



# ARA Women in Rail

## STRATEGY 2023-2026





# CONTENTS

ABOUT .....	2
STRATEGIC FOCUS .....	3
INITIATIVES.....	4

# ABOUT

**In 2014, the Australasian Railway Association identified that women comprised a mere 17% of the rail workforce.**

This significant gender disparity highlighted several key barriers that hindered progress, from industry perceptions to workplace flexibility. Recognising the urgency to create a positive change, the ARA Women in Rail Committee was founded in 2016, tasked with developing a national strategy and associated action plan to increase gender diversity in the rail industry. Since then, two strategy updates have occurred, with the identification and implementation of new practical initiatives, including an increased focus on industry and organisational development. Over the past seven years, we have seen encouraging progress, with the 2022 ARA Gender Diversity Report Survey revealing that the representation of women in the rail workforce has increased to 24%.

However, it is important to recognise that women and individuals from diverse backgrounds continue to face systemic disadvantages and barriers when entering, advancing, or securing senior management positions within the industry.

At the current rate of progress, it is projected to take until 2049 to achieve gender parity in the industry. To turn the tide on female participation and address these challenges and barriers, the ARA Women in Rail Committee (WiRC), consisting of senior executives and subject matter experts in diversity and inclusion from across the ARA membership, has updated the Women in Rail Strategy for the period August 2023 to June 2026. The new strategy aims to create a more sustainable, thriving rail workforce by empowering women at every level of industry and by equipping our members with the necessary tools for success.

Along with continuing some of our existing programs and events, the new strategy explores new initiatives to better engage male champions, support women's professional development via scholarships, as well as engaging with secondary and tertiary education institutions.

The ARA is committed to fostering a thriving culture of diversity and inclusion within the Australian rail industry, with a strong emphasis on promoting opportunities for women in rail. Over the course of this strategy, we will make a commitment to consider issues of race, the LGBTQ+ community, and non-binary and trans women in the gender equity activities outlined.



**Caroline Wilkie**

Chief Executive Officer - ARA



**Rebecca Want**

Chair - ARA Women in Rail Committee

Board Member - ARA

Market Leader Transport for Sydney - GHD

# STRATEGIC FOCUS

## Our Vision

An inclusive and diverse industry without barriers that is recognised as an employer of choice for women

## Our Mission

We are committed to fostering equality of opportunity for women in the rail sector by empowering women at every level of industry and by equipping our members with the necessary tools for success.

## Focus Areas



### Industry Knowledge

Measure successes and understand the issues



### Organisational Impact

Encourage inclusive and respectful workplaces



### Professional Development

Grow capacity and capability of women in rail



### Promote Rail to Women

Increase female participation in rail

# INITIATIVES

This section outlines what the ARA will deliver to support each of our focus areas.

## Industry Knowledge

Measure successes and understand the issues



1. Undertake research to better understand women's experiences in rail, understand what the industry is getting right and identify barriers and areas for improvement
2. Undertake gender diversity survey for rail (based on WGEA survey) every two years
3. Provide more opportunities for women to share their stories and personal experiences

## Organisational Impact

Encourage inclusive and respectful workplaces



1. Empower an inclusive and supportive environment through diversity training & resources
2. Deliver a champions of change program that fosters a culture of allyship and gender equality
3. Showcase outstanding accomplishments of women in rail through recognition and awards
4. Identify and promote best practices that enable women to thrive in rail

## Professional Development

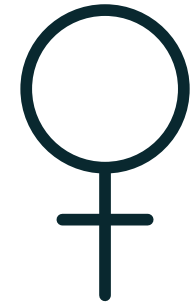
Grow capacity and capability of women in rail



1. Continue to facilitate an annual Women in Rail mentoring program
2. Facilitate a Women in Rail sponsorship program
3. Foster community and networking through Women in Rail events
4. Empower aspiring women in rail through scholarships for leadership courses or education

## Promote Rail to Women

Increase female participation in rail



1. Emphasise diversity through the ARA Work in Rail campaign, including undertaking targeted secondary and tertiary education visits with members
2. Profile and promote women in rail, as well as the initiatives and opportunities offered by member organisations and the Women in Rail Committee
3. Maintain the Women in Rail LinkedIn Group