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## **Cultural diversity as a threshold concept to engage engineers in diversity, equity and inclusion**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) initiatives in the minerals processing sector have long sought to address the underrepresentation of women, an issue that is common to both the engineering and mining workforces (women make up 16 % and 22 % of these workforces, respectively). When the ARC Centre of Excellence for Enabling Eco-efficient Beneficiation of Minerals was formed in 2020, we anticipated that gender equity would be at the centre of our diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives. However, quantitative and qualitative results from our consultations with our members consistently revealed that the diversity measure by which we were most different to the wider Australian population was not gender, but cultural backgrounds.*

*In this presentation, we seek to share the development of our consultative and adaptive approach to EDI initiatives that has contributed to the establishment of a positive and inclusive workplace culture. In particular, we share our experiences of embedding discussions, explorations and celebrations of cultural diversity within our EDI strategy, and the knock-on effects this has had for a greater appreciation of, and value for, EDI more broadly. Our focus on cultural diversity has also brought to light important challenges faced by those moving to Australia to commence their minerals processing careers, and we share some of the actions we have taken to support our new members, and to educate our existing members in this space.*

### **KEY WORDS**

*Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Minerals Processing,*

## **BIOGRAPHY**

Dr Ellen Moon is an Associate Professor in environmental engineering at Deakin University. She is also a node leader and executive team member of the ARC Centre of Excellence for Enabling Eco-efficient Beneficiation of Minerals. She is a geochemist whose research focusses on the molecular-level interactions of aqueous metals and natural and engineered surfaces, applicable to both remediation of contaminated land, and selective separations in hydrometallurgical processes. She has a keen interest in making careers in engineering and the physical sciences more accessible and inclusive to wider range of people.

Annemarie Fawkner is the Centre Chief Operations Officer and executive team member of the ARC Centre of Excellence for Enabling Eco-efficient Beneficiation of Minerals. She has extensive experience in the areas of senior management, strategic, operational, compliance and training implementation and working with national and state regulatory bodies. She has a proven track record of successfully setting up departments and centres from the ground up. She is an advocate for diversity, equity, and inclusion, and coordinates training, mentoring, and gender equity initiatives within the Centre, fostering a inclusive, respectful and collaborative work community.

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