enhance the recruitment and retention of women employees. We find considerable shortcomings in available data, coupled with little evidence of coordinated or concerted industry activity to deal with issues that might assist with promoting women's participation in the industry.*

### 1. Introduction

Women's high representation in low-paid industries and occupations is relatively well-recognised and documented. Recently, this was evidenced in the equal remuneration case brought before Fair Work Australia in 2011, where the policy challenges associated with redressing the undervaluation of women's employment were closely debated. The reverse side of this argument—that women are underrepresented in relatively high-paying occupations and industries—poses a different set of policy challenges.

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We consider the employment participation of women in the mining industry, which is a sector of specific interest for two reasons. First, it is Australia's best-paid industry, with average earnings significantly higher than in other industries. From an equity point of view, it can be argued that opportunities to participate in well-paid industries should be relatively accessible to all those with the appropriate skills and experience. Second, industry representatives have publicly discussed the need to recruit and retain women employees to enable them to address labour and skill shortages within the industry. Labour shortages have been cited as having detrimental effects on industry productivity and also as being a reason for reviewing unwarranted restrictions on the ability of employers to source international labour for new and growing resources projects. Further, labour shortages have been cited as a potential reason for projects, or parts of projects, being relocated offshore (Knött cited in Rout 2011). Statements from leading industry representatives suggest that the failure to implement appropriate policy responses to deal with the recruitment and retention of employees could have implications for national economic growth and employment.

As part of the industry's responses to well-publicised skill and labour shortages, in 2007 the Minerals Council of Australia (MCA) and the Australian government's Office for Women commissioned and released a report titled *Unearthing New Resources: Attracting and Retaining Women in the Australian Minerals Industry* (Minerals Council of Australia and Australian Government Office for Women 2007). The report presented research findings that had been undertaken to examine the attitudes towards and experiences of women working in the minerals industry. Amid claims of being a world first, the report was launched at the Inaugural Women and Mining Symposium in Canberra (Minerals Council of Australia 2007). A keynote address was given by the Honourable Julie Bishop, who at that time was the Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Women's Issues. The MCA press release quoted the organisation's Chief Executive, Mr Mitch Hooke, as saying:

As an industry we can increase the gender and cultural diversity of our workforce if we improve the methods we use to engage women in operational decision making, create a working environment that is non-discriminatory and that values diversity and develop structures to maximise the community development benefits to women resulting from mining activities (Minerals Council of Australia 2007).

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.

This article has two purposes. One is to examine available data from EOWA reports to explore women's patterns of employment in the mining industry and—by comparing 2006 and 2009-10 reports—to assess whether there has been a change in this pattern during five years of mostly buoyant product demand. This is done with reference to the key data requested in EOWA reports. The other is to compare the reported outcomes contained in EOWA with the recommendations included in the *Unearthing New Resources* report to assess whether there is evidence of systematic attempts at an industry level to improve women's participation in the mining industry.

## **2. Context: An Overview of Australian Women's Participation in Mining**

Economic theory, particularly the analysis of labour demand and supply, is frequently used to predict workforce needs. Key examples relevant to this discussion include the Productivity Commission's analysis, at a national level, of the implications of an ageing workforce and its exploration, at an industry level, of the labour needs of the mining industry (Abhayartna and Lattimore 2006). However, the direct empirical estimation of labour supply poses particular challenges. Employment data can show shortages in demand (measured as unemployment) or shortages in supply (measured as unfilled vacancies). As a result, observing current numbers of employees does not provide a full picture of the labour supply (Lowry, Molloy and Tan 2006, p.35).

A further key difficulty in assessing future labour supply, however, is that economic theory yields ambiguous predictions for women's labour supply. Economic research in Australia and internationally has shown contrasting results on women's labour supply, with limited explanatory and predictive power (Nelson 1993; Barker and Feiner 2004; Birch 2005). This is generally explained in terms of women's labour supply decisions being linked with alternative uses of time related to productive household activities, and to the complexity of joint decision making in couple households. So, for example, in the months following the Global Financial Crisis in September 2008 women's labour supply initially increased, possibly driven by a need to supplement household income. However, one year later it had fallen very slightly from 58.5 to 58.4 per cent compared with a slightly larger decline in the male labour supply from 72.4 to 72.1 per cent (Preston and Jefferson 2009). In the particular context of Australia in 2009, the added-worker effect appears to have initially outweighed the discouraged-worker effect in the labour supply decisions of Australian women. Theory, however, provides few

insights into which of these effects would prevail and the matter became one of empirical study rather than of theoretical prediction. The malleability of, and relatively unpredictable changes in, women's labour supply decisions are apparent in recent data. These show either steady or increasing participation rates for the aggregate labour force (currently 65.6 per cent) and for women (59.1 per cent) (ABS 2011b). While not conclusive, these figures appear to demonstrate some changes in labour supply responses from those predicted for the mining industry under very different conditions by Abhayartna and Lattimore (2006).

Labour supply is determined not only by the extent to which potential workforce participants seek work, but also by the supply of appropriately trained and skilled labour. For some particular occupations with high skill levels—such as engineering professionals—educational requirements might lead to a lag in the supply of appropriately skilled labour. However, existing reports suggest that labour supply issues extend beyond the need for highly skilled labour. It has been estimated that most labour shortages will be in semi-skilled occupations (Lowry, Molloy and Tan 2006). Further, *The National Resources Sector Employment Taskforce Report* (2010) noted that pathways to entry-level jobs were unclear and the report included a specific recommendation for the development of a strategy for attracting and retaining women in the resources and construction sectors. Other specific issues relevant to women's labour supply or choices included: working in remote locations; lack of family-friendly work practices; scarcity of part-time jobs; and a male-dominated workplace culture (National Resources Sector Employment Taskforce 2010, p.83). These aspects of labour supply strategies are particularly relevant to the discussion in this paper.

