

## **Red benches raise community awareness of domestic violence**

Two benches at the front of the Kyogle hospital have been painted bright red as a stark reminder that domestic violence dwells in our community.

The red benches also serve as a beacon of hope to domestic violence victims that help is available.

Council painted the benches red at the request of the Kyogle Family and Domestic Violence Working Group which has joined a campaign to have 100 red benches installed across Australia.

The campaign is being driven by the not-for-profit Red Rose Foundation which is working to end domestic violence in Australia.

Kyogle Council Mayor and patron of the Kyogle Family and Domestic Violence Working Group Cr Danielle Mulholland said the red benches movement first came to light during the 16 days of activism last December.

“The CWA organised the 16 days of activism in Kyogle and that included a play on domestic violence and a short presentation on the red benches movement,” Cr Mulholland said.

“The whole thing grew from there, with the idea being that the red benches will get people talking about domestic violence.

“And having them at the front of the hospital reminds people that victims of domestic violence often end up at the hospital, or worse, the morgue.”

Cr Mulholland said raising community awareness of the prevalence of domestic violence and that help is available was crucial in reducing the harm it causes.

“As Mayor, I feel it’s important that the victims of domestic violence, women and men, know that Council cares and that help and support is available.”

Cr Mulholland stressed that domestic violence was not limited to physical violence.

“It can be emotional, psychological, financial and even spiritual abuse whereby a person is prevented from pursuing their own spiritual beliefs because of a family member,” she said.

“If we put a spotlight on domestic violence, then perhaps the victims and perpetrators will get the help they need.”

If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic violence, help is available:

- Kyogle Family Support Service phone 6632 1044
- Help to stay safe or leave phone 1800 RESPECT: 1800 737 732
- The Northern Rivers Community Legal Centre Women’s Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service phone 1300 720 606 or 6621 1044
- The Northern Rivers Community Legal Centre – Family Law and Domestic Violence legal advice phone 6621 1000 or 1800 689 889
- Call out family and domestic violence in the community phone 000 or Crimestoppers on 1800 333 000

*Photo caption: Kyogle Council Mayor Danielle Mulholland, right, and Sheryl Neilsen, of the Kyogle Family and Domestic Violence Working Group and member of the Kyogle CWA Evening Branch, hope the red benches will increase community awareness of domestic and family violence.*

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