



Secretariat National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care

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SNAICC WELCOMES RELEASE OF AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT'S NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR PROTECTING AUSTRALIA'S CHILDREN, THIRD ACTION PLAN: *DRIVING CHANGE: INTERVENING EARLY*

Melbourne, Australia: This week marked the launch of the Third Action Plan under the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020 to both tackle Australia's appalling rates of child abuse and neglect and address failures in the system which is designed to support families. SNAICC, Australia's national peak body representing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families, welcomes the plan and its focus on early intervention to support families.

The action plan has thrown the weight of all Australian governments behind a priority to enhance implementation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle to address the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in child protection services. Another key part of the plan is the establishment of a new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander working group, which will provide expertise to ensure a sustained focus on results for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

While disappointed by the lack of follow-through on priorities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in previous action plans, SNAICC remains hopeful that this new plan will spur state, territory and federal governments, as well as civil society, into action to make the meaningful changes needed to address this worsening crisis for our kids.

SNAICC Chairperson Sharron Williams commented: "We've seen the priority of keeping our kids safe in community and culture in an endless planning stage since the introduction of the National Framework in 2009, but we're yet to see significant change. Now is the time to step up and support the capacity of our communities and organisations to make these great plans a reality for our kids."

SNAICC is encouraged by the renewed focus on early intervention for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kids and the promotion of integrated family services in the first 1000 days of life.

However, Ms Williams also commented: "The \$2.6 million in Commonwealth funding that the Minister for Social Services, the Hon. Christian Porter has announced for projects under the plan will struggle to make a dent on reform of Australia's \$4

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billion child and family welfare service sector. For this plan to have any traction, the states and territories need to contribute and lead changes in their child protection services, and other Commonwealth departments in areas including education, health and Indigenous affairs, have to get behind it.”

With major child care reforms being debated in the Senate at the start of 2016, Ms Williams stated that, “Importantly, Minister Simon Birmingham will need to focus on how the Government’s planned childcare reforms can be best shaped to support our most vulnerable families in the early years.”

SNAICC is calling for major reforms to be implemented under the plan with Ms Williams demanding strong national leadership to address a dysfunctional system for our families: “We can’t leave another plan to fix these problems sitting on the shelf. SNAICC is calling for our governments and politicians to show leadership to bring this plan front and centre by:

1. Adopting COAG targets to address the crisis of over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in Australia’s child protection systems.
2. Every state and territory developing their own detailed and resourced strategies to address the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in Australia’s child protection systems in genuine partnership with our communities and organisations.
3. Embedding accountability for change, drawing on the success of initiatives like the role of Victorian Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People, Andrew Jackomos.”

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

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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.