



# Act for kids

Preventing and treating child abuse and neglect

## CALLUM\*

### 2 ½ YEARS OLD

At two-and-a-half years old Callum would scream for hours on end. He didn't want to play and had no interest in other children. He couldn't bear to be touched, was terrified of loud noises and was diagnosed as Autistic.

Callum's little life had been marred by physical abuse and neglect by both mum and dad. His home was a violent place where dad beat mum, and there were frequent fights with strangers in the house. Police were called regularly. With drug and alcohol abuse rife in the home, Callum's eight year old brother became the main carer for his brothers and sisters. The kids were eventually removed by authorities and placed in separate foster homes, before being referred to Act for Kids for help.



When our therapists first met Callum, he showed significant developmental delays. Act for Kids provided intensive occupational therapy, speech therapy and psychological services to help Callum process his traumatic experiences. Callum also participated in our Early Education Program until he was five years old. Our therapists then supported his transition to prep and worked with other services to address his complex needs.

After two-and-a-half years of intensive therapy with Act for Kids, Callum is no longer diagnosed as Autistic. He plays well with friends and can communicate his needs clearly. Now attending school fulltime Callum does not require special education support and is seen as no different from his peers. We also provided intensive therapy to his mum and dad and worked to resolve the domestic violence, so that Callum and his siblings were able to finally return home to a safe and loving environment.

\*Name changed to protect identity.





## FROM THE CEO

In 1989 Act for Kids, as the Abused Child Trust, opened its first free therapy service in Brisbane. From the beginning, our founders had a vision to expand the service to areas of great need. As a charity working with vulnerable kids and families, we have always

been mindful to grow sustainably, so we can meet our commitment to provide treatment to kids who require months, if not years, of support to rebuild their lives.

After opening integrated therapy services throughout Queensland Act for Kids went interstate for the first time in 2014, with a centre in Adelaide. Late last year, thanks to funding from the Wilson Foundation, we launched an integrated therapy service in Blacktown, our first in New South Wales. While some of our services receive government funding, not all areas do, and we rely on donations and sponsorship to expand and remain sustainable. Which brings me to an exciting phase in the history of Act for Kids. Thanks to generous funding from the Vita Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Vita Group, this year Act for Kids is going national, reaching out to kids across Australia. Commencing with our protective behaviours program for Grade 1 students, *Learn to be safe with Emmy and friends*, we are expanding into Western Australia, Victoria and Tasmania, helping 4000 more kids over the next 18 months learn how to keep themselves safe from abuse.

In the past few months Act for Kids has been the grateful recipient of untied funds from sponsors Auto & General, and the Property Industry Foundation. Untied funding, like your donations, are vital to Act for Kids as we can

allocate resources to areas where they are most needed. Right now, ahead of tax time, is a great time to make a donation, and you can be assured your funds will go a long way towards giving kids like Dean, who you can read about overleaf, have a brighter future.

Next month we are holding our annual Gala Ball fundraiser in Brisbane and it's shaping up to be another sell-out event. We really appreciate spending the evening in the company of our like-minded supporters and celebrating our successes together.

We also have an exciting fundraising initiative being developed on our behalf by creatives Christian and Ben from Publicis Mojo, who have crowdfunded a Monster-shaped crayon product, which we hope to launch later this year. You can read more about the crayons on page 6.

Later this year I'm going to be taking part in my second Act for Kids physical fundraising challenge – this time trekking across the Southern Alps in New Zealand. You can read more about the challenge on page 5, or go to [www.trekforkids.com.au](http://www.trekforkids.com.au) to learn how you can add your support.

Speaking of websites – we are launching a completely new look Act for Kids website in the coming days, featuring a lot more information about the services we provide, our locations and the work we do. We welcome your feedback – please contact us at [mail@actforkids.com.au](mailto:mail@actforkids.com.au)

Finally, thank you again for your interest in preventing and treating child abuse and neglect in Australia. Every day we see results which couldn't be achieved without your help. Thank you for your kind support.

