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Small business a great pathway for young women to become future entrepreneurs

Getting more young women into business – particularly small business – is part of a new push by COSBOA's **Women of COSBOA** initiative, aimed at helping to increase the number of female entrepreneurs around the country.

With women still under-represented across the business landscape, the Women of COSBOA initiative will provide practical support and mentoring to young women through the Academy for Enterprising Girls program, launched today at Parliament House.

Small businesses contribute billions of dollars to the Australian economy and employ 4.8 million Australians, yet in Australian small businesses, women do almost half of all the work while men are twice as likely to own the business. In larger businesses, women make up just 17% of CEOs while men make up 83%.

The goal of the Women of COSBOA initiative is to champion female small business owners and operators, and support enterprising girls seeking to establish a small business or wishing to be a leader in a larger business or corporate enterprise.

The Academy for Enterprising Girls is a one-stop-shop for young women aged 10 to 18 years old to help develop their enterprise skills with advice from some of Australia's most successful small business women, with the aim of helping more young women succeed in business.

Sandy Chong, a COSBOA Director and a member of the Women of COSBOA, said it was vital that Australia did more to promote the success of women in business.

"Working in small business is a great pathway for young women to learn business and enterprise skills – skills which are increasingly in demand and transferable across many different industries," said Ms Chong.

"Every day I see amazing women out there succeeding in small business, and doing something they absolutely love, but when it comes to running a business, men continue to outnumber women.

“COSBOA is thrilled to be part of the launch today of the [Academy for Enterprising Girls](#), an educational platform aimed at giving girls aged 10 to 18 the skills they need to get on the pathway to becoming small business owners and operators.

“The Academy for Enterprising Girls is about helping young Australian women develop the mindset and passion for entrepreneurial and STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) subjects, that will set them up for future success.”

The program has been funded by the Australian Government, through the Office for Women, under the Future Female Entrepreneurs Program. Significant corporate support has also been provided by major high-profile tech companies. The program includes an e-learning component, to be launched in 2020, and a series of in-person workshops around Australia, which kicked off yesterday in Canberra.

“There is of course no reason why girls and young women cannot start their own small business and become successful entrepreneurs. But we find many young women are reluctant because they don’t have the role models or know where to go to get great advice on where to begin.

“It is gaining the knowledge and particularly the confidence to start up a business that will give women greater economic security as our economy continues to develop.

“We hope that through initiatives like Women of COSBOA and the Academy for Enterprising Girls that we can support more young women to gain the relevant knowledge and confidence to get out there and start their own businesses,” said Ms Chong.

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For more information please contact:

John Wynants
Projects Manager, COSBOA
Mob: 0407 929 955