

MEDIA RELEASE

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JOIN THE FIGHT TO PREVENT CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE THIS BRAVEHEARTS DAY

Australian child protection organisation, [Bravehearts](https://bravehearts.org.au), has launched registrations for their annual [Bravehearts Day](https://bravehearts.org.au) campaign on Wednesday, 30 August as a new report alarmingly reveals that more than 1 in 4 Australians have experienced child sexual abuse ^[1].

Held in the lead-up to National Child Protection Week (September 5 -11), Bravehearts is calling on the community to 'Show Your Heart' and raise funds and awareness for the prevention and treatment of child sexual abuse as Australia records its tenth consecutive rise of sexual abuse reported to police, with 61% of those being victims under the age of 18 ^[2].

Bravehearts CEO, Alison Geale said Bravehearts Day marks a significant milestone in the organisation's ongoing commitment to creating a safer future for children – an opportunity to unite communities, spark conversations and mobilise action to prevent child sexual abuse.

"Child sexual abuse is a pervasive crime that affects the lives of countless children and families. Through Bravehearts Day, we seek to empower individuals and communities with the knowledge, resources, and support they need to protect children and break the cycle of abuse," said Ms Geale.

"By registering to host a fundraising event or donating to the cause, Australians can help us create a world where people, communities and systems all work together to protect children from sexual abuse – an atrocious crime no child should suffer.

"With an alarming 28.5 percent of Australians having experienced child sexual abuse, among those individuals, more than 3 in 4 (78%) experienced it more than once ^[1], we're calling on Australians to band together and help protect our children.

"We've also seen online child sexual exploitation increase by a staggering sixty percent from 2021, with the figure expected to rise as children continue to use technology more often ^[3], which is why it's important to educate and empower our youth to speak up," she said.

27-year-old Bravehearts Day Ambassador and child sexual abuse survivor, Sarah Pocock knows firsthand the devastating and long-lasting impact of child sexual abuse and is urging the community to Show Your Heart this Bravehearts Day - noting prevention is the key to creating a safer future for children.

"As a child sexual abuse survivor, I know firsthand the importance of protecting children and I am on a mission to help raise funds for early intervention to help break the cycle of abuse," said Sarah.

"I believe that every child deserves to grow up in a safe and nurturing environment, free from the pain and trauma I experienced. By sharing my story and raising awareness, I hope to break the silence

surrounding child sexual abuse and empower survivors to speak up, seek help and find healing,” she said.

Over the past twenty-six years, the funds raised through Bravehearts Day has helped educate more than 1.3 million children across Australia about personal safety through Bravehearts’ Ditto’s Keep Safe Adventure Program, as well as help fund crucial counselling and support services for children and families impacted by child sexual abuse.

This year, Bravehearts is on a mission to raise more than \$200,000 and Australians can get involved by registering for their complimentary [Bravehearts Day Supporter Pack](#), wearing a purple heart on Wednesday 30th August or [Gifting a ‘Brave Heart’](#) in support of the day. All proceeds raised go towards the prevention and treatment of child sexual abuse.

Bravehearts Day is supported by Busy Bees Learning Australia and is funded by the Commonwealth’s Department of Social Services, National Initiatives.

To register for a free Bravehearts Day Supporter Pack or for more information, visit: www.braveheartsday.com.au or call 1800 272 831.

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About Bravehearts

Bravehearts is a leading Australian child protection organisation with a Mission to provide a coordinated and holistic approach to the prevention and treatment of child sexual abuse. Bravehearts’ Vision is to create a world where people, communities and systems all work together to protect children from child sexual abuse. Operating for over 25 years, Bravehearts provides industry-leading child protection training and education programs, specialist child sexual abuse counselling and support services, as well as engaging in research and lobbying to help protect children from sexual abuse.

References

- [1]. Haslam D, Mathews B, Pacella R, Scott JG, Finkelhor D, Higgins DJ, Meinck F, Erskine HE, Thomas HJ, Lawrence D, Malacova E. (2023). *The prevalence and impact of child maltreatment in Australia: Findings from the Australian Child Maltreatment Study: Brief Report*. Australian Child Maltreatment Study, Queensland University of Technology.
- [2]. Australian Bureau of Statistics (2022). *Recorded Crime - Victims, 2021 | Australian Bureau of Statistics*. [online] www.abs.gov.au. Available at: <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/crime-and-justice/recorded-crime-victims/2021>
- [3]. Australian Federal Police. (2022). *Scale of online child abuse revealed as AFP-led ACCCE marks four years of leading child protection fight*. [online] Available at: <https://www.afp.gov.au/news-media/media-releases/scale-online-child-abuse-revealed-afp-led-accce-marks-four-years-leading>

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