

Queensland Child Protection Week 2025

Award Winners

Professional (Non-Government) Award –

Conrad Townson, Project Paradigm Principal Advisor Child Sexual Exploitation - IFYS

Conrad is the Principal Advisor - Child Sexual Exploitation for IFYS, Project Paradigm, a national strategy that supports prevention, early intervention, and community capacity building in the effort to ensure children and young people are free from harm through exploitation. The work Conrad supports in his current role builds the capacity of frontline professionals and communities to identify and appropriately respond to child sexual exploitation through the development and provision of training, webinars, and resources. Conrad is well regarded in Qld, nationally and internationally and is known for his gift as a connector, facilitating connections for people and other professionals across sectors to create better outcomes for children and young people. His welcoming and generous nature demonstrate the work he does is more than a job... he's one of the good ones!

Professional (Government) Award –

Debbie Jones, Manager Policy & Programs, Child Abuse & Sexual Crime Group

Debbie Jones is the Manager of Policy and Programs with the Child Abuse Crime Group in QPS and has dedicated over 30 years' public service to child protection and social justice issues. Debbie led the translation of major inquiry findings into policy and practice and was the pioneer and instigator of the Qld Intermediary Scheme which facilitated a more victim-focused justice system. Through her commitment to joint agency protocols, she has delivered a 44% reduction in police call outs for residential care. Her visionary, trauma informed leadership and cross agency collaboration have transformed child protection for the QPS and created enduring improvements in service delivery and child safety. Known for her humility, Debbie is now being duly recognised for the mantra she lives everyday leading the education and culture change required to protect Qld's children.

**Media & Communications Award –
2024 Stadium of Hope Campaign by Act for Kids**

Act for Kids 2024 Stadium of Hope Campaign was a groundbreaking awareness and fundraising campaign launched during child protection week and bringing attention to the scale of child maltreatment in Queensland and Australia. In collaboration with Suncorp Stadium, Act for Kids leveraged Australians' deep connection to the venue to demonstrate the crisis – every seat could be filled by a confirmed case of harm to a child. This large-scale initiative mobilised the community, fostered critical conversations and inspired collective responsibility to help create a safer future for all children.

The campaign reached an enormous nine million people through digital and mainstream media platforms, securing national coverage. This bold, large-scale campaign sparked important Queensland and National discussion about the often-overlooked issue of emotional abuse whilst raising funds for vital therapeutic services that will contribute to significant positive change for children in Australia impacted by trauma.

**Regional Program Award -
Kambu Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Corporation for Health (Kambu Health) - Family Wellbeing Service**

The Kambu Health, Family Wellbeing Service (FWS) team delivers integrated, innovative, and culturally safe services, in response to family and community needs. The Family Wellbeing Service team provides in-home support and connects you with services that can help with the challenges of raising a family.

The team from Kambu Health Family Wellbeing Service walks alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in the Lockyer Valley and Somerset regions who may be experiencing life challenges and would benefit from support. Providing: Family capabilities and connections by using a culturally holistic case management approach through co-design with you and your family. In-home and community-based support. Parenting programs and School holiday programs.

Operating in Laidley and the Lockyer Valley region for more than four (4) years, the Family Wellbeing Service, are supporting families with a high complexity of need working to keep First Nations families together and creating change. The Family Wellbeing Service plays a critical role in keeping children safely at home, reducing the risk of statutory intervention and promoting long-term wellbeing for families.

Education Initiative –

Children’s Book Program - Children’s Rights Queensland

Children’s Rights Queensland (CRQ) has made a significant impact through its Children’s Book Program, creating engaging, culturally safe resources that help children understand their rights and support early child protection. To date, CRQ has produced three books and distributed more than 20,000 copies across Queensland—including over 7,000 copies delivered directly to children in care and temporary accommodation. Building on this success, CRQ is set to release two new books later this year, further expanding its reach and influence. Projects like I Am Me (co-created with Auntie Sharron mirii Bell, with 100,000+ YouTube views of the song) and The Big Book of Rights (co-designed with 200 children) are fostering rights-respecting environments across Queensland. Children’s Rights Queensland empowers communities to raise awareness, spark conversations, and create safe, informed spaces where children’s rights are valued and upheld. The program represents an innovative, culturally safe and impactful approach to early child protection through rights education, developed through child and First Nations-led, community-informed design.

Volunteer Award –

Kathryn Rodda, Foster Carer Churches of Christ & Hope in Suitcase Volunteer

Kathryn and her husband have been fostering since 2017 and have provided placement or respite for nearly 50 children and currently care for 2 children with medical needs placed with them since birth. She is always willing to do whatever is required to support the journey of a child in the care system, whether that is travelling several hours for a child’s medical appointments, helping them make connections with family members or supporting the transition to a kinship placement or reunification home so they have every chance of success. Kathryn exhibits her never-ending commitment and energy being a carer, in her day job and through the ongoing support of children and families as the local co-ordinator for Hope in a Suitcase, which provide a suitcase with much needed items of their own to babies, children and teenagers when they enter the care system. Hope in a Suitcase’s local impact has expanded to also provide the maternity ward with Mum & Baby bags to give to new mums escaping DFV in the Fraser Coast region and recently provided toiletry packs and sanitary packs for a local high school’s new ‘Feeling Fresh’ program. Her exceptional commitment is described as endless with her ‘always, always’ going above and beyond for the needs of the children.

