

Monday, 27 February 2023

## **GOT YOUR BACK SISTA EMPOWERING LOCAL WOMEN THANKS TO NEWCASTLE PERMANENT EMPLOYEES**

Got Your Back Sista is now offering the [Empowerment Circle](#), an initiative to build community, strength and healing among survivors of domestic violence, facilitated by a donation of almost \$13,000 from Newcastle Permanent employees.

The 90-minute support sessions take place at Got Your Back Sista Village HQ - 15 Elizabeth Street, Tighes Hill – and cover a different topic each week.

Led by a registered counsellor, participants learn skills such as resilience, self-care and kindness to self and others as a way to rebuild their lives after experiencing domestic violence.

According to participant Frankie, the Empowerment Circle is also “an opportunity to connect with other women”.

“The Empowerment Circle is a chance for women like me who have experienced domestic violence to come together and share our stories, talk about issues we’re facing or particular emotional struggles we’re having,” Frankie said.

“What’s empowering about it is that you walk away feeling like you’re normal, and what you’re going through is not exclusive to you but common amongst survivors. I always feel a huge sense of relief after I’ve been and I take away a lesson or something new every time.”

Frankie spoke of one such lesson from a recent Empowerment Circle session that really resonated. At the time, her transition property accommodation was finishing and she needed to find a new home.

“I was really struggling with the fact that we would need to move again and my children would have to change schools again,” she said.

“The guilt I felt as a mother for not being able to build a foundation for my kids was consuming me. I brought this up at an Empowerment Circle and the social worker said that sometimes I need to be the adult and make the tough decisions, and that’s OK.

“It was a real lightbulb moment for me as I realised I couldn’t continue to be shrouded in guilt, I had to step up and take charge of our situation and make the hard call, knowing that children are resilient and what they needed from me was stability, not guilt.”

Newcastle Permanent employees donate over \$50,000 via payroll deductions each year and nominate charities they believe deserve support through the company’s CommunityAssist Employee Donation Program.

Employees then vote to select four charities each year to receive funding.

# Media Release



Kirsten Lyndon, Manager, Partnerships and Community Engagement at Newcastle Permanent, said Got Your Back Sista was a popular choice for employees to put their donation towards.

“We love that Got Your Back Sista provides the tools for people to take care of themselves, all while creating a strong sense of togetherness to show that no one needs to be alone,” said Ms Lyndon.

“The Empowerment Circle gives all participants a chance to develop vital life skills and build community, for free, in a safe space, with an experienced professional leading the way.

“Our Community Assist Employee Donation Program receives so many recommendations for wonderful causes to donate to, but Got Your Back Sista really resonates with our people.”

Melissa Histon, Founder and CEO of Got Your Back Sista, said the charity was incredibly grateful to Newcastle Permanent’s employees for selecting them as the recipient of this donation.

“As the name suggests, our Empowerment Circle sessions are one of the most empowering and valued services our clients experience at Got Your Back Sista. As a group of often highly vulnerable women, it’s liberating for them to see that what they are experiencing or feeling is very normal,” said Ms Histon.

“We are so grateful to every Newcastle Permanent employee who donated. Because of their donations, we can ensure we continue to have a professional councillor facilitate these sessions, which is of enormous benefit for our clients.”

For women thinking of joining in but feeling hesitant, Frankie gave the assurance that she still gets nervous ahead of sessions.

“When, for years, you’re told that you’re not good enough, it’s hard to shake it from your mind, so whenever I’m with a group of people – especially people I don’t know – your monkey-mind starts and all the negative talk in your head makes you doubt that people will like you,” Frankie said.

“It’s so hard to be vulnerable, but literally the minute you walk through the Got Your Back Sista door, there’s this feeling of calm and acceptance.

“Nothing is ever hard there, and now I really look forward to being there and being a positive contributor.”

**To register for the Empowerment Circle, please contact the Got Your Back Sista team on 4989 2777 or [info@gybs.com.au](mailto:info@gybs.com.au)**

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