



Media Release

23 November 2010

New approach will encourage Canberrans to help Canberrans

New philanthropic initiative, *Hands Across Canberra*, provides an opportunity for all who care about Canberra's future to get involved in creating lasting change for our community, according to *Hands Across Canberra* spokesperson Ms Amy Banson.

Hands Across Canberra was launched today by Deputy Chief Minister, Katy Gallagher, MLA.

"I agreed to be a part of this exciting initiative as I believe in the power of a community to create lasting change," said Amy.

"I have seen firsthand – through the campaigns I have launched for acquired brain injury and depression – how creating awareness around particular needs in a community can lead to increased support to do more and better things for people who are suffering or struggling.

"*Hands Across Canberra* is a whole new approach to giving in our local community. It has the commitment of business, community and government leaders, which is core to achieving its aims," said Amy.

The key objectives of *Hands Across Canberra* are to:

- (1) build stronger links within the Canberra community;
- (2) to improve the understanding and acknowledgement of need in the Canberra Community;
- (3) increase donations to support Canberrans in need; and
- (4) assist community service organisations to increase their capabilities

"We will work towards these goals by raising funds through the *Hands Across Canberra* Foundation, which will provide grants to organisations.

"We have also established a Giving Portal, which is an easy, secure way for people and businesses to give to local causes. It is also a way that we here in the region can learn more about who is in need, who is helping them and how we can all get involved.

"Through my work in the community, I see great people doing fantastic work, but most with little support and with even smaller opportunities to become more professional, to recruit board members or volunteers with the skills they need, and to raise much needed money in a crowded space. *Hands Across Canberra* aims to address these gaps in the next stages.

Hands Across Canberra Committee

Amy Banson, *Shaping Visions*
Georgina Byron, *Snow Foundation*
Helen Falla, *Hartley Lifecare*
Peter Gordon, *Economic Futures Australia*
Dean Hall, *CFMEU*
Martin Hehir, *DHCS*

John Hindmarsh, *Hindmarsh Group*
Diane Kargas, *Greater Good*
Sandra Lambert
Elizabeth Whitelaw, *Minter Ellison*
Allan Williams, *Qantas*



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“We are excited about the future of Canberra. We know that Canberrans are already generous and this initiative is simply a new way of growing the pie of generosity. “I urge you to visit handsacrosscanberra.org.au, to think about how you can help, and to get involved in whatever way you are able to,” Amy said.

These initiatives will be driven by the Hands Across Canberra Committee, which will be chaired by Allan Williams of Qantas Airways. Members include:

- Amy Banson, Shaping Visions
- Georgina Byron, The Snow Foundation
- Helen Falla, Hartley Lifecare
- Peter Gordon, Economic Futures Australia
- Dean Hall, CFMEU ACT Branch
- Martin Hehir, Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services
- John Hindmarsh, Hindmarsh
- Diane Kargas, GreaterGood
- Sandra Lambert
- Elizabeth Whitelaw, Minter Ellison

Biography for Amy Banson

Amy Banson is a 27 year old Canberran who has a background in supporting young people and working with disadvantaged youth. She enjoys setting herself personal challenges that has included long-distance walks. Her first walk, from Brisbane to Canberra called *Walk With a Rose*, became a national awareness raising event about Acquired Brain Injury and the lack of respite care available in Australia. It raised an amount of \$50,000 and received extensive national coverage.

Her second initiative called *Strength to Speak* was aimed at raising awareness of depression and anxiety. With strong local and national support she created the *Strength to Speak* program which was placed in 425 schools across Australia. To promote the program she completed a four month walk from Perth to Canberra in 2007. Amy is currently writing a book to collate the experiences of her walks

In 2006, Amy won the Young Person Award through the Foundation for Young Australians, has become the ACT Youth Advocate for Drug Free Australia, has established the *Walk With a Rose Foundation* for people in the ACT with acquired brain injury to access respite care, and became the 2008 recipient of the Young Canberra Citizen of the Year award.

For the past seven years, Amy has worked in the social welfare sector in various roles. She continues to mentor and support young people as a Barnardos foster carer of two young teenage girls at her home in Binalong. Amy has a passion for personal growth and is passionate to support, inspire and empower others to their full potential. She is the Founder and Director of Shaping Visions, a coaching and mentoring consultancy which provides support to women, parents and adolescents.

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