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Darwin program for women in prison earns national award

A program that helps women in prison in the Northern Territory to re-engage and reconnect with the community before and after their release from jail has received national recognition.

YWCA Australia's Women of Worth program for women involved in the justice system in Darwin, won the Federal Government's Australian Crime and Violence Prevention Gold Community Award in Canberra today.

The annual Australian Crime and Violence Prevention Awards (ACVPA) recognise initiatives that prevent or reduce violence and assist governments in developing practical projects to reduce crime in the community.

YWCA Australia Chief Executive Officer Michelle Phillips said the Women of Worth program helped women to access the connections to family and community, education and employment opportunities, safe and secure housing, and develop their sense of self-worth and other skills required to lead a fulfilling, positive life after they leave the justice system.

"Women of Worth is one of very few programs designed specifically to provide women with support and assistance both before and after they are released from prison," Ms Phillips said.

"We start working with women six months before their release and continue for a further 12 months afterwards to help them reconnect with their children and family, find secure accommodation in the community, get a job or enrol in education or training and anything else they need to live a positive lifestyle."

The program is tailored to the individual needs of each woman, focusing on their strengths and requirements.

"We encourage women to recognise their own worth through the program and to implement positive changes into their lives so they can successfully re-engage with the community," Ms Phillips said.

"We have also had great success in reducing the risk of recidivism while women are engaged with the program and breaking the cycle of involvement in the justice system."

Ms Phillips said the award was recognition of YWCA Australia's commitment to empowering women across Australia and to creating a future where all women and girls are safe and respected.

For more information about YWCA Australia's programs visit <https://www.ywca.org.au/programs>

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About YWCA Australia

YWCA Australia is a feminist organisation focused on improving gender equality for women, young women and girls.

Together we challenge the systems, structures and policies that act as barriers to women, especially young women, achieving their full potential. Our evidence-based programs and services, delivered across the country, aim to be inclusive of all women and offer support with housing, homelessness, leadership, safety and wellbeing.

Our goal is to positively impact the lives of more than two million women, young women and girls by the end of 2023.