

19 MARCH 2021

MEDIA RELEASE

Unmute yourself – speaking up to end violence against women

The Australian Government has launched the third phase of the national campaign to reduce violence against women, *Stop it at the Start*.

The campaign encourages adults to positively influence the attitudes and behaviours of young people aged 10-17 by role modelling positive behaviour, calling out disrespect and starting conversations about respect. It aims to unite the community around positive actions everyone can take to break the cycle of disrespect, and ultimately, violence against women.

Community influencers and campaign supporters Kristy Masella, Andy Saunders, Renee Thomson, and Sean Choolburra share a common message—even the simplest, smallest actions can make a big difference for young people, and for our community.

“I’ve been very quick to have conversations with my girls to say ‘I’ve just realised I’ve been tolerating this’, or, ‘this has been part of my life and I’ve just become aware of it now, so make sure you look out for it and that you are aware of it,” said Darumbal woman and mother, Kristy Masella.

“By doing this, my daughters will be able to identify disrespect a lot quicker and easier.”

Birripai man and TV personality, Andy Saunders, emphasises the importance of role modelling respectful behaviors towards women, drawing on the key influences in his own life.

“My grandfather brought up 10 kids at a time when things were very hard, especially if you were Aboriginal... he was the most loving, beautiful man and teacher, he taught me everything I needed to know about being a good father and husband,” said Andy.

“If you have kids, nieces, nephews, or young people that look up to you, that’s exactly where you can make the change.”

As a young Indigenous woman growing up in Western Sydney, youth mentor Renee Thomson encourages other people in her community to speak up in a safe way about disrespectful behavior towards women when they encounter them.

“There’s been many times in my life where I’ve spoken up about a disrespectful comment or behaviour towards women, and also times when I didn’t speak up, but later wished that I had,” said Renee.

“It’s so important to break down disrespectful behaviours that we’ve learnt from a young age.

“Explaining the harm that these words can have, can help people understand how can have a lasting impact,” she said.

Comedian and proud Girramay, Kalkadoon, Pitta and Gugu Yalanji man, Sean Choolburra agrees we all play a role in setting an example for our young people.

“I think all of us get exposed to disrespectful attitudes towards women in some way or another. This is why I think it’s important to always reflect on the examples we are setting for our children and the things we say,” said Sean.

The campaign is being rolled out nationally with advertising across Indigenous and mainstream media outlets and in community organisations such as Family Violence Prevention Legal Services and Aboriginal Medical Services and health services.

In addition, a suite of tools and resources will be available online at respect.gov.au to help inform people about how they can reflect on their own attitudes, role model positive behaviours, and start conversations about respect with the young people in their lives and others in the community.

For information and to access campaign resources, including footage of Kristy, Andy, Renee and Sean sharing their stories, visit respect.gov.au.

If you or someone you know is experiencing or at risk of domestic, family or sexual violence contact 1800RESPECT on 1800 737 732 or visit 1800RESPECT.org.au.

For media interviews please contact 33 Creative at media@33creative.com.au.

Media Background

- The *Stop it at the Start* campaign aims to break the cycle of violence against women and their children by encouraging adults to reflect on their attitudes and start conversations about respect with young people.
- The campaign first began in 2016, and is aimed at the adults who have the biggest influence on young people aged 10-17, such as parents, aunts, uncles and other family members, as well as elders, teachers, coaches, and community role models.
- Getting involved could be as simple as role modelling positive behaviours or talking to our kids about respectful relationships. It might seem overwhelming, but together we have the opportunity to create a future for our children free from disrespect and violence against women.
- Advertising for the third phase has commenced and will continue until Saturday, 31 July 2021.

[CLICK TO DOWNLOAD HIGH RES IMAGE HERE.](#)