

MEDIA RELEASE

Vietnamese Refugee and Previous Belmont Small Business Award Winner Carina Hoang Continues to Shine

The 19th annual Belmont Small Business Awards are once again underway and open for small businesses across Western Australia to enter until 5pm Monday 15th October 2012.

One of last year's winners, Volunteer of the Year Carina Hoang was appointed as Representative for UNHCR Australia recently.

At age 16 Carina demonstrated amazing courage by escaping war-torn Vietnam on a small wooden boat with her 2 younger siblings and 370 other people. Carina survived harrowing conditions in a refugee camp in Indonesia, before being given the opportunity to go to the USA where she earned a Bachelor of Chemistry and MBA. Five years ago, Carina settled with her husband and daughter in Perth, and made a pledge to raise awareness of 'boat people' and their stories. She now volunteers her time to assist families from different parts of the world to search for graves of their loved ones in former refugee camps in Indonesia.

Last year she released her first book, Boat People: Personal Stories from the Vietnamese Exodus 1975-1996, a series of 31 short stories by Vietnamese boat people, and nine stories by non-Vietnamese staff that work in various refugee camps in South East Asia. The book has already received an award as Best Regional Non-Fiction (Australia and New Zealand) in the 2012 Independent Publisher Book Awards.

Carina said of the Belmont Small Business Awards, "The awards were a fantastic way to share my harrowing story. I hope from sharing my story to inform the community and business people about what it's really like to be a refugee and asylum-seeker."

"I really encourage everyone in the community who volunteers their time to a cause to enter the Belmont Small Business Awards and share their stories", Carina said.

The Belmont Small Business awards are coordinated by the Belmont Business Enterprise Centre (Belmont BEC). Belmont BEC is a non profit community based organisation established, in 1994. The Belmont BEC offers 'one stop shop, low-cost advisory services' and provides small business support with a helpline, mentoring, networking, legal and accounting services and a range of other services.

For more information on how to nominate a business for the 2012 Belmont Small Business Awards or for information on attending the awards ceremony in November call the Belmont BEC on (08) 9479 3777, email awards@belmontbec.com or visit the website <http://www.belmontbec.com/awards>

The final "Night of Stars" event when the winners will be announced will be held on the 15th November 2012 in the Grand Ballroom, Crown Perth.

For further information please contact:

Carol Hanlon

CEO

Belmont BEC

P| 08 9479 3777 M| 0417963231

E| carol.hanlon@belmontbec.com



Belmont Business Enterprise Centre (Belmont BEC)

PO Box 370, Cloverdale WA 6985 Phone 08 9479 3777 Fax 08 9479 3888

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