

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **CANBERRA BUSINESSES ASKED TO SPONSOR NON-VIOLENCE TRAINING FOR YOUNG ATHLETES**

*A local foundation is offering to pay half the training cost for ACT teams after seeing positive results*

Now is the time for corporate sponsors of youth sports teams to change the future with innovative, evidence-based programs that help kids learn the skills and tools to stand up to bullying and harmful behaviour. Through their sponsorship of these groundbreaking programs, Canberra businesses can also change the way children in the ACT deal with gender inequality and behaviour that leads to larger problems like domestic violence.

The iRespect initiative teaches coaches short, positive lessons they give to their teams during team training sessions. The lessons empower kids to tackle two of the biggest obstacles they face—how to stop harmful behaviour and how to effectively speak up when someone you know is being disrespectful or harmful to others. Across the ACT, results have been very encouraging.

“iRespect has helped Basketball ACT teach coaches and kids positive coping strategies for some of the biggest social issues facing young athletes today,” says Michael Haynes, CEO of Basketball ACT. “Providing support to our young athletes is a key priority for Basketball ACT, and these courses are an important step toward that. Coaches from a number of our clubs participated, and the feedback was extremely positive.”

Strong results, such as these, have led The Snow Foundation to pay half the cost of the programs for youth sport team sponsors in the ACT.

“Our children are faced with a rapidly changing society, and this program is simple,” says Georgina Byron, CEO of The Snow Foundation. “It delivers powerful short messages, creates change and helps kids keep each other on the right track. We can empower the region’s young people to stand up for what’s right and stop bad behaviour and violence before it starts.”

iRespect is partnering with many teams across Canberra such as ANU, Eastlake AFL Club, Woden Valley Soccer Club, Uni Norths Rugby Club and the Canberra Raiders to teach respectful behaviour and positive coping skills.

“Groups, companies and sports clubs who sponsor youth sports teams can make a huge difference by funding this course,” says Mark Wadie, Founding Executive Director of iRespect. “The more teams learn these skills, the closer we come to ending the cycle of disrespect, gender inequality and domestic abuse that we battle with today.”

The programs are open to sports coaches and clubs with athletes who are aged 14 and older. For more information about how to get involved and sponsor one of the iRespect initiatives for a club, contact Mark Wadie at 0437 850 462. For media inquiries, please call Kathleen Sweetapple of the Snow Foundation at 0455 22 77 11.