Women in Mining



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How would you describe your experience as a woman working in the coal industry?

- I come from a family of engineers, and only have brothers, so being in a male-dominated industry has not been a big issue for me.
- I have wanted to show that I am a good engineer, not just a good female engineer.
- I loved working as an underground operator so much. I loved operating the equipment, getting the process tasks down pat and trying to be the best or fastest in the crew. I think I had extremely good trainers who taught me the right way.
- I am also a representative on a few industry panels and steering committees which are also quite male-dominated. Again, I haven't experienced anything different, so it is not an issue to me. I feel I can hold my own.

Do you think the coal sector should be placing more emphasis on hiring women?

- I think it takes a certain type of person to work in an underground environment, and to a lesser extent in the coal sector. I think primarily, companies should select personnel based on their suitability, work ethic and respect for others.
- However, there are merits to trying to increase diversity in this environment. The women I have worked with in the coal sector have all mostly risen to the top because they are good at what they do, perhaps strove harder to prove their merit and have documented the value they've added to their companies.
- These women are a good example of how diversity in the workplace benefits the company, and they provide younger women who are just starting their careers someone to look up to.
- So, in theory, if these types of women are who companies hire, then it is of great benefit. If companies are hiring any females who do not fit the criteria or on merit just to get the numbers up, it will be to the detriment of the drive to get diversity levels up.

What are some of the benefits of more diverse workplaces?

- In my experience, diversity adds to the range of perspectives and thought processes for problem solving in all fields – technical, financial, people – and a more holistic view of the issues.
- It also challenges some interesting and outdated opinions on issues and makes others think differently. So long as people are empowered enough to challenge the outdated ideas without fear.

What would you say to women considering a career in coal mining?

- The mining industry provides a lot of opportunities for personal and career development, from the coal face to the boardroom, and a huge diversity of disciplines and roles in between. There is also plenty of opportunity to work all over the globe.
- In mining, a problem or process has many variables to balance and it takes a wide range of expertise to get the optimal outcome for the business. Mining gives you the opportunity to truly understand the range of business drivers – not many other industries provide this breadth of experience.
- It relies heavily on people and working relationships. If you like the camaraderie that comes with working in teams or leading teams, it's a fantastic industry to be in.
- If you like to physically see the fruits of your labor, and possibly get involved in doing the work to make your designs and plans come to fruition, then mining is for you.

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