Focus on raising profile of women

By NIGEL ADLAM

A key business conference in Darwin this weekend will focus on how to help women get into the boardroom.

Only about 11 per cent of board members of the leading 200 companies listed on the Australian Stock Exchange are women.

NT Federation of Business & Professional Women president Lina Finochiaro, who is organising the conference in the Territory, said: “That’s simply not enough. We must do much better.”

The theme of the conference will be A Recognisable Contribution. “Women are starting to develop their own businesses, particularly in the Territory, where there’s a lot of opportunity,” Ms Finochiaro said.

“But we still aren’t achieving at the rate of men.”

She said women’s business groups were striving for 20 to 30 per cent representation on boards. “We’ve got a long way to go,” she said.

“We’re saying to women, What can this generation do? We want to arm ourselves to get on, to get the training, to get the mentorship. How can we get on to boards when we don’t have the training or the contacts?”

“The only way we’re going to change things is by getting into the boardroom.”

The conference master of ceremonies will be former Chief Minister Claire Martin. A message from Prime Minister Julia Gillard will be read out.

Speakers will include Opal NT manager Marie Louise Pearson, Energy Resources of Australia director Sue Oliver and NT Ombudsman Carolyn Richards.

The conference will be held at the Darwin Airport Resort.

Graham Watts thought big when setting up his one-man chauffeured taxi business. He chose a Ford Territory Ghia all-wheel-drive, the same car used to ferry around Australia’s leading politicians.

Mr Watts was involved in the taxi industry for 10 years. He owned a cab company and set up the Cachebache network in Darwin.

Domestic natural gas output sets record

PERTH: Australia set a new natural gas production record in 2010, while the value of liquefied natural gas (LNG) exports also hit fresh highs.

A report by energy economists EnergyQuest shows domestic gas production rose 27 per cent in calendar 2010 to a record 1060 petajoules (PJ), up from 833 PJ in 2009.

Natural gas output grew strongly on Australia’s east coast, where coal seam gas production reached a record 221 PJ, an increase of 43 PJ, or 24 per cent, from the previous year.

LNG production rose 6.2 per cent to 19.8 million tonnes per annum (Mtpa), from 18.6 Mtpa, with the start of the fifth processing train at the Woodside Petroleum-led North West Shelf operations in Western Australia.

EnergyQuest’s report said the value of LNG exports was a record $9.462 billion, a 24 per cent jump from $7.631 billion.

EnergyQuest CEO Graeme Befruze said momentum in LNG sales was providing the impetus for further investment in the sector.

He said the new liquefaction plants were all planned to come online in the next four years, with processing capacity of about 50 Mtpa.

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