

The North West STAR

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Samantha Walton



Veronica shaking the hand of a Care Bag recipient.

NORTH West Queensland locals are being urged to tune in this Wednesday for the screening of an award-winning short documentary showcasing how a group of Doomadgee women are helping to tackle 'period poverty' in PNG.

A Woman's Calling tells the story of how women in Doomadgee, on learning about how difficult life can be for extremely disadvantaged women and adolescent girls living in remote Papua New Guinea, were inspired to help.

The women embraced the challenge of learning how to sew washable sanitary pads, with two members of the group travelling to a remote village in PNG to hand-deliver the precious 'Moon Sick Care Bags' - helping to promote good menstrual hygiene and enabling girls to stay in school and women to continue caring for their families.

Cairns' Yolonde Entsch is one of the Executive Producers of *A Woman's Calling* and founder of Empowering Women Empowering Communities (EWEC), which introduced the Moon Sick Care Bag Project to Doomadgee in 2017.

"I am so excited and proud that people all around Australia are going to have the opportunity to see our story in this award-winning short documentary," she said.

"When the Doomadgee ladies decided to make 250 (final tally 330) Moon Sick Care Bags for their sisters in PNG, I knew immediately that this story needed to be told.

"As one of the documentary's Executive Producers, I was thrilled to be able to take Veronica Walden and Anthea Chong to the Treaty Villages (located in the Western Province) to hand out the Bags that the Doomadgee women had made. Their experience, and connection with 'their sisters', was heart-warming and will stay with me for the rest of my life."



Anthea and Veronica handing out MSCBs.

The documentary will air on NITV this Wednesday, 25th September at 11.50pm, and be available via SBS On Demand after that. SBS has also secured the documentary for a broader screening with a date/time yet to be confirmed.

"We're keen to get the word out so as many people as possible get to view this amazing and inspiring story," Mrs Entsch said.

"When the women of Doomadgee, who have very little, are so willing to take on a project to help women and girls in PNG who have even less, it really makes you - as a viewer - think about your own contributions."

Significantly, *A Woman's Calling* is also being considered for inclusion and awards at a number of film festivals within Australia and internationally, and has been confirmed to screen at Gympie's Heart of Gold International Short Film Festival on October 3rd .

"It's already received recognition as August's Winner of the 'Best Documentary Short' category at the Changing Face International Film Festival, so both of these are going to secure the Doomadgee ladies - and the Moon Sick Care Bag Project - some valuable exposure internationally," Mrs Entsch explained.

A Woman's Calling was produced by Sunshine Coast-based filmmaking company Pluggas and funded by Cairns-based community development organisation My Pathway, with substantial planning, operational and in-kind support from Empowering Women Empowering Communities.