

The WIMNet Diversity Questionnaire -Summary of responses to date
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Introduction

In late April of 2003 The AusIMM Women In Mining Network (WIMNet) distributed a letter, brief questionnaire and the AusIMM Diversity Policy to Companies within the Minerals Industry requesting feedback and views on diversity. The questionnaire asked how each company perceives diversity, how diverse they feel their companies, whether they offer paid Maternity/Paternity Leave, and what they see as being challenges to developing a more diverse workforce in the mining industry. WIMNet wish to canvass the views of member companies on diversity and promote discussion and strategies for improvement. The outcomes will help us to keep encouraging diversity and establish a policy position on the issue. ABS Data from the 2001 census shows that women comprise 45% of the Australian Labour Force and only 13.6% of the mining industry. Little data is available on other minority groups in the industry. The WIMNet would like to see an industry workforce that reflects the communities in which it operates.

The WIMNet will endeavour to keep members informed of the progress of the questionnaire and our findings. The WIMNet will also be thanking those who have responded to the questionnaire and keeping them informed as to the progress and findings also. If anyone is aware of or has any information on Company Policy regarding Diversity and Maternity/Paternity Leave, please forward them and your views to us. If people would like to know if the questionnaire has been sent to their company, or would like to have the questionnaire sent to their company, please contact us via policy@ausimm.com.au.

What level of response was received?

To date we have received 20 responses from 114 that were sent out (17.5 % response rate). Responses are still being received. This is promising and WIMNet hopes that responses will continue to be received. 14,220 people in the workforce are represented by the responses to date. 12.38% of these 14,220 people are female. The responses are from companies operating predominantly only in Australia. The sample represents a broad range of mining activities from coal mining, exploration and mining to smelting and minerals processing. The indigenous workforce comprises 2.37% of the sample population and physically handicapped represent 0.07%. Answers often reflect the individual character and issues pertinent to that particular company and even that particular sector of the industry. For the information and responses to the questionnaire to be better interpreted and understood, it helps us to have a profile of the companies and hence the population represented by the responses. This information may also help The AusIMM in its work studying employment trends, structural/cultural changes within the industry and to address issues for minerals sector professionals in the future.

What proportion of companies have a formal diversity policy?

45% of respondents have a formal policy to encourage diversity in their workforces. In some cases companies have an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Policy, while others have a formal diversity policy as well as an EEO Policy. Some comments received on this:

- However we do have a policy for equal opportunity which helps ensure sex, sexuality, race, colour, religion, age, marital status, pregnancy, political opinion, physical disability or intellectual impairment are not used as reasons for exclusion or preference in gaining employment
- The company has an EEO Policy and is developing anti-harassment/affirmative action and anti-discrimination policies
- Not related to workplace participation for women

Views on Diversity

Most responses showed that companies are supportive of diversity but do not limit defining diversity as addressing the gender imbalance present in the industry. The intent of the questionnaire was not to imply that the WIMNet is on a campaign to favour women, minority groups or to simply appear politically correct, but to try to understand how the industry perceives diversity and subsequently itself. Responses to the question that asks how the company defines diversity were overall very positive and reflected the individual cultures of the different companies. Several responses we would like to share are as follows

- "Different perspectives, skills and life experiences" ... " result from a workforce diverse in factors such as gender, race, age and ethnicity"
- "A diverse workforce has men and women of varied backgrounds and ethnicity and reflects the communities within which we operate. Diversity has a broader connotation than "women in the workforce"
- "We don't have a company definition of diversity. We aim to achieve an inclusive organisation in which individuals, irrespective of background, race, gender or disability, feel valued, comfortable and accepted"
- Diversity means ... "Valuing individual differences within the workforce and among key stakeholders, as a means of meeting needs and achieving business objectives"
- Diversity is "Not Defined,remains neutral to all community sectors"

Is diversity important to mining and exploration companies?

About 70% of respondents believe that increasing diversity in their workforce is important to their company. We have included a selection of responses that show the range of opinions regarding the relative importance of diversity.

- “Diversity in the workplace is important to ensure a true cross section of the community is able to contribute to the business, to attract and retain the best talent and to ensure minority groups are awarded opportunities based on fairness and merit”
- “We do not discriminate for or against any community sector. Encouragement or inclusion of a community sector above other community sectors is discrimination”
- “Diversity and the contribution of a diverse range of beliefs and characteristics brings various methods of working, experience and expertise to the workplace, thereby enhancing work practices and productivity to create a balanced, dynamic company”
- “Diversity leads to continuous improvement through the challenging of norms and status quo.”Our company “is committed to providing opportunities to all the groups that make up the communities in which it operates”
- “Place a great importance on servicing the needs of communities in which we operate- need a diversity of perspective’s and people to achieve goals.”

How do companies believe they fare with regard to diversity?

In general, companies felt that they were doing well in response to the question on how diverse the companies’ workforces were.

	<u>Number of responses</u>	
	<u>On Mine Sites?</u>	<u>Over the whole company?</u>
1- Reflects the communities within which you operate	5	4
> 1.925-Average on Mine Sites		
2- Doing well	5	7
> 2.275-Average over whole company		
2.5-	1	1
3- Could do better	3	7
4- Very low diversity	3	1
0- No response	3	0

Maternity, paternity and parental leave

30% of responding companies offer paid maternity and paternity leave or parental leave. There is a broad range of leave policies in place from no paid leave up to 14 weeks fully paid. As more responses are received we will endeavour to put together a more comprehensive understanding of the different options available regarding parental and family leave. Some responses:

- “Currently implementing six weeks full pay for maternity and 1 week full pay for paternity leave. Only for permanent employees with at least 12 months continuous service at this company”
- “No precedent in company”
- “Policy of 14 weeks full pay about to be introduced”
- “Position Paper has been put forward-paid maternity leave under consideration”
- “6 weeks parental leave”
- “12mths leave; 1mth paid on commencing and 1 mth on ceasing parental leave, long service accrual continues throughout parental leave (note: policy under review for improvement)”

Views on the main challenges to developing diverse workforce

The final question asked companies to tell us what they thought were the main challenges to developing a more diverse workforce. A lot of the responses reflect the underlying issues that the industry is facing regarding impending skills and human capital issues. The 2003 AusIMM Congress identified education and attractiveness of the industry as a career option to be a major issue. It is necessary to promote the industry as an attractive and rewarding career option to sustain and capture the future workforce of the minerals industry. If we can offer students and new professionals the support, information and assistance they need to develop rewarding, balanced careers and cope with their technical and professional responsibilities, then we ultimately encourage a diverse workforce within the industry. These responses are very interesting.

- “Getting the message across to the broader community that mining can provide rewarding careers and values a diverse workforce”
- “Attracting suitably qualified applicants from different demographic backgrounds, and overcoming stereotypes that continue to persist within the mining industry”
- “Diversity by itself has no merit. Removing barriers to free choice eg discrimination or unfair grounds is probably more to the point. Neutrality to all sectors and balance”
- “Finding people who want to work in the industry and having females in particular actually apply”
- “Including aboriginal people in relevant work by providing training opportunities”
- “Encouraging families to live at remote sites/regional centres- Employees prefer FIFO”
- “Attracting females to careers in the mining industry prior to tertiary education, recruiting females for non-traditional, professional mining roles”
- “Available pool of women in non traditional areas such as trades, Lack of attraction to the industry-image as a 'blokes' workplace, underlying attitudes/prejudice regarding women in the industry”
- “Understanding what you are really trying to do and not being influenced by politically correct people who think they know”
- “Managing our careers, especially isolated areas, entrenched attitudes, employee expectations, lack of integrated policies/programs”