



QUEENSLAND CHAMPIONS OF CHILD PROTECTION RECOGNISED TODAY

The definition of champion: *a person who vigorously supports or defends a person or cause.*

That well and truly distinguishes the 11 people and/or organisations that we applaud today for the work that they do to improve the lives of compromised young people and the loving support they provide to at-risk children.

Our State's champions of child protection will be recognised in an awards ceremony at Parliament House, launching Queensland Child Protection Week (QCPW) 2022 celebrations.

Chairperson Georgina Livingstone said that while many of us have been forced to overcome adversity in recent years, these incredible Queenslanders face emotionally confronting and challenging situations on an ongoing basis.

"Each and every day, these passionate and hard-working champions, make the world a better place for many innocent Queenslanders who have lacked hope, joy and consistency during their young lives," said Ms Livingstone.

"These Queenslanders really are 'champions'."

"I'm grateful for the opportunity to personally thank each of them for the courage, commitment and care that they so generously give of themselves to our state's vulnerable children and their families."

QCPW kicks off this Sunday, 4 September (Father's Day) and runs until next Saturday, 10 September. The week will be celebrated with around 100 events being held across the State.

The Minister for Children, Leanne Linard MP congratulated this year's Child Protection Week Award winners.

"This year's winners were drawn from a diverse range of organisations under the theme of '*Child protection is everyone's business*'," Ms Linard said.

"These community champions are helping disadvantaged children and their families survive and thrive and should be commended for their daily dedication to creating safer communities."

"Queensland Child Protection Week is an opportunity to start conversations about working together to create safe and supportive environments for our children and families."

[ENDS] Thursday, 1 September

BIOS OF AWARD RECIPIENTS FOLLOW BELOW



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For more details on award winners, please telephone Danyelle Nolan on 0408 410 930 or email media@childprotectionweek.net.

2022 QUEENSLAND CHILD PROTECTION WEEK AWARD WINNERS

Professional Award

Elizabeth Harris

Elizabeth established and manages the 'Out of Home Care' Health Advisor role within the Children's Plus Unit at the Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service.

This role is designed to ensure local children in out-of-home-care receive regular health and developmental assessments.

Elizabeth is described by her team as "passionate" and "one-of-a-kind" and sees all of these children on a regular basis.

Elizabeth creates a safe, comfortable and secure environment for the children and young people that she sees. She does this by seeing her patients in their most preferred and comfortable space - including, day care, school or their carer's homes. Elizabeth, with the help of the wider Child Protection Team on the Sunshine Coast, also secured funding from Wishlist (a local hospital charity) to provide back packs filled with essential items for children and young people in Out of Home Care - something of their own to cherish when often they often enter care with very little.

There is no role across any Queensland Health Child Protection Unit or wider Queensland Health services that is implemented this way.

Elizabeth's success can also be attributed to the excellent working relationships that she has established with the three Child Safety Service Centres across the Sunshine Coast region.

Professional (Non-Government) Award

Caroline Collins

Caroline's exceptional commitment to the wellbeing and safety of local children has shown an improvement in the lives of vulnerable young people in the Gympie region.

Through facilitating multiple partnerships, projects, events and reports in her role as Local Level Alliance Coordinator, Caroline has facilitated the creation of two 'State of Gympie Children' reports based on Australian Early Childhood Data.

They have identified the particular vulnerabilities of impacted children in the Gympie region and from this, a range of working parties have been established to improve outcomes.



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The 'Reaching Families' program has led to the successful funding of a 'Pop Up Play' project - which was so effective it attracted funding from the Primary Health Network. It is also being considered for roll out beyond Gympie and right across Queensland.

Caroline has also played a key role in the delivery of a range of popular events aimed at engaging families and raising awareness around early childhood engagement and prevention including 'Gympie Little Kids Day Out', 'Child Protection Week' and 'Messy Play', as well as the 'Teddy Bear Health Check'.

Caroline goes above and beyond in her part-time role. She has great connections in her community and does outstanding work.

Media & Communications Award

DNX Media

'The Children in the Pictures'

The nominees Akhim Dev, Simon Nasht and Tony Wright are the creators of the documentary feature film, 'The Children in The Pictures'.

The film reveals the difficult and painstaking work of police specialising in investigating online child sexual exploitation, particularly those investigators of Taskforce Argos, the world-renowned specialist unit of the Queensland Police who have pioneered a victim-centric approach to what has become the world's fastest growing major crime.

The nominees are also instigators of the associated impact campaign which has shifted public understanding of this technology-driven crisis. Released in Australia in October 2021, first in cinemas, then broadcast by SBS, "The Children in The Pictures" has provoked an extraordinary response from audiences around Australia and the world.