In the context of ambiguous theoretical predictions, empirical challenges in analysis and highly public industry concerns about labour shortages in the mining industry, this study examines ABS and EOWA data on women's participation in mining at an aggregate level and also in particular occupations. The purpose of this approach is twofold. Firstly, to explore whether there are changes in the patterns of women's participation in the mining industry during the strong demand period between 2006 and 2009-10. Secondly, to identify from EOWA reports, insights into successful, industry-level initiatives aimed at encouraging women's participation in mining. In doing so, the study hopes to contribute insights into policy measures that assist with improving women's workforce participation in the face of predicted labour shortages.

### 3. An Overview of Australian Data on Mining Employment and Earnings

Mining industry employment patterns are dominated by male, full-time employment. Table 1 provides mining industry employment data for August 2009 and August 2011. The former year is provided as a point of comparison with information contained in EOWA reports for the 2009-10 reporting period, which forms the basis of our later discussion. The latter is provided as the most recent available data at the time of writing. Male full-time employment accounted for 85.2 per cent and 83.8 per cent of the mining industry in 2009 and 2011 respectively. Part-time employment among both men and women accounted for a total of 2.6 per cent and 4.0 per cent for these two periods. As a point of comparison, full-time employment across the Australian workforce accounted for approximately 70 per cent of employment, with approximately 16.2 per cent of employed men and 45.8 per cent of employed women working part-time (ABS, 2011a). Thus, over the past two years, part-time employment in mining might be considered as growing quickly from a low base.

Earnings data included in Table 2 show that mining's image as a high-paying industry is deserved. Men and women employed in the industry earn premiums compared with their counterparts in other industries. When hourly earnings are considered, men working full-time in the mining industry earn approximately 52.3 per cent more than average male earnings across Australia. Women's earnings in the industry also compare relatively favourably with other industries, being 37.2 per cent more than the average hourly cash earnings for other women across Australia. Despite its relatively masculine profile, the raw gender-wage ratio based on average hourly cash earnings in the mining industry (0.812) appears more favourable when compared with some other relatively feminised industries such as financial and insurance services (0.713), professional, scientific and technical services (0.789) and health care and social assistance (0.798). It does, however, fall below the national average of 0.899.

**Table 1: Mining Industry Employees by Sex, Full-time and Part-time Employment and Occupational Classification, Australia, 2009 and 2011**

	Males (thousands)			
	August 2009		August 2011	
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
Managers	14.17	-	15.85	-
Professionals	21.01	-	28.31	0.89
Technicians and trades workers	41.16	1.76	53.59	0.36
Community and personal service workers	-	-	0.49	-
Clerical and administrative workers	5.35	-	8.32	0.5
Sales workers	0.58	-	0.27	-
Machinery operators and drivers	52.06	0.97	70.68	0.37
Labourers	6.28	-	12.0	0.18
<b>Total</b>	<b>140.60</b>	<b>2.73</b>	<b>189.46</b>	<b>2.3</b>

	Females (thousands)			
	August 2009		August 2011	
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
Managers	2.26	-	2.4	0.19
Professionals	4.97	0.27	5.87	1.26
Technicians and trades workers	0.49	-	3.01	-
Community and personal service workers	-	-	0.82	-
Clerical and administrative workers	7.63	2.0	11.34	4.61
Sales workers	-	-	-	-
Machinery operators and drivers	3.62	-	3.94	-
Labourers	0.53	-	-	0.74
<b>Total</b>	<b>19.5</b>	<b>2.27</b>	<b>27.39</b>	<b>6.81</b>

Source: ABS (2011c)

**Table 2: Average Hourly Ordinary Time Cash Earnings for Full-time Adult Employees by Sex and Raw Gender-wage Ratio by Industry, Australia May 2010**

	Male \$	Female \$	Raw Gender- wage Ratio
Mining	50.40	40.90	0.812
Manufacturing	29.70	25.80	0.869
Electricity, gas, water and waste services	38.60	34.60	0.896
Construction	32.00	28.10	0.878
Wholesale trade	29.30	26.70	0.911
Retail trade	24.60	23.50	0.955
Accommodation and food services	23.20	21.90	0.944
Transport, postal and warehousing	31.10	29.20	0.939
Information, media and telecommunications	40.80	33.20	0.814
Financial and insurance services	46.40	33.10	0.713
Rental, hiring and real estate services	30.30	25.70	0.848
Professional, scientific and technical services	38.40	30.30	0.789
Administrative and support services	30.50	25.70	0.843
Public administration and safety	33.90	33.00	0.973
Education and training	38.80	35.60	0.918
Health care and social assistance	38.70	30.90	0.798
Arts and recreation services	27.70	25.30	0.913
Other services	26.80	25.50	0.951
<b>All industries</b>	<b>33.10</b>	<b>29.80</b>	<b>0.899</b>

Source: ABS (2010), Table 1.1

In addition to providing a context for the following discussion, the data in table 2 suggest that despite perceptions that mining contributes to Australia's gender pay gap, it appears unlikely that pay rates are a deterrent to women working in the industry. While there is an (unadjusted) gap between men's and women's earnings in the industry, women working in the mining industry are still relatively well paid compared to other industries. The data in Table 1, however, suggest that patterns of work in the industry differ markedly from accommodating women's traditional pattern of combining unpaid

household work with part-time paid employment. This is a matter which we discuss further after considering insights from EOWA reports.

#### 4. Method

This study deals with two specific questions. First, do EOWA reports indicate any change in the patterns of women's employment in the mining industry between 2006 and 2009-10? Associated with this question are ancillary questions: Is there evidence to indicate greater representation of women in the mining industry during this five-year period? Do any changes in the aggregate representation of women reflect their participation in non-traditional and leadership roles within the industry? Second, do EOWA reports provide insights into successful industry-level initiatives to encourage women's participation in mining? Associated with this question is whether an analysis of EOWA reports suggests the existence of possible mechanisms to facilitate improvements in women's representation in the mining workforce and, if so, whether these mechanisms have relevance to other industries and sectors?

The approach taken to these questions is to examine available data from EOWA reports to explore women's patterns of employment in the mining industry and, by comparing 2006 and 2009-10 reports, to assess whether there has been a change in this pattern during five years of, mostly, buoyant product demand. This is done with reference to the key data requested in EOWA reports. It is followed by a comparison of the outcomes contained in EOWA reports with the recommendations included in the *Unearthing New Resources* report to assess whether there is evidence of systematic attempts at an industry level to improve women's participation in the mining industry.

