

Helping refugee women to blossom this Valentine's Day

The launch of social enterprise Angkor Flowers & Crafts online will provide the opportunity for consumers to not only find the perfect Valentine's Day gift but also support the training and education of migrant and refugee women in Western Sydney.

The launch of the e-commerce platform comes at a time when, according to Nielsen research, "consumers around the world are saying loud and clear that a brand's social purpose is among the factors that influence purchase decisions". Angkor Flowers & Crafts employs qualified florists to train disadvantaged women from Cambodia, Thailand, Khmer and Burma backgrounds in order to increase their confidence, language skills and employment opportunities. Founder Sophea Chea, said that through her role as a social worker, she realised that many of these women faced barriers such as domestic violence, lack of education and family support and had no idea how to take that first step to changing their lives. "They often feel that their only chance in life is to stay-at-home with their children and be homemakers. By offering the training and support through Angkor Flowers & Crafts, we are giving them hope and the opportunity to make a contribution as well as building their skills and confidence ", Sophea said. Sophea has ambitions to expand the company in order to aid more disadvantaged women and has no qualms about taking on the more established online commercial florists in an industry that grew at an annualised rate of 5.9% to reach \$60 million over the last five years. As a recent recipient of Macquarie Group Foundation's Business Planning Competition and Grants Program, Sophea plans to offer more training opportunities to migrant women over the coming year as knowledge of the brand and its purpose grows. One of the women benefitting from the training is Leaghny, originally from Cambodia, who said working at Angkor Flowers & Crafts allowed her to better look after her two children. "I feel proud of myself for being able to make my own money and I know it will help me have a colourful future," Leaghny said. Angkor Flowers & Crafts offers a range of Valentine's Day specials this February 14 including long stem red roses and unique hampers with guaranteed next day delivery for the Sydney region. For further details, interviews, images contact: Sophea Chea, Angkor Flowers & Crafts: 0420 734343 Joanne Ryan, Infodec Communications: 9531 5595 or 0421 159 866

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