

PeakCare Awards

The WOKE

(Translation: Highly aware of social issues)

The WOKE Award Candidate Nomination Statements

BABI Youth & Family Service

BABI Youth and Family Service has been operating in the Brisbane bayside suburb of Wynnum since 1983. BABI aims to provide holistic and integrated support to young people and their families through a diverse range of services and interventions including youth homelessness with a case management focus; tenancy support; counselling and parenting programs; one-to-one youth support; Get Set for Work Employment program; youth engagement; and youth development and leadership. Our model is grounded in the values of empowerment, integrity, innovation, excellence and collaboration. During 2020, BABI has improved the outcomes for Queensland children, young people, parents and families by providing employment pathways; housing to young people and young families; social and personal development programs; youth leadership opportunities; counselling and education to parents; and information, referrals and brief interventions to young people.

Alison Brodie, Life Without Barriers

Alison Brodie from Life Without Barriers is nominated for the WOKE Award for being an excellent practitioner.

Central Queensland Indigenous Development (CQID) Family Wellbeing Services

The Family Wellbeing Services Team at CQID has been working with vulnerable and at risk Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families to strengthen their capacity, parenting skills and resilience to prevent problems from developing or escalating to crisis point in order to avoid entry into the statutory system or when exiting from the statutory system. Our Family Wellbeing Services program focuses on improving the wellbeing of children and their families; ensuring the children are safer; and contributing to a significant reduction in the number of at risk Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the tertiary child protection system. When first established, the Family Wellbeing team had the challenge of making an impact on Indigenous families, however by implementing a structure case management approach in early 2019, this changed. Since July 2019, CQID has managed to achieved over 400 outcomes in improved safety, life skills and cultural identity for over 200 families in Longreach, Emerald, Woorabinda, Rockhampton, Bundaberg and Hervey Bay.

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CREATE Foundation

As a national organisation for a community of over 45,000 children and young people in care around Australia, CREATE was concerned about the impact of COVID-19 on this community and produced a video series to help its members understand the Corona Virus and have the confidence to reach out for support if needed. The information portrays the necessary information in easy-to-understand language with visually appealing imagery. CREATE is very aware of the potential risk for children with a care experience as they are likely to be more vulnerable at this time and aimed to contribute to the great work being done by foster carers, residential workers and caseworkers. Five video animations were developed by CREATE and animation team, Suitcase Murphy. The video topics included Gus talks COVID-19 with kids, for kids! - Episode 1 - About the Corona Virus; Episode 2- Social Distancing; Episode 3 - Resi Care; Episode 4 - Going to school; and Episode 5 - Feeling normal. The video series has reached thousands of viewers during the global pandemic.

Liz Dwyer, Services Australia - Centrelink

Liz Dwyer is a WOKE individual who goes above and beyond to advocate for young people and families who are disadvantaged by the system. Liz ensures all people and especially young people (aged 15 to 25) are able to access support services through Services Australia- Centrelink. Liz works tirelessly to ensure young people are supported and that the system that is in place to take care of our most vulnerable in society works for them. Liz is truly an exceptional and WOKE individual who doesn't stop until every young person receives the care and support they need for a better life.

Kirsten Firman, South Burnett CTC Youth Services

Kirsten has managed South Burnett CTC youth services for 20 years. She oversees the residential program, domestic violence services, young mums' clubs, safe haven night patrol and at least 10 other services. All her services are based on developing healthy pathways for children and families to a better future. She is an amazing person who puts 100% into every family. She seeks out opportunities to meet need. She is brilliant and has been my mentor and idol for 14 years.

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Deidre (Dee) Gallagher, K.I.N. Care Services (QLD) Pty Ltd

Established in 2017, K.I.N. Care Services was founded by Director, Dee Gallagher, to provide comprehensive Foster and Kinship Carer Assessments to the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs. The organisation has since moved from solely providing assessments, to now working across three service streams, including In-Home Family Support, NDIS Support and Specialist Services. K.I.N. Care Services' values are embedded in the word 'FAMILY' – *Forever; Accepted; Making Connections; Identity; Love; and You are Important*. K.I.N. Care Services works collaboratively with key government and non-government agencies to keep children, young people, participants, and their families safe and together. The organisation has a professional, multidisciplinary team comprising of Therapists, Counsellors, Case Managers and Family Support Workers to oversee and manage the support being provided to vulnerable members of the Queensland community. All services are therapeutic, trauma informed, person-centred and holistic to ensure personalised support.

