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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Links forged in new project

A select group of go-getters from across South Australia's Limestone Coast have seized a unique opportunity to step inside the mind of a successful entrepreneur. On May 21-22, participants spent a day in Victoria's South-West as part of the innovative new mentoring program 'Winning Links', following in the footsteps of leading business professionals working in real estate, optometry, accommodation and tourism, human resource consulting, and engineering wholesaling.

"It was a rare chance to gain valuable insights into running a successful business, developing and enhancing leadership skills, building business success, and forging new cross-border networks," says Elizabeth Hodges, Chairman of Women in Business & Regional Development.

The feedback from those who took part has been extremely positive.

"I wasn't sure what to expect and was a little worried that I wouldn't have any ideas to offer, but together we had lively discussions all day, sharing ideas, and each coming up with solutions. We have different strengths and a healthy respect for those; my mentoree is artistic, imaginative and has fantastic foresight, (whereas) I live a frantic life that has required planning, organising, lists and structure to keep my sanity...Together we have had many laughs and have come up with some great ideas," said one participant.

"My mentor runs a very tight ship and her expertise in particular fields was exactly what I needed," added another.

The next "link-up" will be held in Horsham in July. The program, which is the latest Australian Government-funded initiative of the Women Working @ Winning project, will also provide participants with a valuable opportunity to showcase their own success stories at a local business network function in that area aligned to their visit. Registrations are open – but applicants will need to get in quick!

"Whether you have a home-based business, burgeoning shopfront or are part of a larger organisation, 'Winning Links' represents a fantastic chance to forge alliances, broaden markets, gain improved leadership skills and meet new people in a relaxed and friendly environment," says Elizabeth Hodges.

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“Yes it can be difficult taking time out from work, but the long-term benefits are worth the juggling act, with our last lot of participants returning home newly motivated with tools which are expected to have a major impact on both their business and personal lives.”

In addition to Horsham, visits to Portland and Adelaide are also being scheduled for November, with plans for the Limestone Coast to reciprocate in March 2009, with 20 young entrepreneurs from those regions spending a day “work shadowing” south-east based business people. As part of this return visit, mentors and mentorees will be personally invited to participate in an exciting leadership forum *Dare to be Different*, followed by a Gala International Women’s Day celebration dinner.

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To arrange an interview with a participant of the Hamilton link-up or to register to participate, please contact:
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