



MEDIA RELEASE (For Immediate Release)

Australia unites to walk and run against family violence in the 2023 Run Against Violence Virtual Team Challenge

Registrations for Australia's annual Run Against Violence (RAV) Virtual Team Challenge are now open, with the event kicking off on Wednesday, August 30th, 2023. Its goal is to generate meaningful conversations about family violence prevention and remove the stigma surrounding family violence. Teams of up to 20 people are encouraged to walk or run 1300 kilometres over 19 days in their local community.

Co-founded by Kirrily Dear and Brad Smithers in 2017, the RAV Virtual Team Challenge is pivotal in creating a safer community for everyone. Kirrily says, "It's more than just a run; it's about people joining together to create healthy and respectful communities, free from family violence. Participants can start their own team, or there are teams looking for additional members. The Challenge is a fun and meaningful way to make new friends across Australia and worldwide."

According to a recent [Australian Child Maltreatment Study](#), almost 40% of Australians have been exposed to domestic violence in childhood, with long-term consequences in adulthood, such as a higher likelihood of mental disorders. This year's theme, "Seeing the Unseen," aims to demonstrate the power of connection to create communities where family violence no longer exists.

The Challenge is now in its sixth year, with over 200 teams participating across Australia last year (almost 70% of whom were based in regional areas). This year, Kirrily hopes to welcome more communities into the RAV family, specifically more men, who play a pivotal role in the healing journey.

"So far, men only make up around 21% of RAV participants," Kirrily says. "We want men to know that the RAV Challenge is enjoyable, healthy, and you don't need to say or do anything special. Listening and participating is enough."

This year's artwork, created by young Indigenous artist Jorja Cohen, and incorporated into RAV 2023 merchandise, depicts male and female figures seated and facing away from each other.

"They can't see each other's expression or form; they are unseen by each other and by their community and families. They're melancholic and hurt." says Jorja. As the story unfolds, the two find their paths to healing and reconnection through their family and community.

All donations go directly to the National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN) to support and expand the [Love Bites Program](#), helping Australian teenagers access respectful relationship education in their schools.

Brad encourages everyone to participate, regardless of fitness level. "Whether you can walk or run 10 or 10,000 metres, we'd love you to join us to help end family violence", he says.



The RAV Virtual Team Challenge equates to 1.7 million steps*, representing the estimated number of Australians who experience physical abuse before the age of 15. Let's all take steps towards preventing family violence together.

* Sourced from ABS Personal Safety Survey 2016.

More information – <https://www.runagainstviolence.com/team-challenge-overview>

Follow on – Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/runagainstviolence>

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Attachments:

- 2022 Heat Map shows the location of participants during the 2022 RAV Virtual Team Challenge.
- 2023 Artwork by Jorja Cohen depicting this year's theme – Seeing the Unseen.
- National Invitation provides an overview of the history and impact of the event.