**Youth Participation Award –
2025 Youth Summit – Queensland Family & Child Commission**

The Commission's April 2025 Youth Summit provided a platform for 35 young speakers from across Queensland to present their lived experience and ideas for change to over 300 decision-makers and frontline staff from the public and community sectors. Speakers ranged in age from 9 to 25 years, representing the needs and aspirations of children and young people from diverse communities all over the state. Their 6-minute presentations focussed on issues that matter to them, their experiences with systems and spaces, and tangible actions decision makers could take to make things better. Feedback from attendees highlighted the wisdom, care, expertise and honesty of the speakers and their courage in sharing their stories. Speakers have also been offered opportunities to connect and work with organisations and departments on professional development, consultations, and establishing youth participation opportunities, ensuring their involvement and advocacy doesn't end at the Summit but continues to have impact well beyond the day's closing statements.

**Thriving Communities Initiative Award –
Brisbane Youth Service**

Brisbane Youth Service (BYS) is being recognised for its pioneering, organisation-wide Youth Domestic, Family, and Sexual Violence Practice Framework, which guides best practice in supporting young people aged 12 to 25 impacted by violence and homelessness. Centred on safety, empowerment, and co-designed solutions, the framework embeds a child-safe, youth-led culture across all services and is supported by targeted programs that strengthen families, prevent harm, and promote recovery. These include the Safe Young Mums and Bubs Program—providing 24/7 therapeutic care and parenting support to young mothers and their children—and Ruby's Reunification Program, which offers short-term accommodation and mediation to keep families safely together. In 2023–24, BYS saw a significant reduction in crisis-level violence among the young people it supported, with more than half reporting improved safety and wellbeing. Through its integrated, trauma-informed approach and strong collaboration with government, sector, and academic partners, BYS is driving long-term change and helping thousands of young people each year build safer, more stable futures.

Our Children Our Future Award -**Pormpuraaw and Napranum - SafeKids Far North Qld – Act for Kids**

The SafeKids Program in Far North Qld was created through the advocacy of the traditional owners inviting Act for Kids to establish the service which gives their staff a genuine sense of executing their cultural responsibilities within a therapeutic and cultural framework that empowers staff and the children and families they work with. From the outset, Bessie Holroyd and Rebecca Luta as community members were employed and involved in facilitating community reference groups to ensure the service developed was responsive to the needs and nuances of each community to maximise community buy in. Across the whole of Act for Kids, the team in Pormpuraaw and Napranum have maintained the highest staff retention with many working in the program for more than a decade reflecting the uniqueness of the staff being local and needing to have connections and strong relationships across the community and with the children they support. The Safe house provides a safe and nurturing home for kids under child safety to stay safely in community and allows kids under child safety who have been living a long way from home to come back to community and stay connected with their family, culture and country.

Transition 2 Success Initiative Award -**Our Neighbourhood (NBHD)**

Our Neighbourhood (NBHD) is a collaboration between business and not-for-profit organisations, coming together to create a community hub in the Ipswich CBD. NBHD are passionate about helping young people who are on the brink of or have been caught up in the cycle of detention, at risk of homelessness and disengagement from education or experiencing other disadvantage. NBHD partnered with T2S and TAFE Queensland to deliver a partial Cert II Salon Assisting qualification at their location in Semester 1 of 2025. Whilst the T2S programs are usually delivered from a Tafe or Youth Justice Service, the Neighbourhood enabled the program to operate out of a real barbering business, enmeshing the young people within the community and providing fluid opportunities for them to interact, give back and make amends. NBHD is not specifically funded or targeting child protection directly but the work this organisation does with disadvantaged youth is based on a simple but powerful philosophy is 'receive good things: pass on good things' through a model that focuses on healing in the first space – home, building purpose in the second space – work and finding belonging in the third space – community.

**Child Safe Organisation Award -
Life Without Barriers**

Life Without Barriers has maintained a sustained commitment to child safety, wellbeing and participation over many years. Their approach to child safety spans governance, cultural, operational and environmental factors, while always centring the rights and voices of children. We Put Children First is Life Without Barriers' evidence-based child safety campaign, comprising a suite of communication materials, practice and training resources for staff and carers and resources for children and young people. Life Without Barriers promotes and embeds child safe practice across all aspects of their work, bringing the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations to life. Critically, Life Without Barriers understands that keeping children safe is a shared responsibility, and prioritises partnering with government, academia and the community services sector to share their expertise and resources, so that children in our community can be kept safe from harm.