

A black and white photograph of a woman, Patrice Marinelli, wearing a hard hat and safety glasses, looking intently at a control panel. She is wearing a work shirt with a 'FORACO' logo. The background shows industrial equipment and a window with a grid pattern. A red diagonal line runs across the image from the top left to the bottom right.

FORACO

▼ **Patrice Marinelli**
DEEP HOLE DIRECTIONAL
DRILLER – RIG 17
FORACO Australia
2023 Australian Drilling
Industry Association (ADIA)
Woman of the Year

FORACO Australia

Expand opportunities with Women in Drilling

**The drilling industry needs to recruit
more women – here's why and how**

Executive Summary

Almost half (49%) of Australian women don't believe mining is a job suitable for women.

This is the result of a recent study of women between 18-35 conducted by Antenna Research and commissioned by FORACO.

This needs to change. Not only does the resource industry offer women incredible opportunities, but the resource industry also needs more women.

There's a skill gap in the resource industry so it doesn't make sense to exclude half the countries' talent pool to fill it. Or for them to count themselves out.

Australian mining job vacancies have more than doubled since February 2020, according to management consultancy McKinsey and that's set to grow. Mining operations and projects labour demand will require around 24,400 new workers by 2026. The forecast suggests we will only have 16,000.

At FORACO, we have a good overview of the industry because we're a mid-sized recruiter. We're also one of the largest global mineral exploration drillers, operating 25 drill rigs in Australia, and 300 rigs in over 24 countries globally. What we see is a significant skills gap.

There's already a gap between the candidates with the skills we need and the roles that need filling. And it's only going to get worse as our workforce ages, and the complexity of drilling and mining operations grows.

Why is the skills gap an issue for the resource industry?

A talent shortage hinders the industry's ability to innovate, improve productivity, and meet the growing demand for minerals as we move into the energy transition from carbon based fuels to renewables. As long as it exists, the mining industry isn't as efficient as it could be.

And it goes beyond just headcount. Business performance, across all industries, improves with gender diverse teams. Drilling is no different. Diversity brings different perspectives, skills, and problem-solving approaches, increasing innovation and efficiency.

Studies have consistently shown that companies with greater gender diversity tend to perform better than those with less. This makes for a robust and sustainable drilling and resource industry.

To do the work that will be required in the drilling industry over the next decade, we need a constant flow of men and women into it.

Why should women want to work in mining?

The resource industry provides opportunities for women to build successful careers. Our research shows that job security, salary and flexibility are critical for young Australian women when choosing their career. All things that the drilling and resource sector offers.

The industry is also changing. As we streamline operations, reduce environmental impact, and embrace digital transformation, the demand for skilled professionals rises and the types of skills changes.

This creates opportunities for people to develop expertise, take on leadership positions, and contribute to groundbreaking projects, shaping the future of the industry. An enticing prospect, no matter your gender.

However, the perception of the industry is not changing as fast as the reality. Our research showed that many women were put off roles because they were worried about their skills or safety.

How is FORACO driving change?

We want to change that perception. We know, with the right training and support structure, anyone is capable of a successful drilling career.

Take for example FORACO's own Patrice Marinelli. Patty (as those who know her call her) is a driller on a deep (2,500m) directional drilling campaign in South Australia. Having received the 2023 Australian Drilling Industry Association (ADIA) Woman of the Year Award, she's an example of the successes we'd like to see more of.

At FORACO we have adopted measures to ensure Patrice and other women are safe on site and confident in their skills. These initiatives align with the company's core values – integrity, innovation and involvement.

It is clear from our research that a perception of the industry exists, and while we've already made steps to make the resource industry one where women can thrive, we need to ensure that women are aware of them so they can forge successful careers in the industry.

This white paper lays out the skills gap challenge, our research showing women's perceptions of the resource industry, and the steps FORACO is already taking to change them.



Nathan Elford
VICE PRESIDENT
FORACO Australia

Contents

Executive Summary	ii
The state of the resource industry	1
Why the skills gap is an issue	1
Recruiting more women closes the skills gap	1
How FORACO supports women to fill the skills gap	2
Safety	3
Education and skills	4
Conclusion	5

The state of the resource industry

The mining industry faces a significant skills gap. It's a gap bigger than any of the future mines we are drilling.