- More than 500,000 Australians have now seen the film generating exceptional media coverage and doubling of social media discussion around the subject in the 3 months following the release;
- Resulting in more than 80% of audiences 'feeling more comfortable' discussing Child Sexual Exploitation Material' and 90% of parents and caregivers later initiating a discussion about online safety with their children;
- Queensland Police Investigators have attended virtual and in-person screenings of the film at the UN in New York and Vienna, London, Brussels, Los Angeles and Washington DC, Ottawa and elsewhere to highlight the world-leading work of Queensland Police in this field;
- There has been a 20% decline in the incorrect use of the term 'child pornography' since the release of the film. The correct term is 'child sexual exploitation material';
- The nominees have succeeded in raising more than \$1 million in funding to continue increasing awareness and they work with the Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation on the development of resources to inform audiences what they need to know to ensure children remain safe;
- The film will become the centrepiece of the UN General Assembly next year.



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Described as “a film that every human must see”, it significantly raises public awareness around the confronting issue of online child abuse; seeks to change the language we use to describe the crime, and educate parents and caregivers about the risk’s children face online.

Volunteer Award

Karen and Darren Germon

‘Hope in a suitcase’

Karen and Darren are passionate foster carers who wanted to make a difference to the lives of children in their care, as well as other children in the care system.

Not prepared to see children moving between placements with nothing or only a few items in a plastic bag, Karen and Darren took the initiative to establish the Queensland arm of ‘Hope in a Suitcase’ - a volunteer-run, non-profit organisation which provides children in foster care with their own suitcase.

The suitcases are filled with essential items such as toiletries, (sanitary items for the older girls), underwear, a set of pyjamas and a change of clothing. They also include something to cuddle for the younger children, a book to read, a journal or colouring-in books and pencils to encourage creativity and provide a distraction away from their turmoil.

Karen and Darren recognise that children in care experience traumatic circumstances outside of their control. The suitcase becomes a safe and secure place to keep their belongings and take with them on their journey. The suitcase also represents genuine care from their community and provides affected children with respect, dignity and hope in their future.

Hope in a suitcase (founded in New South Wales) hadn’t existed in Queensland until Karen and Darren took action and quickly established links and grew strong community support.

Karen and Darren regularly supply suitcases to Child Safety Centres, fostering agencies and hospitals. They believe that winning the Queensland Child Protection Week award will ensure greater awareness of ‘Hope in a Suitcase’ and in turn provide joy, love and hope to more children in care. This warms their hearts.

Regional Program Award

NELP (Navigating Early Learning Pathways)

A regional program that advances education and life outcomes – NELP: ‘Navigating Early Learning Pathways’.

It was a collective commitment to improve education and life outcomes for children in care and on Intervention with Parental Agreements (IPAs) that led to the development of a partnership between the Department of Education, North Coast Region and the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs Sunshine Coast and Central Region and the implementation of the project titled NELP.



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NELP prepares children who experience a high level of disadvantage and vulnerability, as well as their carers and families, prepare for school or re-entry to school.

NELP's objectives are to ensure every child in care or on an IPA aged 3-5 years are accessing quality early childhood education and Prep-age eligible children are being actively supported to successfully transition to school.

The cooperative partnership has embedded systems for critical information exchange that enables a team-around-the-child approach.

This culture of strong cross-agency collaboration has led to a continuing evolution in education and child safety practices.

NELP has now been extended to focus on other key stages such as the transition from primary to high school and the transition from one to school to another.

Transition 2 Success Initiative Award

Three Big Rivers

Three Big Rivers is an Indigenous-led employment group.

Partnered with Transition to Success in Townsville, the organisation helps close the gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people subject to Youth Justice and/or Child Safety Orders through the provision of a 'Farm Hand' course delivered over 14 weeks.

Indigenous staff and mentors offer training and employment opportunities in a dynamic and interactive environment. Run on traditional grounds, with a range of culturally appropriate learning techniques, the course saw 10 participants complete re-vegetation projects in the local region. The partnership supported participants with an effective and productive transition into the workplace as well as providing a visible return for the community. The result, three young people were offered paid traineeships after successfully completing the program.

Three Big Rivers has also developed positive partnerships with local organisations to provide better outcomes for young people – acknowledging and thanking the Townsville City Council, On Common Country, North Queensland Dry Tropics and TAFE Queensland.

Child Safe Organisation Award

G8 Education

G8 Education is one of Australia's largest providers of high-quality early learning and care. Safety is an integral part of fulfilling that purpose which is why G8 Education has created and implemented a 'Child Protection Program'.

Headquartered on the Gold Coast, G8 ran a highly successful 'I Will' campaign across all of their 440 centres nationally. Team members reviewed G8's Child Protection Statement of Commitment and



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wrote their own personalised 'I Will' - stating what action they would be taking to protect the children in their care. This led to hundreds of passionate G8 team members posting photos of themselves holding their 'I Will' child safety commitments on to the 'Workplace' platform and the creation of an 'I Will' wall that is very proudly displayed at G8's Gold Coast Support Office, showcasing each team members' commitment to being child safe.

