



**AWARDS BOOKLET**

**NSW  
WOMEN IN  
MINING  
AWARDS**

Proudly sponsored by

**BHP**

# ENCOURAGING INCLUSION AND CELEBRATING DIVERSITY

---



Welcome to the 2026 NSW Women in Mining Awards!

Tonight, we recognise the exceptional women and diversity champions who are making a lasting impact across the NSW mining industry.

These awards highlight the individuals driving inclusion and diversity, from women excelling in operational and leadership roles to those championing gender diversity throughout mining companies and supplier businesses.

Join us as we celebrate their remarkable achievements shaping the future of NSW mining.

Winners of the NSW Women in Mining Awards will go on to represent NSW at the Women in Resources National Awards, hosted by the Minerals Council of Australia.

---

## **A message from our Platinum Sponsor, BHP**

BHP Mt Arthur Coal is proud to sponsor the 2026 NSW Women in Mining Awards.

At BHP, we believe we are better together. Inclusion is the foundation of a safe, respectful, and high-performing workplace. We are always working to create an environment where every voice is valued and everyone can thrive.

In 2025, we achieved our aspirational goal to achieve gender balance within our employee workforce globally. We are the first global, listed mining company to achieve this milestone.

Our aspiration is about harnessing the enormous potential that a more inclusive and diverse workplace will deliver at BHP, so we can leave a positive legacy for generations to come.

# MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

---

On behalf of the NSW Government, I am delighted to congratulate all winners and finalists in the 2026 NSW Women in Mining Awards.

These awards recognise leadership, innovation and perseverance, and shine a light on the many ways women are contributing to the strength and success of mining across New South Wales. They also highlight the importance of workplaces that actively value diversity, inclusion and fairness.

The resources sector plays a vital role in our state's economy, and its future depends on attracting and retaining diverse talent. Across NSW, more than 31,000 people work directly in, or in a role supporting the mining sector.

It has been my privilege as Minister for Natural Resources to meet with many impressive women in mining. From critical minerals mines in the Far West, to coal mines in the Hunter and Illawarra and at previous Women in Mining Awards nights, I am inspired by the talent and the resilience of these amazing women in our industry. I know that the more women are able to build rewarding careers in mining, bring new perspectives and skills to roles both on site and behind the scenes, the more successful the industry will be.

While progress has been made, there is still work to do to ensure women have equal access to opportunity, leadership and safe, respectful workplaces. Creating these conditions benefits not only individuals, but the entire industry.

It is encouraging to see this progress across so much of our industry, and the NSW Government continues to support efforts that break down barriers, foster participation and open pathways for women at every stage of their careers.

Tonight, we celebrate those who are leading by example and helping to shape a more inclusive and resilient mining industry. Congratulations to all finalists and award recipients, and thank you to everyone contributing to a stronger future for the sector.

I wish you an enjoyable and memorable evening.



The Hon. Courtney Houssos, MLC  
Minister for Natural Resources

# MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

---

Tonight we recognise the achievements of the women of the NSW mining industry, and celebrate their fantastic contribution.

Mining in NSW supports many diverse city-based jobs and even more employment opportunities in regional and remote locations across the state.

Thousands of incredible women across NSW work in our mining industry and also live in regional communities. Their contribution strengthens those communities, while helping our industry deliver economic benefits for NSW.

Tonight's Awards celebrate the achievements of women in mining across a range of fields.

From technology and innovation to engineering and trades, as well as in operational roles and running businesses, our award winners highlight the opportunities for women in mining and showcase the career paths available in our sector.

On behalf of the NSW Minerals Council I congratulate all the finalists. Being nominated for one of these awards means you have been recognised by your peers for an exceptional contribution and as a role model for the next generation of women in mining.



Stephen Galilee, CEO  
NSW Minerals Council

## NETWORKING DRINKS



---

Sponsored by Newmont

Our evening begins with Networking Drinks at 6:30pm – a fantastic opportunity to connect with industry colleagues in a relaxed setting before the formalities begin at 7:00pm.

This is your chance to engage in meaningful conversations, share insights, and build new connections with professionals who are passionate about driving diversity and inclusion in the mining sector.

## MASTER OF CEREMONIES



---

Sponsored by Yancoal



**Natasha Beyersdorf**  
Newsreader NBN News

Natasha began her journalism career in regional New South Wales at Radio 2TM in Tamworth, before moving into television with Prime TV as a reporter and newsreader.

She joined NBN News in 2001, where she has reported on major regional stories and anchored weekday bulletins. Known for her professionalism and warmth, Natasha has built a strong connection with audiences across the Hunter and northern NSW.

