

THE DAYS OF THE MINING GAME BEING EXCLUSIVELY FOR MALES ARE WELL AND TRULY DEAD. 'BOYS AND THEIR BIG TOYS' MIGHT HAVE BEEN THE MINDSET FOR MANY GENERATIONS, BUT MORE AND MORE WOMEN ARE STEPPING UP TO BECOME AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE BOOMING MINING AND RESOURCES SECTOR HERE IN THE TERRITORY. IN THIS ISSUE WE SPEAK TO EIGHT SUCH WOMEN, FROM ALL OVER THE NT, WHO PROUDLY SHOW US THAT THERE'S NO JOB IN MINING A WOMAN CAN'T DO, FROM PIT TO THE BOARDROOM.

Words Jo Robertson

# WOMEN IN MINING



Photographed by Cameron Laird.



"WHERE YOU OFF TO, LOVE?" ASKED THE TAXI DRIVER ENROUTE TO THE AIRPORT. "I WORK AT THE TANAMI OPERATIONS, THE GRANITES GOLD MINE," BRIONY COLEMAN REPLIED. "OH, A TRUCK DRIVER, ARE YOU?" THOUGH SHE'S AN ENVIRONMENTAL OFFICER WITH A SCIENCE DEGREE AND YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN HER PROFESSION, BRIONY SAYS THE OLD WOMEN-IN-MINING STEREOTYPE STILL LINGERS FROM TIME TO TIME, BUT ONLY FAINTLY.

# briony coleman

Words **Jo Robertson.**  
Photographed by **Mark and Tim.**  
Hair and mak-up by **Linzie Stewart.**

The mining industry was a natural career choice for Briony, who grew up in Western Australia. "Mining's fairly mainstream in Perth, and it was the time of a mining boom when I graduated from uni," said 27 year-old Briony, who studied natural resource management. "I'm really passionate about the environment too, so it just fit." Briony's been at Newmont's Tanami Operations in the Tanami Desert for almost five years, with a stint at a Newmont mine site in WA. Her Environment Department is responsible for the mine's water, waste and chemical management, and generally overseeing the environmental management across all work areas of the site. "It's fantastic because every day is different," Briony said. "I switch between inspecting the workshops to sampling water bores, to supervising land management works, to interacting with stakeholders from Traditional Owners to government; it's certainly never boring."

Briony said the beautiful country and the isolation are also real positives. "We're Australia's most remote mine site, and so we get to see some amazing things out here." Briony also plays a key role in managing Newmont's Indigenous employment programs, which provide work opportunities to the people of the local Warlpiri communities. "Programs like the 'Yapa Crew' ('Yapa' meaning 'Aboriginal person' in Warlpiri language) where they do general maintenance around the mine have been really successful in introducing the guys to mine life, and making sure they're ready when a job in another area of the mine comes up," she said. "One of my other big projects at the moment is expanding our ranger program, in which the local Warlpiri people assist us with our environmental monitoring. I really enjoy the community interaction side of things." Briony's currently studying for a Graduate Diploma in Community Relations for the

Resources Sector at the University of Queensland.

In her job, Briony said her biggest challenge is looking for ways to take good environmental management to the next level. For guys and girls on the ground sometimes this means doing things a bit differently. Her nine days on and five days off fly-in, fly-out roster means Briony gets every second weekend in Darwin, which she definitely calls home after buying a unit in Nightcliff. And though she does look forward to getting back after a shift, she says life at the mine is a great experience. "It's not for everyone of course, but I really enjoy it. I have some fantastic friends out there and it's a real social culture – our wet mess is the hub of the mine and our social club is always putting on great events like bands and quiz nights and raffles... The food's great and I can go to the gym, do Pilates, go for a walk or have a swim; it's a great lifestyle."