Individual Flexibility Agreements initiative - CSIA, Services Union, Fair Work Commission, PeakCare, QATSICPP, DCYJ&MC, CofCQ, UCC, IFYS, Mercy, LWB

Initiated by Community Services Industry Alliance and The Services Union, the process of developing Individual Flexibility Agreements (IFAs) was facilitated by the Fair Work Commission with participation by the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs, PeakCare, Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak and representatives of residential care providers including Churches of Christ in Queensland, UnitingCare, IFYS, Life Without Barriers and Mercy Community. The IFA was developed to support circumstances where a service may need to care for a young person who has contracted COVID-19 or needs to be in a period of quarantine or self-isolation. Most importantly, the IFAs enable quality essential services to continue to be delivered to young people and to ensure consistency in care during a difficult and unsettling time, while appropriately compensating and supporting employees. With the IFA already having been activated in Queensland, the advocacy and child-focused / employee supportive work of this eclectic group of organisations has certainly supported consistency and care to young people who need it the most, in incredibly challenging and unprecedented times.

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Mel James, Social Care Solutions

Mel is a Social Worker and the Director of Social Care Solutions (SCS). She has been running SCS for over 10 years and is a passionate believer in improving outcomes for children in out of home care by providing exceptional quality consultancy, training and assessment in the fostering and child protection industry. She and her team have completed thousands of specialist, parenting and foster and kinship carer assessments, using child-focused and child-friendly assessment tools, ensuring young people's views are paramount and their voices heard! She provides countless hours of supervision, training and professional development to staff around the country so as to ensure everyone improves their practice for working with young people in care.

Ben McKeown

My dad Ben has advocated for the children, young people, parents and families within our community of Horn Island. He has been a voluntary member of the SES for over 20 years in which he has participated and driven the SES Cadets for a number of years prior to the program being closed. This has not stopped him from supporting the children and young people in our community. Together with my mum, they have taken children and young people out in the boat and on camping trips on the weekends to keep them occupied. Both my mother and father are approved Foster Carers and they enjoy giving children a culturally appropriate and safe environment. My dad is the Manager of a Residential Care facility for young people on Horn Island and is passionate about working with young people, parents and their families who utilise this facility in working towards either reunification or connection to family and country in a culturally appropriate way.

Nik Phillips

Nik has stood up and spoken up and advocated for young people under the care of Child Safety for over 10 years. Nik is an approved Foster Carer and support facilitator so spends more than 24 hours a day 7 days a week working and caring for vulnerable children in Queensland.

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Kathy Whitfield, BABI Youth & Family Service

Kathy is a WOKE individual who works passionately to ensure Queensland young people receive the support required to achieve great outcomes both in their lives and for the community. Kathy works in both employed and volunteer capacities to ensure young people from all walks of life get to experience support and know the feeling of having someone in their corner backing them. Whether it is driving young people to school, work and medical appointments, participating in online framework forums, supporting young people to achieve secure housing and employment or engaging young people in group social activities, Kathy strives to ensure all young people have access to the opportunities they need for success. Kathy truly represents what it means to be WOKE and partners with many community stakeholders to help influence lasting improved outcomes for young people.

Ashley Wilkinson

Nominated by a number of people, the following are extracts from the nominations that were received:

- *Ashley always takes time to educate himself and the people around him on current social issues. This makes for an innovator and conscientious colleague*
- *Ashley has an obvious commitment to ensuring his education regarding social issues is always current and relevant, which is strongly highlighted in his role as a youth worker*
- *Ashley is highly aware of current social issues and strives for improving outcomes for clients*
- *Ashley takes pride in being inclusive and affirming in his practice. Ash ensures he surrounds himself with diversity and embraces it too.*
- *Great guy! Highly aware of current social issues and how they impact the people he works with. Works hard to advocate for improved outcomes for these people*

Leanne Wood, Home Stretch Campaign

Leanne Wood has been a key leader of the Homestretch campaign which was officially launched in November 2019 in Queensland. The Home Stretch movement advocates that young people in care in every Australian state and territory should have the option of extended care and support until the age of 21 years. Leanne and the Queensland Homestretch committee have developed policy positions, research papers and media campaigns to raise awareness of the issues that young people leaving care face and advocate for their continued support up until 21.

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Lesley Wood, The Benevolent Society

The effective supports and early intervention services The Benevolent Society (TBS) provide within our Early Years Centres aim to reduce the number of children and families involved with statutory child protection services, as well as the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children within the child protection system. Our dedicated and committed team work with families to address and prevent psychosocial issues from escalating and placing unborn babies and children at significant risk of harm. We are effectively engaging with hard to reach and reluctant to engage vulnerable young people in the Logan community who may not otherwise access vital antenatal care offered in clinical settings or hospitals. Through adopting a soft entry approach our highly skilled team facilitate early learning and educational groups, supporting the healthy development of children. We welcome all children and families into our Early Years Centres, upholding the values of TBS, and promoting the vision of a just society where everyone lives their best life.

Massimo Zaini, Act for Kids

Massimo works tirelessly within the gulf and western cape communities in Queensland. As the SafeKIDS Manager he works to ensure Aboriginal children stay on country with their communities, develops and maintains reference groups, and works closely with Traditional Owners to ensure all care is provided with a cultural lens.