

Celebrating women in mining on IWD

Celebrating the many diverse paths - and speaking about the challenges faced

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Newmont and Rio Tinto have set targets and corporate initiatives to address diversity and inclusion | Credits: Newmont Goldcorp

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How the landscape and culture of mining has changed since the 1970s is a perennial question. For women in the industry there have been shifts to introduce legislation so women could work in mines (although this is not the case in all countries) and companies have felt the societal pressure to close the gender gap, in pay and in principle.

According to a [World Bank report released in June](#) last year, women make up only 15% of the mining workforce. The report emphasised that the COVID-19 pandemic further increased job insecurity and reduced opportunities for women in the sector, underscoring the urgent need for support and robust safety protocols.

It is also true that legislation continues to hold back women's participation in mining. A [2023 World Bank report on the artisanal and small-scale mining sector](#) analysed over 30 national mining codes and land ownership frameworks. It discovered that more than two-thirds of mining codes that regulate the management and production of minerals, and 80% of laws concerning property rights, don't adequately support women's access and control over resources.

Women work in various mining settings across the industry. While the term 'women in mining' may conjure up images of a literal woman in a hard hat down a mine, the truth is that there are

many jobs throughout the sector that may not require the exposure to hazardous environments, and physical demands, but are still not represented with parity across the roles.

And, while it should hardly need to be stated, women do contribute meaningfully to the mining sector.

In a report authored by [White & Case LLP, ARCH and Women in Mining UK, in 2023](#), which analysed the affect women in mining at senior levels from 2012 - 2022 to determine what, if any, effect those women had on performance of those companies, research found that there remains a positive correlation between a higher EBITDA margin, a higher return on capital invested, higher ESG scores with the percentage of women on boards.

With this in mind, *Mining Journal* spoke to women across the sector to find out how their journeys compare.

Laura Tyler, Chief Executive, Adriatic Metals

How did you get into mining?



Credits: Adriatic Metals

I've always been fascinated by the earth—how it forms, how it changes, and how it constantly regenerates itself through geological processes. That curiosity led me to study Geology at university, and later Mining Engineering, which opened the door to my career in mining.

I started as a mine geologist in one of Australia's biggest underground operations, Mount Isa Mines, and spent about 15 years in technical leadership before transitioning into operational

and business leadership roles. Over the past 35 years, I've worked on four continents, been involved in the discovery and extraction of copper, silver-lead-zinc, diamonds, gold, uranium, alumina, and nickel, and had the privilege of working with incredible teams and communities along the way. And through it all, my love of rocks has never changed. They've been the foundation of my career—literally and figuratively!

How has the industry changed in the time you've been in it?

Mining is about progress—both in terms of the materials we produce and the way we produce them. That's what makes it such an exciting space to work in.

In some ways, mining has transformed dramatically. In others, its essence remains the same. One of the biggest shifts I've seen is in health and safety—both physical and mental.

The industry has worked hard to raise standards and ensure people not only go home safely every day but also feel supported and valued in their work. We've also made huge strides in environmental responsibility. Mining today isn't just about extracting resources; our standards have lifted dramatically – how we mine and the impact we have on the environment and community is considered in every step.

It's about minimizing impact, maximizing efficiency, and designing operations with sustainability at their core. A great example is Adriatic Metals' Vareš Silver Mine, which was designed to have a minimal footprint, reuse old industrial sites, and operate as a zero-water-release operation. These kinds of advancements were unheard of when I first started in the industry. What hasn't changed is the essence of mining—the combination of science, engineering, and human ingenuity.

This is a fast-paced ever-changing industry, driven by innovation and the need to deliver the metals that power modern life, seeking to continuously improve. It brings together the knowledge of the earth with ingenuity and engineering skill to deliver the metals the world needs to thrive and lift millions out of poverty. Mining is about progress—both in terms of the materials we produce and the way we produce them. That's what makes it such an exciting space to work in.

What would your message be to any woman—or girl—considering a career in mining?

Mining isn't just a desk job—it's dynamic, hands-on, and full of opportunities to work all over the world.

First, find a career that excites you—one that challenges you, helps you grow, and gives you opportunities to make an impact. Mining offers all of that and more. There's often a perception that mining is just for geologists and engineers, but it takes an entire ecosystem of skills to make a mine work—from finance and human resources to sustainability, procurement, legal, marketing, and beyond.

