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SMALL BUSINESS PROGRAM HELPING TO EMPOWER PNG WOMEN

The PNG Women's Chamber of Commerce & Industry (PNGWCCI) and Australian Business Volunteers (ABV) have just completed a successful business capacity building program for a group of 16 PNG women.

The program received rave reviews from participants, such as:

“One of best programs I’ve ever attended. I like the simplicity of the language.” - Rai Romney, Emerald Housing

“This program is exactly what we need to do business here in PNG. Without this program I could never be a success in business.” - Julie Veali, Tee Laa Dee Catering

“I loved this program as I’m now more focused and I know what I want to concentrate on. I really liked the human resources workshop as I know now how to be firm and deal with staff and wontok. Marketing has been really good for me as well and I’ve already using new ideas to get more customers. I’m so excited as I’ve learnt so much and already using what I’ve learnt.” Helen Benjamin, G Soles

The four week program which ended on Tuesday is known as the Your Enterprise Scheme (YES) and was aimed at women who already have business experience, such as small business owners and managers.

“This focus on working with people who already have some small business experience is a distinctive feature of the YES model” says ABV Chief Executive Officer Sarah O’Connor who is in Port Moresby to attend the final day of PNGWCCI YES. “YES is all about providing people the skills to build on what they already have, and to seize business opportunities” says O’Connor. “This is important because it’s growing businesses which create jobs.”

The program consisted of five one-day workshops conducted by experienced Australian business volunteers over the last four weeks. Topics included, business planning, marketing, managing employees, risk analysis, and other areas essential to growing a successful business. The business volunteers also carried out one-on-one mentoring

sessions between workshops to provide guidance to the participants on putting their new business skills and strategies into practice.

According to PNGWCCI President Avia Koisen: “We’ve had great support for this YES from the business community including Paddy’s Hotel, Digicel, Exxon Mobil, Pacific Islands Trade and Invest and Virgin Australia, and ABV is a great partner – their volunteers are all highly experienced and understand the PNG context”.

The next step for PNGWCCI is to run more YES programs and so benefit even more women and their businesses.

“Both PNGWCCI and ABV will be talking to corporations and government about their support for YES future programs. We believe they will step up, because small business really is key to empowering women.”

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