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MEDIA RELEASE

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INTOUCH AND WB COMMUNITY FOUNDATION TEAM UP TO TACKLE FAMILY VIOLENCE IN THE WEST

inTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence and the Western Bulldogs Community Foundation are pleased to announce a new initiative which sees two of Victoria's leading community organisations collaborate in a groundbreaking effort to address and eliminate family violence within culturally diverse communities. The *Working Together Strengthening Partnerships to Support Women in the West* project aims to fortify partnerships and referral pathways between inTouch, The Western Bulldogs Community Foundation and key community organisations located in Melbourne's West, **including The East African Women's Foundation (EAWF), and Australian Vietnamese Women's Association (AVWA).**

The *Working Together* project combines specialist training, community outreach and events, resource development and the creation of safe and inclusive spaces- building the capacity of diverse communities to recognise, respond and refer instances of family violence correctly and appropriately.

A key component of the project is the Western Bulldogs Community Foundation's long-running Daughters of the West (DOTW) program, a 10-week, free health and wellbeing initiative focused on engaging with women in Melbourne's West. As part of this project, three DOTW programs will be co-designed and delivered with the Vietnamese and East African communities in Melbourne's west from July 2023.

With gender equity a key pillar in all DOTW programs, the WB Community Foundation will build on primary prevention core themes to provide culturally appropriate and relevant support and information pertaining to family violence awareness, response and referral.

This sharing of knowledge and expertise also extends to inTouch collaborating directly with workers at the Australian Vietnamese Women's Association and the East African Women's Foundation to build their capacity to effectively respond to family violence in their communities.

The urgency of this collaborative effort is highlighted by the alarming increase in family violence incidents across Victoria, amounting to a 5.9% rise since 2021. The Western Metro region of

Melbourne, known for its cultural diversity, requires dedicated efforts to address the unique challenges faced by its diverse population.

“We know that, across the board, instances of family violence are still far more under-reported in culturally diverse communities,” inTouch’s Sector and Community Executive Manager, Maryum Chaudhry said. “It is crucial that access to appropriate support services be made available to *all* individuals experiencing family violence, regardless of their culture, language, visa type or location.”

Commonly, challenges to seeking help can include a lack of understanding regarding the definition of family violence, stigma, cultural pressures around relationships, language barriers, economic restrictions, limited social connections, and the absence of local culturally responsive family violence services.

“We’re thrilled to be able to strengthen our work with and for culturally and linguistically diverse women in Melbourne’s west through the Working Together partnership,” Western Bulldogs’ General Manager of Community and Government Relations, Kashif Bouns, said. “This critical work is at its strongest when approached in partnership with subject matter experts and community champions. It’s a great opportunity for us to be able to use our successful Daughters of the West program as a vehicle for change in this space.”

Find out more about the Daughters of the West program through Western Bulldogs’ Community Foundation [here](#). For more information about inTouch and family violence support in migrant and refugee communities, visit inTouch’s [website](#).

About inTouch

inTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence (inTouch) provides person-centered, integrated and culturally responsive family violence services to migrant and refugee communities across Victoria.

We have assisted nearly 30,000 women and children experiencing family violence since 1984, providing a holistic service that centers the experiences of victim-survivors in everything we do. inTouch provides many services including court and community outreach, legal assistance, sector training and capacity building, prevention work and perpetrator intervention programs. For more information, visit www.intouch.org.au

About Western Bulldogs Community Foundation

More than just a football club, the Western Bulldogs has a long-standing history as the community club of the AFL. The Western Bulldogs Community Foundation is the club’s community arm that utilises the trusted brand of our football club to deliver life changing programs.

At its core, the Foundation delivers demonstrated impact in the areas of health and wellbeing, youth leadership, cultural diversity, social inclusion and community advocacy. Across Melbourne and Victoria’s west, we reach over 20,000 community members each year including direct capacity building for over 4,000 participants in our targeted programs.

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