

Women miners line-up for e-mentoring program

WOMEN working on remote mining, oil and gas projects will soon benefit from an industry e-mentoring program designed to increase gender diversity across the national resource sector.

The final details of the national e-mentoring program will be one of many agenda items as the Australian Women in Resources Alliance (AWRA) reference group meets in Perth today.

Comprising representatives from employers and government and industry bodies, AWRA seeks to connect women resource workers with both male and female mentors whose success and experience can offer guidance and support.

"We've been overwhelmed with expressions of interest from women who want direct access to leaders in the industry, which indicates the desire of students, jobseekers and professionals to take advantage of the abundant career opportunities the sector offers," AMMA executive director, industry Minna Knight says.

"The AWRA e-Mentoring Program will extend the benefits of mentoring to those women who have struggled with face-to-face mentoring due to their remote locations and non-traditional work schedules.

"The program's technology will guide them through a structured process supported by an integrated chat tool, video conferencing and various functions so both mentor and mentee get the most out of the relationship."

AWRA is facilitated by resource industry employer group AMMA with funding from the Australian Government's Critical Skills Investment Fund. The initiative is assisting industry to meet its skills demand through a greater attraction and retention of women workers.

Ms Knight says a recently completed national analysis of gender diversity in resource roles indicates that both industry and government must step-up their efforts to increase the participation of women from the current 13.4% to 25% by 2020, in line with AWRA's overarching goal.

"Industry forecasts are that more than 90,000 new jobs will be created on Australia's major resources and related construction projects by 2015 and women have a very important role to play in the development and operation of these projects," she says.

"If the industry is to meet it's true potential, we need to make a deliberate effort to mentor young women so they can go on to deliver an additional \$240 billion worth of projects sitting in the national pipeline.

"Complementing the AWRA e-Mentoring Program will be a targeted education campaign in the form of 'AWRA Way Forward Guides'. The guides will assist employers to create inclusive cultures, implement flexible work practices, engage with female jobseekers, improve living facilities and create greater career development opportunities for women."

The AWRA reference group meeting will take place ahead of the AMMA West Coast Conference on 24 October; a one-day event dedicated to a wide-range of workforce issues impacting resource operations in Australia's west.

MEDIA: For more information, contact Kylie Sully on 0409 781 580 or kylie.sully@amma.org.au. The AMMA West Coast Conference is open to the media, [click here](#) to view the program.