15 November 2019 Anglican Deaconess Ministries, Mercy & Justice

**“Restoring Sanctuary”: ADM launches $80,000 grant initiative for churches to address domestic violence**

*Sydney—*When the United Nations set apart 25 November in 1993 as the official International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, its goal was to raise awareness around the world about domestic violence. Yet even with such focused attention, violence toward women remains today as serious a cause of death and injury as cancer, and a greater cause of ill health than traffic accidents and malaria combined.

In Australia, domestic violence is a leading cause of homelessness, and one woman a week is killed by a current or former partner.

To counter such trends and to shed light on the International Day to end violence toward women, the Mercy & Justice arm of Anglican Deaconess Ministries will launch “**Restoring Sanctuary: Creating Safety for Domestic Violence Survivors”** on 25 November, a one-time innovation grant of up to $80,000. Calling upon Australian-based Christian women to form an innovative, collaborative and church-based response to domestic violence, the grant invites applicants to consider new and theologically based ways to ensure the safety and healing of domestic violence victims.

“Many women who love God are dismayed by the impact partner abuse has had on the church and society at large,” said Amelia Schwarze, ADM Program Manager and Domestic Violence Specialist. “We don’t always know how to respond and so this grant provides an important opportunity for Christian women and congregations to create ministries that can address the needs and trauma of abuse victims, that restore a sense of sanctuary for them.”

Applicants for the “Restoring Sanctuary” grant could range from church ministries or social enterprises to community organisations or for-profit companies. They are invited to present a concept that outlines a new response to the issue of domestic violence in the applicant’s specific context and must detail how a Christian woman is leading the initiative, one which seeks to bring healing and hope to those affected by domestic abuse.

“Part of our mandate at ADM is to inspire women to act on their faith through an applied theology of ministry,” said Libby Sanders, Program Manager for ADM’s Mercy & Justice ministries. “In addition to bringing Christian women leaders together in this area, we want the grant to sustain the long-term flourishing of women and children in Christ. That’s our goal.”

The innovation grant process is intended to draw out unique solutions from women who understand the impacts of trauma and domestic violence on women, men and children, on families, congregations and communities. Its focus is particularly on women who have knowledge, expertise, experience, drive, and compassion toward the issue while addressing structural and cultural change within churches.

Initiatives might include biblical training programs, new partnerships, research-based projects, or any number of works that address domestic violence and provide recovery opportunities for victims. Interested applicants may attend an in-person Information Session at ADM on 12th December or participate in a webinar information session on 16th December. Funding will be awarded in June 2020.

“We hope that each phase of this grant, from expressions of interest to networking with others and ultimately securing funding, will help Christian women and their congregations see domestic violence as everyone’s responsibility,” Schwarze said. “It’s part of Christ’s command to ‘love our neighbour as ourselves’, and for the church to create safe places for those who have suffered such violence.”

To learn more about applying for the grant, “Restoring Sanctuary: Creating Safety for Domestic Violence Survivors”, please visit [www.deaconessministries.org.au/restoring-sanctuary](http://www.deaconessministries.org.au/restoring-sanctuary).

For more information on Mercy & Justice at ADM or for interview opportunities, contact Jo Kadlecek, Creative Director, at Jo@deaconessministries.org.au.