Australian mining job vacancies have more than doubled since February 2020, according to management consultancy McKinsey and that's set to grow. Mining operations and projects labour demand will require around 24,400 new workers by 2026. The forecast suggests we will only have 16,000.

There are other factors compounding this. Many existing experienced workers are readying for retirement and as technology changes mining, the required skills also change. The industry is crying out for data analytics, engineering, mechatronics and environmental science skills.

This means there are roles available at all levels: entry level operators, engineers, drillers, geoscientists, logistics, procurement, data analytics/AI and functional specialists.

Why the skills gap is an issue

Most (71%) mining executives say that talent shortages stopped them from meeting production targets, according to the McKinsey research. Even more (86%) said it had gotten harder in the past two years to attract and keep the talent they need.

This causes many specific issues on-site, not just within the wider business. Being short-staffed leads to role fatigue, incidents, and a narrow, often jaded acceptance of reoccurring issues.

Add all this up and it creates a less efficient, innovative and safe industry.

By closing the skills gap, mining companies can share the workload, improve site safety and provide more opportunities for career growth. This allows companies to attract and retain top talent, increase innovation and productivity, and improve overall business performance.

Addressing the skills gap is crucial for the long-term sustainability of the resource sector.

Recruiting more women closes the skills gap

As it stands, only 12 percent of the global mining and metals workforce is female. This means there is a large untapped pool of talent that could be working in our industry.

Our research shows that more than half of young women would consider a career in mining. The top factors for women when considering roles is job security and high- paying salary. The good news is that most respondents also saw these as the two primary benefits of resource careers.

What factors are most critical to you when choosing a career?

Job Security



A high-paying salary



Flexibility



A job that provides a sense of adventure



A job that provides me the opportunity to travel



■ Gen Z
■ Millennials
■ All

In fact, almost two-thirds of Australian women would consider a FIFO job.

So, we know the mining industry provides career prospects that can appeal to young women. The next question is how we do it.



▼ **Jen**
DEEP HOLE DIRECTIONAL
DRILLER – RIG 17
FORACO Australia

How FORACO supports women to fill the skills gap

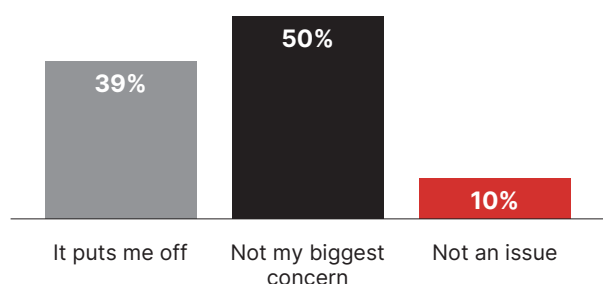
Women want to join the industry, and yet the percentage that do remains low. Change takes time, but it happens faster when you understand the roadblocks and take the lead in removing them.

The resource industry has made large strides in addressing the things that stop women from joining the industry, but our research shows this needs to be an ongoing effort.

Safety

Safety in mining is a concern for 90% of women when thinking about future careers, with 39% naming it a big factor. For many, it's the reason they are unlikely to consider a career in mining.

How much of a concern is safety when considering a career in mining?



However, in the past two decades, there has been an orchestrated effort on multiple fronts to improve safety

in the industry, including better risk management, better equipment design, a focus on wellbeing and tightening of legislation.

The record of the industry is improving and will continue to do so.

Safety in the resources industry can be split into three parts: equipment safety, emotional safety, and physical safety.

At FORACO we are using our core values of Integrity, innovation and involvement to improve safety at all levels for all our employees.

Equipment safety

In 2012, a general manager of a major iron ore producer in the Pilbara remarked "Other than putting on a hard hat and some long pants, you drillers haven't changed a lot over the past 20 years."

We wanted to change this.

In the past two decades, we've embraced and designed innovative technology that provides new ways of operating to keep our workers safe. This includes multiple initiatives across all our sites.

1 Implementing a comprehensive integrated Safety Management System – By detailing correct operation of equipment and specific tasks, everyone on site knows their roles and how to do them safely. With over four hundred documents, the system provides detailed and specific guidance on all activities including deep hole directional drilling, reverse circulation, and water well drilling. Regularly reviewed and updated, this library brings a consistent level of service delivery across the business.

