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## National women's enterprise event in Strand

**Nick Rabbitts**

LIMERICK is to play host to the annual National Women's Enterprise Day, which will take place in the Strand Hotel next month.

The event, which gets under way on the evening of Thursday, November 18, is designed to recognise and celebrate the contribution women make to the business world.

More than 300 delegates are expected to be at the conference, where they will hear five female entrepreneurs, including Limer-

ick's Jennifer Ryan, who helped found the Ponafre Coffee in Annacotty.

She will join Sahar Hashemi, who founded the UK high street chain Cafe Republic, as well as local entrepreneur and hotelier, Mary Fitzgerald.

It is hoped when delegates hear Jennifer's, and other stories, they will be inspired to set up in business themselves, and help bridge the gender divide.

Although Ireland's city and county enterprise boards have supported almost 13,500 female entre-

preneurs, men are still almost three times more likely than women to set up their own business in this country.

Eamon Ryan, CEO of the Limerick City Enterprise

Board, says it is often through knowledge of other business people, that women go into business themselves.

"Research from the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor shows that women who know an entrepreneur are five times more likely to become an entrepreneur themselves," he explained.

"Through profiling the success stories of female entrepreneurs in Ireland on National Women's Enterprise Day, we hope to encourage more women to seek out new business opportunities by setting up their own business."

The National Women's Enterprise Day is co-funded by the European Social Fund with support from the Department of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs through the Equality for Women Measure.



Donna Daly Blyth from Donna's Dance Studio in Cork, Alison Boardman from Unique Voice Language Institute in Kerry, Ann Marie Durkin from Shasta in Longford, Alison Ritchie from Polar Ice in Offaly and Jennifer Ryan from Pónafre Roastery in Limerick join Minister of State for Equality, Integration and Human Rights, Mary White to launch National Women's Enterprise Day which will take place in the Strand hotel