

# Gymnastics Australia & Bravehearts Partner To Protect 220,000 Aussie Children!



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## GYMNASTICS AUSTRALIA & BRAVEHEARTS PARTNERSHIP SET TO PROTECT 220,000 AUSSIE CHILDREN!

In an Australian first in child protection, around 220,000 Aussie kid's nation-wide (91% under 12-years-old), will now be safer from potential harm following the launch of a unique joint initiative thanks to Gymnastics Australia and Australia's leading child protection advocate, Bravehearts.

This new initiative announced today will protect children through empowering and training adults at all levels of the sport with specialised child safety knowledge enabling Gymnastics Australia to play a crucial role in helping protect the most vulnerable members of the community – our children.

Bravehearts Founder and Executive Chair, Hetty Johnston AM welcomed the partnership saying, "In a proactive move, Gymnastics Australia have taken a leadership role in becoming Australia's first national sporting body to implement 'child safe' steps on a national scale in line with the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

"The Bravehearts services being delivered to Gymnastics Australia are the culmination of almost 20 years' of evidence-based research and service delivery, with Bravehearts' ChildPlace and childPROTECT Frameworks in line with the Royal Commission's '10 Elements of ChildSafe Organisations'," Ms Johnston said.

"This partnership will ensure Bravehearts provides specialised education, training services, risk management and cultural reform outcomes to the management, staff, parents and children of Gymnastics Australia," she said.

"With the Royal Commission reporting 3.2 million Australian children participating in organised sport or physical activity outside school, through implementing Bravehearts' unique training and education programs for staff, parents and children, Gymnastics Australia will be driving the change necessary to have a significant impact on improved child protection throughout Australia.

"Every organisation that works with children, especially national sporting organisations has a duty of care and a responsibility to keep the children in their care safe.

"Our heartfelt congratulations to Gymnastics Australia for forging the way forward, for setting new benchmarks in child protection and inspiring all other children's services organisations to follow," said Ms. Johnston.

Gymnastics Australia CEO Kitty Chiller said, "Our organisation is committed to creating environments where children are safe so we're implementing so much more than optional training for a few staff. This is a significant cultural shift within our organisation where the safety of children is paramount."

"Through this partnership, Gymnastics Australia's affiliated clubs will be provided with resources while Bravehearts' specialised training will be a mandatory requirement for all coaches and officials.

"The training will provide every coach, official, administrator and volunteer with the knowledge and skills they need to better equip them to mentor and protect our children, and that will happen at every level, throughout the entire Australian gymnastics community, which is vital.

"Gymnastics Australia is committed to providing young gymnasts with personal safety information and invaluable education for parents about how to keep children safe and partnering with Bravehearts, the leading child safety advocates, shows just how serious we are."

Bravehearts' specialised training will provide general information of child sexual assault, address risk factors and how to avoid them, identify what predatory or grooming behaviour looks like, how to respond to disclosures, how to identify indicators of harm in children, and much more.

"If these measures can help Gymnastics Australia protect even one child, it has been more than worthwhile. However, our aim is far greater – our aim is to do everything within our power to protect all the children in our care and we encourage all like organisations to join us in partnering with Bravehearts to better protect the children in their care." said Ms Chiller.

Gymnastics teaches the fundamental skills of all movement and builds confidence and competence as a foundation for future sporting success for children of all ages, with an emphasis on 'Start Here, Go Anywhere!'.

Ditto's Keep Safe Adventure Show presents personal safety strategies for children in a fun and non-confrontational style with Ditto the friendly lion cub the star performer.

For information on Bravehearts' child protection programs and how your organisation can become involved, please visit our website:  
[www.bravehearts.org.au](http://www.bravehearts.org.au)

If the content of this story raises any issues for you, please call Bravehearts on 1800 272 831.

#Bravehearts #ProtectOutKids @BraveheartsProtectKids #StartHereGoAnywhere @GymAustralia

-ENDS-

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