



MEDIA RELEASE

Issued Tuesday 3 August, 2010

NAB AND WESTPAC JOIN FORCES TO HELP HOMELESS WOMEN

Although financial institutions are usually on hand to help people buy their first home, two of Australia's leading banks have reached out to the homeless by joining forces with The Big Issue in a bid to assist disadvantaged women secure employment and training opportunities.

By becoming *Foundation Subscribers* to the ground-breaking Women's Subscription Enterprise, NAB and Westpac have pledged their support for homeless and disadvantaged women across Australia.

NAB has a strong commitment to diversity and inclusion and was the only major Australian bank to have been recognised as Employer of Choice for Women by the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency in 2010.

Rowan Arndt Head of Inclusion and Diversity for NAB's Business Bank said their subscriptions would allow Business Banking employees throughout Australia to learn more about homelessness and enable them to raise awareness of these issues with customers.

"By supporting The Big Issue, NAB's contribution will help assist marginalised and homeless women, by providing employment," Mr Arndt said.

The Women's Subscriptions Enterprise uses a model selling subscriptions to The Big Issue magazine to offer paid employment, training and pathways opportunities to homeless and disadvantaged women.

A self-sustainable social enterprise, the groundbreaking new initiative will employ disadvantaged women to work as Dispatch Assistants, to pack, sort and collate the Magazine, in a safe, secure and professionally rewarding environment.

For every 100 subscriptions sold, the Enterprise can employ one disadvantaged woman. The more subscriptions that are sold, the more women can be employed. The generous support of NAB and Westpac ensured the employment of three disadvantaged women, well before the program launched yesterday.

Ms Sally Herman, General Manager People and Transformation at Westpac Bank, said Westpac had a long history of community involvement and was eager to get involved in the Women's Subscription Enterprise.

"At Westpac we see sustainability as a way of thinking about and managing our business," Ms Herman said.

"We are committed to building a strong future for our customers, our employees and the communities in which we serve. The Women's Subscription Enterprise is one way we for us to do that."

Mrs Sonya Clancy, Chairman of the Board of The Big Issue Australia, says it is becoming increasingly important for businesses to recognise the value of building positive outcomes for the community into their day-to-day business operations.

“More and more organisations are developing socially responsible business strategies and want to make a positive and lasting impact on society,” Mrs Clancy said.

“The Women’s Subscription Enterprise relies on the support of businesses to survive; they are absolutely vital in ensuring the growth and sustainability of this exciting new program.

“The Big Issue encourages Australian businesses to purchase subscriptions to the magazine and support this wonderful new initiative that will be able to deliver paid employment, training, support and assistance to Australia’s ‘invisible’ face of homelessness – women.”

ENDS

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