



St Barbara



Mining



990
employees



22%
female



78%
male

Challenge

St Barbara has been working to increase the number of women in its male-dominated workplace for several years, with the aim of achieving a more equal balance of women and men across the organisation.

Strategy

With a limited number of applications received from women for site-based technical and professional roles, St Barbara developed strategies to counteract existing barriers to attracting and retaining women.

The main barriers include the perception of mining as a 'man's domain' with a 'blokey culture', a shrinking pipeline of qualified women for professional and technical roles, and difficulty retaining women in fly-in fly-out site-based roles because of extended periods away from family.

Actions

Taking into account these barriers, four main action areas were identified – female recruitment, retention of women, advancement into management roles and pay equity.

As a key part of delivering change, target setting has been used since 2010 to focus attention on goals within the organisation and to demonstrate a commitment to drive change.

There has also been a strong commitment to regularly monitor, measure and report on targets and there has been unwavering support from the executive and board.

St Barbara Attracting women to a male-dominated industry

Recruitment

Currently the representation of women in the St Barbara workforce is 23%. A target of 30% has been set for 2018 with a number of strategies used to promote gender equality in recruiting practices, including:

- Campaigns to recruit women into under-represented areas of the business, such as trades and technical roles.
- Conducting an audit and eliminating gender-specific language from job advertisements and role descriptions.
- Updating advertising templates to highlight the company's achievements and commitment to improve diversity and gender equality.
- An emphasis on eliminating bias (conscious and unconscious) on recruiting panels and all shortlists include female and male candidates.
- Producing monthly reports for the executive leadership team showing the gender breakdown of applicants and those shortlisted.

As a result, in the 12 months to December 2016, 24% of all new starters were female compared to 20% in the 12 months to December 2015.

Retention

Retaining female talent is a key part of St Barbara's gender diversity strategy. The company has worked hard to put in place advanced practices around paid parental leave, including return-to-work incentives, flexible work arrangements and paid leave for those experiencing domestic violence.

The company has implemented a mentoring program and a Women's Internal Network Group to support women, in particular women who work in remote locations.

The company has seen an increase in the proportion of women returning to work after a period of parental leave from 50% between 2007 and 2009, to 100% between 2009 and 2016.

“The main barriers include the perception of mining as a ‘man’s domain’ with a ‘blokey culture’, and a shrinking pipeline of qualified women for professional and technical roles.”

Advancement into management roles

- A formal process is in place to ensure gender bias is not a factor in assessing the performance of women and men within St Barbara, including the identification of talent.
- Leaders who identify key talent must complete unconscious bias training.
- Training and development records are analysed to determine the ratio of women and men attending training. A recent analysis indicated that a third of those receiving training were female.
- All employees who have been identified for succession – women and men – are supported in their career development plans. Every year the leadership group meets to discuss the organisation's talent pool to ensure there is gender equity across succession plans.
- An internal mentoring program was rolled out in July 2016, with an enthusiastic take-up by female and male mentees and mentors. In the program, participants meet with their mentor once a month for a year to help progress their career aspirations.
- A target has been set to have at least 25% female participants in any leadership development programs.
- In 2014 a target was set for 33% representation of women on the board by 2018. The board achieved this target on 1 July 2015.

Pay gap analysis

Addressing the pay gap is key to creating gender equality in an organisation and St Barbara conducts a monthly organisation-wide pay gap analysis and an annual like-for-like analysis.

- St Barbara has maintained a nil gender pay gap for 'like-for-like' roles continuously since at least 2013.
- In 2007, the overall organisational-wide pay gap was 43% in favour of men. As a result of setting targets and other initiatives, this gap has been reduced to 16% as at 30 June 2016. The 2018 target is to reduce the pay gap to 8%.
- As the overall pay gap has remained relatively steady over the last few years, the focus is now on increasing the numbers of women in professional and leadership roles to help address this issue.

Employee experience

Meryl Jones fell in love with geology on a two-week placement in the Flinders Ranges while studying maths, chemistry and geology. This led to a 30-year career spanning mining and exploration geology, land management and business evaluation. She is currently a Principal Resource Analyst at St Barbara.

"I love my job and I've had an amazing, diverse, challenging career in the resources sector. I have never had an issue with being a female in a male-dominated industry. I grew up in a male-dominated family and my father was very supportive of me going into the industry. At the time my Mum said, "You can't go out there in all that dust and dirt with all those men!" and my Dad said, "The most important thing is to find a job you love."



"I have been mentoring a woman in her thirties and now she is using those techniques to mentor a woman in her twenties."



Building a female talent pipeline

Meryl Jones is also the founder, and Chair of the Board, of the Get Into Resources program.

Based in North Metropolitan TAFE's Northbridge campus in Perth, Get Into Resources (GIR) is an educational event that uses TAFE's simulated underground mine training facility known as 'The Cut'. Over the course of a day, school students are given the opportunity to interact with professionals and tradespeople from the resources sector and participate in a series of hands-on presentations to get an overview of the opportunities resources industry.

"One of the aims of GIR is to attract young women to the resources sector for the future talent pipeline – I'd like to see every high school child come through the GIR program. I want girls to know that resources is more than rocks, big trucks and dirty blokes – that there are well over 150 different types of jobs on a mine site from a kitchen hand to general manager – and every one is essential for a mine site to work efficiently," says Meryl.

"We all know there is a problem with girls not taking STEM subjects and I meet many girls who say they never knew what type of opportunities there were in the resources sector. Some have even gone back to their schools the day after participating in GIR and changed their Year 11 subject choices so they can pursue a career in resources. The GIR model is simple to replicate and it would be great to expand it into other locations."

When I first started working in 1986 in a small gold mining company, there were 40 employees and two were women. My experience throughout my career has been that the men have been incredibly supportive and have taken me under their wing and mentored me – I think because they knew that I was willing to do the best job that I could.

I joined St Barbara in 2011 and was one of the first people to work flexibly. I went to my job interview and said I wanted to work part-time. The interviewer was unsure, but I said, 'I understand you have some concerns, but let's give it a try.' And it's been a great success.

Because I am happy in my working arrangements, I give 120% of myself to the company. That's a win-win for me and many others who work flexibly at St Barbara.

The company is also doing some great things around attracting and retaining women – in particular the new internal network for women. I've been part of the mentoring program where I have been mentoring a woman in her thirties and now, in turn, she's using those mentoring techniques to mentor a woman in her twenties."



Visit www.wgea.gov.au to learn about employer best practice and download practical tools to improve gender equality in your workplace.

Drill down into our data at data.wgea.gov.au to compare how industries are performing on gender equality.