Whatever your passion, there's a place for you in this industry. And the best part? Mining isn't just a desk job—it's dynamic, hands-on, and full of opportunities to work all over the world. I also believe deeply in financial independence—it gives you the power to make choices for yourself and your future. The mining industry offers well-paid, stable careers, and I would encourage every young woman to pursue a career that gives her the ability to stand on her own, support her family, and create the life she wants.

What is Adriatic Metals doing to encourage more women to join its workforce? Could it do more?

The short answer? We've made great progress, but we can always do more and I don't think that work ever stops.

Right now, women make up around 23% of our workforce which is quite a solid record in the industry. We have women working across geology, engineering, processing, marketing, projects, and corporate functions. That's something to be proud of. But I know from experience that we can go further—especially in underground mining.

I've worked in operations where there were far more women working underground than I see here, so I know there's an opportunity to break down old barriers and open more doors. One thing I really appreciate about Adriatic is that the company's founding vision has always been to build a workforce that reflects the communities we operate in. That mindset is crucial because diversity doesn't just happen by accident—it is achieved when leaders actively create an environment where everyone feels welcome, valued, and able to succeed.

What challenges do women face when working at Adriatic Metals?

The reality is that the biggest challenges start long before women even enter the industry. For many girls, mining is simply never presented as an option.

Schools, career advisors, even parents—many still see mining as a tough, male-dominated world and picture the old images of coal miners covered in dirt. That perception is outdated and far from the reality of modern mining, but it still influences career choices.

That's why changing the conversation around mining is so important. We need to showcase the opportunities available, highlight the incredible women already in the industry, and make sure young women know that this is a space where they can thrive. Inside Adriatic, the focus has to be on creating the right culture—one where women feel supported, valued, and able to progress into leadership roles. I've seen what's possible, and I know that if we keep pushing forward, we can continue to break barriers and build an industry that truly represents the world we live in.

Louise Wrathall, Chief Financial Officer at CAML

How did you get into mining?



Louise Wrathall, chief financial officer, Central Asia Metals | Credits: CAML

It was a fortunate accident actually! My school began to offer a geology A-level for the first time when I came to choose my options, and I selected this subject and really enjoyed it. I couldn't honestly say I had a career goal in mind at that time so, when it came to opting for a course at university, I was advised to study something I enjoyed, so chose geology.

My geology course at the University of Liverpool was more academic than vocational and, although I still enjoyed the subject, I was keen to progress towards a career and believed that mining geology would interest me more than some of the other geological disciplines. I therefore chose to continue my studies with an MSc in mining geology from Camborne School of Mines which led me to realise that I was very interested in the economic/financial aspects of geology. At that point I knew I wanted to pursue a career, at least initially, that related to the interface between mineral extraction and capital markets.

After completing my MSc in 2002, the stock market was not great for the mining sector and hence a job in finance was difficult to secure. I therefore chose to get some hands-on industrial experience and initially worked for Hanson Aggregates in the UK quarrying industry.

By 2004, the Chinese reindustrialisation programme had transformed the mining sector and I was approached for a junior mining equity analyst role in London and then spent 10 years as a mining analyst, concluding that part of my career with Investec.

How has the industry changed in the time you have been active in it?

In the mining industry, we are notoriously comfortable with tried and tested methods of extraction and processing, and one significant change I have noted is that an increasing number of mining specialists are now embracing new technology and innovation.

The enthusiasm for the energy transition, battery technology, and a generally greener and cleaner way of life, has also meant that commodities which were barely mentioned 20 years ago are very much in demand now, and even traditional commodities we have long covered have multiple new end uses.

With the push on ESG and sustainability focus, it is positive that mining businesses now place increased emphasis on ensuring they are responsible producers, which is crucial to maintaining both investor and local support.

What would your message be to any woman – or girl- looking at mining as a career?

If you're considering a career in mining, go for it."

If you're considering a career in mining, go for it.

Mining is a dynamic industry that offers really interesting opportunities for women. Whether you're interested in geology, engineering, sustainability, finance or community engagement, the sector has diverse career paths where your skills and perspectives can make a real impact. Although mining has traditionally been male-dominated, the industry is evolving, with increasing efforts to promote diversity and create inclusive workplaces.

Once you're in, work hard, network a lot, and ask lots of what you might think of as silly questions! The mining industry is a small place, therefore it is good to develop a reputation for working hard and to take advantage of opportunities to create contacts. I believe these two factors are vital for career development, but they also ensure the social aspects of the work are enjoyable as well.

