

# Believe.

## Barnardos Australia Newsletter

### **WARNING**

**The following story involves child sexual abuse and is distressing.**

**Charlotte's story of abuse is harrowing. It is difficult to write, and difficult to read.**

But her story must be told, because Australian children like Charlotte are suffering unspeakable abuse behind closed doors. And it is only through the support of compassionate people like you that Barnardos can keep them safe and guide them gently on their road to healing.

In Charlotte's case, it was the vigilance of her Barnardos' caseworker that led to her rescue.

Charlotte was just six years old when her family came to our attention. Her teachers noticed she had become more and more withdrawn and anxious. She also started to soil herself at school.

When her school contacted Family and Community Services to report their concerns, Charlotte and her mother were referred to Barnardos for intensive support and counselling.

Nothing could prepare our counsellor and caseworker to hear the disturbing details of Charlotte's abuse.

As they gained the trust of this little girl, shocking details began to emerge. The court case that followed would begin to fill in more of the back story.

The facts were clear. Charlotte's mother had an intellectual disability and would let random men frequent the home day and night. While affected by drugs and alcohol, her mother often left Charlotte alone with these men.

What unfolded over the coming months is too graphic to detail in this newsletter.



We can report, however, is that Charlotte's father and associates were later arrested, thanks to Barnardos' intervention and a detailed police investigation. They were charged with child sexual abuse and producing child pornography.

This poor child suffered the worst of abuse at the hands of the father she trusted. It has been a very long road for little Charlotte. But with the consistent support of our counsellor and caseworker – and many months of counselling and play therapy – she began to start the healing process.

After a careful matching process, Barnardos found Charlotte a very special new family. This incredibly courageous little girl, now seven years old, is thriving in her new home.

**Every time you donate to Barnardos Australia, you help a child like Charlotte to escape the nightmare of abuse and neglect, and to begin the long road to healing.**

**There is more to Charlotte's story which we will share in our upcoming Christmas appeal that will be mailed to you shortly. We will also share an update with you on Charlotte's incredible progress.**

**(To protect minors from reading the graphic details, and to give you the opportunity to choose not to read the full story, it will be included in your mailing in a sealed envelope).**

# “I thought he would kill me that day...”



Tegan is a bright, articulate young woman who was close to finishing her teaching degree when she met a man we'll call 'Ryan'.

A single mother of four young children, she had recently divorced and was initially swept away by Ryan's romantic gestures. In retrospect, she says, there were early warning signs.

**“He was pretty over the top, even from our first date,” Tegan recalls. “Within a short time, he told me he loved me, and he was constantly checking in with me by phone and text. If I didn't answer immediately, he would get really angry.”**

Within a few months, Tegan was ready to call it quits, but Ryan threatened to share private photos on Facebook if she dared to leave him. “These were not intimate photos, just pictures of me walking around in the privacy of my home. I didn't even know he had taken them. It rattled me.”

That was the first of many red flags. “It just escalated from there,” Tegan remembers. “He became increasingly possessive and controlling: the emotional and verbal abuse was getting worse.” Then came the first of many physical attacks.

Ryan became enraged with her during a neighbourhood party. Frightened, Tegan rushed home and locked herself in the house. Ryan managed to break in, and the assault that followed lasted for hours. At one stage, Tegan passed out.

With her partner's threat of exposing her on Facebook still top of mind, and the fear of what he might do if she

tried to leave, Tegan stayed: desperately hoping that he would change. Or calm down. And he did, at times.


It was the textbook cycle of domestic violence: after his explosive attacks, he would be in tears, begging for another chance. Things would calm down for a while, then the tension would build and another explosion. Then the regret and the tears and the promises to change.

It never did. At one stage, after a particularly brutal beating, Tegan took out a Domestic Violence Order. She was determined to leave the relationship: then she discovered she was pregnant. Wanting to believe her partner's promise that he would change now that they were expecting a child, the couple attended counselling. The cycle of domestic violence continued.

When she was seven and a half months pregnant, Tegan suffered the worst assault yet. “He had his hand over my mouth and nose, and I couldn't breathe. I truly thought he was going to kill me that day,” she says. “He had a black belt in martial arts and I had no chance against him.”

