

## From Kelly's Desk

In this edition instead of my words, let's focus on what **ACOSS** has to say about the **Raise the Rate Campaign**.

The campaign to **Raise the Rate for Good** is key to reducing poverty and inequality in Australia. The goal of the Raise the Rate campaign is to fix our social security safety net for good so that it keeps people out of poverty, with income of \$500 per week. Experts define the poverty line in Australia as \$480 - \$500 per week for a single person with no children, including housing costs.

Before the COVID-19 crisis, the rate of Newstart had not been increased in real terms for 25 years, while the cost of living, especially housing, has gone through the roof.

There is broad support for a permanent increase to the JobSeeker Payment (formerly Newstart), including from community organisations, such as anti-poverty networks, unions, business groups, not-for-profit organisations, local governments, territory governments and several federal parliamentarians. Polling shows the majority of the community agrees that we cannot go back to the old Newstart rate of \$40 a day.

### The key recommendations for the campaign are to:

- Increase the base rate of JobSeeker Payment by at least \$25 a day, and ensure everyone receives at least \$65 a day.
- Ongoing indexation of payments in line with wage movements twice per year
- Establishment of a Social Security Commission to advise the Parliament on the ongoing adequacy of income support payments

### We can never go back to the old Newstart payment of \$40 a day or the old Youth Allowance, which was even less

When people were trying to survive on \$40 a day, they were regularly skipping meals, going without medication and sleeping rough.

### People told us they were:

- eating the bare minimum, for example, a tin of food and some porridge a day
- showering once a week to save on electricity bills
- trapped in abusive relationships
- couch surfing or living in a car
- students had to give up on their studies

We can never go back to treating people with judgment and indifference.

Please click here to join us in this campaign: <https://raisetherate.org.au/>



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# We need to criminalise...

On 19 February 2020, Hannah Clark and her three children were brutally murdered by her estranged husband. After their deaths, mounting evidence suggested, while Ms Clarke and her children may not have suffered physical violence, there was a long history of psychological abuse and controlling, coercive behavior by her husband, the children's father.

Just 13 days later, on 3 March 2020, Dr Preethi Reddy, a dentist, was murdered by her ex-boyfriend. Her death devastated her family and her sister said 'I knew that he had controlling tendencies... there'd be that coercively controlling behavior – but it was never threatening, violent or aggressive... What I'm realizing now is that he had never perpetrated physically violent acts towards her in the past because he knew that he would lose control of her that way. So his first act of physical violence had to be his final act of control.'

It's a pattern all too common in domestic homicides.

This year, the government is looking at this issue.

Mark Speakman is the NSW Attorney General and the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence. He states: *'Coercive control is a form of domestic abuse involving repeated patterns of abusive behaviour – which can include physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or financial abuse – the cumulative effect of which is to rob victim survivors of their autonomy and independence. The impact of this abuse is abhorrent, but the appropriate response to this behaviour remains an ongoing challenge for law enforcement and legal minds alike.'*

*The NSW Government will move this week to establish a Parliamentary Joint Select Committee that will hold a public inquiry to examine coercive control in detail.'*

To this end Mark Speakman has published a Discussion Paper which details key issues and which the Inquiry can use as a guide.

So, what is coercive control exactly? Evan Stark, who originated the concept of coercive control defines it this way:

- Deprivation of liberty and autonomy, such as preventing one person from leaving the house at all or requiring them to get permission for any movement beyond the household.
- Isolating an individual from friends, family and wider society. This could be done through deprivation of liberty, manipulation by suggesting that friends and family are not in fact supportive, or the use of the victim's social media to drive away family and friends.
- Withholding or controlling access to resources, including money. This can extend from direct demands that all income of the victim be provided to the perpetrator, as well as denying the victim a say in the management of joint property, or using their property without their consent. This can also include the imposition of restrictions on the victim's access to education, employment and training opportunities.
- Psychological control and manipulation, including by making the other person question their memory of events and agreements i.e. gas-lighting, or threatening self-harm or suicide.



