

24 February 2021

Financial support to help women rebuild after family violence

A new financial support program for women experiencing family violence will help victim survivors to leave abusive situations and rebuild their lives.

The Domestic and Family Violence No Interest Loans program offers women a financial conversation which includes information about government supports, hardship provisions from utility companies and others, referrals to a range of other support services as well as access to \$2000 loans without interest or fees.

Good Shepherd CEO, Stella Avramopoulos, said the FDV NILS program would help women rebuild their lives, with the loans available to be used for rent and bond, furniture and whitegoods, removal and transport costs, car repairs, legal costs and other household expenses.

“Women need access to reliable information and support and a small loan can be life changing. Women tell us that finances are very often the key reason they cannot leave abusive, violent households,” Ms Avramopoulos said.

“Women can’t leave because they can’t afford that first month’s rent or the bond, they can’t afford removal or transport costs or they can’t afford to set up a new house. Think about a mother with children facing all the costs of setting up a new home to escape violence,” she said.

“Our workers are specially trained to work through the complex challenges women are facing in this situation, for example many women who have suffered financial abuse do not have access to bank statements, bills and other records. We can sensitively address these issues and be flexible about the level of documentation required.”

NAB Personal Banking Group Executive Rachel Slade welcomed the new support program for women experiencing domestic violence.

“We are proud to support this program by helping to deliver No Interest Loans to assist domestic and family violence survivors in regaining their financial independence,” Ms Slade said.

“Our teams hear first-hand from customers who are experiencing family violence and the loss of financial control that can come from this. It’s important that we support those members of our community experiencing vulnerability with financial resources, education and microfinance.”

Good Shepherd is Australia’s oldest not for profit working with women and families and has supported women experiencing family violence for more than 150 years. Good Shepherd offers a range of economic wellbeing programs and services, understanding that economic participation is a critical part of women’s recovery.

The long-running No Interest Loans program has supported more than 300, 000 low- income people to get their lives back on track.

Anyone applying for a NILS loan is firstly offered a financial conversation, which may include information about negotiating with service providers, banks or landlords to have debts waived or paused, supporting people to access government support and referrals to other services such as family and domestic violence, legal, mental health and financial counselling.

To be eligible for FDV NILS, women must have experienced family and domestic violence in the past ten years, be aged over 18, an Australia citizen/permanent resident/visa holder and able to pay back a loan if a NILS loan is issued.

More information about the FDV NILS program can be found at: 1300 031001 www.goodshep.org.au/fdvnils