

LEADERSHIP is not exclusive to executive managers-

two of the region's most successful businesswomen have revealed.



TAFE North Coast Institute Director Elizabeth McGregor and Liesa Davies – Port Macquarie Hastings Council's group manager for economic development – believe leadership is a combination of traits any woman can develop "in her sphere of influence".

Both women have worked across a range of locations and combined personal and professional priorities to be where they are today. Actively engaging in opportunities beyond their comfort zones has been key to the progression of their careers and activities within the communities they have lived in.

Liesa - who launched her career in Port Macquarie in 2009 after a series of Canberra-based Department of Defence senior executive roles - also holds roles as the president of the Willing and Able Foundation and as a committee member with the Port Macquarie Surf Lifesaving Club (Nippers).



"My focus was always all about doing the things that I enjoyed, but also to ensure I was challenging myself," the mum-of-three said. "My career path has been determined by being able to step up and take new opportunities – many times ones where I've had to experience a great learning curve – well outside my comfort zone."

That's not to say that bringing to life new opportunities has always come easily: "Recognising it is a challenge to balance everything is important," Liesa said. "Sometimes priorities need to change, sometimes you have to ask others for help. I've been lucky to have a good support network and some inspiring mentors."

Elizabeth and Liesa are key members of an expert panel discussing leadership at the launch of the Hastings Business Women's Network professional development 2016 calendar launch next Thursday morning (31 March) at TAFE Graduates Restaurant in Port Macquarie.

Facilitated by Roving Trainer's Barbara Smith, the event will also welcome State Member for Port Macquarie Leslie Williams, 2015 Woman in Business awards winner Tanya Simmons and HR and business consultant Kelly Lamb.

As the head of North Coast TAFE, Elizabeth says that it's important to be authentic in pursuing professional and personal opportunities – being “bold and courageous in taking on new challenges but also in judiciously saying no”.

“I didn't have a career plan – I had a philosophy: do what you love; do it as well as you can, and – when you're not loving it - challenge yourself to make a change,” Elizabeth said. “Work and life are ideally integrated – my belief is that having meaningful work – whether paid or not - is important for a meaningful life.”

A former teacher, a wife and mother, Elizabeth reveals a strong sense of identity, purpose and values is helpful for women in today's business world.

“Knowing ourselves and what we truly value well enough to take control allows us to strike a balance that works for us as individual people,” she said. “It helps to be comfortable to shift priorities at different times in our lives.”

In leading a dispersed academic and administrative workforce, Elizabeth has taken a cultural approach to building leadership across North Coast TAFE: “Dispersed leadership, where individuals are creative and in charge in their workspace, is essential for the future succession of our business,” she said.

“It is important to develop opportunities for people to be challenged and actively engaged in their current roles and in their futures.” “Leadership and management require a combination of skills and attributes – and to build these capabilities we have introduced leadership forums and initiatives across many levels of the organisation.”

Sponsored by North Coast TAFE, Vital Voices will reveal the skills and attributes today's women need to capitalise on in order to secure success for themselves, their families and the businesses in which they work.

To register for the event visit:

<http://www.hbwn.com.au/event/event/detail/event/43022>