



MEDIA RELEASE

RESPECT NOW CAMPAIGN CALLS ON ACT GOVERNMENT TO FUND PRIMARY PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

8 March 2015: This International Women's Day, YWCA Canberra is launching a campaign calling on the ACT Government to make preventing violence against women a priority.

The campaign, *Respect NOW*, raises awareness about the importance of primary prevention and seeks \$200,000 of funding per year from the ACT Government, to deliver the award-winning program, *Respect, Communicate, Choose* (RCC) in all public primary schools in the ACT.

Lauren Jackson and the University of Canberra Capitals are supporting the campaign as *Respect Champions*, and are committed to raising awareness of primary prevention as a means to combat violence against women.

"Young people need to have access to information on respect and relationships," Ms Jackson said.

"It was something that was certainly lacking when I was growing up, and it's so important that we build these skills now to prevent violence in the future."

RCC is a best-practice primary prevention program that works with young people age 9-12 in primary schools, to build knowledge and skills around respect, gender equality, diversity and being an active bystander.

"Given that we have already seen 13 women killed as a result of intimate partner violence this year, it's critical that primary violence prevention programs are implemented in all primary schools," Frances Crimmins, Executive Director of YWCA Canberra said.

"Primary prevention is the only way we can enact a cultural change to build a generation free from violence against women, and currently there are no programs in schools that address this community-wide problem.

"Despite proven positive outcomes for young people, *Respect, Communicate, Choose* has not been funded by federal or state governments since 2013," Ms Crimmins said.

"We're tired of telling schools that we can't run the program because the government doesn't see violence prevention as a priority.

“We hope that via the online petition that is part of the Respect NOW campaign, we’ll see the ACT Government’s Department of Training and Education take a renewed focus on this issue,” Ms Crimmins said.

Respect NOW engages primary school age children to make paper cranes as a symbol of peace and hope, to raise community awareness of the need for RCC to be funded.

The petition will be presented to Yvette Berry, Minister for Women and Joy Burch, Minister for Education at the end of the campaign.

Respect NOW will launch officially on Sunday 8 March, International Women’s Day, on YWCA Canberra’s website with a special video message from Lauren Jackson and Frances Crimmins.

Visit www.ywca-canberra.org.au/respectnow for more information - this link will be live from 7am Sunday 8 March.

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Frances Crimmins and Lauren Jackson are available for interview.

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About YWCA Canberra: YWCA Canberra is a feminist, not-for-profit community organisation that has been providing community services and representing women’s issues in the Canberra community since its establishment in 1929. YWCA Canberra employs more than 300 staff across the ACT, and delivers 30 quality programs in children’s services, community development, housing, youth services, women’s leadership, advocacy, and training. Represented in 122 countries, the YWCA has a global reach of 25 million women and girls. As part of this international movement, YWCA Canberra works for a world where reconciliation, justice, peace, health, human dignity, freedom and care for the environment are promoted and sustained through women’s leadership. For more information visit:

www.ywca-canberra.org.au

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