EDUCATION AND AWARENESS KEY DURING SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH

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Education and awareness will be the key focus during this year’s Sexual Assault Awareness Month, which begins today.

Minister for Women’s Policy, Bess Price, said the Country Liberals Government is working hard to increase the safety of Northern Territory women and reduce violence in the community.

“Sexual Assault Awareness Month aims to raise public awareness and educate the community about sexual assaults,” Mrs Price said.

“We need to support all victims of sexual abuse by developing avenues for discussion, creating a wider understanding and providing assistance within their community.

“Throughout the month we must challenge the secrecy, shame and isolation surrounding sexual assault, and provide support and understanding to survivors and their support people.”

Attorney-General John Elferink said the month must also promote justice for victims of sexual assault and identify ways in which we can work towards its prevention.

“Sadly, there was 342 sexual assault offences in the Northern Territory in the year to January 2014; this is unacceptable,” Mr Elferink said.

“To address the prevalence of sexual assault in the community, the Northern Territory Government is targeting offenders through pro-arrest policing strategies while also providing the necessary support to victims.”

Mrs Price will today launch Sexual Assault Awareness Month at the Ruby Gaea Darwin Centre Against Rape’s annual art exhibition, Project Unbreakable, at the Supreme Court of the Northern Territory.

Coordinator for Ruby Gaea, Samantha Bowden, said Ruby Gaea encourages every person to speak out when witnessing acts of sexual violence and sexual harassment, regardless of how small the act is.

The exhibition at the Supreme Court Darwin will be open on Monday 7th April until 1st May 2014.

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