

# DIVERSITY IN THE MINING WORKFORCE

## St Barbara's leadership in addressing gender equality

St Barbara, a mid-tier gold miner, demonstrates strong leadership in addressing SDG5 – Gender equality – Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. While this case study focuses on SDG5, St Barbara's contribution also supports SDG8 – Decent work and economic growth, SDG4 – Quality education and SDG3 – Good health and well-being.

St Barbara demonstrates business leadership and innovation to achieve workplace equality and inclusion, applying a sophisticated approach that integrates gender diversity with core business strategy. St Barbara has improved employment, retention and business outcomes: 100 per cent of its female employees returning from paid parental leave between 2009 and 2018, a nil like-for-like gender pay gap and women representing 25 per cent of its leadership team.



5 GENDER EQUALITY



 **Cardno**

This case study explores the role of visionary leadership in championing SDG5, operational policies to support SDG5 and St Barbara's development of leading practice gender smart safety audits across its operations. It also shows how SDG5 can be embedded core business and supported by targeted social investment.

Relevant Australian SDG5 indicators include: the proportion of women in managerial positions.<sup>1</sup>

### Global and Australian drivers for SDG5 – Gender equality

Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of girls by 2030 requires shared action to eliminate the causes of discrimination that limit women's rights in private and public spheres.<sup>2</sup> Integral and interconnected to all other SDGs, economic growth and social inclusion for half the world's population is central to equitable and sustainable development for all.

Closing the gender gap makes good business sense: research shows organisations valuing inclusivity attract and retain high performers, reduce staff turnover costs, enhance operational performance, boost reputation and improve access to markets.<sup>3</sup>

Despite significant progress, women and girls in Australia continue to experience inequality and discrimination limiting the choices and opportunities available to them. For example, in 2018 the all industries average national gender pay gap was 22.4 per cent.<sup>4</sup>

Recommended actions for companies to support SDG5 have included creating inclusive business models, ensuring pay equity and implementing policies to prevent violence against women.<sup>5</sup>

A diverse and inclusive workforce regardless of size and industry generates tangible benefits, such as increased efficiency, productivity, innovation, creativity and improved employee engagement.<sup>6</sup>

### Diversity and inclusion in Australia's minerals industry

The minerals industry is historically male-dominated. Barriers to women's participation include a perceived lack of flexibility in operational roles and challenges associated with time away from family in fly-in-fly-out (FIFO) arrangements.<sup>7</sup> Women represented about 16 per cent of Australia's mining workforce in 2017, far lower than the national all-industry average of 47 per cent.<sup>8</sup>

Similar misconceptions about STEM roles also hamper girls' enrolment in these subjects, limiting women's broader representation in Australia's STEM workforce—currently at 16 per cent. STEM subject enrolment is at a 20-year low, presenting challenges to meet future labour workforce requirements. This has flow-on impacts on the number of women moving into the minerals industry.<sup>9</sup>

Mining companies are increasingly at the forefront of change to support gender equality. Companies are improving organisational frameworks to achieve diversity, realising that these same frameworks are required for broader

organisational and strategic success. Indeed, the 'benefit of gender diversity is not just the diversity of thought women bring to the table ... [but] the culture and governance it requires'.<sup>10</sup>

### A snapshot of St Barbara—'a rich history and bright future powered by diversity'

St Barbara is an Australian-based, ASX-listed gold producer and explorer, with assets in Western Australia (Gwalia) and Papua New Guinea (Simberi).

St Barbara employs approximately 1,000 staff across its Australian and PNG operations. At Gwalia, 16 per cent of employees are female while across its Australian operations, including head office in Melbourne, 24 per cent of employees are female. At Simberi, 97 per cent of employees are PNG nationals, with 56 per cent Simberi and Tabar Islanders.

### The start of the journey ...

In 2007, St Barbara recognised its human resources practices were largely transactional with minimal linking of recruitment, retention and remuneration to core business strategy. A pay equity gap of 43 per cent and women representing just 19 per cent of its workforce reflected this.

St Barbara acknowledged workforce diversity could be a critical component of its future success and set itself a goal to be an employer of choice for gender equality. This started St Barbara on a journey that would position the company as an Australian leader. St Barbara's practice and performance today exceed industry benchmarks driven by a mandate of 'continuous focus—combined effort'.

### Diversity as core business strategy

St Barbara formalised a strategy to address gender inequality within its workforce in 2010. It aimed to remove barriers for women's workforce participation and embed women's empowerment within a five pillar People Strategy: talent, diversity, leadership, engagement and performance.