What challenges do women face when working at CAML?

Many will say that a company's culture starts 'from the top' and I feel that my female colleagues and I are extremely well supported by our CEO and Board of Directors in this regard.

Our head office comprises over 50% females in very varied roles, whereas in our countries of operation, while we have many female colleagues in senior roles, they tend to be in more traditional areas such as finance and human resources.

We struggle a little more to encourage an increasingly diverse workforce in some of the production-related roles, but I firmly believe that this is a function of historic 'norms' rather than discrimination. That said, I'd love to see this change over time and believe that with the effort we make in this area, it can.

Eva Abend, Metals Trader at Macquarie Group

How did you get into mining?



Eva Abend, lithium trader,

Macquarie | Credits: Macquarie

I got into metals first and that was almost by accident. I was looking for roles in a Trading environment and the metals space fascinated me, and by extension so did mining. What really stood out to me was that we're living in a world that's perceived to be ever more digital and virtual, but actually our lives are dependant on physical "stuff" – whether it's the cobalt in our phone batteries, the aluminium that our cars are made out of, the copper in our electric wires, the steel that makes our houses stand tall in the sky. And seeing where those products come from, how they get from the ground to consumers, is really fascinating.

How has the industry changed in the time you have been active in it?

I've been looking closely at the lithium and cobalt markets for the last 3 years and the key change I've seen is the overall growth and increase in diversity. It's inspiring to see more people involved, more geographies, more market participants trading.

What would your message be to any woman – or girl- looking at mining as a career?

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I would encourage anyone to just try it! I wouldn't have believed I would end up in the industry I am in now and I think that's part of the journey. Especially in relatively new markets like lithium, you get the luxury of actively shaping the market which is incredibly rewarding.

What does Macquarie do to encourage more women to its workforce? Could it do more?

One of the unique things about working at Macquarie is a real emphasis on the value of diverse thought and perspective, which is deeply embedded in the culture and something I experience day-to-day on the trading floor.

There are some fantastic initiatives aimed at attracting young female talent from under-represented backgrounds which means we'll continue to see more women in a variety of roles. Of course, being led by Macquarie's CEO Shemara Wikramanayake is a huge inspiration for female staff because you see that anything's possible.

What challenges do women face when working in the industry, in your view?

Let me start by saying that things have come a really long way in recent years, but it is true that challenges remain, especially around representation and being heard. From my perspective, we need to work better together as women but also with the support of senior men to break through glass ceilings and make sure we're working towards an even more equitable industry.

Australia

In the lead up to International Woman's Day 2025, *Australia's Mining Monthly*, *Mining Journal's* sister publication, spoke to several of the industry's top women.

This led to the insights mining magnate [Gina Rinehart](#) shared. Essentially, in Rinehart's view, mining can be a rewarding career that could lead to financial independence- but only if the job was based on merit.

"And I suggest you drop any entitlement culture and any feeling that you should start at the top by showing that you are willing to learn," she said.

Western Australia Chamber of Minerals and Energy chief executive Rebecca

Tomkinson also spoke to the publication, as well as [Lynas chief executive Amanda Lacaze](#)

Lacaze said that the challenges faced by women in mining are the same as those faced by women in any industry, with well-meaning assumptions on what will be 'best for women' still abounding.



CME head Rebecca Tomkinson | Credits: CME

Throughout her career she has experienced these well-meaning assumptions and seen their ramifications.

"As a result, women are often guided to roles in corporate support functions rather than operational leadership roles," she said. "If we are to achieve sustained change for women in the mining industry we need to continue to build critical mass of women in operational leadership alongside the women working in essential corporate roles."

According to Tomkinson, more than 10,000 women had joined the sector in the past decade, and 5,000 of them joined in the past two years.

She said the shift was largely due to workplaces making conscious efforts to create environments that were family-friendly, inclusive and safe, with a strong focus on fostering cultures of respect leading to more women choosing to build careers in mining.

"The mining industry is very committed to increasing participation from many different groups and that is evidenced by the growth in women's participation over the last decade," Tomkinson said.

"The piece that we can do together is to continue focusing on showcasing our positive stories and show the opportunities that there are within our industry [as] I firmly believe the best way to attract new talent is to show them the opportunities on offer."

