

PRESS RELEASE MAY 2024

Because I Love Him

by Ashlee Donohue

**One woman's journey
through domestic violence
to empowerment**



Ashlee Donohue's memoir *Because I Love Him*, published by Magabala Books 1 May 2024, is one woman's deeply personal journey through domestic violence, shining a light on a national crisis that remains a taboo subject, often shrouded in silence despite its pervasive impact.

"In all of the madness stood two addicts: one severely addicted to alcohol and drugs, and the other just as addicted to the addict ... In my sickness—the sickness of this toxic love addiction—his threats were the only words I wanted and needed to hear," explains Ashlee.

A proud Dunghutti woman, born and raised in Kempsey NSW, Ashlee shares an unflinching and very personal account of love, addiction, motherhood and domestic violence. She pulls back the layers of strong family ties, the intricacies of relationships and the unspoken expectations within urban Aboriginal communities.

An accomplished and tireless anti-violence advocate, Ashlee hopes that by sharing her story she is breaking the misconception that victims are alone in their experiences.

"The significance of sharing stories like mine cannot be overstated," says Ashlee. "It's disheartening that only a fraction of domestic violence incidents make headline news, with the majority overlooked or underreported. Through platforms like social media, a handful of individuals are shedding light on this issue by documenting every tragic outcome of domestic violence. But it's crucial that personal narratives, like mine, are shared widely in a collective effort to dismantle the barriers of silence and stigma, fostering a community where survivors can find solace, support, and strength in solidarity."

Because I Love Him is a compelling and often confronting read that unravels the journey from addict to empowerment, something Ashlee hopes will help other families.

"My hope is to foster a profound understanding of the intricate layers that constitute domestic violence and by sharing my narrative, offer a source of empowerment and enlightenment, guiding readers toward positive insights and actions in their own lives."

Magabala Books is honoured to publish Ashlee's important story: "*Because I Love Him* is a powerful truth-telling that brings to light the difficulties Aboriginal women face when suffering from domestic violence, an issue that has been normalised for too long," says Melena Cole-Manolis. "Thank you Ashlee for your resilience and courage while telling your story and giving voice to the silenced."

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The Author

Ashlee Donohue is a proud mother and grandmother, educator, speaker and advocate around the anti-violence message and has been actively working for the Aboriginal community for over 17 years, notably for Gadigal Information Service – Koori Radio 93.7FM and Mudgin-Gal Aboriginal Corporation. She has attended and presented around the anti-violence message at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women forums in New York City. Ashlee completed a Master of Education (UTS, Sydney), was the recipient of the UTS Human Rights Reconciliation Award and served as a Director of Community Education for the Bachelor of Arts in Adult Education and Community Management. Ashlee is the Chairperson of Warringa Baiya Aboriginal women’s legal service, and a member of the ‘Our Watch’ Aboriginal women’s advisory group.

Available May in all good bookshops and online from Magabala Books — **RRP \$27.99**

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