



**EMBARGOED UNTIL MIDNIGHT 1 SEPTEMBER 2013**

**NAPCAN Play Your Part Awards Western Australia**

**To: John van Bockxmeer**

**For:**

**Inspiring leadership in promoting the wellbeing and safety of children**

**Organisation:** Fair Game WA

**State:** WA

The 'Wellness Walkabout' was developed in 2012, in a collaborative and voluntary effort led by John Ban Bockxmeer and Curtin University lecturers. The 'Wellness Walkabout' is an inspiring and innovative flip-book story which incorporates yoga poses that represent the native Australian environment and animals. The story has been designed for the delivery to children of the outback, who have been found to be very much visual learners. The aim of the initiative is to improve the mental and physical health of children in the outback, and imbed the program via Fair Game's train-the-trainer initiative, within the existing human capital of communities.

Last year, the 'Wellness Walkabout' reached over 1200 children (predominantly indigenous). By May 2013, it had reached over 750. With the prediction to reach well over 1000. The visits are coordinated during periods which are identified by community leaders, to represent times of greatest risk. The repeat visits and strong community engagement means that the kids are remembering the program, and remembering the skills and messages taught during previous visits.

John and his team are proud of the degree to which they have been able to get out into the communities and develop relationships with these vulnerable communities. John believes that Wellness Walkabout may be the first program of its kind engaging young Indigenous kids in Yoga based wellness exercises. Wellness Walkabout provides the perfect 'down-tempo' activity, scheduled into Fair Game's school holiday programs during the hotter period of the day. Current participant engagement and community leader feedback has been extremely positive.

**NAPCAN is awarding 2013 Play Your Part Awards WA to John van Bockxmeer for: John's leadership in bringing innovative yoga based wellness exercises to vulnerable remote communities. This is the sort of initiative NAPCAN is hoping will inspire other individuals to look at how they can play their part in their local community to promote the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.**

**For further details:** contact Madelene McGrath, NAPCAN on 02 9269 9200