



PROSPECTS UNEARTHED FOR WOMEN

AN online mentoring program to help women succeed in the resources industry and encourage more gender diversity will continue until at least mid-2018.

The Federal Government will provide an extra \$490,000 to ensure the Australian Women in Resources Alliance's e-Mentoring Program survives. The program already has connected more than 200 women with experienced male and female mentors since funding started in 2013.

Australian Mines and Metals Association industry services executive director Tara Diamond says it not only will help female workers but support the industry to be more competitive through workforce diversity.

"Australia's resource industry is heavily male-dominated, with women comprising just 17 per cent of the national workforce compared to 46 per cent across all industries," Diamond says.

"Despite a challenging operating environment, the resource industry still employs almost 100,000 more people compared to 10 years ago, and opportunities abound for women to play a greater role in the industry's growing production capacity.

"As the only national program offering mentoring to women via an online platform, AWRA e-Mentoring is breaking down the barriers that in the past have prevented some women receiving valuable professional guidance, such as remote locations and non-traditional work schedules.

"The program will continue to be a

critical part of the resource industry's multifaceted approach to support the career development of women across multiple occupations.

"This is particularly in technical and trade roles in which women have been traditionally underemployed."

Diamond says providing mentoring opportunities for women from culturally diverse backgrounds, including indigenous workers, will be a focus for the next two years.

Employment and Women Minister Michaelia Cash says the government wants to support private sector initia-

tives that help women succeed in traditionally male-dominated roles and industries. "To truly empower women's workforce choices, we must remove barriers for women to enter and succeed in traditionally male dominated industries, such as the resource industry," she says.