That brutal assault was the final straw. Tegan mustered the courage to leave her abusive partner and press charges.

Tegan is eternally grateful that the Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service referred her to the LINKER service: of which Barnardos is the lead agency.



**If you are experiencing domestic violence, or are concerned about someone who is, contact 1800 RESPECT for 24-hour confidential support.**

"I honestly don't know what I would have done without the wonderful people who supported me through the LINKER service. I fear I may have gone back to him and who knows what would have happened if I did?"

"I know for sure that I would not be as far along in my journey to healing without the support of the LINKER network."

Today, Tegan has re-enrolled in her University Studies and transferred her study to a Bachelor of Social Science (Psychology). She knows it will be a struggle, but she also knows that she can always turn to the LINKER service partners for support.

"These agencies are supporting me to be stronger for my children. That's my focus now. And knowing that I am supported, I feel stronger than ever!"

In September, the official evaluation report for the LINKER service was released. To read the full report, visit [barnardos.org.au/linker](http://barnardos.org.au/linker)

**Thank you! Your support for Barnardos is helping to give parents the support and tools they need to be more resilient for their children and to create safer homes. Together, we are building stronger families and communities.**

## It's critical!

**The rate of domestic violence incidents eliciting critical bodily harm in the Far West and Orana region of NSW is more than five times higher than the overall rate for NSW. Women who live in rural and remote communities are faced with unique geographic and sociocultural barriers. Among them, limited access to support services, privacy concerns in small towns and the stigma or shame attached to being a domestic violence victim.**

**LINKER is a unique and innovative service which addresses the after-hours support gap in Western NSW. It proactively offers telephone and text message support to women who have accessed emergency short-term accommodation as the result of leaving domestic violence.**

**LINKER is funded as part of the NSW government Domestic Violence Response Enhancement. It is provided by a consortium of Specialist Homelessness Services with Barnardos Australia acting as Lead Agency.**

# Urgent need for foster carers

**Barnardos Auburn Centre Manager, Mary Haiek, and Roula Mostafa recently set up a stall at Roselands Shopping Centre to spread the word about the urgent need for foster families. And the need is urgent!**

Around 45,000 Australian children are unable to live with their parents due to abuse and neglect.\* These children need nurturing, stable homes, some for a little while, others more permanently.

We urgently need dedicated people to provide short-term care. Could you open your home and heart for a short time for a child in need?

As a foster carer, you will be guided every step of the way, with comprehensive training, 24-hour support, regular home visits and an allowance to help you support the child in your care.

We are looking for carers who have lots of love, time and support to offer a child.

If you have a loving household and would like to share it with a child who may have never of known one, please speak to our carer team on 1800 663 441. Alternatively, you can fill out our online enquiry form at [barnardos.org.au/get-involved](http://barnardos.org.au/get-involved)

\*AIHW 17/18 report



PHOTO CREDIT: Bankstown Canterbury Torch





# “When I grow up I want to be...”

Barnardos Australia has a long history of providing specialist and culturally appropriate services for indigenous children.

We work in partnership with Aboriginal communities and organisations to provide the training, eSources and support they need to care for their children.

Our umbrella of services include: parent education and counselling, emergency accommodation and out-of-home care options that ensure Aboriginal children who are unable to live at home are cared for by their kin or Aboriginal foster carers.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> August, Barnardos Australia celebrated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day 2019. To mark the occasion, we asked children from our Yurungai Learning Centre (after school care program) what the future might hold for them.

**“I want to go to college and get a life”, one youngster told us. “I want to make robots”, revealed another. One child had a very specific goal: “When I finish school, I want to go to the shops!”**



We asked children from the Yurungai Learning Centre what the future might hold for them

You can check out this short video – and many others – on our Youtube channel. To learn more about how we are putting your support to work, visit [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com) and search for “Barnardos AU”.



