



**Secretariat National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care**

**UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS DAY SHINES SPOTLIGHT ON  
ABUSES OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER  
CHILDREN'S RIGHTS**

**MEDIA RELEASE:** 10 December 2015

**Melbourne, Australia:** Human Rights Day, observed every year on 10 December, commemorates the anniversary of the adoption of the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) by the United Nations General Assembly.

SNAICC, Australia's national peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families, recognises that while the last 25 years have seen some important steps towards the realisation of rights for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, progress towards the realisation of rights remains stalled or in regress.

**THE FACTS**

**Many of the rights accorded under the Convention of the Rights of a Child (CRC) and United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) remain unsupported in Australian legislation.**

**Aboriginal children are more than 9.2 times as likely to be placed in out-of-home care than non-Aboriginal children.**

**Nearly a quarter of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait are identified as 'vulnerable' in the domain of cognitive and language skills development, while Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are more than twice as likely as non-Indigenous children to be developmentally vulnerable.**

**Despite the national adoption of an 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle', 47.4 per cent of Indigenous children are placed with non-Indigenous carers.**

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people are 29 times more likely to be in juvenile detention.**

**Eighteen years after the *Bringing them Home* report, most of its recommendations remain unrealised.**

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Amongst the most distressing of children's rights violations in Australia's history is the tragic forced removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families, now recognised as the 'Stolen Generations'. In 1997, the outcomes of a national inquiry into these events were detailed in the *Bringing them Home* report that made 54 recommendations to redress the trauma experienced by former and current generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. In 2008, more than a decade after the report was first published, then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd delivered a National Apology to the Stolen Generations.

In 2015, the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families remain uniquely shaped by the impacts of colonisation and resulting intergenerational trauma.

SNAICC Chairperson Sharron Williams however remains optimistic for the future:

"Despite these challenges, the cultural strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to care for their own children remain the dominant driving force in the realisation of their kids' rights.

"A rights based response must draw on these strengths to increase investment to strengthen families and empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and their organisations to self determine responses.

"This is why SNAICC, and partners in a coalition, are seeking national targets on Indigenous child removal and investment in early intervention to drive a national strategy, resources and accountability to see all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children safe and cared for within family and culture."

/ENDS

For more information please visit <http://www.snaicc.org.au> or contact:

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### *About Human Rights Day*

This year's Human Rights Day is launching a year-long campaign for the **50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the two International Covenants on Human Rights:** the [International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#) and the [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#).



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The two Covenants, together with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, form the International Bill of Human Rights, which sets out the civil, political, cultural, economic, and social rights that are the basic rights of all human beings.

*Our Rights. Our Freedoms. Always.* aims to promote and raise awareness of the two Covenants on their 50th anniversary. The year-long campaign revolves around the theme of rights and freedoms – freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear – which underpin the International Bill of Human Rights.