

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release
10th August 2021

Australian Children More Vulnerable Than Ever

Children are at risk from sexual harm more than ever through COVID lockdowns and CEO of national child protection organisation, Bravehearts, is urging Australians to take action by getting involved in Bravehearts' 25th annual White Balloon Day on Friday, September 10.

"Children are at risk more than ever through COVID-19, particularly as they isolate with predators that are known to the family," said Bravehearts' CEO, Alison Geale.

"Additionally, our children are more vulnerable to online predators during lockdown, where they are spending more time unsupervised online. It's crucial we continue to shine a light on these risks and that children and families are still receiving support and education," Ms Geale said.

Ms Geale hopes to see record numbers of Australians join the country's largest campaign dedicated to preventing and protecting children from child sexual assault by wearing white on Friday, September 10 and donating to help fund preventative programs, counselling, and support services.

"Now, more than ever, we need communities across Australia to band together to prevent child sexual assault by wearing white, holding events and donating this Bravehearts' White Balloon Day," Ms Geale said.

Approximately 1 in 5 children will experience child sexual assault or exploitation and in up to 90% of cases the offender is known to the family*.

"It's time to break the silence and stigma surrounding child sexual assault - it's everyone's job to keep our children safe. Bravehearts' White Balloon Day is a day of action and the first step in raising awareness and creating a safer world for our kids."

Register for Bravehearts' White Balloon Day, Friday, September 10, and donate at whiteballoonday.com.au

Bravehearts' White Balloon Day is a giving day where the community can make donations to protect Aussie kids, with our major sponsors Superannuation Australia Advice and Busy Bees Early Learning Australia, seeing this year's efforts doubled as they match donations made by generous Australians on Friday, September 10. Bravehearts' White Balloon Day is also funded by Commonwealth's Department of Social Services, National Initiatives.

Have you been affected by child sexual assault and need support? Bravehearts is here to help - 1800 272 831 (Monday to Friday, 8:30am – 4:30pm AEST) or bravehearts.org.au

ENDS

For more information, please contact Mckenna Lea from Ruby Communications on 0449 830 123 or email mckenna@weareruby.com.au.

*REFERENCE: JPrice-Robertson, Bromfield and Vassallo, 2010; Mills, Kisely, Alati, Strathearn, & Najman, 2016; Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, 2017; Australian Bureau of Statistics 2017; Quadara, Nagy, Higgins & Siegel, 2015.

PLEASE NOTE: Bravehearts does not sell balloons as part of our White Balloon Day campaign nor endorse the release or use of balloons. For a list of innovative alternative activities for supporters to get involved that do not use balloons, go to www.whiteballoonday.com.au

About Bravehearts

Bravehearts' is a leading Australian child protection organisation dedicated to the holistic prevention of child sexual abuse and exploitation. Bravehearts' Mission is to prevent child sexual assault and exploitation in our society and its Vision is to make Australia the safest place in the world to raise a child. Operating for over 25 years, Bravehearts provides industry-leading child protection training and education programs, specialist child sexual assault and exploitation counselling and support services, as well as engaging in research and lobbying to help support and protect against child sexual assault and exploitation.