

Media Release

31 March 2021

MacKillop CEO voted Pro Bono Impact 25 winner

Dr Robyn Miller, CEO of MacKillop Family Services, has been voted among the sector's most inspiring and influential leaders in the Pro Bono Impact 25 Awards 2021.

More than 19,000 people voted from a shortlist of 150 to select this year's Impact 25 winners, who have been picked for their innovation, influence, and collaboration following one of the toughest years of our times.

Dr Miller was nominated for implementing an innovative program to help young people in out of home care (OOHC) who are at risk of child sexual abuse. Power to Kids teaches young people – and the carers who work with them – strategies to recognise and intervene early when they are the targets of harmful sexual behaviour, sexual exploitation and dating violence. Young people in care are at a much greater risk, and there was previously an absence of a targeted and evaluated program. The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse brought a strong attention to this need.

Honoured to be selected for the prestigious award, Dr Miller paid tribute to her colleagues and said the need to find ways to prevent harm and protect vulnerable children, young people and their families, drives her work.

"I've worked in the field of child protection for more than 30 years and knowing that there are kids at risk who urgently need help can still keep me up at night. We are making a difference, but it is a constant and growing need I am inspired by the amazing children and young people we work with who have responded to the program so well.

"Child protection and looking after children in care is vitally important work. I work with the most inspiring, caring, and compassionate people in this sector who are committed to prevention and best practice. It's a human rights issue and as providers of services we need to be smarter.

"I feel honoured to be selected alongside such an inspirational group of Impact 25 winners and I'm thankful that the people who voted understand the importance of the work we do and want to see protection put in place for young people in residential care," Dr Miller said.

As CEO of MacKillop Family Services, Dr Miller led a pilot of the Power to Kids program in MacKillop's residential care homes. The data was so positive, MacKillop secured funding from Westpac to implement the program in residential homes across Australia.

The Impact 25 winners will be celebrated in a virtual awards celebration on 31 March, featuring special guests Greg Mullins AO AFSM, former Fire and Rescue NSW commissioner and councillor at Climate Council; Aunty Fay Stewart-Muir, senior Boon Wurrung and Wamba Wamba elder; and Melanie Mununggurr-Williams, Djapu writer and 2018 Australian Slam Poetry Champion.

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