



Media Release

Tuesday 12 March 2019

Your chance to support Camden's first women's shelter

Residents, local businesses and community organisations are invited to attend an information forum, to find out how they can lend a helping hand in establishing Camden's first women's shelter.

The forum, run by Women's Community Shelters (WCS) in partnership with Council and the Camden-Wollondilly Domestic Violence Committee, will be held on **Wednesday 20 March, 7pm, at Camden Civic Centre, Oxley Street, Camden.**

WCS Chief Executive Officer, Annabelle Daniel, said support from the Camden community was absolutely crucial in establishing and running a successful shelter.

"We're looking for a keen group of people to serve, initially, on the steering committee and then to become a Board and oversee the shelter once it's established," Ms Daniel said.

"There will be even more opportunities to volunteer. If someone has expertise in fundraising, HR, social media, legal, on boards or with community organisations, we would welcome their interest. There will also be various tasks to be done to set-up the shelter and then to keep it running – everything from providing cookery classes to admin help.

"We've found that establishing a shelter brings a whole community on a journey of understanding women's homelessness and domestic and family violence.

"At some, the local butcher donates a meat tray once a week for the women and kids. A local gardening business has maintained the shelter grounds for us. A local computer expert might volunteer to create a website! All these things make a huge difference – and we're hoping for the same in Camden.

"We are so grateful to Council for all their support, Masterton Homes, who will take care of building the shelter, Wattle Grove Lions Club, who have committed fundraising support, and everyone else who has, or will, support us along the way."

Ms Daniel will speak at the forum about the WCS shelter model, along with:

- A representative from the Narellan Police Area Command, who will discuss local domestic violence statistics;
- Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Services Coordinator and Camden Woman of the Year 2018, Tanya Whitehouse, who will discuss the need for the shelter in the local area; and
- Domestic violence survivor and advocate, Lisa McAdams, who will share her shelter experience.

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Mayor of Camden, Cr Peter Sidgreaves, said Council will continue to have a zero tolerance to any sort of violence and offer help to victims and their support systems.

“Helping establish this shelter is another stand we’re taking against domestic violence,” Cr Sidgreaves said.

“We’re working closely with the Camden-Wollondilly Domestic Violence Committee and Women’s Community Shelters on a number of campaigns and Council have recently become a White Ribbon Accredited organisation.

“We’re working hard on initiatives to spread the White Ribbon message and continue to create a united front against the issue of domestic violence.”

The shelter will provide crisis accommodation to up to six women and their children in the Camden area, as well as a client-centred case management plan.

For more information, Camden-Wollondilly Domestic Violence Committee on 4640 7333.

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