

HIDDEN EPIDEMIC



Raising awareness: Lisa Scaffidi and Liz Davenport. Picture: Ben Crabtree

Women to unite over violence

■ **Cathy O'Leary**
Medical Editor

Perth Lord Mayor Lisa Scaffidi and fashion icon Liz Davenport are spearheading a campaign to curb violence against women, which they believe remains a hidden epidemic.

They are supporting Kiss Violence Against Women Goodbye, an event organised by Momentum Forum in the lead-up to International Women's Day to raise awareness that violence against women is an unacceptable crime.

It comes after Attorney-General Michael Mischin told the Rotary Club of Perth last week that WA Police investigated 39,000 complaints of family and domestic violence last year, and 10,800 of them were verified as assault.

Davenport said women often found themselves trapped in a terrifying situation, usually with children to protect. "They are not only physically trapped but financially destitute," she said.

"Through this campaign we're offering a bridge from those who can help to those who need help. In many cases it is not only the practical assis-

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Barbara McNaught

tance that makes a difference but the fact that someone cared enough to reach out."

Ms Scaffidi said she believed life was too short for women to allow themselves to be subjected to what she described as the indignity and disrespect of violence.

Momentum Forum chief executive Barbara McNaught said there was more understanding now that violence against women had a lifelong impact. "Bruises fade and black eyes heal but a woman can carry an unseen wounded soul for years after," she said.

Her group is hosting the International Women's Day lunch at the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre on March 8. For details, go to momentumwf.com.au.