



Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care Inc.

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MEDIA RELEASE

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National Apology welcomed by national Indigenous children's peak body

“SNAICC applauds Prime Minister Kevin Rudd for the manner in which he apologised today to the Stolen Generations,” Muriel Bamblett, AM, Chairperson of the Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC), said today. “Through the formal apology and his speech, the Prime Minister demonstrated with his heart and mind that he understands how important the apology is for the Stolen Generations and the nation as a whole. Today is a day to celebrate what is a new beginning in the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.”

SNAICC, she said, “looks forward to the establishment of a bi-partisan commission to set national targets for overcoming Indigenous disadvantage. Quite rightly the Prime Minister began with a focus on little children – the children at the heart of SNAICC. We will pursue with all our resolve this national objective of over the next five years having every four-year-old Indigenous child in remote communities enrolled in, and attending, a proper early childhood education centre or program.

“Further we will pursue with resolve this objective being applied to all Indigenous children in every city, town and community across the land – as part of a broader plan to secure the wellbeing of our children.”

Ms Bamblett said, “SNAICC also welcomes the support provided for the national apology from the Federal Opposition.” She added, “Whilst Mr Nelson may have said more had he said less, the journey to reconciliation has many starting points and we acknowledge the beginning Mr Nelson has made.”

She concluded “SNAICC has today received messages of support for the Stolen Generations from Indigenous peoples in other parts of the world, including Canada. They too have experienced the pain of having their children taken and their families broken up. These experiences have been all too common in colonised lands and the solidarity between Indigenous peoples across the world has been important in the struggle for recognition and justice.”

SNAICC, the Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care, the national non-government peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, first called for a national inquiry into the Stolen Generations in 1991.

Ms Bamblett was in Canberra as an invited guest of the federal government to witness the National Apology from the public gallery of parliament.

Muriel Bamblett is available for media comment on (03) 9489 8099