

Wednesday, 27 October 2021

## **NEW RIZEUP HOMES PROGRAM GIVING LOCAL SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE A FRESH START**

Victim survivors of domestic and family violence in the Northern Rivers region will have access to fully furnished safe houses thanks to Australian not-for-profit, RizeUp's Homes Program, made possible through a funding grant from Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation. The RizeUp's Homes Program provides furniture and appliances to enhance crisis accommodation, and access to support from trained volunteers that helps pave the way to safety in times of crisis.

A 14.4 percent increase<sup>1</sup> in sexual assault and domestic violence related assault in New South Wales over the last two years has spurred the community-focussed organisation to expand its existing operations beyond Queensland, Victoria and further into New South Wales, into the Northern Rivers region.

RizeUp Founder and CEO, Nicolle Edwards, said the RizeUp Homes Program is a vital social service that supports women and families to safely leave violent households and never look back.

"RizeUp's Homes Program helps survivors move onto the next stage of their post-violence lives by supporting their move to secure and suitable housing in a safe and nurturing environment," said Ms Edwards.

"Thanks to the support of the Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation's \$69,000 grant, we can offer victim survivors in the Northern Rivers region with access to 20 fully furnished safe houses that don't just put a roof over their head, but help foster a sense of safety and comfort at such a challenging time. We take crisis accommodation and fit it out with everything these women and their families need to not only function, but be comfortable.

"This means more victim survivors and their families can avoid the alternative options, which are often 'sleeping rough' or being forced to return to abusers through economic necessity," she said.

[Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation](#) Chair, Jennifer Leslie, said RizeUp is creating a physical space for survivors, along with digital resources that raise awareness about the realities and pervasiveness of this issue.

"Domestic and family violence occurs in communities across the country. It is a devastating reality for far too many, regardless of age, socioeconomic or demographic grouping. Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation is determined to help rewrite the future of disadvantaged Australians, and are incredibly proud that our grant, which has funded

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<sup>1</sup> NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, *NSW Recorded Crime Statistics quarterly update March 2021*, Media Release, 10 June 2021, [https://www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au/Pages/bocsar\\_media\\_releases/2021/mr-NSW-Recorded-Crime-Statistics-Quarterly-Update-Mar-2021.aspx](https://www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au/Pages/bocsar_media_releases/2021/mr-NSW-Recorded-Crime-Statistics-Quarterly-Update-Mar-2021.aspx), (accessed 25 October 2021)

furnishings for 20 safe houses and training of RizeUp volunteers, can support vulnerable women and their families when they need it most.

“Over the last two years, Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation has provided two funding grants to RizeUp, helping to deliver the RizeUp Northern Rivers Hub in 2020, and more recently, their Hidden Crisis campaign, an online education awareness program for people affected by domestic violence,” said Ms Leslie.

The Hidden Crisis campaign aims to engage the community in developing an understanding of ways to support vulnerable families attempting to flee domestic violence.

“This video campaign is a powerful, visual reminder that domestic and family violence occurs within all communities and that we must work together to raise much-needed awareness of the impact domestic and family violence has on so many lives,” said Ms Edwards.

“It is our hope that the Hidden Crisis campaign prompts important conversations and brings them to light instead of keeping them behind closed doors.”

The Hidden Crisis campaign was delivered with the support of a \$26,600 grant from Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation. To view the Hidden Crisis campaign, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Uk5Sy4gYCc>.

## **Call for volunteers**

To support rising demand for the RizeUp Northern Rivers Hub, RizeUp is urgently calling for volunteers in the region to support various aspects of the Homes Program. Volunteer opportunities include driving vans to move furniture into safe houses, assembling furniture and styling furniture, or helping to create a beautiful and safe home environment with a pantry full of food. To learn more or sign up as a volunteer, head to [www.rizeup.com.au/volunteer](http://www.rizeup.com.au/volunteer)

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## **About RizeUp**

RizeUp supports affected families with a range of programs that enable women and children to safely escape the traumas of domestic and family violence. Founded in 2015, the organisation has rapidly grown across Queensland, New South Wales, and now Melbourne, as has worked hard to meet the ever-growing need.

## **About Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation**

The Newcastle Permanent Charitable Foundation distributes approximately \$1.5 million in grants each year to facilitate charitable projects that address disadvantage, marginalisation, and isolation in local communities throughout the Hunter, Central West, Central Coast, New England, Mid North Coast and Northern Rivers regions of NSW. Since its establishment in 2003 as a gift to the community as part of Newcastle Permanent’s 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the Charitable Foundation has provided more than \$23 million to 512 community initiatives.