# Barnardos is a family... and family comes first

## Insights from Barnardos Youth Worker, Max Fenton

*The theme of our current Annual Review is 'We Are Family'. This encapsulates everything that Barnardos Australia stands for.*

*And ours is a remarkably diverse organisation of so many people working together to keep children safe from abuse and neglect. It's a mix of dedicated staff, foster carers and volunteers – and above all, the compassionate people who make it all possible: you, our wonderful donors...*

*Max Fenton is just one of more than 640 Barnardos Australia staff members. He works at the frontline for one of our 178 Safety & Prevention programs. Here, he shares his insights into what drives his passion for helping young people to become the best they can be and achieve what they want out of life.*

"I got into youth work about seven years ago. I thought I would have to do a trade until I found out you could make a living out of helping people!

**I really enjoy helping people. Not everybody has been given the same opportunities in life. Growing up, I was very fortunate to have great parents and a really stable environment but then I started to realise that not everyone was the same. I felt I had to give back.**

What drives me is seeing young people with no self-worth achieve what they want out of life. I get to work with them and see them grow and become their own person in that time.

Tristan is one of my young people at Barnardos

Penrith Family Centre and I've been working with him for a year and a half. He has a great sense of humour and is very intelligent. He likes to keep me on my toes. My favourite thing about Tristan is how confident he has become in who he is. When I first met him, he was isolated and withdrawn.

Since then, I've seen him engage with everyone here and have very open conversations. Tristan knows he can talk to me about anything.

**"What I love most about Barnardos is it's an organisation based around family and community."**

We make sure anyone who comes here – no matter what their identity or culture – feels safe to express themselves. We have young people from very diverse backgrounds. The biggest thing our young people learn here is acceptance.

Our young people know we'll be here when they need us. They know us by name. They know us as people. Because at the end of the day, this is just a building. It's the people here that matter.

What I love most about Barnardos is it's an organisation based around family and community. I come to work knowing that I am going to be supported and because of that love and support I receive from Barnardos I can illustrate that straight to my young people.

Barnardos is a family... and family comes first."

### MAX FENTON

Youth Worker

Barnardos Penrith Children's Family Centre



# Remember Barnardos kids this Christmas

## Can you help bring Christmas to a child in need?

Each year, Barnardos Australia runs a community appeal with the goal to surprise every child and teen in our care with a special Christmas gift. With more than 10,000 Aussie kids in our services, that amounts to a lot of gifts!

It is a unique gift drive that is open to private donors, schools, corporates, small businesses, communities and families. Between now and 21<sup>st</sup> December, we are appealing for gifts for children aged from 0-18 years.

This year, we are encouraging our wonderful supporters to purchase gifts using our online service Simply Giving (all gifts online have been pre-selected by our Centre Managers, plus this platform helps us by keeping time and labour costs to a minimum). However, we also understand the importance of private toy drives, which can be particularly motivating for community, work and family groups.

There are many ways you can donate gifts or help to support the Christmas gift appeal:

**1. Purchasing gifts directly via our partner, Simply Giving.**

See [barnardos.org.au/gifts-for-kids/](http://barnardos.org.au/gifts-for-kids/) for details.

**2. Have your own corporate/community page set up via Simply Giving.**

At no cost to you, Simply Giving will set up your personal page and dashboard. You set your own target and share the link with your supporters so together, you can watch as you edge closer to your target. Email [giftsforkids@barnardos.org.au](mailto:giftsforkids@barnardos.org.au) for more details.

**3. Conduct your own gift drive to collect new toys or donate movie tickets/gift vouchers.**

Organise your own gift/toy drive and deliver your items to our collection centre located in the Wentworth Park Sporting Complex, Wentworth Park Avenue, Glebe. We will collect gifts from 14<sup>th</sup> October to 20<sup>th</sup> December.

**4. Volunteer in our gift warehouse, or join our driver pick-up and delivery crew.**

Please contact [giftsforkids@barnardos.org.au](mailto:giftsforkids@barnardos.org.au) for more information.

Please help us spread the joy this Christmas by supporting the Barnardos Gifts for Kids Appeal.

Your support will help us reach our target of 10,000 gift donations this Christmas for children and young people in our care.



For more information on foster care  
**1800 663 441**

For enquiries or donations  
**1800 061 000**

**[barnardos.org.au/donatenow](http://barnardos.org.au/donatenow)**

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*In some cases, models used and names changed to protect privacy.*



**Barnardos  
Australia**