

Wednesday 21st November 2018

**PRESS CONFERENCE: 9.30am MILTON BRISBANE**

## **8 MILLIONTH call for help answered by Kids Helpline**

**Kids Helpline has this week responded to its 8 millionth request for help from a young person in Australia, marking a significant milestone for the country's only free, 24/7 phone and online counselling service for young people.**

"Since the launch of the service in 1991 a young person has attempted to contact Kids Helpline every 56 seconds and on average we manage to deal with around 800 calls or online requests for help every day," said **yourtown**/Kids Helpline CEO Tracy Adams.

The 8 millionth call came through via phone late on Monday afternoon this week.

"We want to take a moment to recognise our dedicated counsellors and the teams behind the call centre, as well as the community, who fund more than three-quarters of our service by buying tickets in the **yourtown** Art Union prize draws," said Ms Adams.

"While the 8 million figure is an important milestone for us, we know our work isn't done. While we do our very best with the resources we have, more than 186,000 calls and requests for help have already gone unanswered this year alone."

For 21 year old Molly the Kids Helpline service has been vital for her very survival, having called the counsellors numerous times when suffering serious mental health issues.

"There are times I know I wouldn't have made it through to the next morning if I hadn't been able to call Kids Helpline. The counsellors have helped me calm down and are able to get me thinking reasonably again. There's no way I would be here today if it wasn't for the service," explains Molly.

Molly's mother Sue agrees: "I will always be eternally grateful to Kids Helpline. Without them I doubt we would still have our beautiful daughter."

The top 5 reasons young people contacted Kids Helpline in 2017 were: mental health issues, family relationships, emotional wellbeing, suicidal thoughts and dating/partner relationships.

### **MEDIA CALL:**

TIME: Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> November 9.30am

LOCATION: **yourtown** Business Centre, 5 Cordova St, Milton Qld

### **INTERVIEWS:**

CEO of **yourtown**/Kids Helpline, Tracy Adams

Young people who have used Kids Helpline, Molly and Cameron

Molly's mother Sue

### **VISION AND IMAGES AVAILABLE:**

TV overlay of call centre and young people that use the service via phone or online <https://vimeo.com/301726574>

TV overlay of **yourtown** Christmas Prize Home <https://vimeo.com/297648760/66d24ae07e>

## FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Jo Stone 0414 384 407 or Nikki Holmes 0412 387 570 from Livewire Productions or Tracey Gillinder from **yourtown** 0434 077 478

**yourtown** is a registered charity and public company limited by guarantee providing services young people can access to find jobs, learn skills, become great parents and live safe, happy lives. For over 57 years we've been tackling the issues impacting young people in Australia - like youth unemployment and mental health, and taking on issues like family and domestic violence. The community with **yourtown's** Art Unions funds most of what we do.

## MOLLY'S STORY:

Molly was 13 when she first called Kids Helpline. She was struggling with the pressure of school and didn't have many friends. Her mum Sue had also been unwell.

Molly has attempted suicide numerous times and regularly uses the Kids Helpline service as she battles mental health issues.

"I've had a lot of dark days. I've struggled a lot with depression and anxiety, dissociative episodes things like that. I've struggled with self harm for a long time too which thankfully I am in recovery for, it's been tough but I am getting there," says Molly, who is now 21.

"There are times I know I wouldn't have made it through to the next morning if I hadn't been able to call Kids Helpline. The counsellors have helped me calm down and are able to get me thinking reasonably again. There's no way I would be here today if it wasn't for the service," explains Molly.

Molly's mum Sue said the first suicide attempt came as a shock. Molly had called Kids Helpline and the counsellor initiated a Duty of Care emergency action.

"Kids Helpline literally saved Molly's life. Both Jon and I had gone to work for the day, leaving Molly in bed as she was not well enough to attend school. What we didn't know, was that Molly had taken an overdose. Thankfully she had made contact with Kids Helpline and they activated the emergency services to attend our home," said Sue.

"The first thing I knew about all this was a call from the paramedics telling me they were at our house and that they would be taking our gravely ill daughter to hospital. I will always be eternally grateful to Kids Helpline - without them I doubt we would still have our beautiful daughter."

## KIDS HELPLINE STATISTICS:

- Kids Helpline opened on 25 March 1991 with more than 3,200 young people making a call on the first day and Kids Helpline has responded to more than 8 million contacts over 27 years.
- In 2017, Kids Helpline responded to 157,656 contacts from children and young people nationally. We also had 607,634 unique visitors to the Kids Helpline website with 2,051,601 page views.
- Since 2001, Kids Helpline has initiated 18,382 Duty of Care emergency care actions to keep children and young people safe.
- The average counselling session time via phone in 2017 was 32 minutes and 54 minutes via WebChat. An increase in the complexity of issues and the need for more intensive, longer sessions has seen a 72% increase in the counselling time over the last ten years.
- Top 5 reasons young people use the Kids Helpline counselling service in 2017: Mental Health 26%; Family Relationships 18%; Emotional Wellbeing 17%; Suicide-related 16%; and Dating and Partner Relationships 10%.
- The reasons for contact have changed over the years - the Top 5 reasons young people contacted Kids Helpline in the 1996-2000 period: Family Relationships; Peer Relationships; Partner relationships including partner violence; Child abuse and/or family/domestic violence; and Bullying.
- The cost of operating Kids Helpline has doubled in 14 years going from \$5.5M in 2004 to \$11M in 2018
- **yourtown** Art Unions funded 74% of Kids Helpline in 2018.

Kids Helpline is here anytime and for any reason - [kidshelpline.com.au](http://kidshelpline.com.au) or free call 1800 55 1800.

To buy a **yourtown** Prize Home ticket and support Kids Helpline follow this link <https://ytwn.in/2QSMJbl>