

9 October 2017

Employment for resources professionals improving ... but some concerning disparities remain

A recent AusIMM survey confirms that employment of resources professionals is stabilising after an extended period of high unemployment during the industry downturn.

The AusIMM is the peak body for professionals and managers in the resources sector and represents 13,000 members working in Australia and internationally.

The 2017 AusIMM Professional Employment Survey shows that unemployment rates of Australia-based professionals working in the mining and resources sector have fallen from 14.1 per cent in 2016 to 7.4 per cent in 2017.

This improvement in employment is coupled with a significant improvement in industry outlook, with 65 per cent of survey respondents anticipating increased industry opportunity in the coming 12 months (compared to 29 per cent in 2016).

Recently appointed AusIMM CEO Stephen Durkin said the results align with a growing positive sentiment towards professional opportunities in the resources sector.

“Australia’s mining industry is world-class, and our success is a credit to the talented professionals working in the sector. There are 65,000 professionals employed in the Australian mining industry, a sector that contributes AUD\$236 billion, or 15% of GDP, to the economy.”

“It is encouraging to see such a strong uplift in employment and opportunities for our members and resources professionals as a whole after what has been a very difficult few years for the industry.”

“There are many positive signs that the sector, which is so important to the prosperity of our nation, is returning to good health”, Mr Durkin said.

Despite the overall improvement in the national employment rate for resources professionals, there are sectors of the industry that are lagging. In Western Australia, unemployment remains higher than the rest of the country at 9.0 per cent.

Unemployment amongst professionals working primarily in iron ore also remained high at 14.4 per cent, compared to other commodities such as copper or coal that recorded low rates of unemployment at 3.5 and 3.9 per cent respectively.

“While the overall rate of employment has improved significantly, there is a fragmentation with some sectors and regions continuing to report high rates of unemployment”, Mr Durkin said.

Survey results also indicated some key differences in employment and remuneration based on gender, with a remarkably low unemployment rate for female resources professionals of 3.7 per cent compared to 8.1 per cent for male resources professionals.

While employment of female professionals, who make up approximately 15 per cent of the workforce, has improved, there remains a significant gap in remuneration. Female AusIMM members reported lower wages than their male counterparts in all career stages except at the graduate level.

“This gap in remuneration for women working in the sector is an issue of concern for the AusIMM and for our members, as diversity within the sector is vital to our ongoing success and growth. Together with our Women in Mining Network (WIMnet), we will continue to champion diversity and inclusion



throughout the industry to support increased participation and gender equity, reflecting the broader community in which we work”, Mr Durkin said.

The AusIMM Professional Employment Survey is conducted annually and 2017 data was collected from 1955 AusIMM members between June and July. The full report will be published in the October edition of the *AusIMM Bulletin*.

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The AusIMM

The Australasian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy (The AusIMM) represents 13 000 professionals working in the global resources industry. Our role is to provide leadership for resources professionals and to represent members on global, national and local issues that affect them and their communities.