

THE WAY FORWARD GUIDE TO **IMPLEMENTING A DIVERSITY & INCLUSION STRATEGY**

Achieving the benefits of a diverse workforce requires a strategy that meshes with the organisation's overarching strategic objectives. Strategic planning and program implementation is necessary to achieve the broad organisational change that will enable an organisation to attain, maintain and reap the benefits of gender diversity and inclusion. This guide is intended to give resource industry leaders a blueprint for change that can be applied to organisations of any size.

This Way Forward Guide has been written and developed by the Australian Mines and Metals Association (AMMA) with support from the Australian Government and contributed to by Diversity Network as part of the Australian Women in Resources Alliance (AWRA) initiative.



AWRA is an industry-led initiative dedicated to helping employers attract, retain and reap the rewards of women in resources workplaces.



AWRA is driven by Australia's resource industry peak body, AMMA, and supported by the Australian Government through the National Resources Sector Workforce Strategy.



Diversity Network

Founded by Lucy Stocker in 2013, Diversity Network forms partnerships with smart companies that are committed to greater diversity within their teams. These companies are leading the way, and understand that top performance and productivity comes from having a diverse and inclusive workforce.

Diversity means being composed of differing elements, and organisational diversity specifically means having a workforce composed of different types of people.

AWRA is primarily concerned with enhancing gender diversity, however we acknowledge that diversity has a much broader definition and encompasses people of different ages, ethnicities, belief systems, abilities, sexual orientations and other qualities. The approach described herein can also act as a guide for employers developing and implementing a broader diversity strategy.

Gender diversity is reflected in the number of women employed in an organisation and the distribution of their participation across the organisation. AWRA understands gender **inclusion** to mean:

- The levels and influence of women in the organisation.
- Their engagement, involvement and contribution over time.

Inclusion means that people in organisations feel they belong, are valued and that they make a meaningful and impactful contribution to the organisation's success.

An organisational diversity and inclusion (D&I) program is often viewed as nothing more than a training course or a human resources initiative hoping to meet a target. Such an approach fails to take into account the structural and cultural factors within an organisation that inhibit diversity and inclusion, and the breadth and depth of change necessary to truly involve and appreciate diverse employees.

Achieving diversity and inclusion, particularly in a non-traditional industry such as the resources requires strategic thinking, policy translated into practice and a culture where diversity and inclusion are 'normal' in an organisation. Like the advances in workplace health and safety over the past decade, achieving diversity and inclusion requires comprehensive organisational change.

The necessary conditions and the processes for achieving successful change are well known. This document provides straightforward guidance for an organisation of any size, outlines each of the success factors and discusses how they specifically apply to a diversity and inclusion strategy.

Critical Success Factors for Organisational Change

1. A **shared purpose**, including a compelling business case for executive/senior management.
2. Active and visible **leadership** from the very top of the organisation.
3. Local and accountable sponsorship and leadership (particularly in larger organisations).
4. A comprehensive and **systematic approach** with a view to long-term sustainable change.
5. Effective program **planning and implementation**, including clear goals, milestones and deliverables, and specific, measured performance targets.
6. Allocation of adequate **resources**, including a Program Champion and Program Manager.
7. Regular, clear and influential **communication** that engages and influences the whole organisation.
8. Appropriate awareness and procedural **training** of all personnel.

1. Shared purpose and vision

Change begins at the top of an organisation with a shared understanding of the need for change and the desired future state.

The *vision* of the future organisation should be comprehensive and long-term (e.g. a 10-year strategy) and like all business strategies, plan for sustainability in the face of future change and risk. The vision should include targets for female participation at various levels and a date by which these targets will be achieved. The vision might also include ideas about the culture, attitudes and processes within the organisation (e.g. innovation based on diverse thinking, adaptability, corporate social responsibility, sustainability, community reflection and engagement).

While research and data form a compelling *case for change* (see list of resources at the end of this guide), it is important for an organisation to analyse its own business model and determine a purpose for improving (gender) diversity. Look back at *Way Forward Guide 01 Diversity as an Imperative for Business Leaders*, to see the business case of Anglo American Metallurgical Coal.

2. Active and visible leadership

Active and visible leadership from the very top of the organisation is critical. For example, the CEO could be formally recognised as the Champion of the program, and the Executive Team as active sponsors. Some (larger) organisations choose to create a Diversity Council to oversee the organisational change and to maintain the diversity strategy in the long term.

Executive support and involvement can provide benefits and mitigate problems/risks to the success of the organisational change and ongoing diversity and inclusion within the organisation. Leaders must have a personal stake in the outcome of the program and of at least some of the sub-projects. They must be actively involved in key decisions from the beginning and project their commitment (and model appropriate behaviours) in order to give the program credibility and influence the attitudes and behaviours of all employees.

3. Accountable local sponsorship and leadership

The influence of the CEO and Executive can be limited if the organisation is spread out geographically or functionally. The attitudes and behaviours of local leaders and managers typically have a stronger influence on employees than those of head office. Typically, they are empowered to reset employees' priorities and key tasks so they can become part of the project team or take part in project activities.

