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Alice Springs town councillor Jacinta Price comforts an emotional Holly-ann Martin at Sunday's #ProtectOurChildren rally

Picture: EMMA MURRAY

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Town rallies to protect our children

Emma Murray

A GROUP of people gathered on Alice Springs Town Council lawns on Sunday for the #ProtectOurChildren rally, organised by town councillor Jacinta Price.

The rally began with an emotional speech from Holly-ann Martin, who has been delivering child abuse prevention education in remote communities for the past ten years.

Ms Martin made a plea to the Federal Government to invest more money in child abuse prevention education.

"The only way anything's going to change is through education, and there has to be a whole of community approach," she said.

"Children need to know it's okay to speak up if something happens to them, and adults need to know how to react when a child tells them."

Ms Martin also pointed to the increasing rates of child on child sexual abuse, fuelled by

"We should be doing more for the kids of this country."

JACINTA PRICE

easy access to pornography.

"When I was a child we played cowboys and Indians because that's what we watched," she said.

"Children are seeing things in (pornographic) films and acting it out on other children.

"There needs to be a national ad campaign about the pornography, to alert parents to the problem."

Rally attendee, Ashley McDonnell, said he has seen first-hand the problems children have to grow up around.

"When I was a kid in town I could see a handful of children

whose home life wasn't the way it needed to be. Now the problem is enormous," he said.

"I work in the school system, and the need to protect our children is huge; these kids are growing up way too fast."

Councillor Price said she would not be silenced on the issue, and spoke passionately about her determination to find better outcomes for children experiencing abuse.

"We should be doing more for the kids of this country; they are the future and we have to ensure that they are looked after," she said.

"We live in a country where there's plenty of opportunity, but we're still seeing horrible things occur, like what happened a few weeks ago in Tennant Creek.

"In the past I personally have felt powerless to do anything. I've seen too much of it now that I have to be vocal, and continue to be vocal, and do everything in my power to ensure this issue is addressed."