St Barbara's approach was hard-wired to core business strategy, approved at Board level and supported by strong leadership from its Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer and Executive Leadership Team. This approach extended beyond site-level actions and embraced a holistic approach to gender equality including:

- **Focus on female recruitment:** rolling out innovative recruitment processes promoting gender equality, including campaigns to attract women into trades and technical roles, eliminating gender-specific language from job advertisements and sharing female employee success stories. Eliminating unconscious bias—discrimination based on hidden biases—has also been a key focus.
- **Retaining female talent:** leading practices implemented include paid parental leave, return-to-work incentives, flexible working arrangements, a parental support network and paid leave for those experiencing domestic violence. Mentoring programs are in place and 100 per cent of women have returned to work after paid parental leave between 2009 and 2018. St Barbara's Women's Internal

1 Australian Government, Gender equality, Australian Government, viewed 4 October 2018.

2 United Nations Women, SDG5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, United Nations, 2018, viewed 27 July 2018.

3 Workplace Gender Equality Agency, The business case for gender equality, Australian Government, 2017, viewed 19 July 2018.

4 Australian Human Rights Commission, Face the Facts: Gender Equality 2018, viewed 20 July 2018.

5 Global Compact Network Australia, SDG5, UN Global Compact, viewed 2 October 2018.

6 Workplace Gender Equality Agency, The business case for gender equality, Australian Government, 2017, viewed 19 July 2018.

7 Workplace Gender Equality Agency, Case study: Attracting women to a male-dominated industry, Australian Government, 2018, viewed 17 July 2018.

8 Workplace Gender Equality Agency, Gender workplace statistics at a glance, Australian Government, August 2018, viewed 2 August 2018.

9 Office of the Chief Scientist, Australia's STEM Workforce, Australian Government, 2016, viewed 2 August 2018.

10 Sara Prendergast, What does effective attraction of females to operational roles look like', Sara Prendergast, 2018.

Network is also instrumental in bringing women together across the company.

- **Career development pathways:** ensuring women attend training, can access mentoring opportunities and there is gender equity across succession plans. St Barbara has a target of 25 per cent female participation in leadership development programs and now has 25 per cent representation across its leadership.
- **Addressing the gender pay gap:** through targets and monthly organisation-wide pay gap analyses and annual like-for-like analysis, assessing and understanding changes in real time to ensure inequities are addressed.



A recognised gender equality champion: Bob Vassie, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer has sponsored all initiatives rolled across St Barbara. Bob was one of the first Workforce Gender Equality Agency Pay Equity Champions in Australia in 2014.

marginalised group—not just women’, notes Val Madsen, St Barbara General Manager Human Resources.

### Pioneering approaches to gender smart safety in Australia, based on lessons from Papua New Guinea

‘Gender safety’ recognises women may face different safety risks and experience work safety differently than men, largely as traditional work sites were designed to accommodate men.<sup>11</sup>

St Barbara piloted a ‘Gender Smart Safety’ program as its first step in developing a system of assessing and measuring women’s safety at its PNG Simberi operations—a location where a 2016 analysis found 56 per cent of women believed real or perceived safety concerns affected their career<sup>12</sup>

Most safety programs focus on eliminating workplace injuries and workplace health and well-being; however, St Barbara recognised increasing safety for its female employees also supported attraction and retention of quality female workers.

St Barbara’s Gender Smart Safety Pilot involved a partnership with the PNG Business Coalition for Women. It aimed to identify safety issues for women on site and actions to address these.

In addition to other programs—including a ‘Warrior Program’ delivered on-site and designed in partnership with local communities to raise awareness of family and sexual violence—the pilot has produced excellent results. St Barbara, along with industry partners, is now supporting drafting and implementation of a national countrywide model policy and minimum standards for women’s safety at work across PNG.

Based on this success, St Barbara is piloting the program at its Gwalia operations. It has institutionalised workplace safety practices that recognise and respond to the needs of women and committed to sharing this approach with industry peers. ‘The safety audit could in fact be run for any

Benefits of the Gender Smart Safety Program at Simberi have included a strengthened awareness of and compliance with safety protocol amongst workers, positive feedback from female workers, and an 18 per cent increase in the percentage of women who feel happy about their safety at work.<sup>13</sup>

### Looking forward—gender equality as an ongoing commitment at St Barbara

St Barbara has received numerous accolades—including the Australian Workplace Gender Equality Agency ‘Employer of Choice for Gender Equality’ from 2014-2018. It also continues to advance its commitments, including developing a company strategy and processes to support people experiencing domestic violence within its workforce.

