



QUEENSLAND
**CHILD
PROTECTION
WEEK**

30 August 2023

QUEENSLAND'S CHAMPIONS OF CHILD PROTECTION AWARDED

Today we celebrate the Queenslanders who commit their lives to creating better outcomes for children who have been harmed or are at risk of harm.

This year's Queensland Child Protection Week (QCPW) award-winners will have the spotlight shone on them to thank them for the work they do, often 24/7, to help our State's vulnerable young people in their darkest hour.

Chairperson Georgina Livingstone said for the first time there would be 12 awardees – the greatest number of awards in the event's 38-year history, with two parties both set to receive the Professional Government award.

"The fact that the Committee simply couldn't decide between these extraordinary people, is a testament to the commitment and care in our sector," said Ms Livingstone.

"We are grateful for all of this years' heroes of child protection and relish the opportunity to acknowledge their significant efforts, passion and devotion to preventing child abuse and neglect."

QCPW kicks off this Sunday, 3 September (Father's Day) and runs until next Saturday, 9 September. The week will be celebrated with more than 200 events being held across the State.

Child Safety Minister Craig Crawford said Queensland Child Protection Week was a chance to celebrate the state's unsung frontline heroes.

"Our award winners go above and beyond, to protect children from abuse and harm," Mr Crawford said.

"We honour and applaud the work of these unsung heroes. "I also pay a heartfelt tribute to the resilience of all the youth within these programs.

"As the award-winning VIBE team say, the key message is: *"We will not give up on you"*.

"Come join us at some of 200 events across the state."

**QUEENSLAND CHILD PROTECTION WEEK IS PROUDLY SUPPORTED BY
THE QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT.**

[ENDS] BIOS OF AWARD RECIPIENTS FOLLOW

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



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2023 QUEENSLAND CHILD PROTECTION WEEK AWARD WINNERS

Professional (Non-Government):

Dr India Bryce & Dr Simone Collier, Co-Directors at Unique Minds Consultancy

With more than three decades of child protection and advocacy work between them, Dr Simone Collier and Dr India Bryce have worked tirelessly to raise awareness, build capacity, and empower practitioners, leaders, and survivors to interrupt the cycle of cumulative harm and protect children from chronic maltreatment.

Simone and India have successfully implemented a Cumulative Harm Aware Approach, and a Cumulative Experiences Index (CEI) which provides an innovative, and evidence-based means of identifying the interconnectedness and complexity of exposure to different forms of adversity that accumulate over time, including intergenerational trauma.

The CEI is a vital information gathering tool created to promote family preservation and reunification. Between 2022 and 2023, the CEI has been used in practice by Act for Kids' Goonawoona Jungai service for First Nations People of the Doomadgee Community.

The program offers assessment and support for vulnerable families, in kinship, foster care for the Department of Child Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs, as well as in schools and education institutions.

Professional (Government) (This year there are TWO winners in this category)

Janine Erb, Child Safety - Senior Team Leader

Janine has worked in Child Safety for 28 years, starting in 1994 straight out of university and into the role of Resource Worker at the Logan Child Safety Service Centre. She is now a Senior Team Leader and an integral member of the Fraser Coast Child Safety Service Centre.

When first forming her current team, Janine led her staff in discussions about what the team's name could be and how it would reflect the work that they do with young people and the positive impact they make on them. They became known as the VIBE team; Valuing Independence by Empowering our Young People.

Janine and the VIBE team engage with young people, always ensuring they hear a key message "we will not give up on you".

Janine's focus is on empowerment, support and independence. Each young person she and the VIBE team works with is gifted the Dr Seuss book, 'Oh the places you'll go!' - a small gesture but it sends a big message to these young people: embrace life's journey and adventures, that Janine and her VIBE team are proud of them and to believe they can achieve even when sometimes they may feel that they can't.



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Tony Unicomb
Police Coordinator - Project Booyah (QPS/PCYC Program)

Tony has been a Police Officer for more than 27 years and he has been working on the 16-week program, which takes 10 youths at a time, twice a year, since 2016.

'Booyah' means "an expression of triumph or exuberance" and really sums up the results that Tony achieves persisting with and supporting at-risk and traumatised children and young people - helping them turn their lives around.

Many of the children and young people Tony works with exhibit intergenerational behaviours as a result of trauma and the impact it has their mental health and self-esteem.