2 Creating the "drill of the future" – We've invested in highly specialised equipment that's designed and manufactured in-house. This includes remote controlled drill rigs, hydraulic breakouts and pipe handling equipment that eliminate the risk of manual handling incidents in drilling. Among our non-negotiables were separation of people and equipment, and a much-improved formal training program for new starters. We knew doing so would not only improve productivity but increase safety. This led us to create the NGBF 800 a class-leading hydro rig package which can be operated via wireless remote control to remove the driller from hazards around the drill rig.

3 Introduce the Green Hat Program – Mentors new starters in the drilling industry with a progressive competency-based training program. The green hard hats ensure they are easily identifiable onsite, so that experienced hands can look out for them and show them what to do.

Emotional safety

Increasing emotional safety is less about technical innovation and more about integrity and involvement.

Our research showed that 58% of women felt that working in mining would lead to an uncomfortable working environment for them as women.

While we understand this perception, we have a zero-tolerance rule for bullying and harassment.

We've implemented codes of conduct and employee discipline policies to eliminate bullying and harassment in the workplace, and every team member undergoes training to ensure they are aware of our expectations.

We have a specific code of conduct policy, an employee conduct and discipline policy, a workplace relations policy and a specific harassment and bullying policy. While these policies will help women entering the industry, our aim is the emotional wellbeing of all our staff.

They'll also benefit from supervision by industry experienced, trained and qualified managers who can provide mentoring, training and personal support. Finally, our Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provides our employees and their immediate families with confidential access to professional counsellors if needed.

Physical safety

We work tirelessly every day to keep our team safe, tackling the paramount issue of safety in multiple ways.

Rosters are planned to reduce work cycle fatigue, we have comprehensive in-house and external training, and we take an overall risk-based approach, which eliminates many physically demanding tasks.

To ensure safety on-site, all crew are required to complete their formal Cert II, III and IV in Mineral Exploration Drilling.

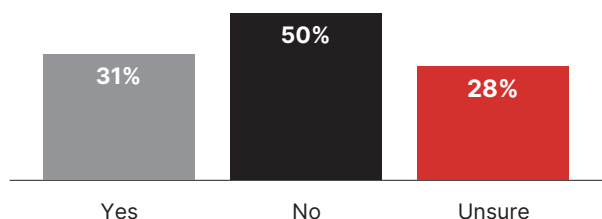
Our tools also improve our workers' physical safety. We have rod handlers and hydraulic breakouts on all rigs, and 36% of FORACO's drill fleet is now remotely operated with climate-controlled drillers cabins.

On-site we only use class leading light and heavy vehicles with IVMS (In Vehicle Monitoring Systems), fatigue cameras, UHF/ VHF radios, with all walkway and access ladders designed to Australian standards.

Education and skills

According to our research, only 31% of women believe they already have the skills to work in the resource sector. This is frustrating, as when women believe they have the skills needed, they are 250% more likely to be open to a career in mining. The 41% of women who didn't think they had the skills; they were much less open.

Do you believe you have the skills needed for a career in mining?



This statistic is particularly jarring, as the skills needed in the industry change constantly. Increasing automation changed the nature of the roles in the drilling and wider resource industry, and we need skills in everything from drillers and equipment operators to geologists, engineers and data scientists.

The resource sector hasn't always welcomed people without experience and at FORACO, we don't want people to limit themselves to what they already know, because we can train them to bring them up to speed with new skills. We hire candidates based on attitude and work ethic – we have the experienced mentors, systems and procedures to train them for the specific technical skills needed to succeed and thrive in the drilling industry.

We have a structured career progression and internal training program for all employees. As mentioned above, all on-site employees are enrolled in, and expected to complete the RII 20920 Cert II, III and IV nationally accredited training programs – at no cost to themselves.

We also reinforce that even our most seasoned and experienced employees had a "first day on site", when they knew nothing, so ask them to look out for, and be mindful of, new starters.



Above: Rig 17 (remote UDR 1200) and crew.

