

Women's Domestic Violence Shelter to be built in Camden

Our Chairman, David Masterton, was in attendance for the announcement that Masterton Homes is building a new refuge for women, with or without children, who are experiencing homelessness, or escaping domestic violence.

"It's alarming to see the rise of domestic violence in Australia. We hope that this shelter will play an important step in their path of healing & recovery. And we're proud that Masterton can help with this important community project" says David.

The announcement was made at the Camden-Wollondilly Domestic Violence Committee fundraising breakfast this morning, where it was also revealed local police are called out to about 50 domestic violence incidents each week.

Committee chairperson Tanya Whitehouse welcomed the announcement.

"This incredibly exciting project will benefit women and children escaping domestic violence who are at risk of homelessness," she said.

"Refuges across the region fill up fast so this new location in Camden is desperately needed."

Domestic violence has been on the rise across Camden for the past few years.

Ms Whitehouse said statistics showed domestic violence crimes in the 2570 postcode - which includes suburbs such as Camden, Brownlow Hill, Spring Farm, The Oaks, Oran Park, Elderslie and Cawdor - had dramatically increased over the past two years.

"Between April 2016 and October 2018, domestic violence had risen by 44.9 per cent," she said. "In the same period intimate, stalk or harassment crimes have risen by 42.4 per cent."

The new refuge will be built on land donated by **Camden Council**.

Masterton Homes will build the facility for free.

Women's Community Shelters will manage the location which will have enough room for six women and their children.

Ms Whitehouse said the shelter was likely to be built by the end of next year.

"This started out as a wish, but through a couple of years of sheer determination and persistence, we will finally get to see it come true," she said.

"This is a real community project thanks to Camden Council, Masterton Homes and lots of other businesses and individuals.

"But we wouldn't be here if the Camden Cats AFL Club hadn't raised the initial \$25,000 we needed to get the project off of the ground."

The new shelter will be linked to transitional housing, allowing women to develop a rental history and set them on the path to re-entering the mainstream housing market.

Camden Police Area Command Domestic Violence Liaison Officer, Senior Constable Lyndall Blackmore said the refuge was a necessity. She said the shelter would be hugely beneficial to victims of domestic violence. "The refuge will be in a good location close to schools and transport – we can't reveal where it will be in order to keep future residents safe," Senior Constable Blackmore said. "We need a shelter like this due to the rising number of domestic violence cases we are seeing.

"Domestic violence is the highest crime we are called out to."

Camden mayor Peter Sidgreaves said the creation of Camden's first women's shelter is a further step council is taking towards assisting women who are suffering from domestic violence related issues.

“Throughout this year Council has continued to solidify its commitment to stand against domestic violence and it’s fantastic to continue supporting and building our great relationship with the Camden-Wollondilly Domestic Violence Committee in helping to establish this shelter,” Cr Sidgreaves said.

“It is planned that a shelter be provided for up to six women and their children in the Camden area. “These shelters provide crisis accommodation and a client-centred case management plan.”

Women’s Community Shelters chief executive Annabelle Daniel said the organisation was eager to work with council on the initiative.

“Women’s Community Shelters is very happy to be working with partners Masterton Homes, Wattle Grove Lions, local Champion Tanya Whitehouse and the broader Camden community towards establishing a purpose-built shelter in the Camden area,” she said.

“We look forward to developing a local shelter board and welcome local community involvement and support for the shelter, as we have been fortunate to receive in other Women’s Community Shelter locations.”