



Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care

The national peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families
www.snaicc.org.au

MEDIA RELEASE

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Minister launches Family Matters website for national initiative to see Indigenous children safe and cared for within family and culture

A new resource will be launched this week on strategies and tools nationwide and state-by-state to reduce Indigenous child removals across the country.

The website on an important national initiative - ***Family Matters: kids safe in culture not in care*** - seeks to engage new partners for change to *Close the Gap* in child removals by 2030.

“Critically, it recognises that child protection and wellbeing is everybody’s business. And what this means is that, whoever we are - Government, community sector, business, philanthropy or community – we all need to look at how we are contributing to the piercing realities of Indigenous child removal today and how we can support change.”

The Hon Natalie Hutchins, Victorian Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, will launch the *Family Matters* website on Tuesday evening at an event hosted at Perpetual Private.

Family Matters is led by SNAICC, the national peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families, with ACOSS, Families Australia, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Foundation, Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak and the Aboriginal Child, Family & Community Care State Secretariat, NSW.

The launch coincides with National Families Week, an annual event held by Families Australia to recognise the fundamental importance of families.

“This year’s theme, **Stronger Families, Stronger Communities**, resonates with our families deeply,” said SNAICC Chairperson, Sharron Williams. “We can’t have strong children without strong families and we can’t have strong families without strong communities. Our community is our family.”

“Taking a child from her family is the most serious act. The trauma on the child, the family, the community is profound and lasting. The costs to society are enormous.”

“*Family Matters* recognises that we are not doing enough to ensure children are safe and cared for within their families. *Family Matters* prioritises investing in families in crisis to support them to care for their children. It offers models to embed Indigenous decision-making within child protection and wellbeing policies, programs and services.”

“Above all, Family Matters seeks to engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities on what they think needs to happen to turn around child neglect and abuse substantiation rates and child removals. It seeks to provide a voice for change and build the necessary partnerships to see this change happen.”

“Our first goal must be to recognise the importance of our Indigenous families and communities, and to value them. Too often they hear mixed messages at best, and or utter denigration at worst. This has to change. This week is about recognising the role we all have in doing this.”

“Communities have the solutions. They have the knowledge. We need to provide the space for them to make decisions about the lives of their families and to support them in these decisions,” said Ms Williams.

“Only by investing in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and by valuing our cultures at the heart of our communities will we see change to the levels of removal of our children. SNAICC calls for new partnerships and ways of working together to build Stronger Families and Stronger Communities: together we can make this happen.”

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