



# Women a valuable resource

## PUSH IS NEEDED TO INCREASE NUMBERS

By **TAMMY LEWIS**  
**GLADSTONE**

**WOMEN** in the resource industry seem to be part of an ongoing trend. In celebration of this current opportunity for women, the Australian Mines and Metals Association (AMMA) recently held a conference in Melbourne.

The Australian Women's Resource Alliance Conference was dedicated to increasing women's participation in the resource industry.

AMMA director of group services Tara Diamond said the feedback on the conference was extremely positive. "As the first professional event of its kind in the resource industry, the AWRA Conference is one part of AWRA's strategy to increase the number of women in the resource workforce from the current 15% to 25% by 2020," she said.

Ms Diamond said it was encouraging to see more than 200 professionals from across the Australian resource and allied industries at the event.

"We wanted the AWRA Conference program to focus on practical information," she said.

Some of the highlights discussed were how to develop a diversity strategy, flexible work arrangements and the retention of new parents.

Discussions also highlighted barriers to women's participation, such as unconscious bias. In Queensland it is estimated the resource industry will create 40,000 new jobs by 2016.

This outlines the importance of women working in the industry, according to Ms Diamond.

"Queensland has been one of the main locations for resource investment in the past few years and has about \$78 billion worth of projects at the "committed" stage.

"It's been proven that business benefits from a healthy mix of male and female workers."

Ms Diamond said AMMA believes that women have an important role to play in the future of the resource industry – both in their capacity to meet key skills demands and bring innovation to organisational practices.

"Perhaps most importantly we need to encourage more females to consider a

resource career when undertaking study," Ms Diamond said.

In the resource industry, she said generally women are outnumbered in traditionally

male-dominated roles.

"This tells us that the resource industry must continue to focus on increasing gender diversity, which is what AWRA is all about.

"There is enormous opportunity for women to enter highly skilled occupations in disciplines such as engineering, geology and skilled trades where they can benefit from a long and rewarding resource career."



**KEYNOTE SPEAKER:** AMMA director of group services Tara Diamond at the Australian Women's Resource Alliance Conference.  
Photo: Lucas Wroe