

# INTERNATIONAL WOMENS DAY

International Women's Day (March 8) recognizes and celebrates the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. The day also raises awareness against bias and stereotyping, encouraging all of us to take action for equality.

A key mission of IWD is to forge inclusive work cultures where women's careers thrive and their achievements are celebrated. This IWD we shine the spotlight on our female geologists: Margaret, Tara and Victoria. We sat down with these ladies and asked them some questions on what it is like to be a woman in a very male-dominated industry

**"Women are the largest untapped reservoir of talent in the world." - Hillary Clinton**

## What can men do to help to achieve equality within the workplace?



**Tara-** By Making themselves aware of any inequalities in their workplace. Being more proactive - researching ways on how to address this imbalance and following through with any plans decided on.

**Laura-** I think office culture in general needs to change its attitude towards women taking maternity leave. It often comes across as a nuisance in many companies to have to find maternity cover for a position. The return to work also needs to be supported with a flexible reintroduction and reassurance that career progression won't be affected by maternity leave.



**Victoria** - I think this should be more a question that everyone asks of themselves; men, women, employees and employers alike. People should be encouraged to reflect on their own biases and think about how they themselves can affect positive changes in the workplace. Employers can help in this by engaging with employees, perhaps setting up training or seminar sessions with external expert speakers, who are well placed to offer advice on equality and diversity.



**Margaret-** If senior management or male colleagues are not seeing their female colleagues being supported within their workplace, if they are not given the same opportunities for advancement, training or promotion, if they are not a part of the same operational conversations as male colleagues of a similar grade, or they do not have a voice in decision making, then again, this is something that senior management or male colleagues should reflect upon. Senior management need to make changes in workplace practices and work culture to incorporate and include these absent voices.

To include those that are equally qualified and experienced, yet may have new or potentially different perspectives. This is also the case for the missing voices of people from different social backgrounds, identities, cultures, ethnicities and/or differing physical/mental abilities.



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## How can we encourage more women to pursue senior leadership roles within the mining industry?

**Tara** - Women need no encouragement, they do want to pursue these roles but these opportunities are not as open to women as they are to men. The other side of this issue is that there are companies out there that would employ more females at senior levels but because more females tend to leave the industry mid-way through their career there are less of them available. I think more needs to be done to encourage women to stay in the industry as a whole.



**Margaret-** Identify where the leaky pipeline is within your organisation? Are equally qualified female staff being hired in the first place? What seniority level do female geos attain within the organisation? If they leave, what are the reasons they leave? Until all staff are supported, mentored and valued equally at junior levels, it hard to retain female staff, for them to apply for more senior roles.

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**Laura** -To reach senior leadership roles, women need to be respected from the very beginning of their industry journey. In our early careers we need to be given ample opportunity to present our professional opinions on projects and in meetings (sometimes louder deeper voices can dominate!), at mid-career levels women need to be given more opportunities to lead projects and build their leadership portfolio and for senior level positions, job security and flexibility for those women who choose to have families is key.

**Victoria** - I believe that many women would be happy to pursue senior leadership positions within industry, the key is giving them the chance to obtain those roles. Firstly, if women are never chosen for promotion, they will never hold a senior role, no matter how many times they might interview for one. Additionally, many women in junior technical roles often are overlooked or forgotten about when it comes to mentorship and training, thus delaying or curtailing their career progress.

Both of these factors combined probably contribute in part to some women being put off joining the industry, or diverting their work and/or studies to other areas. If they cannot see that career progression in exploration/mining is possible, why should we expect them to pursue it when other avenues are open to them? In short, far more needs to be done in terms of employers investing in their female employees (and minority employees) so that they are afforded the same opportunities as their male counterparts. There's a lot more that could be done at a grass-roots educational, and field operational level, but that's a whole other discussion

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## LASTLY, HAVE YOU READ/ LISTENED OR SEEN ANY INSPIRATIONAL BOOKS/PODCASTS THAT YOU FEEL WOULD EMPOWER ANOTHER WOMEN?

### Tara

"Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead" - a book that a male colleague of mine recommended to me!!



### MARGARET

Guilty Feminist podcast



### VICTORIA

I HAVEN'T READ OR LISTENED TO ANYTHING LIKE THAT RECENTLY, BUT I AM A MEMBER OF WOMEN IN MINING UK, WHO OFTEN HAVE REALLY USEFUL TALKS AND EVENTS ON. I ALSO FOLLOW SOME WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP ROLES WITHIN THE GEOSCIENCE COMMUNITY ON LINKEDIN. MARIE COWAN OF GSNI IS A GREAT EXAMPLE



### Laura

My favourite podcasts are those which don't paint life to be perfect, especially when it comes to parenthood! Seeking out autobiographies of your favourite celebrities is always a good call too, I recently read Katherine Ryan's autobiography "The Audacity". She definitely empowers women to be unapologetic about who they are!

