

MEDIA RELEASE

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## BE BRAVE AND HELP FIGHT CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE THIS BRAVEHEARTS DAY

Australian child protection organisation, [Bravehearts](#), has launched registrations for its largest annual fundraiser, [Bravehearts Day](#) on Friday, 6<sup>th</sup> September, to help prevent child sexual abuse – a crime experienced by 1 in 4 Australian children<sup>[1]</sup>.

Held during National Child Protection Week (September 1<sup>st</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup>), Bravehearts is calling on the community to 'be brave' and help fight child sexual abuse this Bravehearts Day, with the revelation that 3 in 4 survivors (78%) experienced child sexual abuse more than once<sup>[1]</sup>.

Bravehearts' CEO, Alison Geale, emphasises that now is the time for individuals to take a stand and protect vulnerable children, and strongly urges the community to take collective action against the pervasive crime.

"With 1 in 4 Australian children experiencing child sexual abuse<sup>[1]</sup>, it's devastating that 1 in 5 (22%) Australian adults lack the confidence on being able to recognise if a child is being abused or neglected<sup>[2]</sup>," said Geale.

"We're calling on Australians to band together to help make uncomfortable conversations more comfortable. By donating, hosting a fundraising event or taking on the #BraveChallenge, we are one step closer to reversing these devastating statistics in a bid to help protect society's most vulnerable - our children," said Mrs Geale.

This year, for the first time, Bravehearts is also introducing, the #BraveChallenge initiative, which will see every day Australians take on a simple challenge catering to all skillsets and ages. From fitness to baking, to dares and dressing up, or simply choosing to have brave conversations, each individual or group challenge that takes place on Bravehearts Day to raise much-needed funds and awareness for Bravehearts' crucial support and education service is one of bravery.

"Already, we're seeing individuals and businesses take on the #BraveChallenge by either facing a fear, hosting an event or having brave conversations with their child about personal safety.

"Since 2016, more than 1.4 million children have participated in our national personal safety education program, Ditto's Keep Safe Adventure, and our work doesn't stop there. This Bravehearts Day, we aim to raise \$250,000 to empower kids through education programs and provide support programs for victims, survivors and families."

Bravehearts Day Ambassador and child sexual abuse survivor, John Cardamone understands firsthand the profound and long-lasting impact of child sexual abuse and is now, asking the community to be brave and take a stance against child sexual abuse.

"My childhood trauma has proven that the impact on a survivor's mental health is long-lasting. After years of secrecy, opening up for the first time to my mother was the beginning of my healing journey," said Cardamone.

“Today, as a father and successful educator, I hope to create a world where all survivors can speak out against their abusers, seek help and find healing without fear or shame. Through Bravehearts Day, we can empower all Australians to be educated and aware to both prevent and speak out against child sexual abuse”

For more than 27 years, the funds raised through Bravehearts Day have been instrumental in preventing child sexual abuse and helping survivors overcome their trauma. Each vital donation contributes to Bravehearts’ essential counselling and support services, with a \$75.00 donation covering the cost of a call for a parent, guardian, or survivor in crisis.

This Bravehearts Day is shaping up to be the biggest yet with more ways than ever to get involved set to attract greater awareness, and the support of major, long-term sponsor Busy Bees Learning Australia, a leading national childcare provider, matching every donation dollar for dollar on Bravehearts Day.

“We can’t wait to see all the brave ways people choose to show their support for Bravehearts Day this year to help us achieve our fundraising goal and continue our work towards ensuring prevention, support and treatment is available to every child,” Geale concludes.

Australians can get involved by registering for their complimentary [Bravehearts Day Supporter Pack](#) and taking the #BraveChallenge on Friday, 6<sup>th</sup> September.

For more information visit: [www.braveheartsdays.com.au](http://www.braveheartsdays.com.au) or call 1800 272 831.

**ENDS**

#### About Bravehearts

Bravehearts is an 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 sexual abuse. Operating for over 27 years, Bravehearts provides industry-leading child protection training and education programs, specialist child sexual abuse counselling and support services, as well 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 Childhood Foundation. (2021). *Still Unseen and Ignored: Tracking Community Knowledge and Attitudes about Child Abuse and Child Protection in Australia*. Available at: <https://www.childhood.org.au/app/uploads/2021/08/Community-Attitudes-Infographic-2pg.pdf>

For more media information, please contact:

**Rhiannon Bulley**

Sabio Account Director

E: [rhiannon@sabio.com.au](mailto:rhiannon@sabio.com.au)

M: 0405 330 449

**Madison Cooper**

Sabio Account Manager

E: [madison@sabio.com.au](mailto:madison@sabio.com.au)

M: 0435 120 535