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For immediate release

MEDIA RELEASE

'ONE DAY YOU WILL BE HEARD, ONE DAY YOU WILL BE BELIEVED, ONE DAY YOU WILL BE ACKNOWLEDGED'

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd stated as part of his apology to the country's Forgotten Australians at Parliament House yesterday that, 'one day you will be heard, one day you will be believed, one day you will be acknowledged.'

A group of twenty young people will be given the opportunity to be heard at the 2009 Asia Pacific Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect (APCCAN 2009). The group of 18 to 25 year olds who have come from throughout the Asia Pacific will use laptops, digital cameras and video to monitor discussions and record presentations from the conference. The conference is taking place 15 to 18 November at the Perth Conference Centre.

Their findings will be presented as a short documentary to delegates as part of the closing ceremony. The group will also have the opportunity to ask the first question of any of the five keynote speakers.

During the conference the young people will upload photos, information and stories to face book where other young people will have the opportunity to participate in online discussions. The discussions will focus on a range of topics including their responses to the Prime Minister's speech and how they can implement changes in their own community to make children and young people feel safe.

The twenty young people were selected from throughout the Asia Pacific region because they experienced abuse first hand, are active in prevention child abuse within their communities or are working or studying in the field of child abuse and prevention.

Kristian Goodacre, Co-Chair of the Young Participants Program commented, 'At previous conferences the young people's program ran as a fringe event to the regular program. At this conference we wanted young people's ideas and opinions on the prevention of child abuse to be heard. I agree with Kevin Rudd that young people's views matter and that their opinions should form part of the decision making process.'

He went on to say, 'I am particularly excited about the interest we have already generated on-line throughout the global community. Our aim is to create awareness and change in people's behavior not just during the four days of the conference but over the long term.'

The conference which is hosted by the National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN) brings together researchers, professionals and practitioners to focus on the critical issues of prevention of child abuse.

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.

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