EOWA is a Commonwealth statutory authority whose role is to administer the *Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act, 1999*. This requires all non-government and not-for-profit organisations that employ 100 or more staff to establish a six-step workplace program to remove barriers to women entering and advancing in their organisations. Each organisation is required to report its progress on an annual basis to EOWA. Organisations may request a waiver from reporting if they have been compliant with the legislative requirements for the previous three years. This waiver can be granted for a fixed period, usually of one or two years.

The number of reports available for the two reporting periods considered in this study has been affected by the granting of waivers to some organisations. EOWA does not provide an industry classification for organisations that receive a waiver. One hundred and forty-five organisations received waivers for periods of one or two years in 2003-04, 115 in 2004-05, 116 in 2008-09,

and 102 in 2009-10. No mining industry organisations were reported as non-compliant in the annual reports for these periods. As a result of the waiving provisions it can be somewhat difficult to gain an overall picture of a specific industry 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.

**Table 3: 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
<b>Total</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>78</b>

Source: Compiled from individual company reports downloaded from the EOWA online searchable database of Annual Equal Opportunity reports, at: [http://www.eowa.gov.au/Research\\_And\\_Resources.asp#Resources](http://www.eowa.gov.au/Research_And_Resources.asp#Resources)

For the purposes of this study, all company reports submitted to EOWA in 2006 and in the 2009-10 reporting period that were designated as mining, were examined. Each report was examined to determine:

- The number of women employed, the level at which they were employed, and the types of roles they occupied;
- The range of strategies that were reported; and
- How the reported strategies appeared when mapped against the recommendations in the *Unearthing New Resources* report commissioned by the MCA.

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) of the companies in the mining sectoral division (Table 3). This is likely to be the most relevant classification linked with the Australian Minerals Council.

The group classification shown in Table 4 provides further details of the sectors within which the reporting organisations operate.

**Table 4: Number of Companies from the ANZSIC Group Classifications of the Mining Sector Reporting to EOWA in 2006 and 2010**

ANZSIC Subdivision	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 nec	5	3
Mineral exploration services	1	1
Mining	0	3
Mining nec	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 and Zinc Ore Mining	0	2

Source: Compiled from individual company reports downloaded from the EOWA online searchable database of Annual Equal Opportunity reports, at: [http://www.eowa.gov.au/Research\\_And\\_Resources.asp#Resources](http://www.eowa.gov.au/Research_And_Resources.asp#Resources)

As might be expected, the majority of the reports were from Western Australia, followed by Queensland and then New South Wales, with the smallest number of organisations reporting from Tasmania. There was considerable variation in company size, as can be seen in Table 5.

**Table 5: Company Size of the Mining Sector Organisations Reporting to EOWA in 2006 and 2010**

Company Size, Number of Employees	Number of Companies	
	2006	2010
<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>

Source: Compiled from individual company reports downloaded from the EOWA online searchable database of Annual Equal Opportunity reports, at: [http://www.eowa.gov.au/Research\\_And\\_Resources.asp#Resources](http://www.eowa.gov.au/Research_And_Resources.asp#Resources)

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. While 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 whether a strategy being reported was specifically targeted at women. As noted earlier, organisations can apply to EOWA for a reporting waiver, which can result in delays in initiatives being reported. This has constrained our data collation and analysis as we are comparing aggregate data compiled from reports from a changing sample of organisations that have both voluntary and free-form elements.

Additionally, while a report pro forma is provided to organisations by EOWA, there is considerable variation regarding how the required information is presented. The EOWA reporting format does not require (or suggest) the use of Australia New Zealand Classification of Occupations. The sample report provided by EOWA contains a table for presenting data on the composition of a company's workforce across seven categories of different organisational roles (board, senior executives, senior managers, managers, administrative staff, sales staff and service staff). However, each company customises the table, and the number of categories used by individual companies in their 2006 reports ranged from one to 16, and in the 2010 reports ranged from

four to 19 categories. This variation makes it difficult to collate data on women's representation in specific roles in a systematic, comprehensive manner. However, organisations included in this analysis used broadly similar approaches for classifying occupations, making possible the aggregation of data into the categories discussed below.

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

Finally, there are limitations associated with the annual timeframe of reporting, such that some companies may elect only to report back on the initiatives that they have implemented in the year of reporting, while 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 is not included in a report, it is ambiguous as to whether the policy or strategy has not been implemented, or whether it has been implemented but remains unreported. For example, 19.2 per cent of companies in 2010 reported including an Equal Opportunity statement in their employment advertisements. However, it is possible that a number of the remaining 80.8 per cent of companies also use equal-opportunity statements, but have reported in previous years. Thus, by sampling the EOWA reports the number of companies using equal-opportunity statements may be underestimated. Another limitation of EOWA reporting is that the companies do not always report under the same name each year; this is 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 study, we have collated information and data from all of the reports submitted in 2006 and all of 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 that were reporting.

In the following discussion, we frequently refer to the percentage of organisations in 2010 and 2006 that report specific workplace characteristics. These percentages are derived as a proportion of the 62 organisations that reported specific characteristics in 2006 and the 78 reports submitted in 2010. In some cases, this means that the percentages refer to all 62 or 78 organisations. In other cases, where the organisations have not reported on a specific characteristic, the percentages refer to a smaller group of companies. The number of organisations reporting on specific occupational categories is noted under the relevant figures below.

