



## STATE GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES FUNDING FOR YOUNG WOMEN OF THE NORTH-WEST

**Big hART** welcomes the announcement of State Government funding support for **Project O**, our inspiring initiative for young women which began in 2015. Today the Member for Braddon, **Roger Jaensch**, announced the government's backing of the project, with \$100,000 of support given to the program.

Mr Jaensch said "Many of the young women involved in Project O face significant barriers to further education and employment due to circumstances in their lives."

"After seeing the positive results of Project O for two years, the State Government saw how vital it was to back these young women and help drive positive change on the North West Coast through the work of this innovative Big hART project."

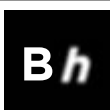
Project O Producer Janelle Johnstone said, "Fifty percent of the young women from our program have experienced family violence. Over the past two years, we have seen significant changes to their sense of agency and confidence, a 15% increase in overall high school attendance, and all graduating participants from last year went on to college this year."

"This funding allows us to continue this critical project for year 2 of our 5 year plan, building skills with our young women, growing the future leaders of our community."

The aim of Project O is to assist young women in rural communities build strong personal agency to help prevent family violence, foster resilience and change their story. With Project O, young women acquire new capabilities, learning how to become change-makers and be courageous in the face of stereotypes and inequalities that place them at risk. Project O's legacy program 20+20 backs 20 young women per year till 2020 to make work happen - developing skills and creating pathways to employment and entrepreneurship that attach capability to aspiration.

16 Year old Project O Participant said, "There are lots of people who are afraid to talk about family violence. Many of the girls from Project O hadn't spoken about their experiences before this project. It helped give us the voice we didn't know we needed."

Project O is an initiative of Big hART, Australia's leading arts company for social change. Our work assists vulnerable people who are experiencing complex disadvantage to have a voice, reimagine their future, and gain the skills – the gift of their story can help drive generational change. To date Big hART has worked in over 45 communities, alongside over 7500 individuals in urban, rural, regional and remote Australia and won over 30 awards, most recently the 2016 Tasmanian Human Rights Award for Organisation of the Year.



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