Conclusion

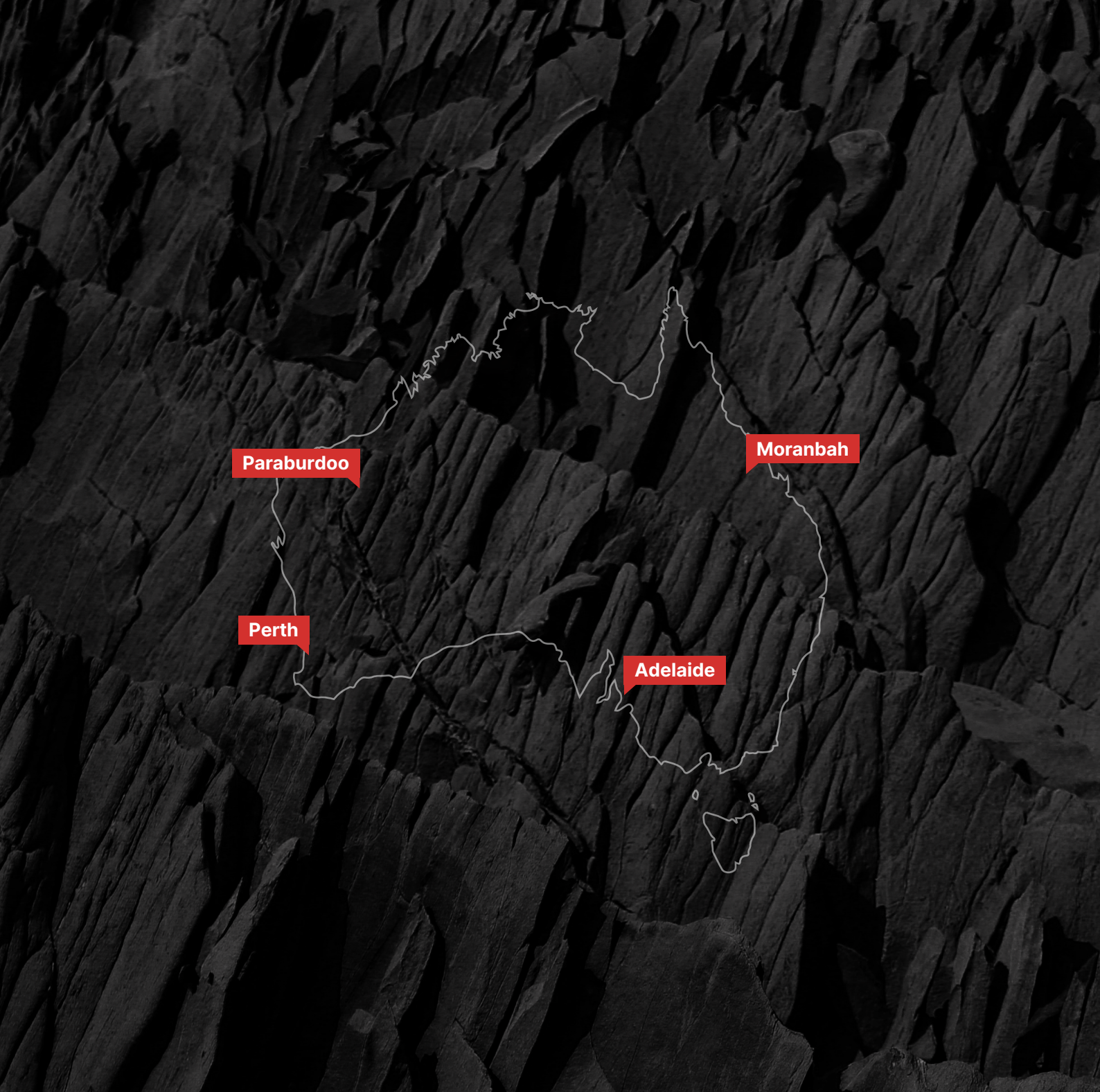
We need more talented people to meet the future demands of a rapidly evolving resource sector. FORACO is dedicated to hiring the best talent for its roles, and to ensure this is case, we need to remove the barriers that deter many women from entering the industry.

We have already taken many steps to do this. We have initiatives and programs designed to mitigate the two main issues holding back young women from our industry – safety and a perceived lack of skills. This is a win for everyone, not just women.

FORACO is committed to providing an emotionally and physically safe work environment. We actively invest in training to provide structured career progression allowing employees develop to their fullest potential.

We encourage women to apply for roles within our industry – we want to hear from you.

Want to join the team? [Join us here](#)



**Integrity. Innovation.
Involvement.**

FORACO Australia
Perth | Paraburdoo | Adelaide | Moranbah
T 08 9251 9900
australia@FORACO.com.au

FORACO.com.au