It is therefore critical that site/divisional managers buy in to the vision of the organisation and its change process, and be held accountable for the success of change under their influence. Local managers can demonstrate their commitment by appropriately allocating time/resources from within their area/division to the change activities, by role modelling the appropriate attitudes and behaviours, and by managing risks and issues within their control decisively.

4. A comprehensive and systematic approach

A gender D&I strategy is a form of strategic workforce planning and as such should consider the end-to-end process by which workers are brought to the organisation and become part of its normal operation.

There are a number of models of D&I to help in strategy development (see the resources list at the end of this guide). Some considerations detailed in other AWRA Way Forward Guides are:

- Building a brand as an employer of women at all levels and in all occupations.
- Developing and communicating an employee value proposition (EVP) for potential female employees for all levels and all occupations.
- Attracting, recruiting and 'onboarding' women using innovative strategies.
- Building an engaged and inclusive culture.
- Work-life strategies to support all employees, both male and female.
- Developing and retaining female employees.

A strategy may also include:

- Building a pipeline of female employees (e.g. by promoting resource industry occupations for young women and supporting their education/training and entry into the industry).
- Providing mentoring, coaching and/or sponsorship programs within the organisation to support, guide and advocate talented women.

D&I initiatives do not have to be expensive or complex, but they will need to be based on a thorough knowledge of the organisation's internal and external context. Creativity is essential, as is consultation with existing female employees.

5. Effective program planning and implementation

Project/program management is the application of knowledge, skills, tools and techniques to a set of planned activities to meet the required outputs and outcomes of the project/program.

It is the everyday business of organisations; a D&I program deserves no less rigour than any other program within the business.

The following describes an effective program management framework:

- The D&I program must have an implementation plan to guide the journey.
- The plan must be realistic and achievable given what else is happening within the organisation.
- Successful projects/programs are managed within the constraints of time, scope, cost and quality, and these four critical elements must be defined and monitored in the D&I program implementation.
- Effective program management includes:
 - Having enough of the right people involved.
 - Regular and meaningful communications to all stakeholders (internal and external).
 - Robust management of risks and issues.

6. Program resources

When planning an organisational change program, it is important to realise:

1. Projects/programs often fail when they are 'bolted on' to the organisation. That is, when the project takes place without any consideration that it will interact with and consume time and resources from ongoing operations. Often people are asked to be part of the project without any release from their existing (operational) responsibilities. Inevitably, the demands on them will be unsustainable and the project will break down.

Dedicated personnel (at least part of their time) are necessary for a D&I program to be effective. Once the D&I program is operating, however, every member of the organisation should have some responsibility and accountability for the operation of the program.

2. People with specific skills and also specific resources need to be (at least partially) allocated to the project. There are at least two critical roles in program implementation – Program Manager and Program Sponsor.

Program Manager

The Program Manager is responsible (depending upon the size of the organisation and the scope of the diversity program) for overseeing or carrying-out *planning, execution* and *closing* of the D&I implementation program (see previous section on effective program planning and implementation). The appointment of a skilled Program Manager with appropriate capacity (time) to implement the program is critical.

Program Sponsor

The Program Sponsor (usually a Senior Executive, if not the CEO) is responsible to the business for the success of the program.

It is the responsibility of the Program Sponsor to:

- Model and provide leadership on culture and values.
- Own the business case.
- Keep the projects aligned with the organisation's strategy.
- Govern project risks, and make and implement timely decisions.
- Ensure funds and resources are provided for the program.
- Focus on the realisation of outcomes/benefits.
- Support the Program Manager.
- Engage internal and external stakeholders.
- Exert pressure within the organisation to overcome resistance to the program, if necessary.

7. Communication

It is critical to communicate that the organisation is going through a process to increase the workforce participation of women, to all internal and external stakeholders who may affect or be affected by the change.

Communication can make or break an organisational change process, and implementing a D&I program is no exception.

Here are some pointers for effective communication during your program implementation. Develop a written communication plan with a mind to ensuring that all of the following occur:

1. As early as possible, communicate the reasons for increasing the participation of women in the business (the business case) in such a way that people understand the context, the purpose and the need.

