

Port Macquarie News

OPINION

The leading national organisation for the estimated

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The leading national organisation for the estimated five million Australian adult survivors of childhood trauma and abuse, Adults Surviving Child Abuse (ASCA), is calling on members from the community to host events in support of survivors this Blue Knot Day - the annual awareness day, on October 27.

ASCA's official Blue Knot Day event will be held at Canberra's Parliament House. It will be fronted by Chair of the Royal Commission, The Hon. Justice Peter McClellan, and the Minister for Health, The Hon. Peter Dutton MP, who will discuss the issues surrounding child sexual abuse and how survivors can recover. ASCA is urging all Australians to get involved to help spread the message that 'Recovery is possible', with this as 2014's Blue Knot Day theme.

With the issue of child abuse being so prominent, ASCA is calling on the community to get involved whether it is an activity in someone's home, a church gathering or a company event, the participation of the wider Australian community can make a huge difference.

President of ASCA, Dr Cathy Kezelman, said support from the Australian community is vital for both survivors and their supporters.

"Australia has borne witness to some confronting stories of child abuse. In the past few years, cases once hidden have finally come to light," she said. "We need to make sure that everyone knows recovery is possible and there are people who can help.

"In order to have a strong support system in place, education and training is urgently needed for health professionals and organisations working with adult survivors of childhood abuse and trauma.

"ASCA's work and research show that with the right help, people can and do recover. Raising community awareness and starting a discussion are essential steps towards de-stigmatising the issue and helping those affected."

Some suggested ideas for activities and events include:

- o Hold a morning or afternoon tea
- o Hold a faith-based service
- o Ceremonially unwrap a building or object in recognition of survivors
- o Create a Blue Knot Day themed display
- o Engage in an activity to help raise funds through sponsorship and donations <http://bit.ly/WgyLEj>

- o Offer your individual skills for free (e.g. offer a free cooking class or yoga class on behalf of Blue Knot Day and have people donate)
- o All Blue Knot Day donations can be made at <http://www.givenow.com.au/blueknotday>
- o Buy and wear a blue knot pin and/or friendship bracelet - available online
- o Get involved on social media using the official Blue Knot Day hashtag #BKD2014
- o To register an event or activity, please contact ASCA via email onevents@asca.org.au.

All public Blue Knot Day events will be registered online so that people across Australia who want to attend an event can easily access information or choose to host their own event if none is listed in their area. ASCA is 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, practitioners and media.

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.

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

People needing support are encouraged to call ASCA's professional support line on 1300 657 380 Monday to Sunday, 9am - 5pm or visit the website.