### 5. EOWA Reports—Workplace Profile

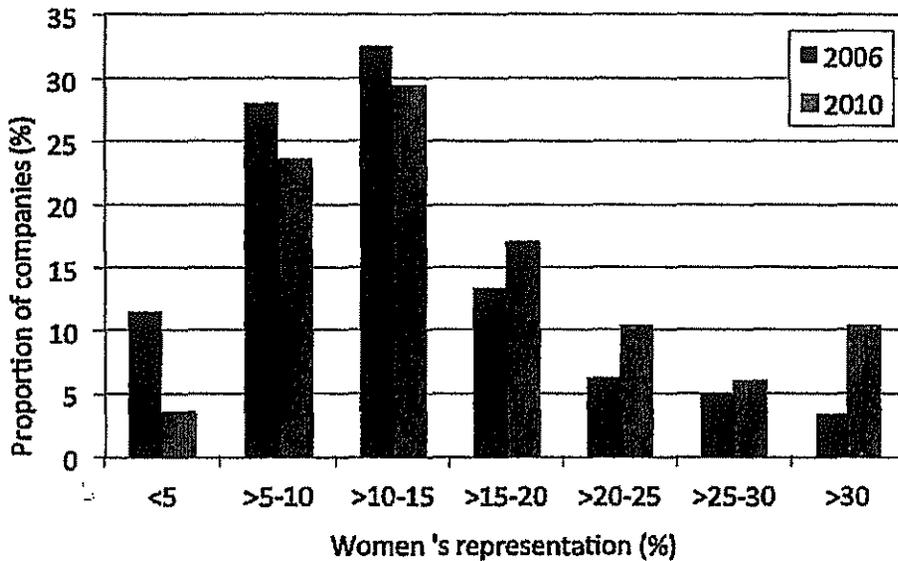
Of the companies reporting to EOWA in 2010, 7.7 per cent did not fully complete the workplace profile (that is, provide a breakdown with some detail on the percentage of women at different levels or in different types of roles in the organisation), compared with 25.8 per cent in 2006. In 2010, five companies with less than 100 employees who, therefore, did not have a statutory requirement to meet EOWA reporting requirements completed the EOWA reporting process. In 2006, only one such organisation completed an EOWA report. In 2010, all companies reported the number of women and men employed in their organisations. In 2006, only one company failed to report the overall representation of women in their organisation. The level of reporting allowed some basic statistics on women's representation to be extracted and recorded for each organisation.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics estimated employment in the mining industry in August 2009 at 165,100 persons, of whom 21,770 or 13.1 per cent were females (see Table 1). In comparison, the total number of staff represented by the EOWA reports was 55,309 in 2006 and 95,506 in 2010. This suggests that approximately 58 per cent of mining industry employees were covered in the 2009-10 reporting period. The overall representation of women in the two EOWA totals reported was 12.4 per cent in 2006, increasing to 14.8 per cent in 2010. These estimates appear to be broadly consistent with the ABS estimate of the proportion of the mining workforce that is female.

The representation of female employees ranged from 2 per cent to 38 per cent 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 per cent and 66.7 per cent respectively. It should be noted that the 66.7 per cent female representation is from a small organisation—less than 20 people—and that women are over-represented in administrative positions.

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

**Figure 1: Women’s Representation in the Workforce of the Companies Reporting to EOWA in 2006 and 2010**



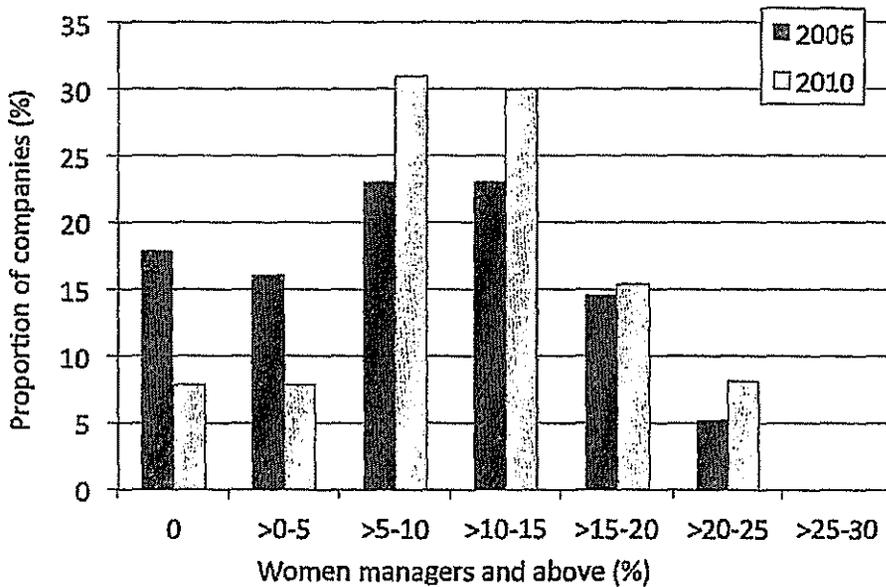
Note: n= 62 out of 62 reporting organisations in 2006, and 78 out of 78 reporting organisations in 2010

***Women’s Representation in Management and Executive Roles***

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

management and executive positions 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 per cent in 2006 to 11.9 per cent in 2010. However, in 2010, 7.8 per cent of companies reported having no women in management or more senior roles, compared with 17.9 per cent in 2006 (Figure 2). In 2006, 33.9 per cent of companies reported having 5 per cent or less of women in management or more senior roles; this decreased to 15.6 per cent in 2010. Correspondingly, the proportion of companies reporting having more than 5 per cent of women in senior roles increased from 66.1 per cent to 84.4 per cent in 2010. However, the range of women's representation in senior roles remained unchanged from a minimum of zero per cent to a maximum of 25 per cent in both years. Thus 25 per cent appears to remain a ceiling for women's representation in senior roles.

**Figure 2: Women's Representation in Management and Executive Roles in the Companies Reporting to EOWA in 2006 and 2010**

