

MEDIA RELEASE

+ WOMEN'S HEALTH GOULBURN NORTH EAST

(03) 5722 3009

whealth@whealth.com.au



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday 26 January, 2022

Federal funds support domestic violence training for disaster responders

Women's Health Goulburn North East (WHGNE) is thrilled the Federal Government has funded Gender and Disaster Australia to enable the initiative to deliver training for disaster responders to support them to identify, refer and care for people affected by domestic violence during times of emergency and disaster.

Gender and Disaster Australia (GADA), formerly the Gender and Disaster Pod, was established in 2015 by WHGNE, Women's Health in the North and Monash University's Disaster Resilience Initiative

It brings together a wide range of emergency sector, community and government agencies and representatives to address the causes and effects of gender-based violence in emergency and disaster situations.

The new four-year funding commitment will enable GADA to deliver online or face-to-face training and resources to more than 1000 disaster responders across Australia, including the Australian Red Cross, emergency services such as country fire service volunteers, primary health care workers and volunteer groups.

GADA will begin training disaster responders by mid-2022.

In announcing the support, Minister for Families and Social Services and Minister for Women's Safety, Anne Ruston, said the funding would increase understanding and awareness of gendered violence and strengthen the capacity of relief and recovery services, offering tools to better recognise and support women and children, and to refer men to appropriate services.

"Sadly, as highlighted in the Royal Commission into National Disaster Arrangements, natural disasters such as fires and floods are often linked with increased reports of family and domestic violence," Minister Ruston said.

Minister for Emergency Management and National Recovery and Resilience Bridget McKenzie said the new training would look to overcome barriers to support that exist in rural and regional areas.

“This new training will ensure those working in disaster recovery have the tools and support to identify, refer and care for people affected by domestic violence, especially in rural and regional areas where we know there are often barriers to accessing support,” she said.

Director of Gender and Disaster Australia, researcher Dr Debra Parkinson has welcomed the funding.

“This four-year contract with the Federal Government is an exciting next step to improve the safety of women and children – focusing on disaster situations,” she said.

“Without WHIN, WHGNE and MUDRI, as the legacy organisations, it would not have been possible for us to be able to announce this exciting new chapter for the gender and disaster work.”

Gender and Disaster Australia associate and trainer, Steve O’Malley, who has served as a fire fighter in Victoria for 33 years and is an Australia Fire Services Medal recipient, said the funding would facilitate accessible, practical support to disaster survivors and emergency responders.

“I’m really pleased to be a part of this work at such an important moment,” he said.

The program responds to Recommendation 22.5 of the Royal Commission to develop nationally consistent, pre-agreed recovery programs including those that address social needs such as domestic violence.

If you or someone you know is impacted by sexual assault, domestic or family violence, call 1800RESPECT on 1800 737 732 or visit www.1800RESPECT.org.au.

ENDS

For more information or further comment contact:

Dr Debra Parkinson
Director, Gender and Disaster Australia (GADA)
0423 6466 930
space@netc.net.au

Mr Steve O’Malley
GADA Associate, trainer and 33-year fire fighter
0400 753 322
somalley@frv.vic.gov.au

Ms Helen Riseborough,
CEO, Women’s Health in the North
0417536552
helenr@whin.org.au