



**23 May 2018**

**For immediate release**

## **First global community research project for Canberra begins**

Hands Across Canberra, in partnership with the Snow Foundation, held the first-ever Vital Signs initiative workshop in the ACT to bring together specialists in key areas of importance to the Canberra community, such as housing, health, learning and belonging. The goal was to focus on gathering existing and credible data to highlight important social and economic trends across the Canberra region.

Vital Signs is a global community research initiative being delivered for the first time in Canberra. This important project originated from Canada. Now Vital Signs has spread across the globe to capture information to inform longer term planning for community foundations, citizens and stakeholders who work together to understand the issues and strengths within their community.

Vital Signs Canberra will tell the story of how the community is progressing in key quality-of-life areas. In addition to the workshop, a Project Manager has been appointed for 6 months as a dedicated resource to gather and analyse data, and facilitate a collaborative and partnership approach.

“Hands Across Canberra is delighted to be auspicing this first Vital Signs Report for the Canberra Community. We are keen to gain more detailed knowledge of what is happening in Canberra and, with the help of our vital stakeholders in the community sector, gain a better understanding of why it is happening. This will help us in better targeting our grant making and raising awareness in the Canberra community of vulnerable people and the issues they are facing.” Peter Gordon, CEO, Hands Across Canberra.

“This is a valuable project for Canberra and the giving community. Vital Signs will take the pulse of our community and give us the knowledge and power to change it. It will help start conversations, identify trends, local priorities and opportunities and help us decide where to focus our attention and resources to have the greatest impact. This approach has been used in Fremantle and Melbourne with success and we are looking forward to using this approach in the ACT.” Georgina Byron, CEO, Snow Foundation.

As part of the initiative’s stakeholder engagement, the workshop captured challenges and opportunities facing Canberrans in the key areas of housing, health, learning and belonging. Sources of data and ideas for indicators were brainstormed to assist the development of the Canberra snapshot of quality of life and community vitality covering those themes.

Creating an atmosphere of collaboration and passion amongst community specialists, the Vital Signs Canberra project team are excited that the initiative has had such a positive start with participants eager to share and contribute to Vital Signs. The Vital Signs Canberra publication will be officially launched at the annual Hands Across Canberra lunch in October.

**- ENDS -**

**Hands Across Canberra Media Contact:**  
**Elizabeth Picker**  
[Elizabeth@opfconsulting.com.au](mailto:Elizabeth@opfconsulting.com.au)  
**0429 614 297**

**Snow Foundation Media Contact:**  
**Kathleen Sweetapple**  
[K.Sweetapple@canberraairport.com.au](mailto:K.Sweetapple@canberraairport.com.au)  
**0455 227 711**