



EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

Industry keen to close gender gap

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WHEN Goondicum Resources advertises a new job opening at its Monto mine, CEO Mark McCauley receives one woman applicant to every 10 men.

Its workforce is made up of about 12% women, which reflects trends across all of Australia's mining industry.

"There's a combination of several factors that are keeping women out of mining," Mr McCauley said.

"Firstly, tradition. And secondly the lack of

education in the mining industry about the benefits of an equal opportunity workforce."

Applications from women for operator roles like processing work and driving machinery are the most scarcely seen while administration, professional and technical roles were slightly more popular.

"These roles are still skewed towards the males," Mr McCauley said.

"More could be done to get women into the workforce but one thing we are seeing is more enrolled in engineering degrees."

Australian Mines and Metals Association executive director of industry services Tara Diamond said the aim was to have 25% of the Australian mining workforce made up of women by 2020.

"It's very encouraging to see that in the last quarter, while this transition (from many mines' construction to production phase) is ongoing, the number of women working in the resource industry has risen by 4500," she said.

She said more young women needed to be

encouraged in the classroom to have a go in what had always been a male-dominated industry.

Mentoring and support services for women have also helped close the gender gap in some of Australia's large mining operations.

Mrs Diamond said that to attract more women employees, industry employers had moved in leaps and bounds, implementing initiatives such as paid parental leave schemes, flexible family-friendly rosters and things such as on-site child care facilities.