

QUEENSLAND MEDIA ALERT:

AWARD WINNER INFORMATION EMBARGOED UNTIL MONDAY 3 SEPTEMBER.

**National Child Protection Week Awards in Brisbane on 4 September
Including Q&A Forum on Preventing Child Abuse**

National Child Protection Week starts annually on Fathers' Day each September (Sunday 2nd - Saturday 8th September this year) to support the message that 'Protecting children is everyone's business'.

"Children thrive when their families are well supported and their communities are connected and strong. National Child Protection Week is an opportunity for all Australians to find ways to 'play their part'", says NAPCAN CEO, Richard Cooke.

"NAPCAN's Play Your Part Awards are designed to recognise the diverse ways that committed Australians are working together to create a safer community for all children and young people."

"NAPCAN warmly congratulates the Puuya Foundation for its great work in the Lockhart River area. Their Kuunchi Kakana Centre is an inspiring example of how community partnership and genuine engagement can create positive outcomes for children and families."

The National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect ([NAPCAN](#)) will be presenting the annual [Play Your Part Award](#) to the Puuya Foundation on 4 September during [National Child Protection Week](#) (2 – 8 September). The event will also include a Q&A Forum about why primary prevention needs to be front and centre when we talk about child abuse and neglect.

What: Play Your Part Awards Presentation & Q&A Forum

When: 9.30am - 12 noon, Tuesday 4 September

Where: Plaza Auditorium, 111 George Street

Special guests attending:

- Megan Mitchell, National Children's Commissioner
- Cheryl Vardon, Chief Executive and Principal Commissioner
- Norman Laing, Indigenous Lawyer and Advocate
- Denise Hagan, Puuya Foundation, Lockhart River
- Beenush Khokhar, R4Respect Ambassador
- Michael Hogan, Director-General, Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women
- Teresa Scott, NAPCAN President

Queensland winner for 2018:

Puuya Foundation for: Kuunchi Kakana (Families Together) Centre & Program

The Kuunchi Kakana Centre is a community-led, community-run family centre in the Lockhart River remote community in Queensland. Family members who have a key role in each child's upbringing attend alongside their children, learning together and developing new skills to help them into the future. All of the activities at the centre serve a developmental purpose and the learning environment was designed by the community, often using simple materials to encourage the

activities to be duplicated at home. Parents and family members learn alternative means of managing behaviour and gain a deeper understanding of the developmental needs that drive children's actions.

<http://www.puuya.foundation/our-projects/kuunchi-kakana/>

Contact:

Note: Play Your Part Awards are awarded to at least one project in each of Australia's States and Territories, as well as to an overall National Winner. **For a full list of National Child Protection Week activities, visit www.napcan.org.au.**

For media attendance, interviews, further information and/or images please contact:

Helen Fogarty | 0410 541997 | helen.fogarty@napcan.org.au

Additional information about the Award Winner:

The Puuya Foundation was initiated in the remote Cape York Aboriginal community of Lockhart River (650 people). It is an independent, non-profit secular foundation, established to strengthen people's puuya (life force in Kuuku Ya'u language). This means taking responsibility for developing leadership, improving competence and having the confidence to invest in and work towards 'closing the gap' at Lockhart River and beyond.

As part of the authentic engagement and strategic planning with the community it was identified that the early years family and learning support services available for the community 'was a mess'. This was particularly concerning because research has shown beyond a doubt that this is the most critical time in a child's development for shaping their life and their life chances for the future. The community asked the Puuya Foundation to work with them to develop a solution. And with this the dream of the Kuunchi Kakana (families together) Centre was born.

In keeping with all the work and projects undertaken by the Puuya Foundation, the Kuunchi Kakana Centre is different:

- The Centre is community-led and community-run.
- The decision to become involved and prioritise this project was at the behest of the community, based on their identification of early years as a strategic priority.
- The aspirational vision for the Centre reflects the holistic and integrated approach of the Puuya Foundation, which recognises that a comprehensive early childhood service must encompass seamless education, health and family support services to the extent that funding allows.
- The community was involved in determining which early years learning model they wanted to adopt (Montessori) based on the needs of the community, and will have input in ongoing curriculum development.
- The Centre is not a drop-and-go childcare centre, but rather a family centre where parents, grandparents or family members attend alongside their children, learning together and developing new skills to help them into the future.

- Local members of the community who demonstrated a passion for and commitment to the early years program and capacity building within the community were provided training in the Montessori model and a number were engaged as early years workers.
- Local members of the community are receiving vocational training and employment opportunities to help with the construction of the new building that will become the permanent, purpose built home for the Centre.