# Coercive Control

- Stalking and intimidation, including through technological means such as installing tracking software or apps.
- Physical assault or threats of physical assault. This can include things such as the destruction of property or harming animals to set an example or to inspire fear for one's individual safety. Threats can also be made against friends or family.
- Sexual assault, including non-consensual intercourse or sexual touching. This may also involve the use of image-based abuse, such as threats to share intimate images against the victim's wishes.
- Reproductive coercion, such as forcing the victim to become pregnant or denying birth control, or demanding an abortion.
- Threatening to take the victim's children away, to send them to state care or to institute court proceedings to deny the victim access to the children.



The Joint Select Committee will look especially at legislative reform to make it easier to prosecute the behaviours and patterns that constitute coercive control. The NSW bill called “Preethi’s Law”, is an Act to amend the Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007, and is currently before the Legislative Assembly.

These behaviours and patterns are so easily hidden and each behaviour taken in isolation can seem to be not worth prosecution. But as we shine light on these behaviours and see them in the context of patterns, the true evil of them is being exposed.

**To quote Voltaire:** ‘To the living we owe respect, but to the dead we owe only the truth.’ Let’s start telling the truth about coercive control.

Please go to our Nova Facebook page (or the direct link below) to sign the petition to criminalise coercive control:

<https://www.change.org/p/criminalise-coercive-control-in-australia>



**#HerNameWasHannahClark**

**#HerNameWasPreethiReddy**

**#SayNoToViolence**

**#NovaForWomen**

**#WomenAndChildrenMatter**



# Thank you for providing...

In our first edition of 2021, we'd like to thank everyone that assisted and gave so generously to our yearly Christmas Appeal. We were extremely grateful to receive so many amazing gifts, gift cards, food hampers and the most amazing array of toys and gifts, to pass on to the women and children we are supporting. This support genuinely changed Christmas for so many people doing it tough, and for people to give to those that they will never get to meet, is the true epitome of kindness.

Unfortunately we don't have the space here to mention everyone, (but please check our previous Facebook posts as there's a lot more information and many photos there) but here are just a few of the amazing contributions.



## AVEO Newcastle - Christmas Giving Tree

For the past 3 years this wonderful group of people have banded together and donated the most amazing gifts to us from their Christmas Giving Tree. From handmade prams, to handy gift vouchers, pamper packs and wonderful toys, there were once again gifts suitable for each and every age bracket, - not forgetting the mums, single, and older women. Everyone was thought of, and it was beautifully wrapped, packed and labelled, making our job just so much easier. Thank you so much for your ongoing support, we genuinely appreciate everything you do for us.



## Junction Fair Shopping Centre - Christmas Giving Tree

This great local shopping centre has also supported us for the past 3 years with their Christmas Giving Tree and once again, all we can say is WOW! The Management, Retailers, Staff and Customers that organized, collected, and contributed gifts, really outdid themselves this year with the most amazing array of beautiful gifts. Scooters, surf gear, gift vouchers, teddy's, jewellery, toys and

lots lots more, - once again all beautifully wrapped and labelled, ready to go under the tree.

We had women in tears of joy because they were so overwhelmed by the kindness and generosity they were secretly shown, and for the relief this gave them at this special time of year.

Thank you so much to all the Secret Santa's within this wonderful community, we're very grateful to each and every one of you.



JUNCTION FAIR

# a Wonderful Christmas!

## Girl Friday - Christmas Hampers, Hams and Beautiful Gifts

This amazing group of women (and their equally amazing tribe of volunteers) have been helping us here at Nova in so many ways for many years and they never cease to amaze us with what they are able to achieve. This year once again, the Girl Friday Women generously provided us with the most amazing Christmas Hamper boxes packed full of delicious goodies, so many Christmas hams, and an array of absolutely gorgeous gifts suitable for all ages.