Tony says *"I don't have a psych degree ... I just have a big heart"*.

Project Booyah is delivered in more than ten PCYCs across Queensland. Tony facilitates the program in Logan.

Media and Communications

Act for Kids

Act for Kids created and released a public awareness media campaign called 'Get Comfy' during Child Protection week, 2022. It culminated research gathered from more than 2,000 Australians aged 16 to 85 who were interviewed about whether they'd learnt about consent at school and if they were comfortable talking about sex, bodies, relationships and consent?

During Act for Kids' consultation, multiple young people from diverse backgrounds and of varying sexualities revealed that they felt that they didn't receive adequate sex education from their school, parents or carers.

True to their belief that children's voices need to be heard, Act for Kids enabled the young people's voices and gave them the opportunity to bravely lead the campaign which reached over 28 million Australians over seven days.

It received national coverage via 194 different media interviews and articles across segments on Weekend Sunrise, 7 News Queensland, The Daily Telegraph, 10 National News, SBS, Happy Families Podcast and MamaMia.

Importantly, the campaign led to vital, valuable conversations between adults and children at home.



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Volunteer

Steve and Debbie Haim, Foster Carers - Anglicare

Steve and Debbie Haim are foster carers who have made a lifelong commitment to caring for children with the most complex needs.

For 22 years they have cared for and advocated for children with significant disability. They currently care for a young person who turned 18 this year and they recently became the child's adult guardians, as well as caring for another child who has extremely high medical needs and requires 24-hour care and protection.

Debbie and Steve have consequently made significant adjustments in their life to care for the newest child in their household, including big changes to their professional lives with Debbie reducing her nursing work to casual night shifts so that they can concentrate on caring for this child, as well as their own biological children.

The Haims have opened up their home to a team of professionals and support people who help them provide the best medical care for the child. They have also recently given their time to the Department of Children Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs to promote foster care and proudly feature in the campaign marketing materials. They are very valued Anglicare carers.

Regional Program

Steve and Norma Armstrong-Ravula, PCYC Aurukun - Youth Support Services

Steve and Norma have enabled a strong youth presence within the Aurukun PCYC which before their involvement, had been under-utilised.

Through activities like marching the streets with the kids during National Child Protection Week last year, to cooking meals and eating together as a community and starting important conversations about healthy strategies to prevent harm, Steve and Norma have created a second home for the young people of Aurukun whenever they need a safe space and have become like family for when the children need an ear.

Steve and Norma involve the whole community in understanding the values and skills they are sharing with the youth of Aurukun and have been so successful connecting with the children that they're often waiting at the centre door for open time.

They involve elders, other services and the youth themselves in all of their decision making and uphold the key recommendations of the Royal Commission and safeguarding to the highest quality.



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Education Initiative

The Australian Federal Police (AFP)'s 'Online Child Safety Team', 'Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation (ACCCE)' and the 'Human Exploitation Strategic Engagement team'.

Brisbane-based Australian Federal Police (AFP)'s *ThinkUKnow* program, partnered with the AFP-led Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation (ACCCE), to develop a first-of-its-kind children's picture book designed to start conversations with children aged 5-8 years old about preventing online child sexual exploitation.

'Jack Changes the Game' is written by respected children's author Tess Rowley (pronounced Roh-lee) and illustrated by Shannon Horsfall and is based on an actual report made to the ACCCE. In the story, Jack meets a new friend online through his favourite game. Before too long, 'Footy Boy' starts asking Jack to do things that make him feel uncomfortable. Jack starts to wonder if 'Footy Boy' is the person he claims to be? Should Jack tell someone? What will happen if he does? The tale takes a child's perspective to online grooming, the challenges they face and why it's important to talk to a trusted adult if they encounter any problems online.

With an increasing number of reports like these made to the ACCCE each year, the book is a practical and informed way for adults and children to learn together about offenders using the direct message or 'chat' function within an online game to contact a child.

Hard copies of the book have been distributed to every primary school across Australia and the free e-book has also been used by Auslan and had more than 13,000 downloads.

The resources and e-book of *Jack Changes the Game* are available at ThinkUKnow.org.au

Youth Participation Award

Russell Bennet, Cultural Support Worker - Anglicare Southern Queensland

Russell Bennet is a proud emerging Elder. He facilitates the 'Gubbi Gubbi' program in Gympie which supports young people in foster and kinship care, offering them family support and youth justice services to connect them with Country and Culture.

