

MEDIA CALL

3rd July 2017

TAKING THE NEXT STEPS IN ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CARE

Next Step After Care is an initiative between Life Without Barriers, Uniting Care Community, CREATE Foundation, Youth Empowered Towards Independence, Integrated Family & Youth Services and the South Burnett Community Training Centre, providing young people between the ages of 15 and 21 support to build independent life after foster care and out-of-home care arrangements. Through practical advice and support, Next Step After Care is helping young people move confidently towards independent living.

As part of NAIDOC Week, **Next Step After Care** invites the media to the launch of Next Step After Care Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander artwork.

MEDIA CALL

Date: Wednesday 5th July 2017
Time: 9am – 12.30pm
Address: Jagera Hall, 121 Cordelia Street, Musgrave Park, South Brisbane.
Media RSVP: abby.edwards@lwb.org.au or call 0472 821 808.

“As part of formal and informal pathways to listen to young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, Next Step After Care is today unveiling a unique extension to its work with the community. We have invited six young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island artists to take part in what must be a first – a collaborative artwork that signifies their own Next Step journey. These artists came from across the state to take part in a cultural and artistic retreat on the beautiful Stradbroke Island (Minjerrabah), home of the Quandamooka people,” said Queensland State Lead, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Initiative Leoni Lippett.

For three days, the young artists immersed themselves in the nature, friendships and culture on the island – taking their own spiritual journeys. This informed the wonderful artwork that speaks of a sense of identity, a sense of place, a sense of being – and a sense of how Next Step was a part of that journey.

“Our young artists have come up with not only a stunning piece of artwork, but a visual identifier that has direct connection to their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. It is a piece of artwork that we hope will resonate with the young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people who might need Next Step’s assistance. Today that journey continues with this special NAIDOC week launch of a much needed strategy to reach young people and help them shape their future in practical ways,” said Life Without Barriers Chief Executive Claire Robbs.

The success of Next Step After Care services has seen the recent development of a scheme to address issues facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people leaving foster care and out-of-home care arrangements. Currently NEXT STEP After Care captures approximately two-thirds of young people leaving care; but there a lower representation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders young people.

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This low representation is concerning as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people currently make up 42% of those individuals currently living in out-of-home care in Queensland.

“Next Step After Care is committed to engaging, enhancing access, developing collaborative strategies, and providing culturally appropriate service delivery and support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people across Queensland aged 15-21 years leaving foster care and out-of-home care. Making ones way in the world independently is big step for any person, but it is significantly harder for young people facing the challenges of life following transition from out-of-home and foster care.

Next Step After Care was established in March 2015 to address issues facing young people at risk following their release from care. We are proud to have led the establishment of this landmark service at the request of the Queensland Government,” said Life Without Barriers Chief Executive Claire Robbs.

More than 1500 young people have used Next Step After Care services since its inception, benefiting from the quick access to practical advice and support with things like:

- Accommodation and food
- Transport options
- Home furnishings and household basics
- Reconnecting with family, friends, community and building relationships
- Education, resumes, training and job-readiness
- Health and social and emotional well-being appointments
- Counselling and other referrals

“Young people accessing Next Step After Care services can seek one-off assistance, or ask for tailored advice and information, set-up ongoing or one-on-one support when they need and we can even help organise identification documents, Medicare, birth certificates and driver’s licences. We also have resources available that can be used to purchase things like household items such as a fridge, washing machine, baby’s cot and pram for example. But most importantly it provides an ear to listen to young people,” Life Without Barriers, Next Step After Care Community Facilitator Nicole Muller said.

Next Step After Care services are available through Uniting Care Community’s 24 hour call or text line on **1800 639 878** or you can email info@nextstepaftercare.com.au

There are Next Step offices in **Beenleigh, Brisbane, Ipswich, Toowoomba, Sunshine Coast, Kingaroy, Mackay, Rockhampton, Townsville and Cairns.**

For all of the information and more go to the Next Step website: www.nextstepaftercare.com.au

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Available for interview:

- **Claire Robbs:** Life Without Barriers Chief Executive
- **Leoni Lippett:** Life Without Barriers State Lead, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Initiatives
- **Nicole Muller:** Life Without Barriers Next Step Community Facilitator
- **Adam McMurray:** Life Without Barriers Operations Manager, Next Step After Care
- **Taz Clay:** Artist from the traditional countries of Bgwcolman and Kalkadoon
- **Muriel (Melay) Jacobs:** Artist from the traditional countries of Wik Mungkun and Thayoor, Darney Island

Download Photo 1: [Muriel \(Melay\) Jacobs: Artist from the traditional countries of Wik Mungkun and Thayoor, Darney Island](#)

Download Photo 2: [Taz Clay: Artist from the traditional countries of Bgwcolman and Kalkadoon](#)

Download Photo 3: [Working on the artwork](#)

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More about Next Step After Care “Creation” Artwork

- Called *Creation*, this canvas piece of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artwork depicts the story of a shared dreaming between the young artists and the Next Step After Care program.
- The artwork tells a story of creation about the Rainbow Serpent who is the creator in Aboriginal lore and the newly created Next Step After Care program who specifically assists young people from all over Queensland who have had a state care experience.
- The particular artwork painted near the body of the Rainbow Serpent represents the lives of our six young artists who tell a short dreaming of their own experiences within the program and in life.
- The artwork at the tail end of the Rainbow Serpent represents the Torres Strait Islands and their people.
- The particular piece you see in the middle is the Torres Strait Island “Dhari” which is a traditional headpiece that is used by men only for traditional dancing ceremonies. The two symbols beside the Dhari represent and acknowledge the Torres Strait Islander people.
- Finally, the artwork in the bottom right hand corner was designed to represent the Next Step After Care program itself which we believe, responsively opens its hands and reaches out to assist any young person in need.

About Life Without Barriers: Life Without Barriers (LWB) is one of Australia’s largest leading social purpose, not-for-profit organisations, working in more than 300 communities across all states and territories. Its main areas of operation includes support to people with disability, children, young people and families, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, refugees and asylum seekers, older people, and people who are vulnerable to social exclusion.

Media Enquiries

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