ADVANCING DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION MATURITY IN THE MINING SECTOR

Mental Awareness, Respect and Safety (MARS) Centre Research Report

GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

MENTAL AWARENESS RESPECT & SAFETY

Summary

Abstract

Building inclusive and diverse workplaces positively influences respectful and healthy behaviours and workplace relationships. This is critical in male-dominated industries, such as mining, where a lack of diversity, and gender inequality, result in a power imbalance that drives sexual harassment and other psychosocial hazards such as workplace bullying and discrimination. This project sought to evaluate how the ECU Diversity & Inclusion Capability Maturity Model (ECU D&I CMM) could be used to advance diversity and inclusion maturity to guide the development of an inclusion culture to help address gender inequality in the Western Australian Mining Sector. The study showed assessment using a contextualised version of the ECU D&I CMM was able to help guide the development of implementation plans to assist with advancing diversity and inclusion in the tested WA Mining case companies.

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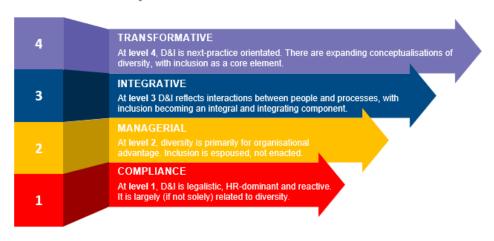
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Research Background

Building diverse and inclusive (D&I) workplaces positively influences respectful and healthy behaviours and workplace relationships, although optimising workplace D&I has proven elusive[1]. Sustainably progressing D&I is critical in male-dominated industries, such as mining, where a lack of diversity and gender inequality result in a power imbalance[2] and requires a holistic approach that integrates D&I into an organisation's culture and core processes[3].

Progress with D&I is also unlikely to be successful without an understanding of root causes, a meaningful definition of success, leadership accountability, context specific solutions and rigorous tracking of progress[4]. CMMs are well suited to address these challenges as they offer organisations a structured analytical process to assess their current operations against predetermined levels of maturity to identify and prioritise improvement initiatives[5].

The ECU D&I CMM (see Figure 1) is an evidence-based tool which had not previously been contextualised for the mining sector. In this project, this tool was adapted to the mining context and used to assess the current state of D&I maturity in two WA mining sector organisations. The purpose of the study was to guide the setting of targets, and the development of implementation plans to influence the respectful and healthy behaviours required to enable equal participation for all diverse groups of employees.

ECU D&I CMM Maturity Levels

4 — TRANSFORMATIVE
At **level 4**, D&I is next-practice orientated. There are expanding conceptualisations of diversity, with inclusion as a core element.

3 — INTEGRATIVE
At **level 3** D&I reflects interactions between people and processes, with inclusion becoming an integral and integrating component.

2 — MANAGERIAL
At **level 2**, diversity is primarily for organisational advantage. Inclusion is espoused, not enacted.

1 — COMPLIANCE
At **level 1**, D&I is legalistic, HR-dominant and reactive. It is largely (if not solely) related to diversity.

ECU D&I CMM Dimensions

DRIVERS & FOCUS
The drivers and focus dimension focuses on the drivers of workplace diversity and inclusion and where the key focus of activity is in the organisation

RESPONSIBILITY & LEADERSHIP
The responsibility and leadership dimension focuses on the leadership approach and how responsibility is devolved throughout the organisation

D&I MEASUREMENT
The D&I measurement dimension focuses on where the emphasis is placed on measurement on how D&I is measured throughout the organisation

MECHANISMS & DEFINING FEATURES
The mechanisms and defining features dimension considers how D&I is being achieved throughout the organisation and includes tools and activities

Figure 1: ECU D&I CMM dimensions and levels

Methodology

The project was conducted in two phases. The first phase involved contextualising the ECU D&I CMM for the mining sector and the second phase involved using the contextualised tool to assess the current state of D&I maturity in two mining sector organisations.

In phase one, a series of online individual interviews and focus groups were conducted with participants from non-managerial to senior manager levels who had a collective mining sector experience of over 140 years. This process was used to make the tool more reflective of mining sector practices and language with over 70 changes made in the evidence guide of the tool.

