



AfPA Launches Diversity and Inclusion Roadmap

Wednesday 17th May 2023

The Australian Flexible Pavement Association (AfPA) has launched its Diversity and Inclusion Roadmap to promote inclusivity and address skills shortages across the flexible pavement industry. Through the roadmap, AfPA recognises the positive impact having an inclusive workforce has on productivity, innovation, and capability, which in turn contributes to building a stronger industry to support roads and infrastructure.

The roadmap is a strategic, multifaceted plan focusing on Attracting, Recruiting, Retaining, and Developing careers for workers in the flexible pavement industry and is designed to combat sexism and perceptions that limit opportunities for underrepresented groups.

AfPA's Diversity and Inclusion Committee was formed in early 2022 to identify and address long-standing diversity challenges in the industry and encourage positive, systemic workplace practices that transform leadership, professional development, and culture.

The roadmap focuses on key industry issues, including gender equity to create sustainable and long-lasting change, not only for the flexible pavement industry but also for the building and construction sector more broadly.

While the need for gender diversity in the roadwork and construction industry is clear, the reality is that the sector remains heavily male-dominated in Australia. Despite women comprising 47.9% of the Australian workforce, only 13% of the construction workforce are women, a figure that shrinks to single digits when focused on trades.

AfPA also identifies within the roadmap that fostering a dynamic and inclusive work environment that values young people and underrepresented groups is equally important to industry improvement and growth.

To address critical skill shortages across the industry, AfPA believes that promoting and attracting new entrants while retaining current workers is essential. However, diversity and inclusion require proactive leadership, accountable commitments, cultural change, and measurable outcomes-based initiatives.

AfPA proposes a set of strategies that aim to increase awareness and break down barriers to participation among underrepresented groups, including the development and implementation of initiatives and programs, such as:



- AfPA Diversity and Inclusion Charter, a senior leadership national commitment to recognise and support a diverse and inclusive workforce and lead best practice strategies essential to industry.
- AfPA Leaders of Tomorrow Initiative, designed to attract and support young and emerging leaders through coaching programs and workshops for educational institutions to help build skills, networking opportunities and relationships throughout the industry.
- AfPA National Knowledge Exchange Program, designed to engage all educational establishments in raising awareness and highlighting the benefits of young people entering the flexible pavement industry.
- AfPA Diversity and Inclusion Mental Health and Wellness Program, designed to assist in mentoring and establishing mental health and wellness standards across the industry.

Lise Sperling, AfPA Executive Director NSW/ACT and Federal Advocacy and Government Relations, and Coordinator of AfPA's Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Pillar said:

“We see the Diversity and Inclusion Roadmap as a way forward, but not the last step in addressing inclusion and diversity in the flexible pavement industry. Diversifying our workforce is not just a matter of social justice; it is also essential for driving productivity, innovation and capability.

It's crucial to understand the barriers and challenges limiting opportunities for a diverse and inclusive industry, including lack of information, role models, and work-life balance programs. We need to challenge misconceptions and stereotypes and actively engage with underrepresented groups to attract a range of talent.

The roadwork and construction sector are in a transitional phase, and we welcome organisations to join in reflecting and acknowledging the barriers to inclusivity in an industry that needs women, young people, and minority groups as well as the retention of the workforce to increase productivity.”