With more than two decades in regional journalism, she is a familiar and trusted voice in the community.

## TAKE-HOME GIFT



---

Sponsored by IMARC

Tonight's centrepieces have been generously provided by IMARC and are designed as a floral gift for guests to take home. Each arrangement includes a QR code to learn more about the International Mining and Resources Conference (IMARC), taking place 27–29 October 2026 at ICC Sydney.

# KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Sponsored by Team Super



**Michelle Keegan**  
CEO  
Augment Technologies

Michelle has over 25 years of mining experience, four years in the space sector, and is now deeply involved in mining technology.

She recently joined Augment Technologies as CEO and is also a Corporate Advisor at Atrico, Director of Mining and Space, and Co-Founder of Robopalooza 2025.

Previously at AROSE, she was Program Director of Australia's first lunar rover, led NASA mining missions, and delivered the Space STEM program. She was also Program Director of Technology Development and leader of the Next Generation Mine Innovation Program at South32.

At South32, Michelle led the design and delivery of new technology and innovation for greenfield projects and their translation into brownfield operations. With a non-traditional tech background, she applied her strategic and mining expertise to drive programs and enhance company competitiveness.

Michelle holds a Bachelor of Engineering (Mining Hons) and a Master of Science (Mineral Economics) from Curtin University. In 2023, she was awarded Space Professional of the Year, and in 2024 was named among the top 100 Global Inspirational Women in Mining. She is passionate about improving diversity, creating opportunities, enabling STEM pathways, and mentoring.



# RECOGNISING EXCELLENCE

---

The NSW Minerals Council wants to thank the people and businesses who entered this year's awards. We congratulate all of you on your efforts and achievements to date.

## **Exceptional Woman**

Melinda Loh, Centennial Coal  
Ellen Griffiths, Glencore  
Kylie Facer, BHP – Mt Arthur Coal  
Emma Stuart, Evolution Mining  
Penny Woodward, Malabar Resources  
Emma White, Aurelia Metals  
Nerida Slee, Yancoal Australia  
Allison Metcalfe, Newmont  
Morgana Gidley-Baird, Whitehaven  
Sarah Wells, Thiess  
Linda Snyman, Evolution Mining Northparkes Operations

## **Exceptional Young Woman**

Courtney Dobson, Newmont  
Ebony Ford, BHP – Mt Arthur Coal  
Victoria Allen, Yancoal Australia  
Abby Jones, Yancoal Australia  
Molly Barraclough, Aurelia Metals  
Stephanie Penales, Evolution Mining  
Alex Talbot-Wilson, Newmont  
Aleisha Saxby, Glencore Ulan Surface Operations

## **Outstanding Tradeswoman, Operator or Technician**

Bridget Flack, Yancoal Australia  
Sarah North, Yancoal Australia  
Laura Goldrick, Thiess  
Kristy Cunneen, Thiess  
Taleigha Everingham-Potts, Evolution Mining Northparkes

## **Inclusion and Diversity Champion**

Megan Martin, Whitehaven Coal  
Leonnice Taylor, Yancoal Australia  
Matthew Ireland, Endura  
Ngaire Baker, Develop  
Jade Paterson, BHP – Mt Arthur Coal  
Michelle Douglass, Glencore Australia

## **Excellence in Diversity Programs and Performance**

Early Careers Program, Newmont  
FlexCrew Program, Evolution Mining Northparkes Operations

## **Technological Innovation**

Emma Clark, Orivium  
Maria Strang, Boggabri Coal Operations  
Harriet Davies, Whitehaven Coal

Sponsored by Komatsu

## FINALIST



**Maria Strang**  
Boggabri Coal Operations

Maria Strang led the implementation of a Training and Workforce Management System at Boggabri Coal, pioneering the introduction of immersive digital learning, including 360-degree virtual site tours integrated into eLearning modules. This modernised approach transformed a heavily paper-based induction process into an engaging digital experience, improving safety, efficiency and accessibility across the workforce.

The initiative reduced site induction time from up to ten hours to just 2.5 hours, delivered annual cost savings of approximately \$300,000 and enabled more than 28,000 digital assessments since rollout. Maria's leadership combines technical innovation with strong stakeholder engagement, demonstrating how existing technologies can be applied in new ways to deliver meaningful operational outcomes.

Sponsored by Komatsu

## FINALIST



**Harriet Davies**  
Whitehaven Coal

As an Environmental Advisor at Narrabri Coal Operations, Harriet Davies has led the implementation and ongoing development of a purpose-built Environment and Rehabilitation Data Hub. This hub is a major digital innovation replacing fragmented, paper-based environmental management systems.

