

MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday 24th April 2025

Child poverty is a policy choice

Barnardos is bringing children's needs to the forefront of the public conversation with their new campaign launching today. Against the backdrop of a cost-of-living election campaign, Barnardos places children's experiences at the centre with the proposition 'A child doesn't choose poverty, but you can choose to change their life.'

The campaign features insights from Barnardos team members who witness first-hand the impacts of hunger, homelessness and social isolation on children, as well as the transformation that becomes possible when they are able to move beyond the poverty trap.

"We have seen a significant rise in the number of families in crisis approaching our centres. These are people who have never asked for help before. One centre in Western Sydney has seen a 300% rise in families needing food assistance," said Barnardos CEO Deirdre Cheers.

"While this problem can feel overwhelming, we need to remember that we have the solutions, and Barnardos is here to walk that journey with families."

Deirdre continued, "The cost-of-living has been the centrepiece of the Federal election campaign, but the long-term impacts on children have been largely absent from this debate. Children are our future, and these economic impacts could shape their lives, but it doesn't have to be this way."

Long-time Barnardos team member Anna, who features in the campaign, speaks about how crisis support is so much more than just putting food on the table. It's about "understanding that kids do need birthday presents and they do need to have a good school uniform."

But crisis support needs to be more than just a band aid approach. Sharon, another team member, talks about working with families until they have the confidence to move forward. "You don't need to hold their hand forever. You just need to help them through their little challenges in life."

Deirdre Cheers added, "As a country, we have taken bold measures to secure the future of our children. Over 100 years ago Australia was a world leader in providing free public education. This was a game changer for our families and communities across generations. I believe now is another important opportunity to change our trajectory and ensure that children have everything they need to thrive."

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