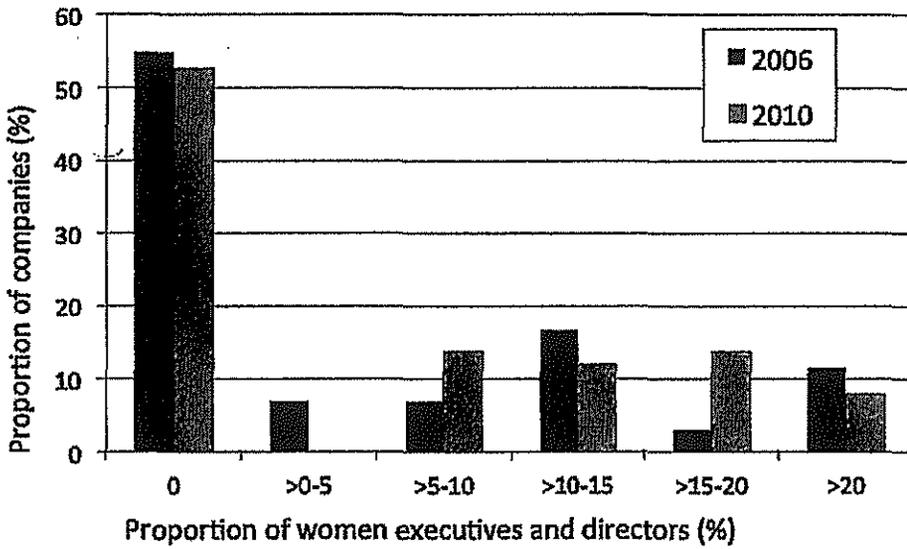


Note: n = 56 out of 62 reporting organisations in 2006, and 77 out of 78 reporting organisations in 2010

A smaller percentage 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 no women in director, CEO and executive roles was similar in both years at 54.8 per cent in 2006 and 52.6 per cent 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 per cent in 2006 to 7.5 per cent in 2010.

**Figure 3: Women’s Representation in Director, CEO, and Executive Roles in the Companies Reporting to EOWA in 2006 and 2010**

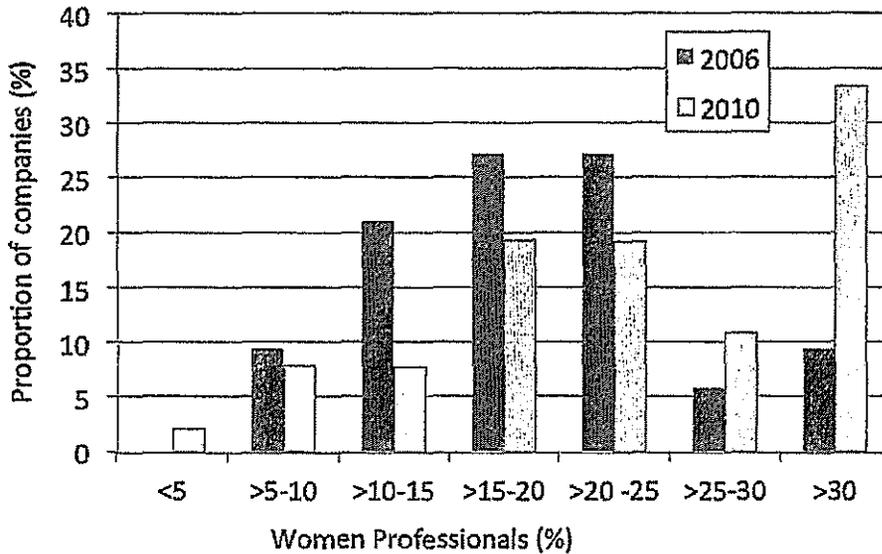


Note: n=42 out of 62 reporting organisations in 2006, and 57 out of 78 reporting organisations in 2010

**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 per cent in 2006 to 69.2 per cent in 2010. The company average representation of women in professional roles increased from 19.6 per cent in 2006 to 24.2 per cent in 2010. However, the number of companies reporting 5 per cent or fewer women in professional roles increased from zero in 2006 to two in 2010 (Figure 4). Of these two companies, one did not report to EOWA in 2006, and the other did not report the proportion of women professionals in that year. Thus, we cannot ascertain whether or not the proportion of women in professional roles in these companies has changed. The proportion of companies employing more than 25 per cent of women in professional roles increased from 15.2 per cent in 2006 to 44.2 per cent in 2010.

**Figure 4: Women's Representation in Professional Roles in the Companies Reporting to EOWA in 2006 and 2010**

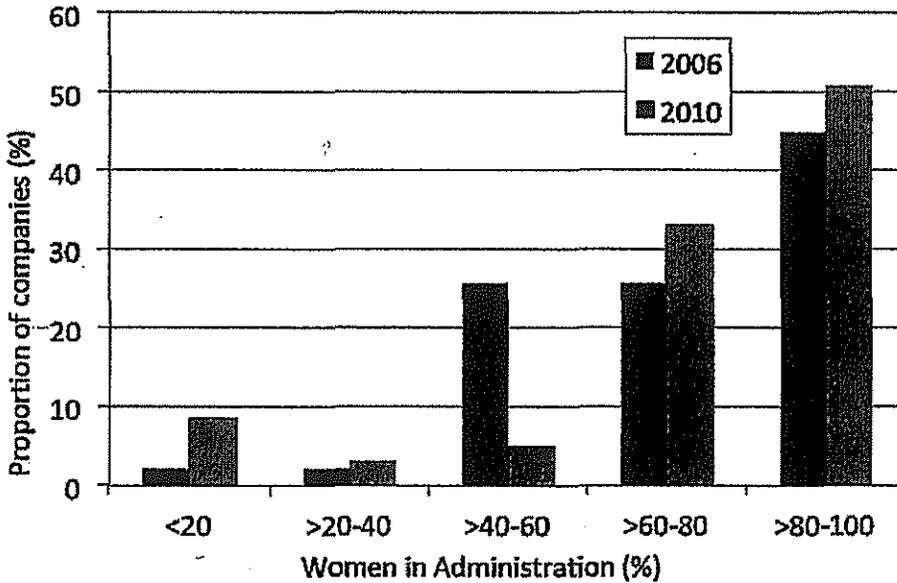


Note: n= 33 out of 62 reporting organisations in 2006, and 54 out of 78 reporting organisations in 2010

### *Women's Representation in Administrative Roles*

Organisations generally use their own occupational classification systems for reporting purposes in their EOWA submissions. 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 per cent in 2006 and 78.2 per cent 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, being 73.7 per cent in 2006 and 75.2 per cent in 2010. The proportion of companies reporting from 40 to 60 per cent of women in administration roles decreased from 25.6 per cent in 2006 to 4.9 per cent in 2010 (Figure 5). However, the representation of women increased in all other categories (<20 per cent; >20-40 per cent; >60-80 per cent; and >80-100 per cent) (Figure 5).

