



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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**20 June 2017**

### **AFTER THE CRISIS– MICROFINANCE FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

A new microfinance facility for those who have escaped domestic violence was launched in Canberra today.

The Snow Foundation and a number of ACT financial institutions, accounting firms and businesses have already donated \$230,000 to the Microfinance Facility for Domestic Violence Survivors, with the goal to secure \$250,000.

The CEO of the Snow Foundation, Georgina Byron, said today's launch offered some brightness for people going through dark times.

“The Facility will be managed by C.A.R.E. Incorporated and will provide interest free loans up to \$5,000, repaid over 3 years, to people who are unable to access other financial assistance”, Ms Byron said.

“For them, it might mean getting the car serviced, paying for the school excursion, or paying a heating bill when their finances have collapsed after fleeing domestic violence”.

“This initiative has been worked on for a long period of time by a passionate group of people who were keen to remind our community and local businesses about the importance of investing in people locally”.

The CEO of the Women's Centre for Health Matters, Marcia Williams, said the majority of women leaving domestic violence in the ACT stayed in their homes post-crisis.

“Can you imagine having to decide whether it is better to face losing your home or not being able to pay essential bills, or instead to resume the relationship with your violent partner because that is the ‘best’ available option?”

“We have been so privileged to work with the local businesses who have supported and contributed to the development and ongoing delivery of this important microfinance facility”.

The CEO of the Domestic Violence Crisis Service, Mirjana Wilson, said the Facility would provide options for people, rather than a one size fits all approach.

“We are very excited that we will soon be able to refer clients to this program, because we know it is going to make a huge difference to their ability to work towards a positive, safe and secure life. DVCS research shows that almost 55% of home owners and 62.5% of families living in private rental lost their homes within 12 months of separation”.

“The research also showed that all of the women studied displayed symptoms consistent with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, and more than half experienced ongoing risks to safety”.

The need for the facility was established in a series of Beyond Crisis workshops held in 2016, hosted by Deloitte, Ernst and Young, PwC, KPMG and Protiviti, in partnership with WCHM and DVCS.

***The Microfinance Facility for Domestic Violence Survivors is jointly funded by: Service One Members Banking, Beyond Bank, Deborah & Richard Rolfe, Deloitte, PwC, KPMG, Ernst & Young, Independent Property Foundation, Hands Across Canberra, Dr Tony Tonks, Aspen Medical, Communities@work, and The Snow Foundation***

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