

# CLOSING THE GAP

## – automation can help

Automation streamlines processes, delivers consistent results for customers and creates a much safer working environment for employees. Victoria International Container Terminal (VICT) is the first fully automated container terminal in Australia and delivers the extra capacity and longevity required to support continued trade growth in the Port of Melbourne.

Traditionally, stevedoring has been a male dominated industry, but the automation used at VICT is changing that status quo and delivering a more diverse workforce. Undeniably, the transport and logistics sector has a gender imbalance with women making up just 16 percent of the workforce, but VICT is working hard to change that by working with industry groups such

as Wayfinder to inform young females about job opportunities. Currently, 55% of VICT's managers are women, which is encouraging to see females in leadership positions.

A diverse workplace gives access to a greater range of talent, which not only benefits an organisation's culture but has a proven uplift on its bottom line. This is because staff have access to an array of opportunities and resources, and can contribute their different perspectives and talents to collectively improve the organisation. Shifting the goal posts and creating more highly skilled jobs breaks down traditional barriers to entry for women in stevedoring. Now the automation removes the physically demanding roles and opens up all roles to everyone, regardless of gender.

However, this is only half the battle. Being able to offer women the same role is one thing but hiring and promoting women is another. Companies need to support equality and commit to gender diversity as a business priority. Recently McKinsey & Co. published a report, *Women in the Workplace*, stating "Women are three times more likely than men to think their gender has played a role in their missing out on a raise, promotion, or other chance to get ahead despite earning more bachelor degrees and asking for promotions." So it's not just about opening up opportunities for women to enter the workplace, it's about harnessing and seeing their talents and actively supporting equal career progressions.

While barriers to entry have been reduced for women at VICT, the broader industry needs to overcome unconscious bias. Gender should not be an issue and no one should ever be told "it's not a woman's job". The new opportunities VICT presents see

women in all areas of the business. In traditional operations, heavy manual jobs were usually fulfilled by males. With the high level of automation at VICT, this is no longer the case. STS Automation Controller now sit in an office and control the Ship-to-Shore cranes 1.2km away from the wharf. The technology and systems in place breaks down the traditional stevedoring roles and creates a more diverse workplace.

To make progress we need to branch away from traditional attitudes. To be inclusive we need to offer opportunities to an array of people. We must adapt and be prepared to change the status quo, to be sympathetic to differing needs. This means offering a workplace that ensures hiring and promotions are fair, where senior leaders and managers are champions of diversity and support an inclusive and respectful culture with flexible working hours and working patterns.

The Australian Comedian, Hannah Gadsby, whose popularity skyrocketed from her stand up show on Netflix, *Nanette* explains, "Diversity is strength. Difference is a teacher. Fear difference, you learn nothing." So let's use this sentiment as an industry and move from strength to strength by supporting diversity. There is great potential for everyone within the logistics and supply chain industry, regardless of gender, because it is an industry with longevity and with so much opportunity. By offering the same roles to both genders and by actively supporting initiatives to encourage more women into the industry, we will all benefit!



VICT's STS Automation Controller, in the office 1.2 kilometres away from ship-to-shore cranes





# VICT. Redefining excellence.

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