

Media Release

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“IT TAKES A VILLAGE” - NEW CAMPAIGN TO KEEP VULNERABLE KIDS SAFE AT A TIME OF UPHEAVAL

Everyone has a role in keeping NSW kids safe. That’s the message in the new “*It takes a village*” campaign launched today by NSW non-profit agencies Fams, Adopt Change and BackTrack Youth Works.

The economic upheaval instigated by Covid-19 has caused major, long-lasting disruptions that are leading to pressure cooker situations in homes across NSW, in some instances threatening the safety of children.

Even as NSW moves out of lockdown, more families are facing combinations of financial hardship, unemployment, housing and rental uncertainty, alongside increased gambling and alcohol intake.

The saying goes that “*It takes a village to raise a child*” and never has that been more true than right now, according to campaign organisers, with everyone needing to play a role in keeping kids safer.

The joint campaign aims to educate parents, neighbours and communities to keep an eye on vulnerable kids and families, and to encourage people to get the help they need.

Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services, Gareth Ward, said Covid-19 changed the way we do things, and that needs to include the approach to keeping young people safe.

“The last few months have been tough for the community, but it’s been even tougher for those that are vulnerable.

“That’s why the NSW Government is partnering with the not-for-profit sector to get the message out that we all need to look out for vulnerable children, and we all have a responsibility to help keep them safe.”

Fams CEO Julie Hourigan Ruse says the village that raises our children and protects our children now needs to be extended to everyone.

“My great fear is those who traditionally identify kids at Risk of Significant Harm have less visibility of children,” she said.

“We’re all in this together, so ask for help if you need it, or if you see a friend who is not coping, reach out and offer to find some support.

“If you see a child who looks like they might be in a bad situation, don’t count on someone else helping, do something, offer support or call the child protection helpline or, if there is imminent danger, the police.

“If you know a family who needs a service like parenting support or counselling, go to the HSNET free online directory, find the local service, talk to the family and encourage them to make the call.”



CEO of Adopt Change, Renee Carter says our greatest priority as a society should be to protect our vulnerable children.

“As a community we need to protect children and raise them in safe and nurturing families, their safety and wellbeing must come first. We all have a role to play,” Ms Carter said.

“Providing a safe and stable home for vulnerable children is so important and we need more people who are willing become provide a loving home for children who cannot stay with their family.”

“Anyone who is interested in offering care for a child in crisis, who can provide a safe and nurturing home should get in contact with Adopt Change to learn more about how they can help.”

Founder of BackTrack Youth Works Bernie Shakeshaft says we all have a responsibility to keep kids safe.

“I’ve heard it said that children are the best barometer of how we’re tracking as a society. We all have a role to play in growing happy healthy kids and need to do much more if we are to ensure kids are safe and supported,” Mr Shakeshaft said.

“Now more than ever we need to keep an eye out for young people doing it tough -and step up if they need a hand”.

The campaign will run for four weeks and will encourage everyone to play a role in keeping our kids safe.

Whether it is making that difficult phone call, checking in with your neighbour or signing up to become a foster carer, it is our responsibility to step up and take action.

For more information visit www.keepingkidssafe.org.au

Click [here](#) to download a copy of the video.

Important contact numbers:

- For an emergency please call 000.
- If you are concerned a child is at risk of significant harm, call the Child Protection Helpline on 13 21 11.
- To connect with your local service visit www.hsnet.nsw.gov.au
- Contact Adopt Change to find out how you can become a foster or kinship carer, guardian or adoptive parent.

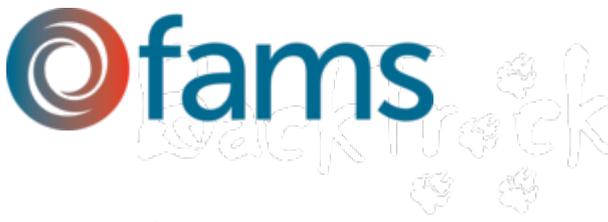
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Media Contacts:

Fams: Sarah Michael 0401 591 286

Adopt Change: Jonathan Sweet 0400 679 329

BackTrack: Francesca Andreoni 0447 530 299



About Fams

Fams is the peak advocacy body in NSW whose aim is to support the delivery of services to vulnerable children, young people and their families.

Children are kept safe by quality services which help kids and families when and where they need it. Fams makes this possible by advocating for better public policy, advising how to achieve sustainable outcomes and acting to help vulnerable children, young people, families and communities.

Established in 1981, Fams has always been driven by strong values and our aim:

- Safe Children
- Strong Families
- Supportive Communities

About Adopt Change

Adopt Change is a not-for-profit organisation with a mission to support and educate families and communities in caring for displaced children (including those in foster care or orphaned) to achieve our vision of a world where all children grow, learn, play and thrive in a safe, nurturing and stable environment. We provide support resources, training, education and programs to work towards achieving this goal.

About BackTrack Youth Works

BackTrack Youth Works is an independent community based not-for-profit organisation established in 2006 to help young people doing it tough. BackTrack works with some of the most marginalised young people in our community. It has grown to become one of the most well recognised and successful youth work organisation working with young people having a hard time. Based in Armidale, NSW, BackTrack works with young people who have run out of options by keeping them alive, out of jail, and chasing their hopes and dreams.