



Submission No:	111
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Secretary:	[Signature]

18 September 2008

The Secretary
Standing Committee on Employment and Workplace Relations
House of Representatives
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ms Scarlett

RE: Pay equity and associated issues related to increasing female participation in the workforce.

Thank you for your letter dated 15 July 2008 regarding pay equity and female participation in the workforce. The comments provided in this submission reflect our experience as an employer in remote regions of Australia.

Xstrata Zinc Australia is proud to be committed to providing women strong employment opportunities and fair remuneration. It is incumbent upon us to do so. But more importantly, female participation in the workforce makes good commercial sense.

Xstrata Zinc Australia's Equal Employment Opportunity policy outlines equal opportunities for advancement and rates of pay to male and female employees of equal experience and aptitude. This policy is our main vehicle for meeting legislative requirements.

Beyond this, Xstrata Zinc Australia has no formal diversity targets but has implemented many voluntary programmes to improve the recruitment, retention and promotion of women in mining. These include:

- 'family friendly' policies and practices including flexible or shorter rosters to attract individuals with childcare commitments and support to increase childcare facilities within local communities, to enable parents to join and remain in the workforce
- participation in the Queensland Resource Council's initiatives in Australia to achieve a target of 10% female representation in the resource sector
- increasing the number of bursaries and apprenticeships specifically aimed at women, especially in technical disciplines
- improving the operational work environment to ensure this is conducive to the retention of the women, with a special focus on changing and bathroom facilities
- restructuring our successful indigenous training programs at our McArthur River Mining (MRM), to cater for higher-than-expected local female interest. In 2007, eight out of 20 trainees were indigenous females.

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These programs aimed at increasing women's involvement in the workforce are a valuable component of Xstrata Zinc Australia's commerciality. The mining industry is currently facing a global shortage of skilled employees across a range of disciplines. Improving the diversity of our workforce, including increasing the participation of women, offers a solution to the current shortage of skills in the mining industry.

Our experience also shows the opportunity to maximise the participation of a local female workforce, especially in remote regions, if the workplace is alert to their needs. We have higher proportions of female workers from the local communities of Mt. Isa and Borroloola than in our fly-in-fly-out workforce at MRM. This reinforces to us the value and importance of maximising the participation of the local female workforce, and is consistent with industry research that shows local communities are the most sustainable source of labour for resources operations.

It also highlights that additional legislation will not achieve greater participation of a local female workforce.

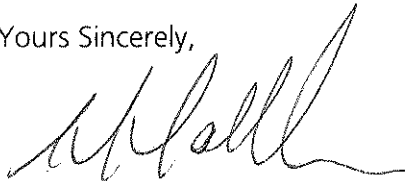
Our strong view is that increased female participation in the workforce will only be realised by the better coordination of existing programs and the commitment of local communities and employers to support the entry of women to the workforce.

Xstrata Zinc Australia has recently alerted our peak body and the Minister for Education, Minister for Employment & Workplace Relations and Minister for Social Inclusion, that we believe the unacceptable socio-economic conditions of many remote regions are prevailing not because of a lack of action or resources, but because of the lack of a single long-term plan to coordinate these activities.

Increasing female participation in the workforce would be a goal for most remote communities, and a coordinated regional plan will provide the structure required to achieve this.

Please see attached for your reference a draft proposed Visionary Regional Plan for the Borroloola region. We suggest this provides a template for individual regions to create a single plan to improve their conditions across a range of long term socio-economic and environmental goals – including increasing female participation in their local workforce.

Yours Sincerely,



Patrick Collins
General Manager
Corporate Affairs and Community Relations
Xstrata Zinc Australia