**Figure 5: Women’s Representation in Administrative Roles in the Companies Reporting to EOWA in 2006 and 2010**

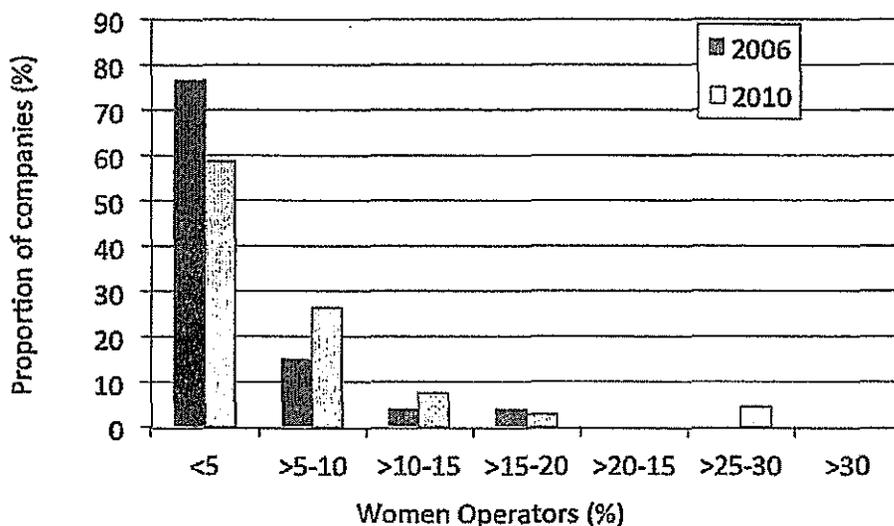


Note: n= 43 out of 62 reporting organisations in 2006, and 61 out of 78 reporting organisations in 2010

***Women’s Representation in Operator Roles***

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

**Figure 6: Women's Representation in Operator Roles in the Companies Reporting to EOWA in 2006 and 2010**

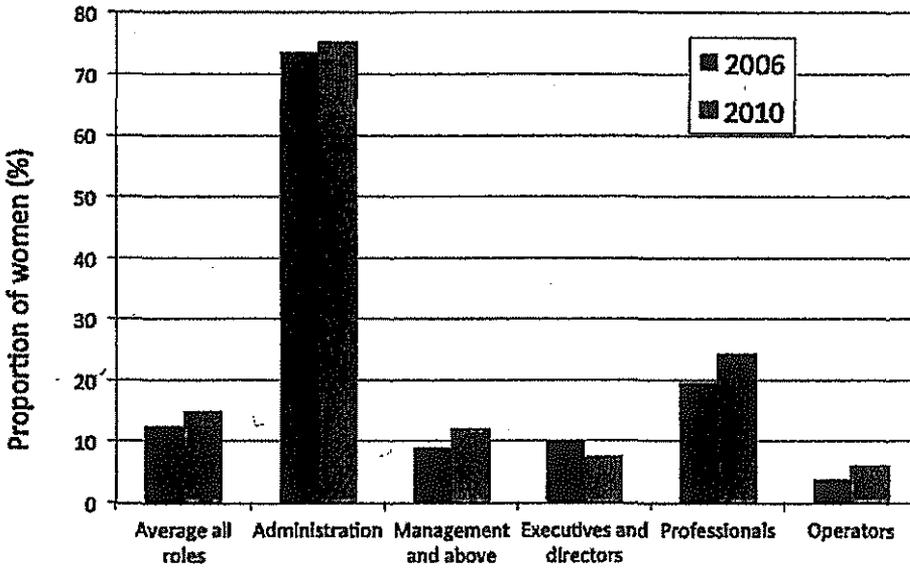


Note: n= 26 out of 62 reporting organisations in 2006, and 41 out of 78 reporting organisations in 2010

### *Women's Representation in Traditional and Non-traditional Roles*

Figure 7 shows the company average representation of women in various roles in the companies reporting to EOWA in 2006 and 2010. The figure is included to enable us 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 per cent) in the administration roles in which they have traditionally been well-represented. In sharp contrast, women's average representation for all roles was less than 20 per cent, and their representation in management, executive and director 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 were available, but their participation was still considerably less than half. Women's representation was least in operator roles, also traditionally male roles within the industry.

**Figure 7: Women’s Representation in Various Roles in the Companies Reporting to EOWA in 2006 and 2010**



**6. Recommended Strategies from the *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 an industry level. The key areas covered by the recommendations included:

- Industry leadership
- Attraction strategies
- Recruitment strategies
- Workplace policies, systems and processes (including the 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. Because of the broad nature of many of the 2010 reports this proved to be challenging, as insufficient detail was available to facilitate the accurate mapping of the strategies. However, some key themes and details did emerge from the 2010 reports, as discussed below.

### *Industry Leadership*

As might be expected, the EOWA reports, based on company data, were a poor source of evidence of industry leadership contributing to increasing women's representation in the resources industry. This was not a requested area for reporting and, consequently, little activity was reported in this area. This might be a specific area of activity better investigated through industry-level reports or media releases.

### *Attraction and Recruitment*

The employment overview provided in Table 1 suggests that the mining industry has marginally increased the percentage of its employees who are female, and the EOWA reporting data above also demonstrate some success in this area, particularly among administrative staff. The EOWA reports provide some insights into the strategies employed by individual companies that have contributed to these outcomes.

In 2010, 70.5 per cent of companies reported that they recruited new staff, and 65.4 per cent of companies reported that they recruited women. However, only 42.3 per cent of companies provided information on their recruitment strategies. The majority of these respondents (28.2 per cent of all reporting companies) reported that their recruitment was merit-based. Of all reporting companies, 23.1 per cent of companies reported using gender-specific recruitment strategies which included measures such as:

- ensuring that women were represented in the recruitment shortlist for all manager-level positions, and setting targets for female workforce participation;
- rebranding to increase their focus on attracting women into non-traditional roles through redesign of a company website, the main source of recruitment advertising;
- featuring images of women in media releases to the local press and in internal and external advertisements; and
- targeting university career fairs and industry events promoting benefits such as paid maternity leave, career planning and flexible working conditions.

