



A National Call to Listen to Children

2 September 2025 | For immediate release

Canberra, ACT: In response to recent media revelations exposing systemic failures that enabled child sexual abuse in early childhood education and care (ECEC) settings, a powerful national vigil and photo opportunity will take place on Thursday, 4 September at 12.15pm on the steps of Parliament House.

The event will create space for collective grief, healing, and action, honouring the children, survivors, and educators affected by abuse.

As part of the vigil, ribbons of every colour will be tied onto a baby fence, each one symbolising a commitment to centring children's voices and supporting the educators who work to protect them. This symbolic act will occur simultaneously in towns and cities across the country, sending a clear and unified message to decision-makers, educators, and the broader public:

Listen to children and centre their voices in these debates.

In the lead up to National Child Protection Week, the vigil responds to the national outrage and sorrow as Australians reckon with the sustained media attention, often challenging for survivors. It is a call to protect our youngest citizens, and to stand in solidarity with those who care for them every day.

"Children are too often left out of the conversations that most impact them. Peak bodies and policymakers often speak on their behalf. Yet children often clearly articulate what they need to feel safe. Children remind us that they deserve more than just safety. They need connection, play and joy. We must do more to amplify children's voices."

-Deanne Carson, CEO, Body Safety Australia

The vigil also serves as a stark reminder that many survivors of child sexual abuse have already courageously shared their stories during the *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse*. Among them are early childhood educators working



today.

We must not forget their voices.

“As a movement we are learning how to pick up the pieces after trauma. Now we need leadership with work on prevention. Have the courage to bring these difficult conversations to policy makers.”

-Paul Auchetl, Survivor, Ballarat.

“Children are the experts of their own lives, with a distinct culture, and will speak to their experiences, including harms, in the future, when they find their voice. We have an obligation to create space for children’s experiences NOW; it’s their right to speak out.”

-Dr Red Ruy Scarlet - Early Childhood Techer, Researcher and Consultant

Educators, advocates, parliamentarians, survivors, and members of the public are invited to stand together in this national moment impacting children. The event will include guest speakers, a moment of silence, and media opportunities.

For further media information, contact:

deanne@bodysafetyaustralia.com.au | (03) 9471 2247

262-266 Victoria St, North Melbourne, 3051

www.bodysafetyaustralia.com.au

About Body Safety Australia

Body Safety Australia is a leading organisation working to prevent child abuse through primary prevention, education, policy reform, and the empowerment of children’s voices. They collaborate with schools, families, and communities to create environments where children are safe, respected, and heard.

About Loud Fence

LOUD fence stands with victim-survivors of child sexual assault, and their loved ones. The colourful ribbons tied to fences represent the voices of those who have been silenced. LOUD fence began as a community response to the Royal Commission into Institutional



Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, and has since grown into a powerful movement of solidarity and support.

About Dr Red Ruby Scarlet

Dr Red Ruby Scarlet is an activist, early childhood teacher-researcher, consultant, artist and academic with over 30 years' experience. She holds multiple degrees in early childhood education and performing arts, and is devoted to creative, inclusive practices that uphold dignity and integrity in early childhood.

Red's expertise spans pedagogy, curriculum, documentation, inclusion, anti-bias, leadership, advocacy and art. She has developed curriculum frameworks nationally and internationally, and received numerous awards for her teaching and advocacy. She publishes widely, foregrounding teacher-research stories and raising the voices of educators through storytelling.

About Lisa Bryant

Lisa is a one woman ChatGPT.

Lisa is a subject matter expert in early education and care provision and has over 40 years of experience successfully guided governments, organisations, and communities to better understand and meet the needs of children and families.

A strong advocate for high quality education and care, Lisa is a sought-after communications specialist, keynote speaker, and policy writer. Her in-depth knowledge of Federal and State Government policies, academic research, and industry trends, positions her as a leading figure in early education research and consultancy.