**Dr Neil Carrington**  
Chief Executive Officer



## OFFICIALLY OPEN IN BLACKTOWN



John Robertson MP, Dr Neil Carrington, Karen Wilson (sponsor), Tanya Davies MP, Blacktown Mayor Stephen Ball

Local and state politicians, police, sector representatives and sponsors showed their support for abused and neglected kids at the official opening of our Integrated Therapy Service in Blacktown recently.

Tanya Davies MP attended the opening as the NSW Premier's representative, alongside Blacktown MP John Robertson, Blacktown Mayor Stephen Ball and sponsors Karen and Geoff Wilson from the Wilson Foundation.

The Blacktown service is the first Act for Kids centre in New South Wales, and the phones have been ringing red hot since the opening, said Dr Carrington.

**“Already we are seeing kids impacted by domestic violence, parental drug and alcohol abuse and mental health issues, extreme neglect and homelessness,”** said Dr Carrington.



# INSURING A BRIGHTER FUTURE



Abused and neglected kids can look forward to a brighter future, thanks to a boost in funding from our Gold sponsor insurance provider Auto & General, whose flagship brand is Budget Direct. The company presented us with a \$35,000 cheque recently, during a visit by 30 of its staff to our Woolloowin centre. This brings the total raised by the company to \$300,000 since 2010.

Budget Direct's ongoing support has meant we can continue to open more Intensive Therapy Service centres in areas of need, helping hundreds of kids who otherwise would be struggling to cope, said Dr Carrington.

CEO and Managing Director at Budget Direct, Ram Kangatharan said the visit was an excellent opportunity for staff to see how important their support is.

**"We are proud to support Act for Kids in their work protecting and ensuring the safety of young people within the community,"** said Mr Kangatharan.



Dr Neil Carrington and Ram Kangatharan

# PROTECTING KIDS TODAY

Thousands of kids will head back to school this year with a new subject on the curriculum – how to keep themselves safe – thanks to communications and electronics provider, the Vita Group.

Vita Group's philanthropic arm, the Vita Foundation, has committed over \$200,000 to roll out our protective behaviours program *Learn to be safe with Emmy and friends* to more than 4,000 five year olds in schools across Australia.

Staff will be encouraged to add to the number of children helped through their own fundraising activities, said Vita Group CEO, Maxine Horne.

**"Through the Vita Foundation, our goal is to make a difference in our local communities, who mean everything to us. We are thrilled that our funding will help over 4000 children to learn how to be safe. And we hope to reach many more,"** said Ms Horne.



**LEARN TO BE SAFE**  
with Emmy & friends



## CUTTING EDGE WINS AWARDS

The powerful short film about five year old Riley who wore a superhero costume under his clothes to protect himself and his little sister from abuse at the hands of their parents, has won an array of prestigious film awards.

Our official partner Publicis Mojo approached Cutting Edge to animate the confronting true story of two children who are now on the road to recovery thanks to the help of therapists at Act for Kids.

A TRUE STORY.



The result was an outstanding animated film which has won two Golds, one Silver and one Bronze at the Brisbane Advertising Design Club (BADC) awards, and was a finalist at the Australian Production Design Guild (APDG) Awards. The film was also nominated as a finalist for the Create Awards and received an Honourable Mention from HOWWW.

Read more about Riley's story on our website.



## SPEAKING UP FOR KIDS IMPACTED BY DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

In early December Act for Kids' Brisbane therapist, Annika Moody was a guest speaker at the Stop Domestic Violence Conference in Canberra.

Annika's presentation focused on how experiencing domestic violence impacts the emotional wellbeing of children. Annika said she valued the opportunity to enhance and share her knowledge with others working in the sector. She hopes by doing so the voice of children impacted by domestic violence has become that little bit louder.

