

2 March 2023

MEDIA RELEASE

BESIX Watpac commits to a 25% female workforce by 2025

The company has also committed to a 5% increase of females in management roles by 2023, is focused on eliminating any gender pay gaps and will be implementing new strategies to support a more balanced workforce.

At the end of 2022 women represented 19% of BESIX Watpac's workforce – an increase of 2% from the previous year. The company had also launched flexible working arrangements and domestic violence policies, delivered a range of behavioural training programs, and actively increased visible female leadership across the business.

BESIX Watpac CEO Mark Baker said he was pleased the organisation was increasing its commitments to diversity and inclusion in 2023, a year of celebration for the multidisciplinary contractor.

"In 2023 we mark 40 years of operations in Australia. I am proud of our diverse and inclusive workforce, and attribute our success over the last four decades to consistently bringing the best teams together to achieve operational excellence," Mr Baker said.

Last year BESIX Watpac employed a record 285 Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander people across its projects and our national average of hours on projects from 2017 to 2021 is 4.4%. We also partnered with Taskable to provide employment experience for people with disabilities.

"My vision is that BESIX Watpac is a workplace where diversity and inclusion is ingrained in our culture. One step is to increase female representation in a sustainable way, and we will do so while continuing to recognise and reward the enormous contribution of our male workforce. Broadening our talent pool and creating a workplace where everyone belongs is critical to our future success."

In 2022 the company invested in several diversity initiatives including the 'Cultivate' sponsorship program, 'Lean In Circles' for female employees and the 'Career Revive' program. Led by consulting firm KPMG, 'Career Revive' supports medium to large businesses in attracting and retaining women returning to work from a career break. The program involved a review of the physical workplace, processes, policies and culture to identify potential barriers to attracting and retaining women returning to work. Based on this review, BESIX Watpac was then supported to develop an action plan and offered guidance on how to improve organisation practices, policies and culture.

National People Manager, Emily Brooks has been leading the development of related policies and operational programs.

"We've set ourselves new targets, but our bigger focus has been working through how our goals can be realistically achieved. Our strategies include targeting 50% female representation for graduate recruitment and establishing a review committee to ensure female candidates are given equal opportunities within our recruitment processes."

"We also believe we can make a significant difference by working closely with our subcontractors and project teams to encourage female specific pre-employment programs and apprenticeships" Ms Brooks commented.

BESIX Watpac's International Women's Day Ambassador Melissa Da Silva is a driving force behind the company's progress.

"We are proud of the approach we are taking to diversity and inclusion, and importantly we're taking a sustainable approach and seeking to implement changes that can help reshape the future at BESIX Watpac," Ms Da Silva said.

"By taking a long-term sustainable view we have prioritised working with education and training providers to create career pathways for young women. Additionally, our partnerships with NAWIC, United Nations Global Compact Australia and Diversity Council Australia will continue to shape our approach."

- ENDS -