



## YOUNG WOMEN SUPPORT CHILDREN IN CRISIS

On 11-12 September, Big hART's **Project O** initiative will roll out critical child trauma training for women's refugees and family violence prevention support services in Cooma NSW.

The child trauma training is funded through the hard work of the young women of Project O, who raised the funds last November at 12 hour art marathon **Colourathon**, at the National Gallery of Australia and at satellite events through the country.

Supported locally by the Cooma Youth Hub and the Snowy Monaro Regional Council, the Project O young women are delighted to see a great deal of interest in the opportunity, with attendees coming from across the region from Cooma to the south coast to attend the training.

*"We are very proud and excited to see the result of all our hard work coming to fruition",* said Abby, Brooke, Briella and Teearna from Project O Cooma. *"It is so great to see so many workers from our refuges and support services wanting to learn more about how to help kids in crisis."*

It is widely recognised that refuges and crisis accommodation services in Australia are severely underfunded and often not resourced to meet the needs of children. With statistics showing that 1 in 5 women in Australia experience family violence, and that more than ½ of women who experience violence have children in their care, there is a critical need for specialised training and support to help children in crisis.

The Childhood Trauma Training will be delivered by Project O partner The Australian Childhood Foundation (ACF). ACF will train local services who work with children affected by trauma and family violence, focusing on building an understanding of the neurobiology of development or relational trauma, and its impacts, as well as exploring practical strategies to support healing and repair. This training will help to provide a safe and calming space for children at refuges, unlocking them from fear, vigilance and self-blame, and help them make meaning of what has happened to them.

An initiative of award-winning arts campaigning organisation Big hART, Project O is a primary prevention project which has run across 5 states, where young rural women develop new skills and learn to advocate for change in their community. It invests in young rural women as change-makers, building resilience and identifying employment pathways, removing the barriers arising from family violence and delivering generational change in communities. The initiative ran in Cooma from 2016-2017 and the ACF training is a legacy of Project O's work in the town.

Big hART was founded in Tasmania's north west 25 years ago and has since grown into Australia's leading arts and social change company of national renown. 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 50 communities, alongside over 8000 individuals in urban, rural, regional and remote Australia and won over 45 awards.

Big hART and Project O would like to thank the Australian Childhood Foundation, as well as our supporters in Cooma, including Cooma Youth Hub, and Snowy Monaro Regional Council.



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