2. Clearly communicate the vision, the mission and the objectives of the diversity program. Help people to understand how these changes will affect them personally. If you don't help with this process, people may come to their own conclusions, which may not be based on fact.
3. Communicate sooner rather than later. If the rumour mill is already in action, communication has come too late. Communicate all that is known about the program, the plans and the outcomes as soon as the information is available. Be concise and to the point. Make it clear that the details may change at a later date, because it is better to be open and honest rather than delay communication until all decisions are final.
4. Communicate consistently, frequently, and through multiple channels, including face-to-face, writing, video, training, focus groups, bulletin boards and Intranets. Recognise, however, that true communication is a 'conversation'; a two-way and real discussion must result. It cannot be just a presentation.
5. Hold interactive workshops and forums in which all employees can explore the changes together, while learning more. Use training as a form of interactive communication and as an opportunity for people to safely explore new behaviours and ideas about change and change management. All levels of the organisation must participate together, so that it is clear that everyone supports the change.
6. Provide answers to questions only if the answer is known. Leaders destroy their credibility when they provide incorrect information or appear to stumble or back-peddle, when providing an answer. It is much better to come back with a correct answer at a later time.
7. Make leaders and change sponsors available, daily when possible, to mingle with others in the workplace. The change leaders or sponsors need to spend time conversing one-on-one or in small groups with the people who are expected to make the changes. Leaders need to listen. Avoid defensiveness, excuses and hasty answers. Act with thoughtfulness.
8. Provide time for people to ask questions, request clarification and provide input. Anyone who has witnessed a leader communicate changes via a PowerPoint presentation to a large group without engaging in discussion will know how counter-productive this is for message acceptance.
9. Provide opportunities for people to network with each other both formally and informally, to share ideas about change and change management.
10. Publicly review the progress and success of the D&I program implementation and the program itself. Publicise rewards and recognition for positive approaches and achievements. Celebrate wins.

8. Train everyone in the organisation

Conscious processes to attract, retain, develop and include women in the workforce will require new skills and approaches from people responsible for managing and leading workers, and will require some people to examine and challenge their beliefs about women working in non-traditional occupations and roles.

Specialised personnel from HR, IR, marketing, and corporate communications will need to be trained in new work policies and procedures by which they put branding, attraction, recruitment, development and other tactics into action.

The entire workforce is also likely to need training to increase their awareness, understanding, acceptance, alignment and commitment (see below), including:

- Awareness of the D&I program and understanding the business case for increasing the participation of women in the workforce.
- Understanding of what an inclusive workplace looks like and its benefits to all employees and to the business.
- Understanding of new policies and procedures arising from the D&I program, and how they affect individuals in the organisation.
- Understanding of conscious and unconscious bias.
- Awareness of discrimination and harassment, obligations and company policy.

What Do You Want to Achieve by Communicating About Your Diversity & Inclusion Program?

Awareness

Individuals are made conscious of the fact that the organisation is going through a comprehensive change to increase the gender diversity and inclusion of its workforce.

Communication must be conspicuous

Understanding

Individuals develop a shared meaning of the change (the business case), and understand clearly that increasing diversity and inclusion does not put male employees at any disadvantage or inconvenience.

Communication must be unambiguous

Acceptance

Individuals internalise the change and have a more favourable outlook – this might require them to become aware of and challenge internalised beliefs about women in non-traditional occupations or industries (see Way Forward Guide 05 Building an Engaged and Inclusive Workforce).

Communication must be persuasive

Alignment

Individuals provide appropriate levels of support for the change and display behaviours that reflect gender inclusiveness. They will have to be made aware that non-inclusive behaviours are not acceptable to the organisation.

Communication must be influential

Commitment

Individuals begin to claim responsibility and ownership for the change and take full advantage of the benefits that differences (diversity) bring to the workplace.

Communication must be compelling

Leading a Diverse Workforce

To enable the wisdom of a diverse team and extract the business benefits of greater diversity, leaders need to:

1. Be accountable for providing the vision for a more inclusive future.
2. Expand understanding and skills to recruit, develop and retain a diverse workforce.
3. Include people with diverse backgrounds, experiences and strengths.
4. Encourage independent opinions.
5. Develop processes for combining information from a range of sources.
6. Provide an environment that is open and inclusive.
7. Articulate the value of shared goals.
8. Challenge traditional thinking and assumptions around roles, skills and behaviours in the workplace and home.

Elements of a Diversity Strategy and Program

Vision and Values Statement/s

What is the desired future state? Vision and value statements must link to the organisation's ethical and guiding principles and clearly connect to the overall business strategy. Ensure input is received from a wide range of stakeholders.

Goals and Objectives

Define what the organisation means by 'diversity' and 'inclusion'. What is to be achieved? Is it measurable? How and by when?

Projects and Tactics

Identify the various change projects the organisation will need to undertake to achieve the program goals and objectives. Ensure that the critical success factors listed at the beginning of this guide are explicitly addressed. Research the case studies in all of the AWRA Way Forward Guides as well as other best practice cases for ideas (see the list of resources at the end of this guide).

Implementation and Evaluation Plans

Examine each of the projects to determine what resources are needed and who is responsible and accountable for the projects, tactics and deadlines. Create measurable milestones that can show continual progress and performance measures. Remember to incorporate a communication plan that informs, engages and involves the whole organisation. Ensure that the overall strategy and purpose is communicated, preferably involving the CEO/Champion.

Other Resources on This Topic

- <http://www.amma.org.au/awra/awra-knowledge-centre#Benchmarks>
- <http://www.amma.org.au/awra/awra-knowledge-centre#CaseStudy>
- <http://www.amma.org.au/awra/awra-knowledge-centre#Diversity>