

EMBARGOED to 8.00am Tuesday, 6 September 2016

Parentline Wins Child Protection Award

Parentline has won the 2016 National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN) 'Play Your Part' Queensland Award for the role it plays in protecting children and young people.

Minister for Child Safety Shannon Fentiman will present Parentline with the award at Southbank Institute of Technology, Brisbane today Tuesday, 6 September.

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 **yourtown** service received the Award because of the proactive role it plays in preventing child abuse or neglect by helping parents and carers build stronger relationships with their children and improve their capacity to support their children's safety and wellbeing.

The seven day a week professional counselling and information service responds to parents and carers about issues ranging from parenting strategies for challenging child behaviours, relationships between children and their parents, through to family custody and access, domestic violence and abuse.

According to **yourtown** CEO Tracy Adams, the organisation was honoured to receive the award recognising the service that for 20 years has worked hard to support parents and carers across Queensland and the Northern Territory.

"Being a parent is one of the most rewarding experiences in life but can also be one of the toughest," Ms Adams said.

"Not only do parents and carers provide for the physical needs of their children, they also steer their learning, language development, problem-solving abilities and shape their social-emotional skills. This is a lot to take on and some find talking to Parentline as an objective, confidential source of support a great help."

Ms Adams said all Parentline counsellors are trained Kids Helpline counsellors, giving them a unique understanding of issues facing parents and their children.

"We're proud that a recent survey of those contacting us showed that 90% found talking to the service increased their capacity to cope, 85% said they had increased confidence in parenting and 86% said they had a greater understanding of their children," she said.

"This is what **yourtown** is about. Giving people choices by working with them to learn skills, become great parents and live safe happy lives."

Over the last 20 years the service has responded to more than 200,000 contacts and had close to 200,000 unique visitors to the Parentline website.

The top reason why parents and carers have contacted Parentline over that time has been to seek guidance and support about children's challenging behaviour, making up around 15% of contacts to the service each year.

The most notable change over the decades was around the mental and emotional health of children with contacts about mental and emotional health almost doubling, going from 6% to 10% in 20 years. This, however, is likely due to increased community awareness about mental health issues and how it affects behaviour.

Parentline also works with other agencies to be there for families when help is needed most. This includes counselling families experiencing issues like domestic violence and mental health concerns referred to the service by the Queensland Police.

Parentline has offered the phone based Triple P (Positive Parenting Program) since 2002.

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

The 2015 Parentine Insights 20 Year report about 20 years of the service can be accessed at www.yourtown.com.au/insights/annual-overviews

Parents or carers in Queensland and the Northern Territory looking for support can contact Parentline on 1300 30 1300 or parentline.com.au. The telephone and email service operates between 8am-10pm, seven days a week. Web counselling is available from 11am-2pm, Tuesday and Thursday.

The service is funded by the Queensland and Northern Territory Governments.

ENDS

INTERVIEW/PHOTO/FILMING OPPORTUNITIES

- Tracy Adams, **yourtown** CEO
- Tony Fitzgerald, Parentline Counselling Centre Manager
- Brendan Bourke, **yourtown** Head of Client Services
- Louise Davis, Clinical Practice Manager
- Parentline Counsellors

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