

## **ANITA DEVCICH ELECTION SPEECH TO ASIA PACIFIC REGIONAL MEETING**

I have been a member of BPW for 20 years, was president of BPW NZ for three years to 2006 and have been for the past three years the Sub regional Co-ordinator for Oceania. I credit BPW and the wonderful BPW mentors I have been lucky to work with, in giving me the skills to take on these challenging roles.

I have always worked and I am a hard worker. I have excellent IT skills and my long career in business administration and entrepreneurship is not yet over. I believe I have the skills and determination and the passion for BPW to do this job well. And I do have a reputation for getting things done.

The Asia-Pacific region is the largest of all the five regions of BPWI and I see the challenges of this region are really the same as always – to improve the status of women in the businesses and the professions and to raise women's economic status. These are the key issues. Everything else is affected by them – they affect the education and advancement of women and girls and all the violence issues. So I am passionate about them as I believe you are all passionate about them.

So, if we all have a passion to improve all women's lives in this rapidly changing world, what can we do?

In our Asia-Pacific Region there are BPW federations and affiliates that have vast differences in the level of opportunity for women and girls – from large modern sophisticated cities where there are high levels of education and wealth to other countries where women live in poverty, uneducated and at grass roots level. The needs of women in our Asia-Pacific countries could not be more different.

The challenge for us is to communicate with each other – find out what the real needs are and to make a commitment to work together. BPWI has done and continues to do great work in bringing us programmes and ideas to work for – eliminating violence and lobbying for the issues that will raise women's status.

If elected, I will work to foster and enable greater communication, as I believe that communication is the key and there has not been enough of it. There has to be better communication between the affiliates and BPWI, and that will support the sub-regional co-ordinators.

To achieve this I would like to instigate a regular e-newsletter that could be posted on our section of the BPWI website as well as emailed out. It would have contributions from everyone in the region to exchange information about events, information and with tools on their projects and membership strategies that work. I see that this will stimulate discussion and co-operation within the region. There is nothing like the exchanging of great ideas to stimulate others into action.

Once the International Theme for the triennium has been set, I would like to instigate a regional project on that theme.

So let us work together and, as president Nok has said, look at new ways to foster the aims of this wonderful organization.

I need your vote so we can achieve this together and grow the membership of this region.

Anita Devcich  
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Immediate Past President, BPW New Zealand