**"Our goal is to raise awareness about the impact domestic violence has on children and we encouraged professionals across the sector to consider their needs when implementing a response, be it a legislative or therapeutic one like services offered by Act for Kids,"** said Annika.



Annika Moody, therapist at Act for Kids Woolloowin.



## STALKING SYMPOSIUM

In February over 50 health professionals attended the inaugural 2016 Australian Stalking Symposium at Robina Community Centre, hosted by Act for Kids and the Office of the Children's e-Safety Commissioner.

Speakers included international stalking behaviours expert Dr Lorraine Sheridan, cyber safety expert Greg Gebhart, Office of the Children's e-Safety Commissioner and Act for Kids Family Coach Emma McKenzie who presented her research into 'Factors Predicting Persistent Pursuit'.

Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with the symposium providing an excellent opportunity for attendees to engage with field experts and understand risk indicators, assessment tools and typologies associated with cyber stalking and protecting those at risk.



# OVER \$25,000 RAISED AT PROPERTY COUNCIL CHRISTMAS LUNCH

Guests raised their glasses and over \$25,000 for Act for Kids at the Property Council of Australia's annual Downtown Christmas Lunch in Brisbane.

More than 1100 attended the lunch where volunteers sold raffle tickets, raising funds for the Property Industry Foundation, which supports Act for Kids.

The raffle prize of a \$10,000 Hardy Brothers Jewellers voucher was much sought after, with Tanya Martin from Lendlease drawn as the lucky winner.



The event was an incredible display of Christmas spirit for those who need it most, said Dr Neil Carrington.

**"We are so grateful for all those who supported us: the Property Council of Australia, Property Industry Foundation, Hardy Brothers Jewellers and our wonderful volunteers,"** said Dr Carrington.

## SUPPORT OUR TREKKERS

This year's annual Act for Kids Challenge will see 12 Brisbane professionals journeying across New Zealand's Southern Alps to raise awareness and funds for abused and neglected kids.

The eight-day trek will take place from 6-13 November, and includes the ascent of two 2000 metre peaks, and a hike high on the ridge overlooking the Hooker Glacier.

Act for Kids Chairman Lesley-Anne Houghton, said she felt compelled to take on the challenge after participating in our Vietnam Challenge in 2015, which raised a staggering \$73,000.



**"I can thoroughly recommend the adventure, it's hugely challenging and rewarding,"** said Lesley-Anne.

**"It's amazing to see so many determined people wanting to promote the work of Act for Kids, and know that their fundraising efforts will help create better outcomes for future generations to come."**

To support our trekkers head to [www.trekforkids.com.au](http://www.trekforkids.com.au)

## 2016 ACT FOR KIDS GALA BALL



One of our biggest fundraisers, the Act for Kids Gala Ball will be held on Saturday 14 May at the Sofitel Brisbane Central. It will be a fabulous night where guests can enjoy exquisite fine food and wine, while helping to raise vital funds to support our programs. Don't miss out, limited tickets available! Proudly supported by Mercedes-Benz Brisbane, our marquee sponsor.

The Gala Ball would not be possible without sponsor support. In addition to our marquee sponsor Mercedes-Benz Brisbane and ruby sponsor Auto & General, we would like to acknowledge our long term supporters SRJ Accountants for their ongoing contribution to the success of this event.

Order your tickets now on 1300 228 000.



# MONSTER-SHAPED CRAYONS TO HELP VULNERABLE KIDS



Earlier this year Publicis Mojo Creatives Christian McKechnie and Ben Lees were brainstorming how to develop a self-sustainable business initiative for Act for Kids.

A while back Ben had visited our Woolloowin centre and was talking to one of our therapists who gave him the insight that vulnerable children sometimes draw monsters to express themselves. Ben and Christian decided a monster-shaped crayon could be a nice way to raise awareness for Act for Kids as well as encouraging people to give.

In early February they started an online crowdfunding campaign to raise funds for initial manufacturing and distribution costs and in 10 days they had already exceeded their \$20,000 goal. The next steps are to further refine the designs, with manufacturing and distribution expected to commence soon after.