Advertisements outlining company values and culture, and promoting diversity and work-life balance were also noted. One company evaluated its external recruitment consultants based on the diversity of the shortlisted candidates they provided.

One of the more frequent gender-specific recruitment strategies was to include an Equal Opportunity statement in job advertisements, as reported by 19.2 per cent of companies in 2010. Of the companies reporting in 2010, 20.5 per cent reported that the global financial crisis had a negative impact on the recruitment of all staff, with the possible implication that opportunities to employ increased numbers of women were consequently curtailed.

### ***Consultation with women employees***

Companies reported a range of different strategies for consulting with women employees (Figure 8). Of all the companies reporting in 2010, only 21.8 per cent identified methods of consultation that were specifically targeted at women. The most commonly reported method for consultation was through staff surveys (24.4 per cent), though only 7.7 per cent of companies reported that they implemented surveys specifically for women in their organisation. The second most frequent method of consultation (19.2 per cent) was through group meetings such as toolbox meetings or regular meetings between managers and (or) supervisors and staff, although these meetings generally did not involve gender-specific consultation.

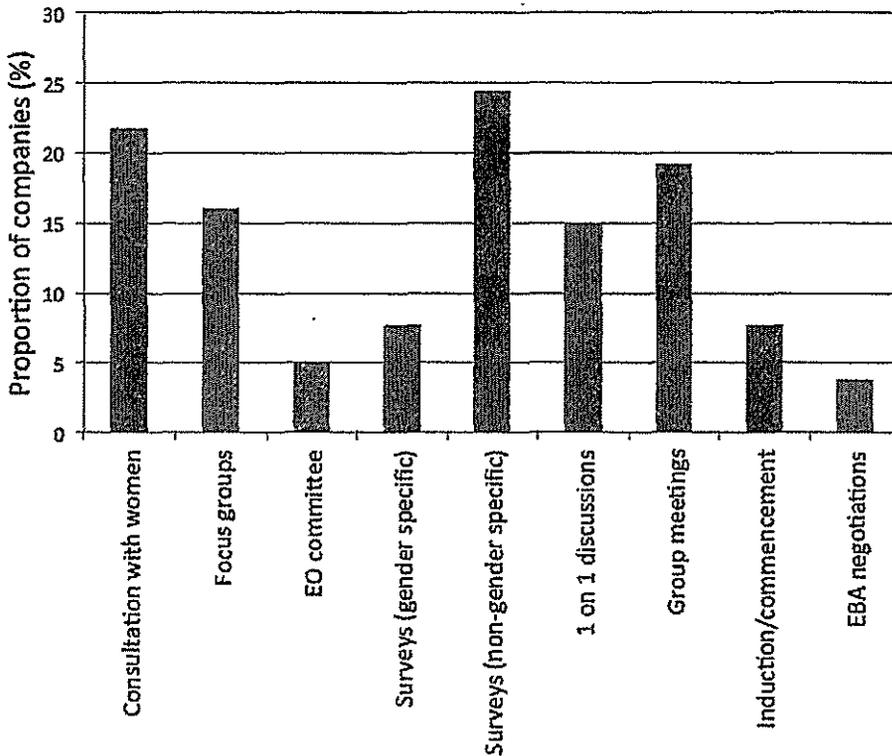
Fifteen per cent of companies reported consultation through one-on-one discussions between managers or human resources (HR) representatives and employees in the organisation; some companies included performance-evaluation and career-planning meetings as a consultation process. In the reporting, this 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. Relatively few—only 7.7 per cent—of companies reported consulting with women at induction or commencement, and 5.1 per cent and 3.8 per cent respectively through Equal Opportunity (EO) committees or Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA) processes. Available evidence suggests that purposeful information gathering and consultation with women employees as a possible mechanism for identifying strategies for improving their retention in the mining workforce remains very limited.

### ***Promotion, transfer and termination***

Of the companies reporting to EOWA in 2010, 78.2 per cent reported that they promoted or transferred staff, and 65.4 per cent reported that they promoted or transferred women. Of all the companies reporting, only 11.5 per cent reported gender-specific promotion or transfer practices. Examples of such practices include ensuring a diverse interview panel, introducing a formal talent-review process and establishing selection criteria with a decreased emphasis on years of experience (which can disadvantage women applicants). Another strategy was to implement a program to increase the

visibility of internal career opportunities and career-development activities and paths. One company reported using senior women as role models in manager-training programs.

**Figure 8: Proportion of the Companies Reporting Different Strategies for Consultation with Women, 2010**



A substantial proportion of the companies (60.3 per cent) reported that some employees left through resignation, retirement or termination. Less than two-thirds (64.1 per cent) of companies reported conducting exit interviews.

### *Training and development*

A large percentage (93.6) of companies reporting in 2010 provided professional development or training for staff. A number of these (44.9 per cent) quantified the number of women receiving developmental opportunities. A large number of companies (44.9 per cent) reported that their training programs were for both male and female employees, and only 6.4 per cent of companies reported gender-specific programs or practices. The practice of succession

planning was reported in 45 per cent of companies, but very few companies noted gender as a consideration in this planning. Only 15.4 per cent of companies reported a formal mentoring scheme and, again, these were generally not gender-specific programs. Only 34.6 per cent of companies reported formal performance assessment or career review processes.

