

MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday, 20 March 2025

Barnardos calls for government action as DFV claims 10 NSW children in 2024

Shocking new figures were released yesterday by the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOSCAR), 13 children and young people were murdered in 2024 and 10 of those were due to domestic and family violence attacks.

For too long we have been calling children “witnesses” of violence towards women despite the increasing amount of evidence and research which shows the devastating impacts of domestic violence on children, the ‘invisible’ victims of domestic violence and now is the time for action.

Barnardos Australia has been calling on Governments to recognise children and young people as victim-survivors in their own right and asking for support services to treat their unique trauma, as well as their parents – not as an extension of them.

Since our research report, *Truth is the Abuse Never Stopped* was launched in 2022 we have welcomed the increasing awareness of the impact of DFV on children by researchers, the general public, peak bodies and Governments. Researchers and advocates such as Kate Fitz-Gibbon and high profile journalists like Jess Hill have done so much to bring attention to this issue. And we are starting to see some results. Just last year the NSW government extended the number of child specialist workers in refuges from 20 to 30 and gave them five-year contracts – this is an excellent first step and goes a long way to supporting the most vulnerable child victim survivors of DFV. But we need more.

The murders of 10 children in NSW last year could have been prevented. We need to see more of an investment by Governments to prevent violence towards women and children.

Barnardos Australia is calling for:

1. **Recognise children and young people as equal victims of domestic and family violence in policy, programs and service delivery** across every Territory and State and ensure that this is prioritised and implemented as part of the First Action Plan 2023-2027 under the National Plan to End Violence Towards Women and Children 2022-2032.
2. **Prioritise children and young people who are victim-survivors of domestic and family violence**, and ensure they receive immediate and effective trauma-informed counselling and therapy.
3. **Provide funding for domestic and family violence child specialist workers** in all seven Barnardos Children’s Family centres to ensure children and young people are supported in their own right with case management and support.
4. **Increase funding for safe, secure and affordable social housing** for children and families fleeing domestic violence situations, including crisis, transitional and long-term housing in order to directly prevent children needing to enter out-of-home care.

5. **Prioritise primary prevention** and fund age-appropriate domestic and family violence education programs which are nationally consistent across early childhood education, primary and secondary schools.

For more information or to arrange media interviews, contact: Irene Saunders, Head of Media, PR and Communications, M: 0410503232 E: isaunders@barnardos.org.au

About Barnardos Australia

Barnardos Australia is here because every child needs a champion. We listen, we act, and we advocate for the safety of children at risk of abuse and neglect, providing family support programs and services that empower children to reach their full potential. When it comes to protecting vulnerable children from abuse, we never give up. We are dedicated to the prevention of trauma in children, and support families to be the best parents they can be. We help children to recover and thrive, and we find safe homes for them through foster care and open adoption. www.barnardos.org.au