**NEWS ARTICLE**

Rosond celebrates INWED 2023 theme of ‘Make Safety Seen’

**21 June 2023**: In celebration of [International Women in Engineering Day (INWED)](https://www.inwed.org.uk/) on 23 June, leading technology solutions provider [Rosond](https://www.inwed.org.uk/) of Midrand is highlighting how it is pioneering diversity and inclusion in the mining industry. “Progress is likely to be optimised by driving Mine Health and Safety Act policy change to consider technology and automation,” comments Rosond MD **Ricardo Ribeiro**.

Held under the banner of the Women’s Engineering Society (WES), INWED celebrates its 10th year in 2023, yet again promoting the amazing work being carried out by women engineers across the globe under the theme of ‘Make Safety Seen’.

“Diversity in the workplace and the inclusivity of women is a business imperative,” says Ricardo. While the mining industry is making great strides to achieve greater gender equality in terms of women at middle and senior management level, the real impact lies at grassroots level.

At board level, women representation may reach as high as 50%, but at the lower employment levels in the mining industry there is still a lot of work to be done. “At Rosond, we have been very passionate about making a difference at this level and our efforts are starting to reap real rewards,” says Ricardo.

At a major iron ore mining operation in the Northern Cape, Rosond employs 42 women in a range of positions. This includes two safety officers, a foreperson (a geologist by profession), a logistics co-ordinator, 19 drill machine assistants, three operators, an assistant operator, a bit sharpener and a safety representative. One of the employees is disabled and the balance fulfil various administrative and office support roles.

“Bearing in mind that it takes a minimum of five years’ experience to develop into a proficient drill operator, we are pleased with the performance of our female team members who thus far have two to three years’ experience,” says Ricardo.

He adds that Rosond is particularly proud of its work in upskilling women and creating opportunities for them to be successful in roles traditionally performed by men. It ranges from creating greater access to these positions and making significant progress in increasing the number of women working at operational level.

Creating a more inclusive work environment in the mining industry requires even greater upskilling and a sensitivity to the socioeconomic and family issues women face daily. It means adopting a sensitive and appreciative view of the reality women are confronted with. “A lot of these women were sitting at home with no job prospects. Developing them further, in conjunction with family planning and financial planning, is key to their career success,” says Ricardo.

As part of Rosond’s commitment to addressing these gaps, it has established an inaugural women’s forum at a drill site in the Northern Cape to provide a platform to address ancillary issues. “There is a lot of responsibility involved in promoting gender equality in the mining industry, especially as we afford women the opportunity to be financially independent and to have viable careers,” says Ricardo.

The women’s forum consolidates all Rosond’s learnings on-site to date in terms of gender diversity and inclusivity. It allows it to continue to offer a sustainable and empowering career path for women in mining. “We invest a lot of time and resources training women to become proficient in the drilling industry. In this regard, we have embarked on a gender inclusivity programme that includes workshops on gender sensitivity,” says Ricardo.

Apart from the female drill rig crews themselves, another way for Rosond to promote gender diversity and inclusivity in the mining value chain is to support small and medium enterprises (SMEs) that are established and driven by women.

Here Rosond is empowering such SMEs by providing them with the equipment and services they require to essentially become accredited partners. Rosond is making significant progress in this area as part of its partnership with WiMBIZ, SA. This is an organisation established to create a platform for women entrepreneurs, businesswomen and professional women to speak in one voice and access procurement opportunities and equity transactions in the mining sector.

Rosond is adding significant value to WiMBIZ, SA through its knowledge of the industry, networks and valuable strategic input. In addition, it recently concluded a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with two WiMBIZ, SA members as part of its enterprise development initiatives in exploration drilling.

“Not only does it allow these smaller, women-led players to tender for bigger projects, it also gives the mining houses themselves the confidence that there is a major player such as us in the background driving the process,” says Ricardo.

He notes that achieving gender equality in the industry remains challenging. “Rosond’s experience on the ground has shown us that the focus should not only be on increasing the number of women in skilled positions, but also on how to support these women through the intelligent design of programmes, especially around family planning and financial planning, that enable them to grow and achieve greater success at work.

“There is richness to decision-making through diversity. Specifically having women in the drilling workplace means that our company benefits from different points of view through different approaches and life experiences. Creativity and innovation are enhanced. We have also found that the men on the teams benefit from working with and learning from women in a traditionally male-dominated work environment,” concludes Ricardo.

***Ends***

**Notes to the editor**

To download hi-res images for this release, please visit <http://media.ngage.co.za> and click on the Rosond link to view the company’s press office.

**About Rosond**Rosond provides fast, efficient, safe, and cost-effective drilling and grouting services to mining and exploration industries throughout Africa. For over 65 years, Rosond has applied advanced design and engineering disciplines to create client-specific solutions. State-of-the-art, in-house manufacturing facilities provide products designed and engineered to meet clients’ specific demands, while an experienced team of engineers and artisans ensure a solution in keeping with global best practice.

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