### *Flexible work*

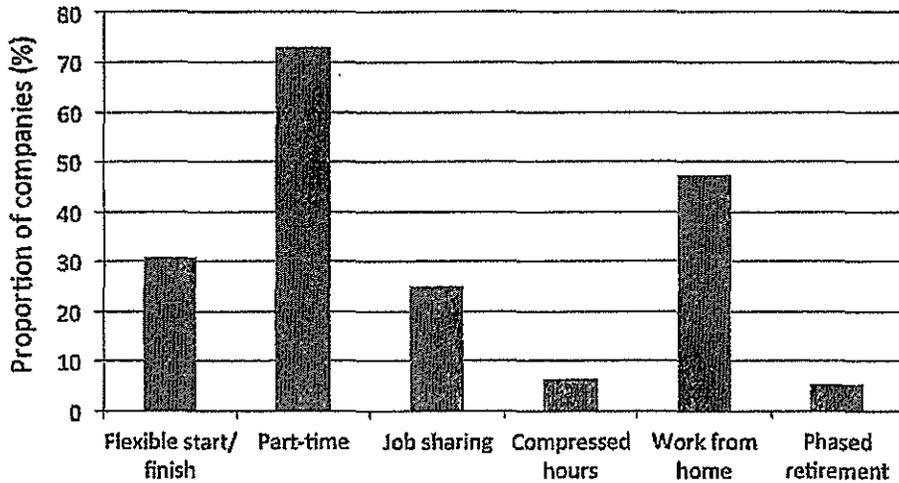
A very large percentage (93.6) of companies reported providing flexible work options for their employees (Figure 9). However, only 29.5 per cent of the companies quantified the number of staff who accessed the range of available options. Part-time staff members were employed in 73.1 per cent of companies in 2010; and 47.4 per cent of companies offered their workers an opportunity to work from home. Flexible start and finish times were offered by 30.8 per cent of companies and 25 per cent reported providing job-sharing opportunities. Only small percentages of companies reported offering compressed hours (6.4) or phased retirement (5.1).

When reporting the available flexible work options, companies generally did not distinguish between the accessibility of these options for staff employed in office-based roles compared with those in site-based roles. Neither did they 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 per cent of companies offered this.

### *Conditions of service*

Of all the companies reporting to EOWA in 2010, 28.2 per cent reported that they revised their conditions of service and 34.6 per cent reported a process of salary review. Perhaps curiously, 39.7 per cent of companies reported that their conditions of service were the same for all employees irrespective of their gender (for example, that their salary scales ensured that male and female employees employed at the same level received the same remuneration), and this alone could be considered a cause for some further detailed research. However, only 33.8 per cent of companies reported conducting a pay-equity review, and 25.6 per cent of companies reported a gender pay gap. Just 7.7 per cent of companies reported a zero gender pay gap, although some of these companies did not appear to consider that women consistently being employed at lower levels of their organisation might constitute a gender pay gap.

**Figure 9: Proportion of the Companies Reporting Various Flexible Work Options for Employees, 2010**



### *Harassment and Sex-based Harassment*

In the 2010 reports, 79.5 per cent of companies reported having communicated harassment policies to their staff. This communication most commonly occurred through EEO (Equal Employment Opportunity) and (or) bullying and harassment education, as part of an induction process (61.5 per cent of companies). About one in eight (12.8 per cent) companies reported revising their policies and procedures for dealing with harassment in the 2009-10 reporting period, and the same proportion reported that employees were aware of company grievance procedures. Designated contact officers for raising such issues were reported by 35.9 per cent of companies. Over half (55.1 per cent) of the companies indicated whether or not they had received any complaints, and 23.1 per cent reported that there had been one or more complaints in that year. Relatively few (12.8 per cent) of the company reports indicated that any complaints had been dealt with successfully. Only 14.1 per cent of companies identified any issues related to harassment in their reports.

### *Pregnancy, Potential Pregnancy, and Breastfeeding*

Many of the companies (74.4 per cent) reporting to EOWA in 2010 indicated that they had a parental-leave policy, and 61.5 per cent reported that staff commenced or returned from parental leave in 2010. Around two-thirds (65.4 per cent) of companies indicated that they made flexible work options available to women returning from parental leave. Around one-third (34.6 per cent) of companies discussed breastfeeding facilities in their reports,

but only 24.4 per cent of them reported that breastfeeding facilities were available at their workplaces. Only 16.7 per cent of companies noted issues associated with pregnancy, potential pregnancy, or breastfeeding.

## 7. Discussion and Conclusions

As noted in description of EOWA reporting requirements, there are difficulties with the completeness of the data presented in the discussion and this raises difficulties with drawing inferences for the mining industry in general. This is particularly the case if one or two companies with thousands of employees introduce gender-specific policies, as the above figures are relevant to a number of companies, rather than to the number of employees covered by specific policies.

Despite this, however, there is little evidence of targeted policies or of successful outcomes to suggest that gender-related measures are a widespread strategy for addressing skills or labour shortages. For example, it might be considered surprising that less than two-thirds of the companies that completed an EWOA report stated that they recruited any women at all during the 2009-10 reporting period, and only 21.3 per cent reported on any gender-specific recruitment strategies. These measures do not appear commensurate with industry-wide efforts to devise policies that engage with and develop potential but non-traditional sources of labour supply.

The range of reported policies aimed at improving the retention of women within the mining industry appears limited and, in terms of frequency, is even smaller than those aimed at recruitment. In a context of acute labour and skill shortages it is surprising that relatively few companies report the existence of policies or processes such as a having gender-specific promotion or transfer practices (11.5 per cent), mentoring schemes for women (15.4 per cent) or gender-specific consultation processes (21.8 per cent). In view of the relative expense of recruiting and training new employees, such measures would, at least at face value, appear to be ready strategies that draw on expertise and insights from current employees.

The key outcome is that while there have been some recent small increases in the percentage of women employed in the mining industry, women remain over-represented in traditional feminised occupations within the mining industry and underrepresented in decision making and operational roles. This may reflect a high degree of self-selection by women who choose not to enter the industry or to exit the industry once they have gained some experience. However, despite significant rhetoric on labour and skill shortages and an associated need for gender-inclusive policies and practices in the

mining industry, the available evidence suggests that proactive programs by many mining companies to address women's employment preferences remain very limited. This suggests that progress in this area is likely to be the outcome of initiatives within particular companies, rather than of an industry-wide effort. There appears to be considerable scope for further improvements in developing recruitment and retention policies that may improve the mining industry as an attractive place of employment for women, and for systematic reporting processes that demonstrate successful outcomes that might be applied across the industry. Currently, it appears that while there are likely to be some successful strategies occurring within individual companies, these appear neither well-reported nor systematically implemented across the industry. This does not augur well for the equity and economic considerations which might be considered as the key reasons for ensuring successful strategies for women's employment participation in the mining industry. In summary, the evidence in EOWA reports seems at odds with strategies that might be expected in a context of projected serious labour and skill shortages.

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