

Victims urged to turn tables

By Jacob McArthur

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HOME SAFE: Jenny Liles and Tanya Rogers from Tamworth Family Support Services are helping locals remove violence from their lives without uprooting from their home. Photo: Geoff O'Neill 091215GOA01

CHRISTMAS is a very emotive time of year and Tamworth Family Support Services (TFSS) is keen to remind locals family violence does not take a break during the holidays.

While the Christmas period does not present an increased risk of domestic incidents, locals are urged to speak out if they are aware of family violence happening.

Domestic violence often forces victims to flee their homes to find refuge from the terror of an abusive partner. With the cost and logistics of relocating, TFSS is urging victims to turn the tables, by staying home and leaving violence.

Assisting victims with safety plans, putting in place exclusion orders and minimising risks in the home, the program puts the onus on perpetrators.

TFSS case manager Jenny Liles said the program educated women about their rights if they have taken out an apprehended domestic violence order, and helped them create a safe room within their chosen premises.

“We move at the client’s pace, though, and encourage them to make the first call,” Mrs Liles said.

The service also wanted to help rebuild safe and secure environments for victims.

TFSS is on the lookout for a builder who can alter houses to minimise risk and maximise safety. The Stay Home, Leave Violence program assists victims by installing locks on windows and fitting sturdier doors.

Mrs Liles said the safe-room component of the program would also entail a sturdy, lockable door being fitted to a chosen room that would act as a refuge within the home.

Each safety plan is developed for the unique needs of each case.

“There’s no right or wrong way to do a safety plan,” Mrs Liles said.