

Women driving Sydney's start up economy

More small businesses are run by men, but when it comes to start-ups, women are in the lead, with new research showing female entrepreneurs launched almost twice as many new firms in the past 12 months.

The new data reveals women registered 4.8 per cent more new businesses in the past year, compared to 2.6 per cent for men. And since 2006, a seven per cent growth in female-owned small businesses compared to 1.9 per cent for men.

Women now head up more than a third of NSW's 650,000 small businesses, according to the NSW Department of Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services – allowing them to champion exciting new business ideas.

Jacqueline Arias from Republica Coffee, winner of the City of Sydney's Best Fair Trade Business Award in 2009, is one of these champions.

The Sydney-based, Colombian-born entrepreneur was so moved by third-world farmers being paid peanuts to produce their much-loved coffee beans that she had to give something back.

She worked with a coffee expert to source fair trade coffee beans from suppliers in Colombia and East Timor where workers receive fair pay for a fair day's work.

Republica started as a one-woman enterprise, but has gone from strength to strength, and is now available at Coles and Woolworths and served on Jetstar flights. Last year, the company made BRW's Fast 100 List and its products were featured in Oprah Winfrey's gift bag during her visit to Sydney.

"Being recognised alongside heavyweight industry leaders is rewarding because it proves you can create an ethical business that is both profitable and successful. And out of BRW's group of 100 business leaders, I was only one of nine women behind a company – an achievement I like to shout about," said Ms Arias.

"It's really important to me that while I'm providing a service to my customers, I'm also making a positive difference to farmers on the other side of the planet, who often get taken advantage of by big business."

Lord Mayor Clover Moore MP said the new research shows women are playing an increasingly important role in the city's business sector.

"More and more women are taking the plunge and starting up their own business and this research proves they are making a real impact. More businesses starting up is good news for the City because our small to medium businesses contribute a significant \$40 million to our economy every year," the Lord Mayor said.

"Small businesses play a crucial role in enlivening communities, driving growth and providing jobs for hundreds of people. It's the reason why we established our Awards so that we could offer tangible support to the many small to medium businesses in the Sydney area.

"With more than 600 nominations and 41,000 votes from the public in last year's competition, the Awards are a fantastic opportunity for local businesses to increase their brand exposure, expand their customer network and take their business ideas to the next level.

"I encourage emerging businesses to follow the lead of past award winners and get involved in this year's Sydney Business Awards – who knows where the competition might take you?"

Businesses looking to follow Jacqueline's lead should go no further than the 2011 Business Awards, which celebrate excellence, innovation and leadership across 22 small business categories, including small bars, retail fashion, restaurants and cafes, cultural and creative services, tourism, bicycle businesses, health and fitness, and IT.

The winners will not only share in \$60,000 worth of prizes, but have the opportunity to add their name to the growing list of Sydney Business Awards success stories like Republica Coffee.

The City's 2011 Business Awards program will be launched this morning.

This year marks the introduction of two new award categories: Online Business, which celebrates organisations where all marketing and sales is done via the Internet, including blogs, email and social networking; and the ANZ Fast Starter Award, which recognises fast-growing businesses with an annual turnover of more than \$5 million.

To be eligible in the Awards, businesses must be located within the City of Sydney LGA, employ fewer than 200 full-time employees, be independently owned and have been in operation for at least six months.

Nominations and voting in the 2011 Sydney Business Awards is now open, closing on 22 July 2011.

People can vote for nominated businesses at www.sydneybusinessawards.com.au or via SMS – all votes go into the draw to win a \$1500 cash prize!

The Business Award winners will be announced at the City of Sydney Business Awards Gala Dinner on 13 September 2011.



Foreign ministry on placing of Alexander the Great's statue in Skopje's central square

Reports on the beginning of work for the placing of a statue of Alexander the Great in the central square in Skopje (in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) drew strong reaction from the Greek Foreign ministry.

"Under other conditions, the decision by the government of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to spend almost ten million euros to honour Alexander the Great, placing a statue of the Greek army commander in the central square of Skopje would honour us," said a relevant statement by press spokesman Grigoris Delavekouras.

He added that this act, apart from being colourful has as a basic axis the effort to appropriate Greek history with the aim of cultivating nationalism and confrontation.

It was added that it is "in full contrast to relations of good neighbourliness and will have inevitable consequences on the country's euro-atlantic prospect."

Delavekouras also revealed that Greece will inform its partners and allies, as well as the international organisations on this provocative act.



Greek employers pessimistic over new hiring prospects

Greek employers remained pessimistic in their forecasts for the third quarter of 2011, a quarterly report by the firm Manpower showed on Tuesday. The index of total employment prospects remained negative (-5 percent), recording a slight improvement compared with the previous quarter, although it remained unchanged compared with the same period in 2010. Despite pessimistic forecasts, employers' intention on new hirings improved in the seven out of a total of nine market sectors.

Manpower, in a report, said its findings were based on interviews with a sample of 751 Greek employers in the public and the private sectors.

The report showed that 12 percent of employers expected an increase in the number of their workforce, a 17 percent a decline, while a 69 percent said they did not expect any changes in their workforce. Venetia Koussia, chairman and chief executive of

Manpower Group in Greece, commenting on the report said: "The index of total employment prospects for the third quarter of 2011 was recorded at -5 percent in Greece, although a steady improvement in new hiring prospects is evident from the first quarter of 2011. It is very important that despite a very difficult period for the Greek market, around seven in ten employers intend to maintain their workforce in the coming quarter".

The financial services and tourism sectors recorded the biggest percentage increase in new hiring prospects (+3 percent), while employers in the public and social sectors were more pessimistic (-13 percent). Northern Greece recorded an improvement in new hiring prospects although they remained in negative territory, while in the Attica region (greater Athens), new hiring prospects for the next quarter were -5 percent, slightly improved compared with the previous quarter.