

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## 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.



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“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 next week.

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](http://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.

**CoS Media Contact:** Keeley Irvin (02) 9265 9106 or [kirvin@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au](mailto:kirvin@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au)

