

SENATOR THE HON MARK ARBIB
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MEDIA RELEASE

November 13, 2009

Minister urges support for adult survivors of child abuse

Senator Mark Arbib today launched the inaugural Forget-me-knot Day to highlight the lifelong struggle of untangling the knot of child abuse and the ongoing issues for adult survivors.

More than two million adult Australians are personally affected by childhood abuse and Forget-me-knot Day is a chance for all Australians to show their support.

“Child abuse is an issue which horrifies most people. It’s so horrible that we don’t want to talk about it and we don’t want to believe it is happening,” Senator Arbib said.

“For most people child abuse is simply impossible to comprehend. But if that’s how society feels, imagine what it must be like for the victims of abuse.

“As a society we sometimes forget that abused children grow up. They don’t leave that abuse in their childhood and many go through life with a misplaced sense of shame, suffering in silence.

“Adults Surviving Child Abuse is holding Forget-me-knot Day to raise awareness of this struggle, and help adult survivors to reconnect with their community.”

Senator Arbib said the statistics surrounding child abuse were confronting:

- More than 70 per cent of people with severe mental illness have been abused;
- More than 80 per cent of women in Australian prisons are victims of incest or other types of abuse; and
- Last year there were more than 55,000 substantiated cases of child abuse and neglect.

“Child abuse is challenging and disturbing. But it’s too important to sweep under the carpet,” Senator Arbib said.

“Ignoring it doesn’t stop it from happening, it simply gives the power to abusers and means that victims continue to suffer in silence and without the vital support they need.

“ASCA is the key organisation advancing the needs of adults who have experienced child abuse. Untangling the knot of childhood abuse is often a solitary, confusing and complex task.

“The impact of child abuse is not just felt by the children. The adults they become, their families, their partners and their community are all impacted by this tragedy.”

ASCA Chairperson Dr Cathy Kezelman said child abuse can be a life-long struggle for an adult to overcome.

“With the right help and support, survivors can find their way through the tangle of child abuse and find a sense of wellbeing and re-engage positively in their communities,” Dr Kezelman said.

“Listening, understanding and supporting are critical to the healing process. ASCA delivers evidence-based workshops to adult survivors of child abuse, and workshops for health practitioners to inform treatment of survivors of child abuse around Australia.

“Through Forget me knot Day – we aim to have a national conversation so that survivors experience the nurture as adults –they were denied as children, and make positive steps to recovery.”

“I am delighted that Senator Arbib will cut the ‘tangled blue knot’ on this historic building in honour of the inaugural ‘Forget-me-knot’ day. Senator Arbib has been a long time supporter of ASCA and has consistently helped us raise awareness around the needs of adult survivors,” Dr Kezelman said.

For more information about Forget-me-knot day visit www.asca.org.au/forgetmeknot

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