



MEDIA RELEASE

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AXA COMMIT TO SUPPORTING HOMELESS WOMEN

AXA, one of Australia's leading financial services companies, has pledged its support of disadvantaged women by becoming a *Foundation Subscriber* in The Big Issue's innovative new program for women, the Women's Subscription Enterprise.

The first of its kind in Australia, the Women's Subscription Enterprise is an innovative social enterprise initiative that will provide paid employment, training, education and pathways opportunities to disadvantaged women.

AXA's generous donation has funded the fit-out for the Program's first Distribution Centre and worksite, located in Melbourne's bustling CBD. The purpose-built site, due to open in September 2010, will provide a safe and secure environment in which disadvantaged women will work as Dispatch Assistants, distributing copies of The Big Issue magazine sold through subscriptions.

Through a subscriptions service to The Big Issue magazine, a long standing and quality product that currently reaches more than 130,000 Australians each fortnight, women across Australia will be employed to sort, collate and pack the Magazine, in a mail-centre type environment. Those employed through the Enterprise will also be provided with opportunities for further education, training and development, access to child care services and travel allowances.

AXA has also taken out a number of subscriptions to help kick-start the Enterprise. CEO of AXA Pacific, Andy Penn, says the organisation is proud to be associated with the exciting new program that will make a difference to lives of disadvantaged women Australia-wide.

"We believe we have a responsibility to support the local communities in which we conduct business and where our employees live and work," Mr Penn said.

"Our community investment activities have shown us that while all services provided to disadvantaged people are important, it is those initiatives that provide sustainable ongoing benefits that are capable of having the largest positive impact.

"AXA is proud to be a key supporter of the Women's Subscription Enterprise in its foundation phase and we look forward to watching this program grow.

"I urge all businesses to get behind the Enterprise, which will make a lasting impact on the lives of these women."

Natalie Susman, Head of the Women's Subscription Enterprise, says AXA's support demonstrates the value of corporate social responsibility.

"By supporting the Women's Subscription Enterprise, AXA show their commitment to the wider community. These days, it's not enough for businesses to turn a profit, they are increasingly expected to contribute to society through the use of sustainable business practices and the support of programs such as the Women's Subscription Enterprise," Ms Susman said.

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