

Tuesday, 9 August, 2016

## Premier congratulates Parentline on 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary

Queensland Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk congratulated Parentline for 20 years of dedicated counselling, education and support for parents and carers at anniversary celebrations in Brisbane today.

Premier Palaszczuk met with Parentline counsellors to discuss key issues faced by those contacting the service, including domestic and family violence, before joining in the anniversary celebrations.

According to the **Parentline Insights 20 Year report** released today, **yourtown's** Parentline helpline service has responded to more than 200,000 telephone and online contacts from parents and carers from across Queensland and the Northern Territory since opening 20 years ago.

Over the last 20 years the top reason why parents and carers have contacted Parentline has been to seek guidance and support about children's challenging behaviour, making up around 15% of contacts to the service each year.

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** (formerly BoysTown) CEO Tracy Adams, Parentline came about because close to 10% (15,000) of calls to Kids Helpline in 1995 were from parents and carers asking for help about parenting. Many of these were over the age of 25 years.

"In response, we trialled a parent focused service across south east Queensland in 1995. The aim was to provide a professional counselling service that educated and encouraged parents and carers to build on their strengths to better understand and work with their family, and find solutions to challenges," Ms Adams said.

"The trial was an overwhelming success with Parentline officially launched across Queensland in 1996 then extended to the Northern Territory in 2004."

Ms Adams said the most notable change to contacts to the service over the decades was around the mental and emotional health of children.

"Contacts about mental and emotional health have almost doubled, going from 6% to 10% in 20 years," she said.

"This, however, is likely due to increased community awareness about mental health issues and how it affects behaviour."

The prevalence of other issues has consistently remained the same over 20 years with challenging behaviour topping the list closely followed by parent-child relationships, parenting strategies and parent relationships.

"That much has stayed the same is not surprising. Being a parent today is no less rewarding and often presents similar challenges to that experienced 20, 50 or 100 years ago," she said.

"Today, Parentline continues to be a great support for parents and carers looking to talk things over with a professional counsellor or find out what other help is available.

“We also work with other agencies to be there when people need us most. This includes families experiencing issues like domestic violence and mental health concerns referred to Parentline by the Queensland Police.”

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

All Parentline counsellors are trained Kids Helpline counsellors, giving them a unique understanding of issues facing parents and their children. In addition to other counselling and support, Parentline has offered the phone based Triple P (Positive Parenting Program) since 2002.

An ongoing survey of parents and carers contacting the service from 2011-15 showed that the service was very effective or effective in helping strengthen families, with 90% of those surveyed reporting it increased their capacity to cope with an issue.

Parents or carers in Queensland and the Northern Territory looking for support can contact Parentline on 1300 30 1300 or [parentline.com.au](http://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/FILMING OPPORTUNITIES

Tracy Adams, **yourtown** CEO  
Brendan Bourke, **yourtown** Head of Client Services  
Tony Fitzgerald, **yourtown** Counselling Centre Manager

Event photo link: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/wakx2uwex5wmcdb/DSC00334.JPG?dl=0>

Photo caption: Premier Palaszczuk celebrates 20 years of Parentline with Parentline counsellors, **yourtown** Counselling Centre Manager Tony Fitzgerald, Board Chair Gerry Lambert, Practice Manager Louise Davis and Head of Client Services Brendan Bourke.

#### MEDIA CONTACTS:

Regan Flor	<a href="mailto:rflor@yourtown.com.au">rflor@yourtown.com.au</a>	0423 843 786
Tracey Gillinder	<a href="mailto:tgillinder@yourtown.com.au">tgillinder@yourtown.com.au</a>	0434 077 478