Women urged to contest polls

By SHIRLYN BELDEN

WOMEN have been urged to contest the general election to partake in decision making and service delivery.

More than 70 women planning to contest the election have completed an intensive training on strategic approaches to successful campaigning. The candidates came from southern, highlands, New Guinea Islands and Morobe regions.

Head of AusAID Stuart Schaefer told the women that their decision to contest the election would go a long way in terms of decision making and service delivery.

"International experience has shown that countries with more female representation in political organisations are more inclusive, egalitarian and democratic," he said.

He said the Australian government was happy to support the initiative and provide funding for K2.2 million.

"The training will help female candidates understand electoral rules, develop a strategy and budget for their campaigns which will put them on more of an equal footing with the male candidates in the election," he said.

Most of the candidates who participated would contest the open seats in the June election while others were preparing for the local level government election next year.

The training focused on equipping the women with skills and information about campaign planning and logistics, management of finances and support teams, public speaking and electoral rules.

"We hope that there will be at least one strong female candidate for each available seat at the 2012 elections, and we expect that this training will have an impact well beyond the election by empowering women to assume leadership positions in their communities, districts and provinces," Schaefer said.

The training was a progressive workshop which started last year and ends today.

It was facilitated by the Australian National University's Centre for Democratic Institutions and the Office for Women Development in Waigani.

No one has powers to defer general election, says Amet

By ISAAC NICHOLAS

PARLIAMENT, government and ELECTION 2012

cy or when there was a declaration of war with another country.