Tomkinson said challenges remained in fostering workplaces where everyone felt valued not just for fitting in, but for the unique leadership, perspective and expertise they brought, regardless of gender.

What are the biggest challenges facing women in mining in 2025?

Gold Road Resources general counsel and joint company secretary Julie Jones believes the biggest challenge is that the industry still struggles to provide workplaces free of gender-based harassment and violence.

"While improvements have been made towards a safe and inclusive workplace, this is not a journey that women can go on alone and we need our male and other colleagues to be an active part of this shared journey because everyone benefits when they are provided with a safe workplaces," Jones said.



Gold Road's Julie Jones | Credits: Gold

Road

Fortescue Metals Group Iron Bridge manager engineering and reliability Baila Shah agreed the industry had taken deliberate actions

to improve gender diversity, however, she believes there is still more to do to help women develop their mining careers and retain them.



Baila Shah | Credits: Fortescue

Shah suggests leaders offer young women mentorship opportunities to help them connect with and learn from experienced mining professionals.

Gold Road Resources general manager people and culture Jessica Logan said despite progress, women still faced both conscious and unconscious biases and outdated misconceptions persist.

"Some still believe men are missing out on promotions due to diversity targets, which is simply not true [and] these narratives create unnecessary division and resistance to change," she said.

"Even with clear evidence of issues related to respect and inclusion, some dismiss these concerns as media hype or isolated incidents [and] when women do speak up, biases often emerge and concerns are reduced to feminist rhetoric rather than being recognised as legitimate efforts to improve the industry."

Logan said many women experienced bias daily.

"Our experiences must be heard, understood and, most importantly, acted upon," she said.

For Northern Star Resources chief legal officer and company secretary Hilary Macdonald, the biggest challenge was increasing the number of females working in the industry, particularly senior managers.



Hilary Macdonald | Credits:

Northern Star

"We need workplaces that support women – and men – with families and those who want to start a family," Macdonald said.

"This support must include offering more flexible working hours on residential or corporate sites to accommodate childcare responsibilities, without causing any impact to career development, as well as affordable childcare opportunities close to the workplace and more generous and widespread paid parental leave for women and men."

Sandfire Resources chief sustainability officer Cath Bozanich expressed concerns about moving away from diversity targets.

"Diversity needs to be led from the top, from the board and CEO down [and] if there is no diversity at the top it will be difficult to achieve it through the company," she said.

"Sexual harassment remains an issue, too, particularly for those doing Fly in, Fly out [and] it stops some women from joining and others from staying within the industry."

Perth Mint chief risk officer and deputy CEO Melanie Brown said women were underrepresented in management, executive teams and among CEO ranks across corporate enterprises, not just in the mining industry.



Melanie Brown | Credits: The

Perth Mint

Brown said workplaces with more women in senior roles could only have positive effects on workplace culture and help further challenge and shift attitudes around what is normal practice.

She added that structural challenges such as access to flexible childcare for all families and normalising the idea that men took parental leave needed to be overcome.

"These are societal issues and not unique to the mining industry," Brown said.

How has the industry changed since you started working?

For Jones, the changes have been significant.

"We now see women in a diverse range of leadership roles [and] the more we see it, the more we believe it is possible," she said.

Having worked in oil and gas, construction and mining, all traditionally male-dominated industries, Logan said she had seen slow but noticeable progress, with mining leading the way.

She believes courageous leadership from the top was key in shifting industry culture.

"Change cannot rely solely on passionate individuals or grassroots efforts, it must be embedded in leadership decisions, policies and company culture," Logan said.

"Companies making real progress treat diversity and inclusion as a business priority, not a checkbox [and] they also have senior leaders actively champion and sponsor women into leadership roles and hold boards accountable for measurable progress in gender equity, safety and workplace culture."



Credits: Gold Road

Logan said that without visible, vocal and sustained leadership commitment, change was superficial.

"The companies that thrive will be those that embed inclusion into their core business strategy, not just their PR statements," she said.

Brown said she felt very fortunate with the experiences, opportunities and sponsorship she has had in the mining industry, both at Alcoa Australia from 2005 and now at The Perth Mint.

"I have seen a shift from the idea that women's networks within organisations were considered the gold standard for supporting diversity, to there now being a clear recognition that this is the responsibility of everyone in the organisation, and in particular the responsibility of boards, CEOs and executive teams to endorse and promote," she said.

"It's not an issue for women alone."