The Data Hub integrates permitting, disturbance tracking, rehabilitation, biodiversity constraints and cultural heritage data into a unified spatial system accessible in both office and field environments.

Real-time digital workflows, live mapping and streamlined approvals have strengthened compliance, improved operational efficiency and enhanced regulatory confidence. Recognised by regulators and industry partners as leading practice, the system has transformed environmental governance onsite and established a scalable model for digital compliance management across the resources sector.

# EXCELLENCE IN DIVERSITY PROGRAMS AND PERFORMANCE



Sponsored by Bengalla Mining Company

## FINALIST



### **FlexCrew Program**

Evolution Mining Northparkes Operations

Launched in April 2025 as a two-year pilot, the Northparkes FlexCrew Program created four fixed-term roles in the Ore Processing Department where working arrangements are co-designed between employees and leaders. This flexible-by-design approach enables part-time and reduced-hours pathways that maintain safety, productivity and team integration while expanding access to operational careers.

The recruitment model focused on local community members previously unable to participate in standard shift work. Interest significantly exceeded expectations, attracting more than 100 applicants. All four roles were filled by women who had either not considered mining viable due to roster constraints or believed returning after family commitments was unachievable.

Nearly 12 months into the pilot, all participants remain employed and highly engaged, delivering strong retention outcomes and contributing positively to workload distribution and team morale. The program has increased female participation in operational roles, strengthened local talent pipelines, and reinforced flexibility as an operational strength rather than a compromise. By redesigning work to reflect modern life commitments, FlexCrew demonstrates how inclusive workforce design can deliver both participation gains and sustained operational performance.

# EXCELLENCE IN DIVERSITY PROGRAMS AND PERFORMANCE



Sponsored by Bengalla Mining Company

## FINALIST



**Early Careers Program**  
Newmont

Targeting university students and graduates in engineering, geology, IT, metallurgy, mining and environment, Newmont's Early Careers Program deliberately focuses on increasing participation from women and underrepresented groups. Focussing on participation of these underrepresented groups through the Vacation and Graduate Development programs has been successful in diversifying the talent pipeline at Newmont.

Gender representation outcomes significantly exceed industry benchmarks. Women comprised 45% of vacation students in 2024/25, increasing to 62% in 2025/26, while graduate cohorts achieved 40% female representation overall and 53% at Cadia. Strong conversion outcomes further validate the pipeline model, with 43% of vacation students returning for subsequent programs and 60% progressing into graduate roles.

The program's focus on accessibility has driven an investment of more than \$260,000 to create Newmont's first fully accessible operational facility. Designed as a permanent capability rather than a one-off accommodation, the facility now supports employees, contractors and visitors and provides a scalable blueprint for inclusive operational environments.

# INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY CHAMPION



Sponsored by Thiess

## FINALIST



**Megan Martin**  
Whitehaven Coal

Megan is currently leading the environment team at Whitehaven's newest operation, the Vickery Mine.

Since 2021, Megan has advocated for women in mining through participation in the then fledgling WIMnet NSW North West Branch. As Co-chair and then Chair of the AusIMM WIMnet NSW North West branch, Megan has been focussed on building a strong regional network that empowers women through practical development, mentoring and meaningful industry connection.

Since 2021, the WIMnet North West committee has grown from a small regional presence into a recognised hub for women in mining around Gunnedah. Key strategies include actively seeking participation from women in the sectors that service the industry, including consultancies and local small businesses. Under Megan's leadership the branch has focused on increasing sponsorship, taking a similar diversified approach and encouraging sponsorship not only from mining companies but those that service the industry.

---

Sponsored by Thiess

## FINALIST



**Matthew Ireland**  
Endura

Matthew Ireland's leadership in mining has been shaped by both professional experience and deeply personal values. Matthew has been inspired by the strong women in his life, early exposure to talented colleagues being overlooked, and personal experience supporting family members with disabilities. Matthew developed a lasting commitment to removing barriers and ensuring equity of opportunity across the resources sector.

Matthew's leadership has led to measurable cultural and operational outcomes, including significant improvements in female, Indigenous and LGBTQIA+ representation and embedding of equitable hiring practices. He has championed gender-neutral recruitment, diverse selection panels, leadership pathways for women and workplace facility upgrades that better support women onsite.

Matthew is a visible advocate across the industry. He has mentored emerging professionals, supported Women in Mining networks, delivered Respect@Work training and championed disability and neurodiversity inclusion initiatives.

