



# St Barbara narrows pay gap

**Jarrod Lucas**

Gold miner St Barbara's bid to cut the gender pay gap has won national recognition as the Australian Women in Resources Alliance calls for an increase in the number of women in male-dominated roles.

St Barbara, which operates the Gwalia and King of the Hills mines near Leonora, collected the excellence in diversity programs and performance award at the inaugural Women in Resources National Awards in Brisbane.

The company claims its human resources policy has reduced the pay equity gap at its operations from 43 per cent in 2007 to 11.7 per cent this year.

Chamber of Minerals and Energy WA chief executive Reg Howard-Smith said research showed women accounted for about 20 per cent of the resources sector's total workforce, while the female participation rate across all industries stood at 43 per cent.

"Resources companies have recognised the strong business case for having diverse teams," he said.

"Extensive research has shown

increased diversity correlates strongly with improved company performance.

"Put simply, diversity builds stronger and more prosperous companies."

But the Australian Women in Resources Alliance has pointed to the most recent data, which shows the number of women working in the industry fell from 15.5 per cent of the total workforce to 13.9 per cent

in the year to May. Tara Diamond, executive director of the Australian Mines and Metals Association, which facilitates the AWRA, said areas traditionally dominated by men should be the immediate focus of diversity-savvy employers.

"There are 37,000 women working across Australia's mining, oil and gas sectors — about 3400 less than 12 months ago," Ms Diamond said.

"This decline shows that as the resource industry's skills demands evolve, driven by many projects moving from construction into production, employers must focus on attracting and retaining

women in their workforces.

"Specifically, the statistics show coal mining, metal ore extraction

and quarrying activities have all gone backwards in terms of their gender balance over the past 12 months.

"While there are many successful efforts across the industry to attract and retain more women generally, achieving a gender balance in these site-based, male-dominated roles presents the greatest challenge."

Ms Diamond said the Australian Bureau of Statistics data showed the oil and gas sector was the only area of the resource industry where the proportion of women employees increased over the past 12 months.

Since May 2013, an additional 1800 women joined the sector, boosting its female participation rate to 23.5 per cent.