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## **NAPCAN Play Your Part Award 2012 - Victoria Urban**

### **Recipients:**

Barker Family: Angela (Anj) Barker and Ian and Helen Barker (Angela's parents)

**For:** Being outstanding advocates for the elimination of relationship violence

**Based in:** Melbourne (originally from Benalla)

### **Background:**

Life for Anj Barker, now aged 27, changed forever when she was brutally bashed by her ex-boyfriend at the age of 16. She suffered severe brain injury and spent three gruelling years in hospital, rehab and a nursing home before being able to return home, still needing full time care. Anj describes the two and a half years spent housed in a nursing home as 'hell'. As a teenager living among the very elderly, she felt angry, sad and trapped.

Despite the enormous challenges she faces daily, Anj is determined to open the hearts and minds of others. She, along with her parents who accompany her on campaigns around the nation, are outstanding advocates for the elimination of relationship violence. Anj, Ian and Helen Barker campaign to stop young people ending up in nursing homes for the elderly and for the introduction of a national no fault insurance scheme, so that people with acquired brain injury can have an equal opportunity to regain an active and productive life. Anj educates the public on antiviolenace, talking to students, young women, police and politicians. She empowers others to say 'no' to violence, by advocating respectful relationships and has represented Australia at the United Nations. She also works to educate others to see the person, not the disability. Anj Barker is an exceptional young woman who has displayed strength and courage in the face of horrific injuries.

Angela, together with her parents Ian and Helen Barker, reach hundreds of young people a year with their message and are exceptional advocates for the elimination of relationship violence. In 2011 Anj won the Victorian Young Australian of the Year Award.



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### **Recognition of achievement**

NAPCAN'S 2012 Play Your Part Awards are about acknowledging individuals, communities or organisations that work towards creating safer communities for children and young people. The work the Barker Family, and in particular Anj, have undertaken to inform and educate young people about relationship violence in the years since Anj's shocking personal experience are an inspiration to all individuals and families. Anj's energy and passion for increasing young people's awareness of this issue and creating safe communities is the reason that the Barker family are being awarded the NAPCAN Play Your Part Award Victoria (Urban) 2012.