



Family violence: the children's story.

Family and domestic violence is increasingly being recognised as the social challenge of our time. Public conversation around the issue is building; however, we often overlook the children - those who hear and see the violence, or are directly targeted. Too often, these children don't have the chance to tell their own story. For 19 days in 2017, solo ultramarathon runner, Kirrily Dear, will ask the nation to stop and listen to these young people.



Jesse Aitken witnessed family violence as a child and featured in ICEBERG



1300kms, 19 days, 1 united voice.

Family violence against children is a problem largely hidden from view. In Australia there is no national research that provides definitive insight into the full scale of the issue. It has been estimated that 935,600 Australian women and 824,300 men had their first experience of physical abuse before the age of 15, with a parent reported as the largest proportion of perpetrators.¹ Further, 568,700 women in Australia, and 99,400 men, report that children in their care saw or heard the violence they experienced by their former partner.² While these figures are confronting, they only tell part of the story. Violence against children can be physical, mental, emotional or sexual and can be inflicted by any family member.

Any child who witnesses, or is a direct victim of, abuse can be left traumatised for life. Just one incident is enough to set that child up for a lifetime of psychological, behavioural, health and socioeconomic challenges³. The #StepsTogether Ultramarathon aims to bring the story of those children to the forefront of the national conversation about family violence.

Starting in Broken Hill on 30th August 2017, Kirrily will cover more than 1300kms – the equivalent of 30 marathons – as she makes her way to Sydney over 19 days. “We will pass through 25 communities on our way to the coast,” says Kirrily, “creating a continuous storyline across the changing backdrop of the Australian landscape. These stories will remind us that no matter where we’re from, whether it’s the back of Broken Hill or the streets of Sydney, no community is immune from the impact of family violence on its young people. Our hope is that the general public will rally around these kids, listen to their words, value their perspectives and show them we have their backs.

“We want to build community awareness of the facts and statistics regarding children’s exposure to family violence, especially intimate-partner violence and the co-occurrence of abuse that emerges from it. The ultramarathon will also give the



children an opportunity to tell the community what sort of support they need, and voice their opinions about how we can end family violence.

“It is a confronting reality for those of us who have lived in safe, stable family environments. But while the stories of these young people are heart-wrenching, their resilience and strength of character, leadership and determination to create a positive future for themselves and their community is incredibly inspiring. These kids are often mature beyond their years, they’re grounded, matter-of-fact and articulate. Many of them are doing amazing things with their lives. Kids currently living with violence, or struggling with its aftermath, deserve to hear the stories of survivors. To gain strength from strength. We want to provide inspiration and hope to children who have been impacted by family violence - to demonstrate that they have the power to make their own life choices, and the right to look forward to happy and fulfilling lives.”



Kirrily Dear during the 2014 ultramarathon



Getting the story out there

As the #StepsTogether Ultramarathon gains awareness and momentum, social media platforms will be set up to give the community access to educational resources, and enable young people to post their stories, their way. In addition, a virtual race will enable all Australians to learn about and participate in the ultramarathon.

A film crew will document Kirrily's journey, with a view to broadcasting a documentary around the issue, both online and on free-to-air television.

Community events will be organised at towns along the way, as an opportunity to listen, learn and spread the word. We are also inviting Australia's leading youth support charities to be part of the experience, and come up with their own methods of creative storytelling.

References

- 1: Sourced from Appendix 9 Australian Human Rights Commission 2015, Children's Rights Report 2015, based on ABS Personal Safety Survey 2012 data.
- 2: Australian Bureau of Statistics (2013). Personal Safety Survey, Australia, 2012 (Cat. no. 4906.0)
- 3: Clements, Oxtoby & Ogle 2008; Methodological issues in assessing psychological adjustment in child witnesses of intimate partner violence. *Trauma, Violence & Abuse* 9(2): 114–127.

Taking steps together

The #StepsTogether Ultramarathon is the second landmark ultramarathon by the Run Against Violence team. In November 2014, Kirrily ran 20 marathons (860km) in 12 days through regional NSW to raise awareness about domestic and family violence. A documentary called ICEBERG was made about the experience. It was on that journey that the Run Against Violence team began meeting young people who had grown up in homes where family violence was present and saw first-hand the impact it was having on their learning and social development.

ICEBERG Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GAW9v9eR5yQ>

Full ICEBERG documentary is available on request.

