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For immediate release

MEDIA RELEASE

'WE WILL DO ALL IN OUR POWER TO NEVER LET THIS HAPPEN AGAIN'

The 700 delegates of the 2009 Asia Pacific Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect (APCCAN 2009) broke into spontaneous applause when Prime Minister Kevin Rudd proclaimed, 'we will do all in our power to never let this happen again.' The sentence formed part of the emotional apology to the country's Forgotten Australians, spoken at Parliament House in Canberra today.

Maree Faulkner, CEO of the National Association for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN) supported the statement and said: 'Kevin Rudd's message is critically important as it provides the motivation to the delegates at the APCCAN conference to make sure that it never happens again. The statement is more than rhetoric and reminds the nation that we need to put children first to protect against child abuse in the future. '

'It is imperative that the government allocates adequate resources to ensure that these statements are able to be implemented in the community. We don't have to accept that the abuse that happened in the past has to continue into the future.'

Professor Dorothy Scott Foundation Chair in Child Protection and the Director of the Australian Centre for Child Protection at the University of South Australia remarked, 'The Prime Ministers apology will help the 'remembered Australians' to heal and give hope to their families. The statement will give hope to those of us who work in child protection. It reminds us that the good intentions of the sector can inflict pain. It strengthens our commitment to review the current system and ensure that it doesn't corrode the well being of those children who are currently in state care. It gives us the opportunity to reflect on the task of protecting children and helps us to remember those who have come before and re-commit to the children who are not yet born.'

'It is a fantastic tribute to those at this conference who have been involved in the sustained effort to bring this to the attention of the decision makers. As a result of this speech let's remember not to wait until the children become adults to hear their concerns but listen to their voices today.'

The delegates are currently attending a conference at the Perth Convention Centre. The conference is hosted by the National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN) brings together researchers, professionals and practitioners who work on the front line for the prevention of child abuse. The conference is taking place between 15 to 18 November 2009.

The program will include five keynote addresses from notable international speakers plus over 200 professional presentations. A detailed program is available at www.apccan2009.org.au.

A media room will be available at the conference and interviews with speakers, members of the conference organizing committee and NAPCAN representatives can be arranged.

For further information please contact:

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Notes to the editor:

NAPCAN (National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect) is Australia's leading advocate for the prevention of child abuse and neglect. NAPCAN's goal is to bring about the changes necessary in individual and community behavior and in government policy to stop abuse and neglect before it starts.

NAPCAN also works directly with children and young people conducting innovative programs to strengthen protective behaviors build resilience and life skills. NAPCAN also assists 'at risk' parents through face-to-face programs and works in local communities building inclusive networks and strengthening local support of children and families.

A charity, NAPCAN is governed by a national board with the support of professional sub-committees and state and territory councils. For further information go to: www.napcan.org.au