

MEDIA RELEASE

Mad Bastards - Building Stronger Communities

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The National Association for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN) has awarded the makers of the critically acclaimed Australian movie, **Mad Bastards**, the National Play Your Part Award for an outstanding child abuse prevention initiative.

The movie tells the story of an Aboriginal man reconnecting with his estranged son in a remote West Australian town. As leading Aboriginal doctor, Mark Wenitong says:

“Mad Bastards speaks to all of the key issues facing Aboriginal men and their relationships, as sons, uncles and partners ... as well as the usual social issues of incarceration, violence and alcohol abuse.

Most importantly, it brings a message of hope, an inspiration that they can break cycles and be the men they want to be.”

Mad Bastards director, Brendan Fletcher will receive the award from the Minister for Community Services Julie Collins in Hobart tomorrow.

Brendan Fletcher said he is honoured that **Mad Bastards** is being recognised by the NAPCAN Award. “I am especially proud that the film is being recognised as a source of hope and a story that promotes the critical role of the Aboriginal male in the building of strong communities”.

While the film doesn't shy away from presenting confronting issues it provides a rare and intimate portrait of an Aboriginal man getting his life back on track, and it leaves the audience with a strong sense of humanity and hope.

“**Mad Bastards** takes a close look at relationships between men and their families and highlights the challenges that face Aboriginal men who are trying to improve their relationships with family,” said Brendan. “It also paints a vivid picture of the complexity of Aboriginal men's lives and highlights their innate strengths and incredible resilience.”

“There is no doubt that strong, proud and culturally secure Aboriginal men play a key role in creating safer communities for children.”

Mad Bastards won a swag of awards in Australia last year, and internationally the film has made a big splash. After a World Premiere at the Sundance Film Festival and has since toured across the globe, including Italy, China, France, Israel, Romania, Ireland, America and the Czech Republic. But back home, the film has received growing interest from the Aboriginal community as a tool for healing. Screenings in Aboriginal men's groups across Australia from Balgo in Western Australia's western desert, to Aurukun in Cape York, Redfern in inner city Sydney, Mansfield in Northern Victoria and the Casuarina Prison in Fremantle have been growing in momentum as the word spreads.

In order to develop the film's potential as a healing tool for men a group of senior Aboriginal wellbeing experts have created a guide to assist men's groups to use the film, which promotes issues such as leadership, identity, relationships and staying strong.

The guide has recently been successfully trialled at a national Indigenous men's group gathering in Wollongong and with the Gamarada men's group in Redfern.

In addition to recognising Brendan individually for his determination and vision NAPCAN has also recognised the creators of the *Mad Bastards Guide to being the best you can be* by awarding them an additional award for their "Commitment to Community Initiatives involving Mad Bastards".

"So many Australian films have a week or two at the cinema, maybe a brief DVD or TV appearance and then you never about them again", says Fletcher. "We are very proud that **Mad Bastards** is having such a rich, long life and such an effective one".

The film was produced by legendary Broome Aboriginal musicians Alan and Stephen Pigram, who also composed the music for the film.

"Because of the real people's stories in the film Alan, Stephen and I knew it had the potential to really hit home and maybe inspire people. Now that's happening, we hope we can share this inspiration as broadly and effectively as possible," says Fletcher.

The Guide's developers are currently seeking funds to distribute the initiative nationwide. "We need partners who share our vision and can assist us to bring the project across as many communities as possible," said Brendan. "After all, you can't have strong communities without strong family men".

The awards will be presented at the Youth Arts and Recreation Centre, 44 Collins St, Hobart 2:00 - 3:15pm

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