# EXCEPTIONAL TRADESWOMAN | OPERATOR | TECHNICIAN



---

Sponsored by Aurelia Metals

## FINALIST



**Taleigha Everingham-Potts**  
Evolution Mining Northparkes

Taleigha Everingham-Potts is an experienced Auto Electrician with more than six years in the mining sector. Following an apprenticeship at Cadia, Taleigha progressed into breakdown roles supporting underground mining operations, diagnosing and repairing heavy machinery including CAT loaders, Sandvik and Epiroc equipment, while coordinating closely with supervisors and leading hands to prioritise critical work.

In 2025, Taleigha joined Evolution Mining's Northparkes Operations as a Light Vehicle Workshop Auto Electrician, where she is responsible for diagnosing and repairing light vehicles and auxiliary equipment while supporting shift leadership when required. She is also continuing her professional development through further trade proficiency training and internal development opportunities.

Taleigha has worked to mentor female apprentices to persevere in the mining industry, and has also contributed to industry-wide advocacy for women in trades. Taleigha has also worked as a peer to peer support person at Cadia.

# EXCEPTIONAL TRADESWOMAN | OPERATOR | TECHNICIAN



Sponsored by Aurelia Metals

## FINALIST



**Sarah North**  
Yancoal Australia

Sarah North began her career in mining as the first female apprentice at Moolarben. Sarah's skills and work ethic soon opened the door to a role with original equipment manufacturer Liebherr, where she worked on Tier 1 mining assets and undertook specialist training at the company's Adelaide facility.

Sarah returned to Moolarben to take on the role of Maintenance Spotter inspecting equipment across the open-cut operation, developing maintenance work packs and coordinating parts and repairs to maximise machine reliability and performance. Sarah's role required both technical knowledge and strategic planning to support asset availability and operational continuity.

Throughout her career, Sarah has demonstrated resilience and determination while navigating a traditionally male-dominated trade. As the first female apprentice at Moolarben, and currently the only female tradeswoman in the Moolarben maintenance department, Sarah takes pride in supporting and encouraging future tradeswomen. Sarah regularly participates in apprentice recruitment events, "Try a Trade" initiatives for high school students and women in mining seminars, helping to show the next generation that a career in the resources sector is both achievable and rewarding.

# EXCEPTIONAL YOUNG WOMAN



Sponsored by Evolution Mining

## FINALIST



**Stephanie Penales**  
Evolution Mining

A passion for sustainability, equity and community impact led Stephanie Penales to an unexpected but deeply meaningful career in mining. After studying international relations and environment, Stephanie entered the mining sector as Evolution's first-ever Sustainability Graduate.

Fresh out of Evolution's Graduate Program, Stephanie was entrusted to project manage Evolution's Sustainability Report and Modern Slavery Statement. Stephanie also played a central role in coordinating Evolution's inaugural First Nations Summit, bringing together Australian and Canadian partners. The experience shaped her leadership philosophy and led to her guiding Evolution's first Reconciliation Working Group and implementation of the company's 2025–2027 Reconciliation Plan.

Stephanie has become a strong advocate for cultural inclusion and social impact, sharing industry learnings at major conferences and championing initiatives that strengthen relationships between mining operations and communities.

# EXCEPTIONAL YOUNG WOMAN



Sponsored by Evolution Mining

## FINALIST



**Aleisha Saxby**  
Glencore, Ulan Surface Operations

A strong aptitude for mathematics and science sparked Aleisha Saxby's passion for engineering early and set her on a rapid career path in mining. Within a year of completing Glencore's graduate program, she advanced to Process and Logistics Engineer at Ulan Surface Operations. Her adaptability was tested when she stepped into an acting Superintendent role for 12 months while maintaining her engineering responsibilities. In 2024, Aleisha made history as Ulan Surface Operations' first female Production Superintendent, breaking new ground in a traditionally male-dominated workforce.

Aleisha has led major operational and capital projects that delivered significant production and financial outcomes, including leading a reject reprocessing project, generating significant additional revenue.

Aleisha is a passionate advocate for STEM education and industry engagement. She has mentored graduates, supported university and school outreach programs, and represented mining at community and industry events to inspire future engineers, particularly young women, to pursue technical careers.

Sponsored by BHP

## FINALIST



**Morgana Gidley-Baird**  
Whitehaven

Morgana's diverse career has spanned different commodities and industries across Australia with a focus on managing teams through periods of disruption, navigating complexity and creating clarity in challenging environments.

