

VICTORIA

MEDIA ALERT:

**Playgroup for dads wins
National Child Protection Week Awards in Victoria**

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 Me and MY Dad Playgroup on their award.

"This project is a wonderful example of the power of peer support and genuine connection in building stronger communities for children. It's also great to recognise the importance of men in the lives of children and remember that our positive interactions with children every day can have a positive long term impact on their lives."

The National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect ([NAPCAN](#)) will be presenting the Victorian [Play Your Part Award](#) to the Me and My Dad Playgroup on 7 September during [National Child Protection Week](#) (2 – 8 September).

What: Play Your Part Awards Presentation Victoria

When: 10.30am-12.30pm, Friday 7 September

Where: Sebastopol Primary School, Warreen Street, Sebastopol (Ballarat)

Special guests/speakers:

- Liana Buchanan, Principal Commissioner for Children and Young People
- Nina Levin, NAPCAN Victorian Manager

Victoria Award Winner: Me and My Dad Playgroup Ballarat

Me and My Dad Playgroup is a bi-weekly gathering of 3 to 10 fathers at the Sebastopol Primary School in Ballarat. Dads, granddads, uncles and male carers can all attend the playgroup which has been running since 2013, providing comfortable space for dads to bond with their children and with other dads. Leigh Whitten, the current organiser of the playgroup said, "It's good to bounce things that you're going through off other dads because we're alone in what we're doing, and it's good to get that bit of help and to know that you are doing OK."

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:
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Leigh Whitten (current organiser of Me and My Dad Playgroup) and his children Tori and Jaxon



