

BUSINESS-FOR-PURPOSE PIONEER AWARDED ORDER OF AUSTRALIA



Tuesday November 26, 2013

Audette Exel, founder and Chair of The ISIS Foundation, has been awarded an honorary Order of Australia for her work with women and children living in extreme poverty in Nepal and Uganda.

Ms Exel established The ISIS Foundation 15 years ago after witnessing appalling conditions in Humla, in the Himalayas, and in the Nakaseke district of Uganda. Since then, the Foundation has raised AUD\$21.9 million for life-saving education, health care and infrastructure in both countries.

Ms Exel, who was Telstra NSW Businesswoman of the Year in 2012, said she was honoured and humbled to receive the award, which was announced by the Governor-General Quentin Bryce. The award is for service to humanity.

“The ISIS Foundation is the product of the dreams and hard work of thousands of people, and it has been a privilege to work with all of them. This work has enhanced my world beyond measure,” said Ms Exel.

“In my lucky life, I have worked with extraordinary people in the developing world who are almost always unsung heroes. For me, this award recognises all those people.”

Before establishing the ISIS Group, Ms Exel worked as a banker and lawyer in Australia and Bermuda, where she was Managing Director of the Bermuda Commercial Bank and Chair of the Bermuda Stock Exchange. She is one of the youngest women in the world to have run a publicly traded bank. She was also on the Board of the Bermuda Monetary Authority, where her signature graced Bermuda’s \$5 note.

New Zealand-born Audette Exel is a pioneer in the business-for-purpose field, setting up a unique partnership between a non-profit foundation and an Australian corporate finance business, ISIS (Asia Pacific), which advises companies on large international transactions and raises money for global fund managers. All profits go to The ISIS Foundation to cover running costs, meaning every dollar from donors around the world goes directly to projects on the ground.

ISIS (Asia Pacific) has provided AUD\$7 million in funding for The ISIS Foundation, which supports more than 30,000 people each year.

“I spent years advantaging the advantaged. Now ISIS advantages the disadvantaged,” said Ms Exel.

“I profoundly believe business is capable of greatness. Business can serve the whole community, not just shareholders. It is inspiring to see so many more non-profits and corporates finding creative ways to tackle poverty together.

“I am delighted to be part of this evolving conversation about how business fits in the new world, and to share my mistakes and successes.”

Ms Exel said Australia was conducting an important national debate about its responsibilities to people living in poverty.

“This is when we see the best of ourselves – when we reach out to others in need. It makes us better people and a better nation,” she said.

Other positions held by Audette Exel

- Non-Executive Director of Suncorp Group Limited, one of Australia’s 20 biggest ASX companies
- Vice-chairman of Steamship Mutual Underwriting Association Trustees (Bermuda) Ltd

Awards

- Telstra 2012 NSW Commonwealth Bank Business Owner Award (2012)
- NSW Telstra Business Woman of the Year (2012)
- One of the Australian Financial Review’s 100 Women of Influence in Australia (2012)
- Elected a Global Leader for Tomorrow by The World Economic Forum (1995)
- Economic Justice and Community Impact Award from the Young Presidents Organisation Social Enterprise Networks (2010)

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