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Leadership Training: ROI for business and female staff

FOR five years the Business Coalition for Women's leadership training program has been getting results for PNG women and the businesses that employ them.

Nearly 200 women from 60 organisations representing a diversity of industries all over the country have graduated from the Coalition's Certificate IV in Leadership & Management, with many of them being promoted as a direct result. Numerous organisations are repeat customers of the

program and readily acknowledge its business benefits.

BSP, Dentons Lawyers, Digicel, Eda Ranu, NCS and Pacific Towing have been the most frequent repeat customers of the Cert IV in Leadership Program. Acting Managing Director of Eda Ranu, Raka Taviri Jnr, reports that "female staff performance has improved significantly and we've received an obvious return on our training investment. Eda Ranu will continue to send female employees on the course to improve their customer service skills internally and externally, as well as to enhance their overall professionalism in the workplace."

It is not just businesses that are benefiting from the Coalition's Cert IV program. All graduates report having acquired new skills and capabilities. Eda Ranu's Vagi Kala (Snr Executive Assistant to MD) credits her new assertiveness, time management and work prioritisation skills, as well as improved working relationships with colleagues and clients, to having undertaken the training. She also reports that the Cert IV has enhanced her leadership and management skills, better positioning her for more challenging roles and future promotions.

The Certificate IV in Leadership and Management was developed in direct response

to the business community's demand for best practice and culturally nuanced leadership training for high potential female staff. Executive Director of the Coalition, Evonne Kennedy, believes that one of the reasons the Cert IV training has been so successful for both trainees and their employing businesses is that although it is Australian certified, it was developed in PNG for PNG. "This is not an off-the-shelf training package from Australia, New Zealand or some other country. We worked extremely closely with training specialists, PNG business leaders and PNG women to craft a program that 100 per cent meets the requirements of PNG's businesses."

The Coalition has conducted the Cert IV training for 15 cohorts of trainees since 2015. Training for Cohort 16 commenced in February this year and training for Cohorts 17, 18 and 19 will be rolled out in the coming months.

To date, the training has predominantly taken place in Port Moresby. However, it has also been run in the Autonomous Region of Bougainville and will be run in Lae this year.

"COVID impacted our plans to diversify our delivery geographically in 2020 but in accord with the 'new normal' and government health protocols we now have the necessary measures in place to continue our training in a COVID-safe way" says Kennedy. "As long as travel restrictions don't prohibit us from getting trainers safely around the country then we will be able to service more of our non-Moresby customers."

Originally developed to provide leadership and management training to women employed in the corporate sector, the Cert IV has become very popular with the public sector and aid organisations. Abt Associates for example, has assisted several government departments to enrol 41 staff in the program and 32 law enforcement personnel have been enrolled via JSS4D.

"There is a huge appetite for high quality leadership and management training for female staff," acknowledges Kennedy. "We realised that we needed to open up our program to career women in other sectors. We also realised that we needed to offer courses for not just lower level managers, some of whom had already done the Cert IV with us, had been promoted, and were looking for additional professional development." Therefore in 2019 the Coalition launched its Senior Executive Women Program in partnership with the Asian Development Bank, as well as its PNG Directorship Course (open to both women and men) in partnership with the Australian



"We want to be able to promote our most talented female staff in to leadership positions and the Coalition's Cert IV helps us do exactly that. Very importantly, it sends the message to our junior female staff that there is a real opportunity for significant career advancement here at Dentons." Stephen Massa (Partner and Head of PNG Office, Dentons).

Cohort	Registration Date	Registration End Date	Course Commencement Date	Location
17	Open	March 29, 2021	April 12, 2021	Port Moresby
18	Open	May 10, 2021	May 24, 2021	Lae
19	Open	August 23, 2021	September 06, 2021	Port Moresby

Institute of Company Directors. Although both of these programs were interrupted in 2020 due to COVID they have been rescheduled to run in 2021.

Numerous other trainings in addition to those focusing on leadership and management are available through the Coalition. The organisation is at the forefront of trainings that maximise workplace safety for women, reduce sexual harassment and support staff impacted by family and sexual violence.

Member businesses also have access to bespoke consultancy services to assist them meet their gender equality objectives.

The Business Coalition for Women has firmly established itself as PNG's 'go to' resource for gender equality – helping businesses recruit, train, develop and promote PNG women. To learn more about the Coalition and its training programs: www.pngbcfw.org.