



**AUSTRALIAN
BUSINESS VOLUNTEERS**

MEDIA RELEASE

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International Women's Day

Australian women executives inspiring change

Australian Business Volunteers is celebrating **International Women's Day** in 2014 by recognising female executives who are inspiring change through volunteering in Asia and the Pacific.

There are 215 women executives registered with Australian Business Volunteers, who donate their time and expertise to mentor counterparts in developing countries. Almost half of this group (46.4 percent) have completed multiple projects in the region, with an average of three to four deployments per person.



Australian Business Volunteers Chief Executive Officer, Sarah O'Connor, said the overall aim of deploying executives is to strengthen the private sector in developing countries and, in doing so, strengthen communities in the long-term.

'Our volunteers love the experience of being able to pass on their knowledge and skills to women in the community and business leaders to tackle complex problems in sometimes quite remote locations,' said O'Connor. 'In the 2012-13 financial year, 45 percent of all our volunteers deployed were women – a remarkable effort considering Australian women are under-represented in executive management teams and there are fewer female business owners.'

'There certainly needs to be more recognition for women who juggle demanding careers, family responsibilities and altruistic pursuits such as international volunteering,' added O'Connor. 'Our female volunteers are not only an inspiration for young women in Australia, but they also create positive change in under-resourced enterprises that deliver often essential services and products in the region.'

To become a registered Australian Business Volunteer, female and male executives, consultants or recent retirees must have a minimum of 10 years' experience in a sector or occupation with manager or executive level responsibilities.

This elite group provide short-term, high-level strategic advice and mentorship to counterparts in social enterprises, small businesses, key government institutions and civil society organisations in developing countries across Asia and the Pacific. They share their expertise on carefully designed enterprise strengthening projects, most commonly in the fields of finance, strategic planning, business development, human resources, marketing, communications, product readiness and operational effectiveness.

The theme for International Women's Day in 2014 is **INSPIRING CHANGE**. Individuals and organisations can partner with Australian Business Volunteers to support female executives mentor and

transfer skills to communities in Asia and the Pacific, or become an individual or corporate volunteer themselves. For further details go to www.abv.org.au.

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For interviews with Sarah O'Connor or ABV volunteers in your state/territory contact Cindy Bryson on (02) 6151 9909 or cindy.bryson@abv.org.au.

Photograph of ABV Volunteers at Pre-Departure Training, March 2014: (L-R) Debra, Jill, Ruth, Derarca, Paulette and Rona.