The engaging program, delivered with the support of Landcare, provides therapeutic benefits to the mental wellbeing of young people aged 10 years and over as well as practical opportunities for them to develop skills through learning about native plants, bush tucker medicine, traditional artifacts and conservation. For some of the young people who've participated in the program, their involvement has translated into employment opportunities.

The program also gives young people strategies to cope with emotional regulation resulting in improved mental health, giving them a sense of belonging, helping to alleviate any social pressures,



decrease their stress levels and increase their self-confidence - a great opportunity to thrive into adulthood.

Thriving Communities Award

Kingston East Neighbourhood Group (or 'KENG')

KENG has been providing supportive programs and a safe space for Logan children and their families experiencing intergenerational trauma, poverty and disadvantage for over 37 years.

They believe that all children deserve access to a place where they feel welcome, cared for and nurtured – delivering a broad range of services that are focussed on children's safety and wellbeing from a community-based neighbourhood centre. Through their staff and the support of many volunteers, KENG 'walks with' their community, connecting and consulting with them about what they need and how they can help.

KENG offers: - Playgroups across multiple locations in Logan City; A dedicated Dad's worker to provide practical support to fathers through a men's group; A baby playgroup; Mental health support; Domestic & Family Violence support; Assistance applying for and completing school enrolments; Obtaining birth certificates; Emergency relief (financial support and food packs); More than 1,000 back to school packs for local children each year ... And more.

They show local families that KENG are here to support them, when many of them are struggling in horrific and confronting circumstances.

Child Safe Organisation

Goodstart Early Learning

Goodstart Early Learning is committed to ensuring the 19,195 children who attend its 220 Queensland services have the learning, development and well-being outcomes they need for school and life. The safety, health and wellbeing of all children is the organisation's top priority, however challenges within centres including high rates of staff turnover and COVID fatigue has resulted in variability in understanding what it means to be 'child safe'.

To address this challenge, Goodstart implemented a state-wide program called 'Safeguarding Children: Responsibilities for Nominated Supervisors'. It was developed for all leaders in every centre with one outcome - an exceptional commitment to the prevention of child abuse, neglect and harm.

The award-winning program provides a comprehensive resource hub for Nominated Supervisors that clearly outlines their responsibilities to Look, Do, Tell, and Prevent, Identify and Respond to child abuse, neglect, and harm.



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Our Children our Future

Juanita Mason (pronounced 'Janeeta') and Natalie Powder
Directors of the Moonaboola Community Development ATSI Corporation

Juanita and Natalie share lived-experience and a passion to apply their collective 30 years of child protection experience to making a difference in the lives of vulnerable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and bringing hope to the young people who need it most.

They established the Moonaboola Community Development ATSI Corporation to provide therapeutic, culturally-safe and appropriate means for out of home care, family support mentorship programs, cultural camps for ATSI children, young people and families.

As educated, experienced, Traditional Owners they have worked tirelessly with governments at all levels to establish a service that has led to real results in the child's attitude and behaviour showing them that the carers, under Juanita and Natalie's leadership and training, would never give up on them, even in the most trying times.

Life changing results include children breaking drug usage habits, they've ceased offending in public areas, and connected with their own culture. They've also developed dreams and true aspirations.

Transition 2 Success

Cade Walker, Coal Train / Registered Trainer

Cade's work has had a transformative impact on many of his students aged 15 years and over, who have gone on to secure meaningful employment and build successful careers thanks to his guidance and support. Without Cade and his adaptability it would be extremely hard to achieve the positive learning outcomes of these high-risk, young people.

Cade Walker has been a part of Transition 2 Success since 2021, demonstrating exceptional dedication to his students by helping them gain valuable skills and certifications that will enable them to transition into the workforce with confidence.

What sets Cade apart from other Trainers is his deep commitment to his students' well-being. He goes above and beyond to provide a supportive learning environment that helps his students feel valued and empowered. He takes the time to get to know each student's unique strengths and challenges, and tailors his teaching approach to meet their individual needs.

Cade delivers training programs that lead to Certificate I and Certificate II qualifications – preparing young people for entry level positions or apprenticeships in a variety of industries, as well as training for a White Card, RSA (Responsible Service of Alcohol), Working at Heights and more.