These women just seem to know exactly what people need to get back on their feet, get them through the tough times, and when women need a little care, they just go about and get it done. They are beyond extraordinary and we thank them from the bottom of our hearts for their incredibly generous and thoughtful, ongoing support.



## West's Group and the Newcastle Knights - Christmas Food Hampers, USB's and Personal Supplies.

There wouldn't be a person in Newcastle that hasn't heard of the West's Group or our amazing Newcastle Knights, and here at Nova we're already big fans of both. West's have already been quietly, but generously supporting us here at Nova via their Clubs Grant, but this time they wanted to do something a little different as well.

Making a stand against the violence towards women, they decided to get involved with the **16 days of Activism** from the end of November, into early December. During this time, all the staff at every site within the group pulled together to collect essential items needed by the women we support. And what a fantastic result!

We were overwhelmed when they turned up at our door just before Christmas with almost 50 shopping bags packed full of essential groceries, personal care items, handbags and a big bundle of assorted USB sticks.

**USB sticks you ask?** Yes! - USB sticks help keep the various documents our clients need to apply for support, rental properties and more - safe, sorted and secure, by keeping them in a secure and electronic format.

All these items were then delivered to us in perfect timing—right before Christmas. Thank you so much to the Management, Staff and Families that organised and contributed towards this helpful and practical donation, it was fantastic and we very much appreciate it.



# Welcome to New Staff

**Nova are very happy to welcome two new members of staff to our team.**

**Sheridan** - one of our new Case Workers, comes to us with a Bachelor of Social Work, and experience as a mental health worker. Sheridan will be seconded to our Domestic Violence Response Enhancement (DVRE) Project for the first five months before returning to the role of Case Worker.

**Cerian** - (*pronounced like Kerrie-Ann*) is another new Case Worker, and will be in our Lake Macquarie area. Starting with us in January 2021, here's a bit more about Cerian.

## Meet Cerian

**Tell us a little about your work history:**

I completed my 4<sup>th</sup> year Social Work university placement at John Hunter Hospital. I spent most of my time working in the Social Work medical team but also gained experience in critical care, and women's health. Prior to John Hunter hospital, I had been working in statutory residential out of home care for a few years. I also gained experience working in community mental health for my 3<sup>rd</sup> year Social Work university placement.



**Who/What inspires you?**

Coffee!

**My hobbies/interests outside of work.**

I love the ocean and go for swims at the beach all the time!

I also enjoy drinking wine, but I'm not sure if this counts as a hobby?

**My favourite's:**

**Movie/s:** I can't pick one but it would definitely be a comedy

**Music:** I love Indi-rock

**Artists:** Frida Kahlo

**Books:** Anything by Clementine Ford

**TV shows:** The Office

**Food:** Italian, all of the carbs!

**Something people may not know about me:**

I was born in Wales and spent my childhood there. Most people don't know I can speak fluent Welsh.

**Something I'm looking forward to:**

Being able to travel again! India is next on my places to visit.



