



Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care

6th SNAICC National Conference Communiqué

Over one thousand people from around Australia gathered in Perth for the 6th SNAICC National Conference.

As we gathered in Perth we carried our ancestors in our hearts and minds, we walked in their footsteps – carrying forward their love, their fight, their determination and their hope for the future.

We heard over one hundred presentations that provided strong evidence that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander models of services and care are working across the diverse range of situations and places where our people live.

Our communities and families have the capacity to care for our children.

We have the knowledge; we have the skills.

It is time to respect and trust this knowledge, and work with our people and services to provide quality of life for our children.

The cultural strengths of communities, our caregivers – both women and men, should be the basis upon which the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are ensured.

The lack of respect for our culture and our knowledge is a major contributing factor to the over-representation of our children and young people in the child protection system. We are outraged by the discrimination still embedded in the system.

And we despair that we are not being heard. We despair that current funding models are not delivering what is needed on the ground.

We urgently call:

On all governments to listen to the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people including our children and young people

On all governments, service providers, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service providers, to focus on supporting our children and families in the early years

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander control over how our children are supported

For these services to be delivered through a holistic, integrated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led early years approach

For the removal of children from their families to be the option of last resort

Where children are removed, the focus should be to reunite them with their families and communities

For a focus to address family violence as the major contributor to the removal of children from their families, by responding to its causes.

For a COAG target for early intervention investment to address the under representation of our children in the early childhood education and care system and their over representation in the child protection system.

For all jurisdictions to establish independent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mechanisms to monitor the exercise and enjoyment of our children's human rights, building on the example of the Victorian Aboriginal Children's Commissioner Andrew Jackomos.

We urge the Australian Government to quarantine a proportion of the Child Care Assistance Package for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

We call for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led research to expand the evidence base for supporting child wellbeing and cultural continuity.

We commit to a national day of action in 2016 to raise awareness of child removals.

We endorse SNAICC as the national voice for our children and families and call for the implementation of this communiqué to keep kids safe in culture.

For more information, or to arrange an interview, please contact:

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About SNAICC: SNAICC is the national non-government peak body in Australia representing the interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.

Founded in 1981, SNAICC was established to engage in activities that promote and accommodate a strong voice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families.

Over the past 30 years SNAICC's efforts have resulted in many key milestones and achievements both in policy developments at state, territory and federal levels and in developing innovative and useful resources for the sector.

SNAICC is governed by an influential National Executive made up of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled children and families' services.