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MEDIA RELEASE

Warringah Council votes to break the silence about child sexual assault

Warringah Councillor, Vincent De Luca was last night successful with a Motion of Urgency, with Warringah Council voting to help break the silence about child sexual assault

Yesterday, Councillor De Luca, attended the launch of White Balloon Day as part of National Child Protection Week. Cr De Luca who has been involved with youth welfare and child protection work since his early teenage years and was awarded the Order of Australia for his work in this field said "White Balloon Day is a way of showing public support and sympathy for victims of child sexual assault and is held every year during National Child Protection Week".

"Research by Australia's leading Child protection advocates, Bravehearts, indicates that one in five children will be assaulted before their 18th birthday. This is a disgrace and we as a community need to do something to stop this" Cr De Luca said.

"As decision makers and community leaders we need to make our stance clear on this issue".

"We need to encourage children and young people and indeed the wider community to report any acts of sexual assault and break the cycle of abuse. We also need to make sure that there is adequate support for the tragic victims and their families and friends of this heinous crime".

"Bravehearts is a wonderful organisation that provides such support and education services. The organisation runs the Ditto's Keep Safe Adventure Education Program which teaches children in pre-schools and schools about personal safety, Counselling and Support Programs, Advocacy, Lobbying and Campaigning, a Sexual Assault Disclosure Scheme, Research Program, Crisis Information Pack, partnership with MySpace to provide information and support to young people, utilising MySpace, Training and awareness workshops on risk management for staff and volunteers in organisations that have contact with children, Supporting Hands Workshops and Therapeutic Professionals Workshops".

Council voted to congratulate Bravehearts for its continuing efforts to stop sexual assault in Australia and support victims of sexual assault. Councillors also voted to call upon all levels of Government to allocate appropriate funding to Bravehearts for it to continue its great work.