MEDIA RELEASE

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**NEW DAHLIA CENTRE OPENS TO STRENGTHEN LOCAL RESPONSE TO GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE & FEMICIDE**

In recognition of Women’s Month and as part of its continued commitment to addressing gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF), Swartland Municipality has officially opened the Dahlia Centre—a new facility aimed at providing victims of GBVF with a safe space and supportive environment.

The Senior Community Development Officer of Swartland Municipality and supporting staff will be based at the Dahlia Centre in Malmesbury that is responsible for the coordination of the programme. It is designed to offer confidential support, guidance, and referrals to government departments that renders services to women and children affected by violence. The centre can also facilitate group discussions and educational programmes, contributing to broader community wellbeing and awareness. Although the centre is based in Malmesbury, other towns will be supported through our GBVF Ward Ambassadors to do referrals to the Senior Community Development Officer and from there to the Department of Social Development and other relevant government departments.

The initiative is the result of a collaborative effort between municipal officials and local volunteers. In addition to administrative planning, the project benefitted from community fundraising, donated services, and hours of volunteer labour, ensuring the centre is fully equipped and functional.

The Dahlia Centre will also provide a dedicated space for the Municipality’s GBVF Ambassadors, who offer frontline support in communities. Here, they will be able to access resources, debrief, and receive guidance to continue their work effectively. Since its launch in 2022, the GBV Ambassador Programme has been recognised as a best-practice model and has since been adopted by municipalities across the Western Cape.

“The opening of the Dahlia Centre marks another step forward in our long-term strategy to address gender-based violence and its impact on families and communities,” said Deputy Executive Mayor, Anet De Beer. “It reflects our focus on building sustainable, community-rooted responses to social challenges.”

The Municipality continues to work closely with key partners including the Western Cape Department of Social Development, South African Police Service (SAPS), and civil society organisations to strengthen the collective response to GBV and child protection in the region.

**END**