

## **'Safe as Houses' event to be held on International Women's Day 2017 - to launch toolkit to assist community housing providers respond to domestic and family violence**

The NSW Federation of Housing, Domestic Violence NSW, Homelessness NSW and the Older Women's Studio Development Project have joined forces to develop a toolkit program, designed for community housing providers to help strengthen practice in responding to domestic and family violence and older women's homelessness.

The new toolkit program will be officially launched on International Women's Day 2017, 8<sup>th</sup> March at The Mint, Sydney.

The 'Safe as Houses' event will feature journalist and TV presenter Deborah Knight as MC and will comprise of a panel discussion with representatives from key specialist services and state government agencies who will discuss the program and issues surrounding housing and domestic violence.

Susan Ryan, the former Age Discrimination Commissioner with the Human Rights Commission and the inaugural Minister assisting the Prime Minister for the Status of Women, will also be speaking at the event. Susan will be addressing the issues of domestic and family violence and older women's homelessness within our communities and the importance of ongoing support for victims.

City West Housing, Sydney's leading affordable housing provider, is sponsoring the launch and supports all developments in responding to domestic and family violence. City West Housing regards affordable, stable housing options as vital in enabling victims of domestic and family violence to seek shelter and a safe and secure place to live.

Wendy Hayhurst, CEO of the NSW Federation of Housing, the driving force behind the toolkit, comments, "this toolkit will help community housing staff support community housing tenants experiencing family violence. Domestic and family violence is complex and affects people, no matter where they live in the community.

"The toolkit will help our members - community housing providers - to better understand the signs of family violence and provide the support women need to be safe, ensuring they have options, and the safety of a secure and affordable home to go to if they choose to leave, and the support they need to stay safe if they choose to stay".

Domestic Violence NSW has also played a large role in the development of the toolkit. Moo Baulch, CEO of Domestic Violence NSW comments, "domestic and family violence is a crime and a violation of human rights. Everyone in our community has the right to live free from violence. This new toolkit is an important step in providing community housing providers with a set of resources, to improve their responses to tenants who are impacted by DFV".

"Community housing providers have a unique relationship with their tenants as well as a crucial role to play in supporting survivors to identify DFV and access specialist support. Recovery from violence and trauma is inextricably linked to a safe home environment, and by equipping housing providers with the tools to recognise the indicators of violence and the confidence to respond we hope that more women and children will be empowered to access appropriate support.



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For more information, interview opportunities or to attend the launch event, please contact:  
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