Morgana began her career with an environmental consultancy before joining Mt Arthur Coal in 2008 as an Environment and Community Coordinator. In 2010, Morgana joined BHP's Newman Joint Venture in WA. This was her first leadership role as Environmental Superintendent, leading teams across multiple remote mine sites. She later joined Chevron's Gorgon LNG Project on Barrow Island, leading environmental compliance for one of Australia's largest and most complex resource developments, overseeing environmental management on a site with a workforce of more than 6,000 people. In 2015, Morgana joined AGL Energy, progressing into a group leadership role responsible for environmental strategy across coal, gas and renewable assets in five states. In this role Morgana led climate transition planning, major regulatory reforms, acquisitions and a proposed corporate demerger.

In 2024, Morgana joined Whitehaven as General Manager Environment, establishing a new group environment function and leading the integration of Queensland assets into the company's governance frameworks. Throughout her career, she has been a strong advocate for building capable teams, strengthening environmental governance and supporting inclusive workplaces. Morgana is actively involved in industry initiatives through Women in Mining NSW, mentoring emerging professionals and contributing to programs that encourage greater diversity and leadership across the resources sector.

Sponsored by BHP

## FINALIST



**Penny Woodward**  
Malabar Resources

As a bassoon player in touring orchestras, Penny's first career was a world away from mining. However, following her studies, she landed a role at Hunter Valley Operations Coal Handling and Preparation Plant (CHPP) and found that she was able to transfer many of her learnings from being an orchestral music performer to the mining sector.

The resilience, perseverance and dedication she had learned as a top level musician stayed with her as she applied herself to her mining career, eventually taking on the role of Process Engineer onsite at Bengalla Mining Company.

Over the following nine years, Penny completed a Graduate Certificate in Management and rose from Process Engineer, to Process Specialist and eventually to Process Superintendent.

In 2022, Penny joined Malabar Resources as CHPP Superintendent, drawn by the opportunity to help build a new operation from the ground up. Penny played a pivotal role in the start-up of the Malabar CHPP, restarting an operation that had been left idle for seven years. Penny was later appointed Surface Infrastructure Manager, where she leads a multidisciplinary team of approximately 25 people responsible for critical surface infrastructure that underpins the mine's long-term success.

Penny has also played an active role in the workplace and as Chairperson of the NSW branch of the Australian Coal Preparation Society to advocate for changes designed to make mining more attractive as a career path for women.

# PREVIOUS EXCEPTIONAL WOMEN

---



There have been some incredible past winners of our awards. Here we note the previous winners of the Exceptional Women in NSW Mining Award and pay tribute to them as leaders.

## **Hope Mulvihill**

General Manager, Business Development and Technical Services, Glencore Coal Assets Australia

## **Keryn Zambrowski**

Senior Manager Investor Relations  
Whitehaven Coal

## **Elizabeth Watts**

Operations Manager  
Xstrata Coal NSW

## **Cate Simms**

Manager – Stakeholder Engagement & Communications (UHMD)  
NSW Minerals Council

## **Simone Painter**

Process Manager  
Alkane Resources

## **Raelene O'Brien**

Group General Manager Technical Services  
Glencore

## **Kirsten Molloy**

CEO  
HVCCC

## **Nicole Brook**

General Manager Business Development & Technical Services, Glencore

## **Sarah Withell**

EGM Health, Safety & Environment  
Whitehaven Coal

## **Renata Roberts**

Chief Corporate Affairs Officer  
The Bloomfield Group

## **Erin Lee**

Regional Manager Southern Mines Rescue  
Coal Services

## **Lyndsay Potts**

Manager Health, Safety & Environment  
Newcrest Mining – Cadia Valley  
Operations

## **Bianca Newcombe**

Principal Metallurgist  
OptiFroth Solutions

# AWARDS JUDGES

---

We thank our judging panel for their time and contribution to our awards program.



**Stef Loader**

Chair, Port Waratah Coal Services  
Non-Executive Director, Sunrise Energy Metals



**Fiona Robertson**

Non-Executive Director  
Whitehaven Coal | Bellevue Gold | 29Metals



**Sarah Withell**

EGM Health, Safety & Environment  
Whitehaven Coal  
2019 Winner of the Exceptional Woman in NSW Mining Award



# SPONSORS

---

Thank you to these industry leading businesses for partnering with the NSW Minerals Council to present the 2026 NSW Women in Mining Awards.

## PLATINUM

---

# BHP

## GOLD

---



# THIESS

## SILVER

---



# Newmont™

## BRONZE

---