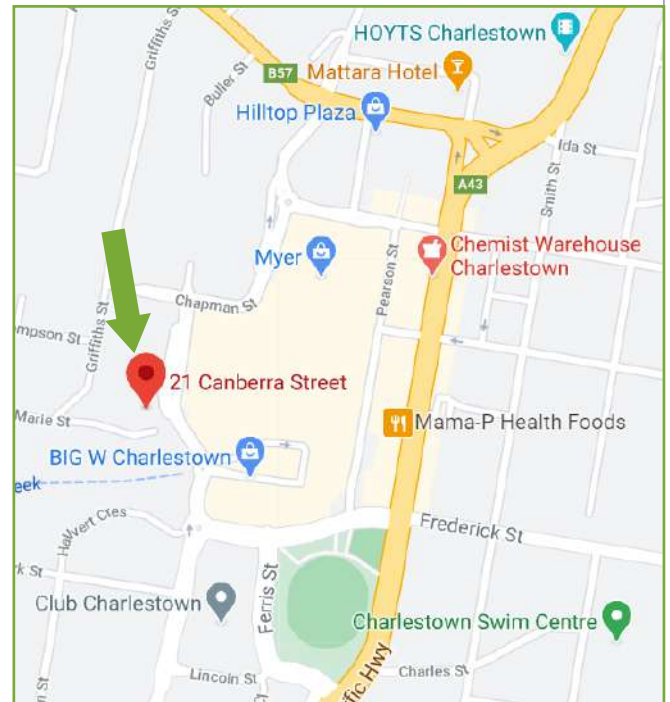
# New Charlestown Hub

## Our New Hub is already busy...

Our new hub at Charlestown is already confirming that our decision to open here was so well needed. Almost every day since opening we've had women (with or without children) dropping in for various levels of assistance and support, as well as regular referrals from associated services such as Centrelink, NDIS and DCJ and more.

The central location is also proving to be perfect, with transport, the square and support services all close by, - meaning women and children no longer have to travel all the way into Newcastle to receive support, reach safety, use our amenities and resolve any housing crisis.

If you, or someone you know needs assistance, please don't hesitate to drop in, or refer them to us. We have a super friendly and very experienced team on hand to help.



**Look out for  
our building,  
just behind  
the Square!**

We're open  
**Monday to Friday**  
**9am - 4.30pm**  
at: **21 Canberra St**  
**Charlestown 2290.**

A welcoming  
place where:  
**Women and  
Children Matter**

# Ways to Donate

## Recycling helps!

Don't forget over the holidays and at anytime, recycling your bottles, cans and containers can also **help fundraise for Nova**.

Take a photo of the image to the right, **push Make a Donation on the machine** and **scan the barcode**. This money then helps us provide a range of extra services for the women and children we support.



Your donation will help the hundreds of Women & Children in our town who are Homeless or escaping Domestic Violence

**nova**  
for women and children  
WOMEN AND CHILDREN MATTER



Thank's for supporting Nova for Women and Children!

## Getting Savvy with QR

We're seeing QR Codes here, there and everywhere these days, and we've joined the party!

Thanks to our friends at Benojo, we now have a new donations website making it much easier for you to make donations with your credit card.

Did you know that unlike many Charities, Nova makes a firm stand that we **do not use any** of your donations towards administration, marketing, wages etc. 100% of funds received are used to assist the women and children we support.



## Our Values

Nova for women and children is based upon a feminist philosophy and is guided by the principles of social justice that are;

- Act with good intent
- Focus on strengths
- Promote collaborative, innovative and inclusive practice
- Embrace diversity
- Work respectfully

We will work with you to make sure you receive the best possible assistance to avoid becoming homeless or, if you are homeless, to access safe, affordable and secure housing.

We are committed to working with you in a respectful way that protects your dignity, is fair, and does not discriminate. **#WomenAndChildrenMatter**

## OPENING HOURS

### General Office Hours:

9am to 4.30pm  
Monday to Friday

We are closed on weekends and public holidays.

### Please Note:

*The Newcastle office is closed to the public on Tuesdays, except for pre-booked appointments.*

## CONTACT US

### Newcastle Hub:

558 Hunter Street  
Newcastle West NSW 2302

### Charlestown Hub:

21 Canberra Street  
Charlestown NSW 2290

### Intake Phone:

1800 769 654

### Office Phone:

02 4023 5620

### Email:

[nova@novawomen.org.au](mailto:nova@novawomen.org.au)

### Website:

[www.novawomen.org.au](http://www.novawomen.org.au)

### Facebook:

@novawomen

### Twitter:

Novawomen1

## AFTER HOURS

If you are a woman escaping domestic violence, requiring after hours assistance please

**Phone: 1800 656 463**