

EMBARGOED MEDIA RELEASE

New research into childhood trauma & abuse released this Blue Knot Day

New data released by ASCA confirms the need for effective support for survivors abused in the home and neighbourhood as well as for those abused in Institutions

Australia, embargoed until October 27th, 2014: Today is the national awareness day, Blue Knot Day, an Adults Surviving Child Abuse (ASCA) initiative to raise awareness for the estimated five million adult survivors of childhood trauma and abuse¹. Marking the day, ASCA has released new research from its 1300 professional support line, showing that most childhood abuse occurs within the home (65%) followed by abuse within institutions and in care.

This year, ASCA's official Blue Knot Day event will be held today (27th October) at Canberra's Parliament house with speakers including Chair of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse Justice Peter McClellan, and the Minister for Health & Minister for Sport, The Hon. Peter Dutton MP.

The data shows that after the home, 10% reported being abused in institutions and 6% in care, other locations where people reported being abused included schools (5%), community and sporting organisations (2%) and other locations, which were outside these main locations (12%).

The research also identified 90% of respondents were abused by a member of their family or a family friend. This was followed by abuse from members of institutions and organisations (22%), including teachers, health professionals, religious representatives and out-of-home care personnel. The research also found that 18% of respondents reported multiple perpetrators from multiple relationships.

Relationship to Perpetrator	Research
Immediate family	64%
Extended family	16%
Family friend	10%
Religious	9%
Teacher	6%
Stranger	3%
In Care	6%
Health professional	2%

Source: ASCA

Commenting on the research findings, President of ASCA, Dr Cathy Kezelman, said: "It has been good to see this once-taboo issue being spoken and thought about as a result of the Royal Commission into Institutional Child Sexual Abuse. To know that the Commission has been granted an extension to enable it to effectively pursue its work has been a commendable step by the Abbott government. However, much more needs to be done. We

¹ Estimated from a range of key resources

must provide the right support to adults, who as children experienced trauma and abuse not just in institutions but also in the home, family and neighbourhood. As the spotlight remains on the issue, we must continue advocate for greater awareness as well as a national coordinated trauma-informed response.

“Though this data sheds a light on the harsh reality of child abuse and its prevalence in our society, a key theme for this year’s Blue Knot Day is recovery. We want to provide survivors with a message of hope - to know that recovery is possible and that it is important to reach out and seek help, which comes in many forms. It’s also important to gain support from your family, friends, co-workers or health care services, as they are part of the journey to recovery – survivors must know they are not alone.”

Other key statistics from the research:

- Most survivors reported multiple impacts of abuse in their lives (72%)
- The most prominent impact reported by survivors was on their mental health (85%) followed by relationships: immediate family (50%); partners (35%); parenting (28%); friends (23%)
- Childhood trauma and abuse left many battling problems with physical health (35%) suicidality (18%), alcohol misuse (15%), illicit drug use (11%), employment (12%), criminality (6%) and gambling problems (1%)

This Blue Knot Day ASCA is calling on government to build on the work of the Royal Commission, further invest in trauma-informed services for adult survivors of childhood trauma and abuse and assist recovery for adult survivors coming forward.

ASCA’s annual [Blue Knot Award](#) will be announced at the event to lawyer, advocate and clergy abuse survivor, John Ellis, as an acknowledgment for his push for national law reform, work with victims of institutional child sexual abuse as well his personal battle for justice from the Catholic Church.

The research findings were drawn from the anonymous records of 4,000 people who contacted the ASCA Professional Support Line (1 September 2013 – 31 August 2014) – 1300 657 380 – which offers professional counselling support, information, education, and referrals for adult survivors, their family, friends, partners and loved ones and those who work with them professionally. Of the recorded cases, 78% of respondents were direct survivors of child abuse.

Help and support is available from the ASCA professional support line on 1300 657 380, 9am-5pm Monday-Sunday.

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Media Contact: Louise Proctor louise@launchgroup.com.au 02 9492 1000 / 0452 574 244

About ASCA: www.asca.org.au

ASCA is the leading national organisation supporting the estimated five million Australian adults who are survivors of childhood trauma, including abuse. ASCA provides hope, optimism and pathways to recovery for adults.

At the forefront of pioneering trauma informed policy, practice and research, ASCA has been instrumental in supporting the work of the Australian Royal Commission into Institutional



Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and people engaging with it. This includes the training of key workers and practitioners.

In 2012 ASCA released Practice Guidelines for Treatment of Complex Trauma and Trauma Informed Care and Service Delivery, a global first in setting the standards for clinical and organisational practice. ASCA is a founding member of the national Trauma Informed Care and Practice Advisory Working Group.

Formed in 1995, ASCA provides a range of services including professional phone support with trauma informed counsellors, a referral database, advocacy, research, workshops for survivors and their supporters, along with education, training and professional development for workers, organisations and health care professionals.