



Media Release

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Freemasons Targets \$2 Million to Building Local Community Capacity

Freemasons Victoria will continue to focus on building local community capacity throughout Victoria with both philanthropic donations and undertaking work with the wider community as a major activity for 2017.

Grand Master of Freemasons Victoria, Don Reynolds said through its membership of 9,400, Freemasons Victoria, with the combined support of 254 Lodges and the Freemasons Foundation, has gifted \$2 million to build community capacity across Victoria during the past twelve months.

“Masonic Lodges across Victoria have played a long historic role in assisting many smaller and vital community groups who help bind the community spirit together and struggle for funding, and in these hard economic times this will continue,” Mr Reynolds said.

“In the past year a range of projects have been funded including a \$750,000 donation to Prostate Cancer Research, support to the Think Pink Living Centre, the provision of scholarships for local schools to help students complete their education and donations to local community groups to help them maintain their services.”

Jane Sydenham-Clarke, CEO of Freemasons Victoria said, “Building community capacity and supporting community philanthropic activity is a pivotal activity for Freemasons Victoria as the organisation **launches a campaign to build a brand for Today’s Man.**”

Ms Sydenham-Clarke said the traditional values of Freemasons - good men supporting each other, their families and the community remains important, and helping good men to become better men is extremely relevant given the increasing alienating world.

“This is a time when men’s identity is deeply challenged and connection, mentorship and contributing to community creates pathways to individual and collective wellbeing.

“With suicide today taking eight Australian lives daily and disproportionately men, Freemasonry, with a strong history of symbolism, charity, personal growth and friendship is critical, is more relevant than ever to address the issues being faced today by men of all ages.”

Ms Sydenham Clarke said a growing movement of young men within Freemasons Victoria known as ‘The Blue Lounge Social Club’ are set to play a major role in attracting younger men to the organisation.

Jack Aquilina, President of the Blue Lounge Social Club, said the current revitalisation plans being undertaken to strengthen Freemasons Victoria is both innovative and vital for the future of the organisation.

“Through the Blue Lounge we aim to engage members with educational forums that maintain their interest in Freemasonry and provide social nights for Freemasons under the age of 55 where they have the opportunity to get to know each other outside of a Lodge setting.

“Importantly they can meet each other’s partners/friends/family and enjoy an informal social environment where questions of a masonic nature can be asked freely,” Mr Aquilina said.

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