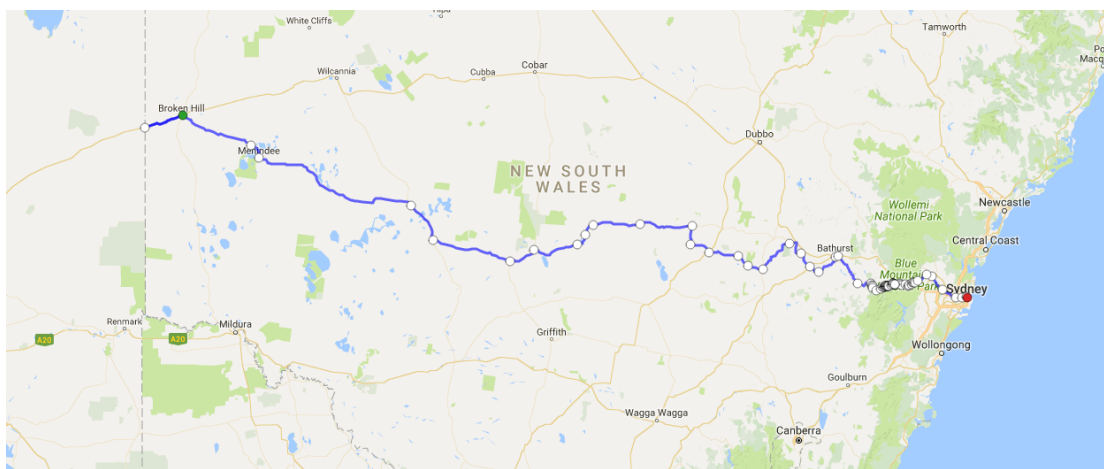


High school students leading change, featured in ICEBERG



The route

The #StepsTogether Ultramarathon will take place over 19 days starting Wednesday 30th August 2017 and finishing on 17th September 2017 at the Blackmore's Running Festival. The table below provides an approximation of the route and distances travelled each day. An online version of the approximate route can be viewed here: <https://goo.gl/Olnsj2>



Wed 30 th Aug	Thu 31 st Aug	Fri 1 st Sept	Sat 2 nd Sept
Broken Hill to Sunset Strip 93 km	Sunset Strip to Ivanhoe 228km		
Sun 3 rd Sept	Mon 4 th Sept	Tue 5 th Sept	Wed 6 th Sept
Ivanhoe to Mossgiel 50km	Mossgiel to Hillston 98km	Hillston to Lake Cargelligo to (Part) Condobolin 130km	
Thu 7 th Sept	Fri 8 th Sept	Sat 9 th Sept	Sun 10 th Sept
Lake Cargelligo to Condobolin 60km	Condobolin to Bogan Gate 64km	Bogan Gate to Forbes 48km	Forbes to Canowindra 70km
Mon 11 th Sept	Tue 12 th Sept	Wed 13 th Sept	Thu 14 th Sept
Canowindra to Orange 60km	Orange, Blayney to Bathurst 75km	Bathurst to Oberon 49km	Oberon, 6ft Track to Katoomba 62km
Fri 15 th Sept	Sat 16 th Sept	Sun 17 th Sept	
Katoomba to Yarramundi 47km	Yarramundi to Sydney Olympic Park 55km	Sydney Olympic Park to Opera House 30km Blackmores Running Festival	



Virtual challenge

A virtual challenge will be held in conjunction with the #StepsTogether Ultramarathon enabling people from around Australia, and the world, to be part of the run.

Teams of up to 10 people can race Kirrily across the Ultramarathon course. They will be challenged to complete 1.7 million steps, the step count equivalent of 1300km, during the 19 days of the race.

“When people see the target of 1.7 million steps they find it an overwhelming number, that it’s too big a challenge to take on. That’s how many people also feel when we talk about bringing an end to family violence. It’s just too big an issue. The goal is achievable and the only way it can happen is by working together.” says Kirrily.

“1.7 million is a very significant number. Not only does it represent the distance of our route, it is also reflective of the estimated number of Australians who experienced parental physical abuse before their 15th birthday. We will be taking a step for every one of those people and letting them know together we are willing and able to create change.”

Teams will register online and can select to fundraise for a number of approved charities providing services to support better outcomes for children at risk.

We are currently looking for sponsors and a media partner for the virtual race.



Run Against Violence

Run Against Violence is an incorporated member association established to use running and other sporting activities as a conduit for educating and engaging communities in family violence prevention.

We believe that, by breaking the silence and encouraging people to learn about family violence, we can remove the stigma and social barriers that prevent people from asking for help.

Website: www.runagainstvience.com

Media: <http://www.runagainstvience.com/RAV/index.html#media>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/runagainstvience/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/RunAgainstViol>

Kirrily Dear professional bio: <http://ewo.com.au/staff-profiles/kirrily-dear>

Contact

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Partnership opportunities

Below are some opportunities if you would like your organisation to be part of the #StepsTogether Ultramarathon.

Vehicle Sponsor

We are looking for a vehicle sponsor who can provide two vehicles during the ultramarathon and cover operating expenses. Sponsors branding to appear on vehicles as well as mentions on social media and other digital platforms.

Digital Partner

If you're passionate about digital, then help us provide an interactive platform for young people to be heard and for all Australians to engage with the Ultramarathon and the stories that emerge. The platform will remain active after the event and be available as a free resource for schools, community groups and any other interested parties.

Media Partner

The ultramarathon brings together an inspiring mix of adventure, endurance and change told through powerful first-hand accounts. We need an organisation to help us

unlock the potential of this story and drive media engagement throughout Australia.

Film Production

The #StepsTogether Ultramarathon is a one-off landmark project. It is a moment in history that needs to be captured and shared with every Australian. We need the voices of the young people to be heard across our country and around the world. Film has a powerful role to play in making this social change a reality.

Supporter Package

Organisations who become supporters will be part of our community engagement program. Your brand will appear as a supporting organisation at our community events and in social media. We will also welcome some of your employees to run with us for a section of the ultramarathon. Funds will be used to cover the operating costs of the ultramarathon and the community events.