

## Who is Child Wise?

Child Wise is a non profit organisation working to prevent the abuse and exploitation of children in Australia and overseas.

Launched in 1991 as part of ECPAT an international network dedicated to protecting children, that now exists in over 70 countries.

The Child Wise mission is to reduce incidence and impact of child abuse and exploitation through advocacy, training, organisational child safer certification and counselling.

## What's the issue?

Child abuse and exploitation has become a prevalent issue within contemporary society. Statistics of child abuse across Australia has shown that on average:

- 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 7 boys will be sexually abused in their life.
- 40,000 children will not sleep in their own bed tonight because it is not safe to do so.
- 250,000 reports about abuse and neglect made last year alone. This equates to one report being made every 2 minutes and less than 50 percent were investigated by Child Protection.
- The age group found to be abused more than any other age group is infants under the age of 12 months. An increased amount of babies and infants die where abuse has occurred than in any other age group.

Indigenous children are over-represented across the child protection system compared with non-indigenous children. Statistics estimated in 2011-2012 that indigenous children were:

- almost 8 times more likely to be the subject of substantiated abuse or neglect.
- 10 times more likely to be on a care and protection order, and 10 times more likely to be in out-of-home care.

*(Source - Australian Childhood Foundation 2014)*

Vulnerable children, families and communities in Australia need our support, care and expertise. It's time we all worked together to prevent this issue and create a safe environment for our children.

## How Child Wise makes it happen?

Child Wise aims to reduce the incidence and impact of child abuse and exploitation through advocacy, training, organisational child safer certification and the national helpline service. Each support we provide is unique, most are extremely complex.

The Child Wise National Child Abuse Prevention Helpline is a toll free number that provides Australians with access to expert advice from trained counsellors and provides an opportunity to speak up about child abuse.

The 'Starting Point Helpline' is a support service that enables individuals to tell their story – even if they don't want to speak to the Royal Commission. Starting Point Helpline provides safe and anonymous support for survivors of childhood sexual abuse who may never have spoken about their abuse.

Our organisation also offers a range of prevention community training programs that educate and build the capacity of

organisations to address child abuse related issues along with management techniques.

Child Wise 'Child Safer Organisations' Certification is the culmination of our programs. It is a holistic audit that considers an organisation's culture, policies, practices, activities, and awareness of child abuse and prevention approaches. The Certification audit allows organisations to demonstrate that they have critically reflected on their culture and systems for protecting children and young people from abuse and exploitation, and to create spaces where children are safe.

The work of the counsellors at Child Wise is to listen to extremely disjointed information, at times from highly traumatised, emotional people who have either witnessed, experienced or have been exposed to some kind of abuse, usually multiple types of abuse over a period of time. Our Counsellors aim to listen, validate experiences and feelings, educate, link in supports, and look at ongoing prevention to stop the re-occurrence of abuse.

This specialised work provides information, support, counseling and education in prevention, advocacy and awareness. Child Wise also provides advocacy and awareness to strengthen the systemic systems, legislation and frameworks to prevent child abuse.

## Speak Up Program

Child Wise seeks to partner with the Department of Education to establish the "Speak Up Program" to Indigenous support workers across Koorie pre-school assistants, Koorie Engagement Support Officers (KESOs) and Koorie Education Co-ordinators. These professionals provide support to families, Indigenous communities and the education sector.

The "Speak Up Program" will connect with vulnerable children, families and the community through a culturally informed, culturally safe program to build capacity in the awareness and prevention of child abuse within Indigenous communities. We will provide the "Speak Up Program" across Western Australia and Victorian Indigenous communities.

The objectives of the "Speak Up Program" is to build the capacity of Indigenous communities to build a society in which children can grow up free from abuse and exploitation. Child Wise will develop and implement the "Speak Up Program" to meet the needs of Indigenous communities at an individual, family and community level. The "Speak Up Program" will educate in childhood development and the impact of trauma and abuse within Indigenous communities. This will develop an understanding of the signs and indicators of child abuse in order to prevent abuse occurring. The "Speak Up Program" will develop the skills and knowledge of how individuals, families, organisations and the community can respond in a trauma informed way to cease inter-generational abuse. This education will develop a clear understanding of reporting requirements across the community so that children have a voice to "Speak Up".

## How can you help?

100% of your ticket price is donated to the project run by Child Wise. Get involved by attending Dine for Life's 2014 Dinner events spanning Perth and Melbourne. Corporate Sponsorship packages available. Go to [www.dineforlife.com](http://www.dineforlife.com) for info.

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