

This Child Protection Week Barnardos Says: Dont Let Domestic Violence Destroy Kids' Lives

Embargoed Media Release: Sunday 3 September 2023

Today marks the start of National Child Protection Week (3-9 Sept) and children's charity [Barnardos Australia](#) has launched a campaign drawing attention to the damaging impact of domestic violence on children.

Titled, "Don't let domestic violence destroy kids lives" the Barnardos campaign puts the voice of the child front and centre in radio, online and outdoor ads, pleading; "When my parents hurt each other, I get hurt too". (assets attached)

Nationally 1 in 4 children experience domestic violence ⁽¹⁾ and one child per fortnight is killed in Australia by a parent or step-parent ⁽²⁾ and the charity believes children are the hidden victims when it comes to the issue of domestic violence.

Besides children being physically hurt, seeing and hearing the violence has a damaging effect on their lives which is evidenced in Barnardos recent [research](#) report. Children are being impacted emotionally, physically and psychologically and the effects can last a life-time.

"Our research shows that children who are exposed to domestic violence during childhood often carry that negative impact into their adult lives in areas such as mental health, education and relationships with a high percentages of those exposed to domestic violence as children experiencing psychological distress, low self-esteem and finding it difficult to trust others in adulthood," said Dr Robert Urquhart, Barnardos Australia's Head of Knowledge, Outcomes and Research.

Barnardos Australia CEO Deirdre Cheers is calling for more tailored support services for children experiencing domestic violence, along with suitable housing for those fleeing domestic violence; "When dealing with domestic violence within families, often the needs of the children are completely overlooked. It is time to recognise children and young people as equal victim survivors in their own right, with their own safety and support needs, and to establish appropriate policy and programs which include children and young people."

Barnardos works intensively with families to ensure children are safe at home. From finding a pathway to safe accommodation to ensuring they have everything they need to recover from trauma. This includes safety planning, parenting support, counselling and trauma therapy, practical and emotional support by listening to children to ensure they are at the centre of all decision making.

For more information go to <https://www.barnardos.org.au/act-now/>

Dr Robert Urquhart is available for interviews. Please contact Irene Saunders on 0410503232

1 Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse 2011 - The Impact of Domestic Violence on Children: A Literature Review

2. See Lang, J. (2020) "How many children die from family violence in Australia?" Actuarial Eye. <https://actuarialeye.com/2020/02/29/how-many-children-diefrom-family-violence-in-australia/>; citing Hill, J. The Drum. Family Violence Special 21 February 2020 drawing on the findings of Brown, T., Lyneham, S., Bryant, W., Bricknell, S., Tomison, A., Tyson, S., & Fernandez Arias, P. (2019). Filicide in Australia, 2000-2012: A national study. Report to the criminology research advisory council.