



COLOURATHON FUNDS TRAUMA THERAPY FOR CHILDREN IN FAMILY VIOLENCE HOTSPOT

A massive 24 hour Colourathon in Tasmania has raised over \$13,000 which will go to a local women's shelter in a family violence hotspot, to employ specialist trauma therapy for children affected by family violence.

The Colourathon was an initiative of Big hART's Project O, which assists young women in rural communities to build strong personal agency to help prevent family violence, build resilience and change their story. This world first arts endurance event was run by 20 young women who have been directly or indirectly affected by family violence, and captured national attention and a community wide response from individuals and businesses in the North-West of Tasmania who rallied to support the initiative.

Working with the Australian Childhood Foundation, the funds from Project O's Colourathon will provide specialist play therapy services at a women's shelter for young children experiencing trauma. In the poorest electorate in the country, this highly innovative primary prevention strategy supports the forgotten victims of family violence – children - and responds to one of the key findings of the Victorian Government's Royal Commission into Family Violence that refuges and crisis accommodation services need to provide adequate resources and services to meet the needs of children.

Dr Joe Tucci, CEO of The Australian Childhood Foundation said "We are delighted to be partnering with Big hART on this extremely important project. Children whose lives have been devastated by family violence will be able to receive specialist play therapy to help them heal and make meaning of what has happened to them."

Scott Rankin, Director of Big hART said "More than half of the young women we work with on Project O have seen or experienced domestic violence, and a quarter of them have spent time in women's shelters. This unique strategy supports the child who has been lost in the system, and also the young women who have been through it."

The Australian Childhood Foundation is a national not-for-profit organisation that works to keep children safe, and help them recover from the devastating effects of abuse, violence and neglect. They have been delivering specialist trauma therapy services throughout Australia for the last 30 years, and in Tasmania for the past 7 years.



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Facts on Family Violence and Children:

- Children do not escape family violence unaffected. They are robbed of their childhood and traumatised by the experience
- Family violence destabilises the foundation of children's development and leaves a lingering legacy
- Play therapy uses the safe space of play to enable children to express thoughts, feelings and difficult experiences in a safe environment
- With the help of a counsellor tuned to their needs, play therapy provides a safe and calming space for children, to unlock them from fear, vigilance and self-blame, and make meaning of what has happened to them.