Media release

Tuesday 18 April 2023

**RECOGNISING THE EVERYDAY HEROES WHO KEEP CHILDREN SAFE**

Everyone can play a role in protecting vulnerable children and ensuring the next generation of Victorians the best possible start in life.

From today, Victorians are encouraged to nominate individuals, teams, carers and groups who demonstrate excellence in working with children, young people and their families, for this year’s Victorian Protecting Children Awards.

Department of Families, Fairness and Housing Deputy Secretary of Community Operations and Practice Leadership Danny O’Kelly today opened nominations for the annual awards, which celebrate the exceptional efforts and dedication of Victorians who keep children and young people safe, and families and carers strong.

Nominations are open to people working in child and family services, child protection, government and academic organisations, and foster, kinship and permanent carers, volunteers, and community members across 11 award categories.

These include the Minister's Award for Excellence in Protecting Children, Robin Clark Leadership Award, Robin Clark Making a Difference Award, Carer Award, Engaging Kids in School Award, Keeping At Risk Young People Safe Award, CREATE Positive Impacts Award – CREATE Foundation, Child and Youth Empowerment Award – Commission for Children and Young People, The Walda Blow Aboriginal Children and Young People Award – Commission for Children and Young People, Leaving a Legacy Award – Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, and Chief Practitioner’s Award – Department of Families Fairness and Housing.

Child Protection can be a demanding and rewarding work and it’s important we call out the effort and achievements of those who work tirelessly on the frontline every day to keep children safe.

Nominations for this year’s Victorian Protecting Children Awards close on Friday 19 May and winners will be announced at a special awards ceremony during Child Protection Week in September.

To find out more and to submit a nomination visit: [[dffh.vic.gov.au/victorian-protecting-children-awards](http://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/victorian-protecting-children-awards)](https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/victorian-protecting-children-awards).

Our child protection practitioners, service agencies and carers perform vital work that helps keep children safe and foster the next generation of Victorians, but we need more people to put their hand up. If you can, consider doing a job that matters to make a difference to a young life. For more information on a career in child protection visit: <https://childprotectionjobs.dffh.vic.gov.au/>

**Quotes attributable to Deputy Secretary, Community Operations and Practice Leadership Danny O’Kelly:**

*“Now in its 20th year, the Victorian Protecting Children Awards recognise our unsung heroes across the children and family services system who make Victoria make a difference to young and vulnerable Victorians.”*

*“Our child protection staff, service agencies and carers work tirelessly to protect vulnerable children and young people and now is the time to recognise that hard work and ask for more Victorians to put their hand up to help.”*