



MEDIA RELEASE

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MEDICS SHOW THEIR SUPPORT FOR HOMELESS WOMEN

The Australian Medical Association Victoria (AMA) has carried on from National Homeless Persons Week with an exciting new partnership with The Big Issue, set to employ homeless and disadvantaged women through their groundbreaking new social enterprise, The Women's Subscription Enterprise.

Through a model selling subscriptions to The Big Issue magazine, the Women's Subscription Enterprise will provide paid employment and training to homeless and disadvantaged women. For every 100 subscriptions sold, the Enterprise will employ one woman to work as a Dispatch Assistant to pack and sort the magazine for distribution each fortnight. The more subscriptions sold, the more women can be employed.

The Australian Medical Association Victoria will help champion the sale of magazine subscriptions through their networks of doctors around Victoria, encouraging their members to subscribe to the fortnightly, general interest magazine for their reception areas and waiting rooms, hospitals, and for staff, patients and visitors.

Doctors from the AMA Victoria will also provide hands on support, visiting Distribution Centres to speak with homeless and disadvantaged women and provide health and wellbeing advice and information, as well as referrals to local GPs.

Dr Harry Hemley, President of the Australian Medical Association Victoria, said he was pleased to have the opportunity to become a partner in changing the face of homeless women's health and wellbeing in Australia.

"Joining The Big Issue's Women's Subscription Enterprise is a great opportunity for AMA Victoria to improve the health and wellbeing of disadvantaged Australian women," said Dr Harry Hemley. "Having worked with homeless women for many years, I'm aware of the issues these women face finding their feet in the community."

Dr Shelley Mallett, General Manager of Research Service and Development at Hanover Welfare Services, appeared recently at an event hosted by The Big Issue, where a group of experts came together to discuss issues around women's homelessness.

"Creating sustainable and long term employment opportunities is the key to reducing women's homelessness and disadvantage," Ms Mallett said.

"The Big Issue's Women's Subscription Enterprise will give women the break they need to get back into the community through work, training and community engagement.

"Some may have never had the chance to learn new skills, while others may have been out of the workforce so long that they have no way back in. What the Women's Subscription Enterprise does, is not just provide homeless women with jobs, but also gives them the permission to believe that they are valuable and valued members of society."

Natalie Susman, Head of the Women's Subscription Enterprise, said giving disadvantaged women the opportunity to work will enable them to take control of their lives, and their futures for both them and their children.

“We all know how important work is in our lives, not only for income, but also for a sense of identity and purpose. We are very excited to be providing employment and training opportunities to some of Australia’s most vulnerable women,” Ms Susman said

“While the journey to launch the program has been long awaited, we are now relying on the support of businesses and industry groups to ensure we continue to provide life changing opportunities well into the future.

“In our first year alone we need to sell 9000 subscriptions to The Big Issue and with the support of organisations such as the Australian Medical Association we feel we can achieve that target.”

To find out more go to www.thebigissue.org.au/womens

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Media Contact: Danielle Bombardieri at dbombardieri@bigissue.org.au or 0400 100 978.