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Fresh push for Advance as it proves the value of the Aussie network

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Advance, [the network for the one million Australians living overseas](#), has appointed a new global chairman and a chief executive for Australia as it moves to build its profile and step up engagement with the 2.5 million non-Australians who have studied in Australia.

New chairman, Yasmin Allen, who sits on the boards of Cochlear, Santos and the ASX says the alumni "are an extraordinary resource for the country".

They are highly educated and although little known in Australia, many are "keen to give back" she says.





Emma Rugge Price has been appointed CEO Australia of Advance, while Yasmin Allen is the new global chairman of Advance, replacing Glen Boreham. **Louie Douvis**

"There is tremendous upside for our companies and our people. These individuals occupy high-level positions around the globe and are willing to share IP and connect with us."

Advance was started by Australian Consul General in New York, Ken Allen, after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, initially to connect people in the aftermath of the attacks. It's grown into a powerful group of expats and alumni globally, and its flagship event is the Advance Global Australian Awards, which recognises high-achieving Australians who live and work overseas, and distinguished Alumni.

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Emma Rugge Price, former GE vice president of Brand and Communications for Australia and New Zealand, has been appointed CEO, Australia, for Advance, reporting to New York-based global chief executive Advance, Serafina Maiorano.

Critical recognition

For many of the recipients, the awards dinner is the first time their home country has recognised their achievements, which span many of the fields of human endeavour.

Ms Allen, the daughter-in-law of Ken Allen, has sat on the awards judging committee for six years. Advance also runs a Silicon Valley program called Propel, which has so far helped 38 entrepreneurs who have raised \$57 million in venture-capital funding.

At the dinner, people are often shocked at the extraordinary achievements of Australians working offshore. "They are leaders in their own right globally, and Australians don't know who they are," Ms Allen says.

"Our talent is our greatest resource and a point of competitive advantage. It is important we maintain our connection and build lifelong partnerships that add value to Australia.

"Advance has more than proven the value of its network and is helping to counter the common complaint of Australians working overseas and many who return – that their global achievements and experience are not valued here."

[Advance Global Australian Award winner 2014, Chris Boshuizen](#), the co-founder of Planet Labs, who was featured in BOSS in 2014, says the award connected him directly to C-suite in Australia. Russell Howard, the 2013 recipient of the same award said it was "critical for getting recognised" in Australia.

Experience undervalued

"Everything changed for me with the Award. The tap on the shoulder of recognition for my past achievements in the US, a world away from Australia, where I did not exist, was a turning point."

At the awards dinner Howard met Lucy Turnbull, chairman of Prima Biomed, who asked him to sit on the board. Advance is also focused on helping Australians return home, and is keen to partner with organisations in Australia who are interested in accessing global Australians.

Says Ruggie Price: "In my experience, most companies, whether Australian or global under value that which is 'not invented here'. There is definitely an element of that in Australia when it comes to international experience and what value it can bring to an organisation in terms of skills and experience, creative thinking and diversity of perspective."

As Australian businesses look to go global and boards look to become more diverse, she expects that thinking to shift.

Several executives who have returned home after many years in Asia and US have build connections through Advance including former Advance board members chief executive of the CSIRO, Larry Marshall, managing director of the ABC, Michelle Guthrie, and chief executive of Data61, Adrian Turner.

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