

MEDIA RELEASE: 31 August 2016

Governor General to present awards at National Child Protection Week launch

With the launch of annual National Child Protection Week 2017, His Excellency General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC (Retd), Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, invites all Australians to join together as a team to keep our children safe and nurtured.

National Child Protection Week will run from Fathers' Day Sunday 3 September to 9 September with a range of campaigns, events, and announcements to support the prevention of child abuse and neglect, and remind us that protecting children is everyone's business.

Sir Peter explains, "This means being part of strong and caring communities. It means listening to children, giving them a voice and speaking up for them. It means never walking by or turning a blind eye when something isn't right."

Sir Peter also reminds us that the little things we do today, matter to a child's life tomorrow.

"This National Child Protection Week I urge everyone to remember back to your own childhood, think about the things that mattered to you, and resolve to make a difference to a child's life for today and the future."

NAPCAN Deputy CEO, Leesa Waters, urges Australians to start thinking about child abuse as a problem that can be prevented rather than a problem to be fixed after the fact.

"Australians are familiar with the concept of prevention in relation to public health and safety issues such as car accidents, but may never have considered child abuse in the same way."

"But if we can reduce road fatalities with changes to legislation and community campaigns, we can do the same with child abuse and neglect."

"Most people are surprised to learn that approximately 1 in 33 children (more than 45,000) are the victims of substantiated child abuse each year in Australia."

"And these are just the ones that are severe enough to reach the high threshold required to be picked up by the statutory child protection system. Hundreds of

thousands more children have less than optimal lives but are not counted in these alarming statistics.”

“However, we know that these rates of abuse are not inevitable. There is clear evidence that much of this abuse is preventable.”

“Our aim is to encourage governments, service providers, and the broader community to direct resources and efforts into prevention, so that all children are valued, nurtured and able to live free from violence, abuse and neglect.”

According to NAPCAN, proven strategies for preventing child abuse and neglect include:

- Building strong communities where everyone understands their role in protecting children
- Valuing children and advocating for their rights, and for their voices to be heard
- Expanding and improving coordination of social services
- Educating families about child behaviour, discipline, safety and development
- Creating organisations that are child safe and child friendly.

National Child Protection Week will include the presentation of NAPCAN’s Play Your Part Awards which honour individuals, communities and organisations that carry out inspiring and effective actions promoting child safety and wellbeing across the country, from rural communities to inner cities, from our suburbs to the outback.

The National Awards will be presented by Governor-General Sir Peter Cosgrove at Government House, Canberra on Thursday 31 August from 12:00pm to 1:00pm at the launch of National Child Protection Week 2017.

State Awards will be presented at events throughout the country.

For information about National Child Protection Week events, or to get involved with the campaign, visit www.napcan.org.au.

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Interviews available with:

Lesley Taylor, National Manager Prevention Strategies, NAPCAN
Leesa Waters, Deputy CEO, NAPCAN

If you would like to view the audio for the campaign, please [click here](#).

NAPCAN (National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect) is Australia's only peak body dedicated to the prevention of child abuse and neglect. For more information about NAPCAN's work, and National Child Protection Week, visit www.napcan.org.au.

Related resources and announcements:

NAPCAN will also be launching the following resources as part of National Child Protection Week:

The Continuum of Wellbeing Film: 3-minute film by NAPCAN outlining the concept of the continuum of wellbeing. This concept is important to our work because it underpins the importance of prevention and reminds us that child abuse and neglect is not inevitable. The film highlights the many opportunities for community, families and services to play their part in protecting children, before it's too late. The film will be distributed widely on social media and website, and played at NCPW events. It will be available at www.napcan.org.au from 31 August.

Prevention Summary Paper: This National Child Protection Week NAPCAN and AIFS have joined together to further explore and promote the concept of prevention. This joint paper provides the foundation for ongoing discussion and research about prevention - what it is, the different types, how it works, and how to communicate these important messages to encourage investment, shift public thinking, and engage the whole community as a team in keeping children safe from harm. Available at www.napcan.org.au from 3 September.