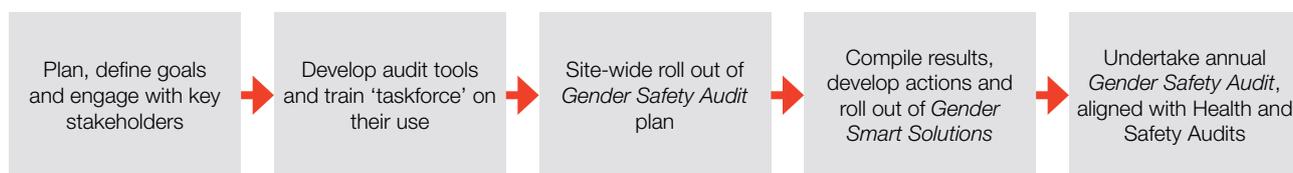
Where do the future challenges lie? Val notes workforce diversity is an ongoing effort. ‘It is relatively easy to have balanced gender representation in a capital city ... our biggest challenge is attracting and retaining women into FIFO roles. We need to be more progressive in how we talk about the career stories of our women so that women considering a career in mining can see that it’s not a dirty, grubby environment’.

St Barbara is also focused on attracting more young people, including girls, to STEM careers. ‘There’s a view that the resource boom is over, but that couldn’t be further from the truth’, notes Val. ‘Australia is resource rich and there will be careers in the resource industry for years to come.’

Accordingly, St Barbara has shifted focus with an eye on attracting the future workforce. Through programs focused on primary schools and Technical and Further Education (TAFE), the company is encouraging young students to consider STEM subjects.

Finally, St Barbara is thinking about future workforce skills and its response to challenges and opportunities associated with block chain, automation and other areas. ‘We are already starting to understand this ... the skills will change and some skills will be different, but some things will

St Barbara’s Gender Smart Safety Audit process



<sup>11</sup> Business Coalition for Women, Gender Smart Safety: Toolbox Talk Workplace Safety for Women, fact sheet, Australia, 2017.

<sup>12</sup> Factive, Case Study: St Barbara Promotes Gender Smart Safety in Papua New Guinea, 2015.

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*

Photos: St Barbara

This case study also demonstrates practice of *Enduring Value*:

- **Principle 2:** Integrate sustainable development principles into company policies and practices
- **Principle 3:** Uphold fundamental human rights and respect cultures
- **Principle 5:** Seek continual improvement of our health and safety performance
- **Principle 9:** Contribute to the social, economic and institutional development of communities in which we operate.



remain consistent—notably problem solving and innovative thinking.’ St Barbara continues to emphasise upskilling its workforce in these core areas.

St Barbara has also maintained a nil gender pay gap since 2013 in like-for-like roles.<sup>14</sup>

### Social and economic outcomes

St Barbara’s work to develop an Australian-leading gender diversity strategy and then translate the strategy into outcomes has enabled it to champion, support and realise the benefits of gender equality.

Key business, economic and social outcomes include:

- Women representing 25 per cent of St Barbara’s leadership team, enabling St Barbara to benefit from diversity of thinking and experience and broadening its talent pool
- 100 per cent of women returning to work from paid parental leave between 2009 and 2018, ensuring talent and corporate experience and knowledge is retained and staff turnover costs are reduced
- Women at St Barbara’s Simberi operation feel happier about the working environment, which supports employee retention and diversity.

St Barbara’s gender diversity leadership is also supporting improved social and economic outcomes for women across PNG through its involvement in the development of a country-wide model and minimum national work standards for women.

### Lessons

- Integrating diversity and equality within core business strategy mean gender equality is discussed at Board level and championed by senior management
- Setting targets and measurement tools enable companies to pivot quickly to respond to changes affecting diversity targets
- Openly communicating commitments to gender and diversity—externally and internally—support companies to attract the best talent
- Being open about what has and what hasn’t worked has enabled St Barbara to assume a leadership role among industry peers, sharing valuable lessons and contributing to new industry performance benchmarks
- Company programs can act as a catalyst for the development of local, national and international initiatives to support achievement of the SDGs.

<sup>14</sup> Workplace Gender Equality Agency, *Case study: Attracting women to a male-dominated industry*, Australian Government, 2018, viewed 17 July 2018.