We can't wait to see the final product which will be available through our online shop and other distribution networks.



Ben Lees and Christian McKechnie



## EARLY EDUCATION PROGRAM OPENS IN CAIRNS

Act for Kids opened its first Early Education kindy for vulnerable families at Edmonton in Cairns, in March. The event was attended by community members, local businesses and supporting government departments.

The program, funded by the Department of Education and Training, is staffed by a Specialist Early Education Teacher, an Early Childhood Assistant, a Psychologist and a Speech Pathologist to support children aged between four and six who have experienced severe trauma from abuse and neglect.

Many of the children suffer significant social, emotional, physical and behavioural effects of trauma from their early experiences, said Kieran Smith, Far North Queensland Regional Director, Act for Kids.

**"The kindy program ensures vulnerable kids are set up for success when they start 'big' school and stay connected to education,"** said Kieran.

**"They will receive wrap-around therapy support and early learning so they don't miss out on early education."**



Act for Kids' Early Education Kindy staff and Dr Neil Carrington



# WINNER OF LOTTERY DRAW #59!



## Second time winners in three lotteries.

### YES YOU TOO CAN BE SO LUCKY!

Mr and Mrs P from Western Australia were over the moon when they received the call to say they had won first prize in the Act for Kids Platinum Class Lottery, Draw 59.

"Winning the lottery once is amazing but winning it twice was a totally unexpected surprise," said Mr P.

As the winners of Draw 57 and Draw 59, Mr and Mrs P won two Mercedes-Benz valued at over \$170,000 plus \$30,000 in platinum bullion.

"We started buying tickets five months ago. Our intention was not to win, but to support a fantastic charity that does wonderful work in the community, and gives vulnerable kids and families a better chance in life."

The Act for Kids Platinum Class Lottery is one of the biggest fundraisers for Act for Kids and has been running since 2006.

Funds raised from six lotteries each year, are vital to supporting abused and neglected kids across Australia.

Lottery buyers have a great chance to win. Only 9,000 tickets are issued and the more you buy the more chances of winning additional bonus prizes.

"They're great odds," said Dr Neil Carrington. "We've had a few winners who have won more than once, but most importantly the people who do purchase tickets in our lottery are giving kids the safe and happy childhood, free from abuse and neglect, they deserve."

**Be our next lucky winner. Draw 60 is now open. Win a Mercedes-Benz GLC SUV Iridium Silver. Visit [www.platinumclass.com.au](http://www.platinumclass.com.au) to purchase your ticket online or call 1800 968 946, Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm.**

**"If you're not in it, you're not going to win it!"** said Mr and Mrs P.

# WIN a Mercedes-Benz



 **Act for kids**  
PLATINUM CLASS LOTTERY

**Be our next lucky winner! Draw 60 is now open. Win a Mercedes-Benz GLC SUV Iridium Silver. Visit [www.platinumclass.com.au](http://www.platinumclass.com.au) to purchase your ticket online or call 1800 968 946, Monday-Friday 9am- 5pm**

# Thanks to our supporters!

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## NEW LOOK WEBSITE

Act for Kids is launching a new interactive website which provides more detail about the work we do and how you can help support us. Featuring news from our regional centres, in-depth stories about the kids we treat, and greater information on abuse and neglect and early warning signs. We plan to launch the new site later this month, so check it out and let us know what you think!



For more information please call 1300 228 000 or visit [www.actforkids.com.au](http://www.actforkids.com.au)

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Act for Kids is a not-for-profit organisation providing free professional therapy and support services to prevent and treat child abuse and neglect. Established in 1988, we have helped thousands of children and families in Australia who have experienced, or are at risk of child abuse and neglect.

To book a table at the Act for Kids Gala Ball call: 1300 228 000 or visit [www.actforkids.com.au/galaball](http://www.actforkids.com.au/galaball)