To embed a child safe culture across all centres, G8 also introduced a 'Child Protection Champion' role. The 'Champion's' role is to be the voice of child protection at their centre. The Champions have received additional training and guidance to have the ability to be a 'go-to person' for their peers to discuss any child protection concerns and work to embed child-protection centre practices by supporting and educating team members and promoting a child safe culture.

The G8 network is committed to working across Queensland and nationally to create child-safe environments by standing beside children and advocating for their right to enjoy a childhood in which their health, safety and wellbeing is a priority.

Our Children Our Future

Family Participation Program – Logan

The Family Participation Program was launched by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service in late 2018 to address the over-representation of First Nation's children in the Child Protection System, reduce risk and ensure children are safe, at home with their family.

The Team works to truly understand each individual family. They aim to reduce worry and anxiety and provide much-needed support to ensure impacted Logan family units are preserved. Their efforts have resulted in a reduction in the amount of children entering into care and able to remain with their families over the past 12 months.

The Family Participation Program implements training, tools and evidence-based best practices, to really make a difference to these families.

Education Initiative Award

The Yili Program

The Yili (pronounced 'yearly') Program is a neuroscience informed, youth transition and engagement program for young people aged 10 to 15 years who are on bail reporting conditions and cannot have their needs met by alternative education facilities.

Short for 'Yiliyapinya' which means 'brain' from the WANKUMARA (GALALI) Language, The Yili Program seeks to break the cycle of detention by providing a bridging program to help young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people transition into mainstream community and schooling. The program offers a second chance for children excluded from all other schools and provides the opportunity for young people to heal, prepare and demonstrate they are ready to re-enter more traditional schooling models.



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Linking with existing educational, employment and support programs, Yili focuses on aligning the social benefits of community with culture, wellbeing, and educational outcomes. The local Aunties, Uncles and Elders, play a major role in designing and delivering cultural activities as well as mentoring as part of the program.

The Yili Program addresses the urgent need for the co-design, delivery and implementation of brain health, healing and fitness programs and strategies that incorporate brain science and neuroplasticity principles that are culturally safe and are accessible to everyone especially our vulnerable Indigenous youth.

Youth Participation Award

Solid Voices of Tomorrow Project

'Solid Voices of Tomorrow' is a Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak project that supports young people to use their voices to tell their own stories.

QATSCIPP invited 14 indigenous young people to act as 'Advisers' and meet with the peak body regularly to share their views and be involved in the development of vital programs, initiatives and policies.

The project promoted a cultural and spiritual connection to leadership for both the young people and Aboriginal staff that will have far reaching benefits for QATSCIPP member organisations and QATSCIPP itself ongoing.

The young people were active, paid members of the working group and articulated ideas and concepts that would allow them to have more agency in their own lives.

The voices of First Nations children and young people were seen as critical to ensuring peak bodies and service systems (including government) understand and are responsive to the needs and interests of children and young people.

Through seeking to understand the life and circumstances of the young 'Advisers', QATSCIPP aided the development of true leadership skills and set the children up for success and genuine opportunity to generate real change in their own lives and greater community.

Thriving Communities Initiative Award

STYMIE

Stymie is an anonymous harm reporting tool that schools are proactively using to support their students to say something without fear.

Stymie now delivers a notification about every 4 minutes.

The risk factors reported bullying, illegal activity, cyberbullying, self-harm, suicidal ideation, discrimination, physical fights, family & domestic violence, physical safety, mental health, and sexual harassment.



To date, this evidence has been used by police, allied health, outside agencies and schools to identify the right type of support for young people who have sought help.

Rachel has presented to more than 600,000 Australian students with over 375,000 notifications being delivered since Stymie was launched eight years ago - 99,495 notifications in the past 12 months alone.

Launched in 2014, the Queensland-based organisation works with 231 school communities nationally and internationally, including 107 schools in Queensland. These schools identify Stymie as an important welfare tool, which has had a significant and positive impact on children, parents and teachers – that’s why 99% of schools who subscribe to Stymie have renewed their subscriptions.

One school reported that “Stymie is amazing. It saves lives but also has a significant impact from an early intervention perspective where young people who are not in a good space can be connected with more formal supports and prevent escalation”.

Stymie’s CEO Rachel Downie is an educator with 28 years’ experience. She created Stymie following the death of one of her students by suicide. Rachel’s efforts and the success of Stymie have been acknowledged and rewarded with the 2020 Queensland Australian of the Year award, 2021 University of Southern Queensland Alumnus of the Year, and 2021 Sunshine Coast Small Business Winner (Health & Wellness).