In phase two, assessment workshops were held at each participating organisation's premises with stakeholders from different levels and departments. No senior/executive management participated in this assessment phase which was not a concern for the research team as senior managers perceptions of the level of equality, equity and inclusion has been reported to be different from the perceptions of other organisational members[6][7]. The purpose of these workshops was to work through the assessment process to determine where participants saw the level of maturity of the organisation. Online reporting back sessions were held after these workshops. These sessions were also used to set desired state maturity levels and discuss potential priority focus areas to address gaps between current and desired states.

Finally, evaluation meetings were conducted with both organisations to determine how effective the D&I CMM tool and the assessment process were to help shape thinking about future D&I strategies and practices.

Key findings

Assessment process raises awareness of D&I

Throughout the project, the research team observed respectful and authentic discussions which were educative and provided rich sources of qualitative data supporting the assessment ratings made. Participants engaged in a manner conducive to helping build psychologically safe and respectful workplaces. Additionally, the research team were pleased to hear the largely positive comments about the process and to hear expressions about how engagement with the tool had brought about new ideas for driving positive D&I change. These observations suggest that the assessment process itself is a valuable awareness raising and culture change initiative.

Outcomes from the evaluation meetings suggested both the D&I CMM tool and the assessment process were valued by industry participants with some suggestions for improvements made including building further guidance on next steps into the supporting package and digitising the tool.

The structured discussions which were part of both the review of the tool and the conduct of the assessment process were extremely useful in generating meaningful conversations about the concepts of D&I which aren't usually discussed within the wider workforce. One participant said:

"Discussing it at length through this process has been really valuable, not only to understand the importance of D&I and the D&I concepts, but also, where we are as a business."

Another indicated:

"It made us think about different facets of D&I, not just the usual policy perspective"

Using the D&I CMM assists with identifying actions and assigning accountability

The outcomes of the assessment process were valuable in presenting an overview of the current situation which was considered useful in establishing measures of where the organisations would like to be in 12-months' time, which, in the case of one organisation, were going to be incorporated into the KPIs for the responsible member of the executive team. One participant said:

"The biggest thing for us is you know, identifying those gaps so we know where to focus our efforts. So, I think we've taken an approach of listing some initiatives out around what initiatives we want to take forward as a result of the study."

Another indicated the tool and assessment process:

"Provided a line of sight of where to go next. In building capability maturity"

Accuracy of results can be enhanced the larger the sample size

There was varied feedback about how accurate organisational representatives perceived the assessment results to be with one of the participating organisations, indicating that there were "no surprises" in the results when they were presented to the executive team. However, representatives from the other organisation expressed a concern that the results may not be representative given the small sample size.

Implications for Industry

This research project demonstrated that the mining sector contextualised ECU D&I CMM can be useful to assist mining sector organisations to identify and address the "success factors" that contribute to sustainable D&I impact[4]. Using the tool also assisted participating organisations towards adopting a more holistic approach that integrates D&I into culture and core processes[3].

How could a WA mining sector organisation use this tool?

Mining sector organisations could conduct their own maturity assessments through assessment workshops which can assist with awareness raising and culture change.

The value of this assessment process will be enhanced through:

- ensuring input from a wide range of representative stakeholders at different levels and from different sites and departments across the organisation.
- creating a psychologically safe environment for participants in the assessment process to ensure they feel safe in sharing their observations and experiences.
- dedicating time and resources to understanding the assessment results in the context of the specific mining organisation so that tailored and organisation centred solutions can be designed and implemented.

The mining sector contextualised assessment tool and a range of supporting resources to assist in using the tool are available on the ECU Mental Awareness, Respect and Safety (MARS) Centre Research webpage at: ECU | Reports for Industry : Mental Awareness, Respect and Safety (MARS) Centre : Research : Business and Law : Schools . The supporting resources include a user guide and an instructional video.

What value would using the tool add for a WA mining sector organisation?

The ECU D&I CMM tool provides an opportunity for mining organisations to track their D&I maturity progress over time and achieve the multiple benefits which result from diverse and inclusive workplaces[4]. This can be done by:

- setting up an assessment rhythm (e.g. annually)
- monitoring progress by comparing results from previous assessment/s
- assigning accountabilities to responsible stakeholders.

This structured analytical process can systematically assist organisations in maximising the likelihood of achieving meaningful progress in advancing D&I maturity, thereby positively influences respectful and healthy behaviours and workplace relationships.

A full technical report from this study will be available on the MARS Centre website in due course.

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