

EMBARGOED to 10.00am Friday, 2 September 2016

Kids Helpline honoured twice winning National and Queensland Child Protection Awards 2016

Kids Helpline has won both the 2016 National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN) 'Play Your Part' National Award, and 2016 Queensland Child Protection Week Award for the critical role it plays in protecting children and young people across Australia.

The NAPCAN Play Your Part Awards recognise organisations that have played their part to prevent child abuse and neglect through promoting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in Australia. The Governor-General Sir Peter Cosgrove will present Kids Helpline (KHL) with the national award at a ceremony at Admiralty House, Sydney today Friday, 2 September.

Kids Helpline received the NAPCAN Award because of its significant work over the last 25 years in providing early intervention strategies that help prevent child abuse and harm, and for being there 24/7 for children and young people needing counselling and support. KHL is the only national winner of this award in 2016.

The Queensland Child Protection Week Committee has also recognised KHL for its outstanding contribution to promoting child protection in its 2016 honours, receiving the Award from Minister for Child Safety Shannon Fentiman at Parliament House, Brisbane on Thursday, 1 September.

According to **yourtown/KHL** CEO Tracy Adams, the organisation was honoured and proud to have received the two child protection awards, particularly given KHL was setup 25 years ago this year to help protect children and young people.

"KHL was started to give children and young people somewhere to turn when they needed help - particularly in relation to concerns about abuse and neglect," Ms Adams said.

"Today, we receive contacts about a multitude of issues with many involving concerns about physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect, as well as domestic and family violence. More than 5,000 contacts related to these issues in 2015.

"Last year, more than 1,700 contacts to KHL resulted in emergency care actions (Duty of Care) to protect children and young people from harm or risk of harm, including issues involving suicidal concerns. Child abuse was the number one reason for initiating a Duty of Care action.

"While we're glad we are here 24/7 to help those reaching out, child abuse and other harm should never be acceptable in our community. It's everyone's responsibility to protect those most vulnerable, providing a safe environment for everyone."

Ms Adams said KHL partners with other key protection agencies, the corporate sector and educators to work on new ways to protect and prevent harm to children and young people.

"Our work is vast, including research into issues like abuse, violence and suicide to help inform Government policy. It also includes partnerships with universities and organisations across Australia to develop new technologies that educate children and young people about key issues they face," she said.

"Initiatives like our Kids Helpline @ School program are helping primary school children across Australia via interactive discussions between counsellors and classrooms to talk through what's worrying kids and to build up their understanding and resilience.

“In its 25 years, KHL has responded to more than 7.5 million phone and online contacts asking for help or support. As we enter the next 25, we will continue to be there to protect, and give children and young people choices, support and someone to listen 24/7.

“In Child Protection Week we’d like to take the opportunity to recognise all who work hard to protect and nurture our children and young people each and every day. This is also a great opportunity for everyone to think about what part they can play to help make our children and young people safe.”

The Awards are presented as part of National Child Protection Week running from 4 to 10 September.

KHL is Australia’s only national 24/7 counselling service specifically for children and young people aged 5 to 25 years – free call **1800 55 1800** or **www.kidshelpline.com.au**.

It is a service of **yourtown** (formerly BoysTown) and is 72% funded by the **yourtown** Art Union, donations and corporate support. Federal and State Governments fund 28%.

Kids Helpline @ School Digital is supported by Optus.

More information about contacts to KHL can be found in the **Kids Helpline Insights 2015** reports available at **www.kidshelpline.com.au/reports**.

ENDS

INTERVIEW/PHOTO/FILMING OPPORTUNITIES

- Tracy Adams, **yourtown** CEO
- Tony Fitzgerald, Kids Helpline Centre Manager
- Brendan Bourke, **yourtown** Head of Client Services
- KHL Counsellors
- VNR footage available of Kids Helpline call centre

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