



MEDIA RELEASE

Indigenous TV series supports ready children, ready families and ready schools

18 April 2017: Ground-breaking new television series *Little J & Big Cuz*, the first animated kids show to feature Indigenous Australians and their culture, is arriving in homes and classrooms to support successful transitions to school for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

Featuring the voice talent of Miranda Tapsell (Little J), Deborah Mailman (Big Cuz) and Aaron Fa'aso (Old Dog), the series builds a bridge between home and school. Each episode is a narrative adventure designed to implicitly build children's understandings of their backyard, the school yard and Country.

Explaining the rationale for the series, Chief Executive of SNAICC – National Voice for our Children (SNAICC), Gerry Moore said, “Extensive research shows a child’s formative early years are a critical predictor of their successful transition to school and life-long education and employment outcomes.

“Currently Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in Australia are twice as likely to be identified as developmentally vulnerable, but they are only half as likely to access important early years education. We know for a fact that a focus on change in the early years is fundamental to Closing the Gap, and we welcome the emphasis *Little J & Big Cuz* places on this critical time and the positive light it shines on our kids,” Mr Moore said.

The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) initiated the series in response to studies showing that educational television programs can help improve children’s transition to school.

Deirdre Jackson, Director of the ACER Foundation explained, “The initiative is not just ‘getting children ready for school’, but also ‘getting schools ready for children’, following a two-way learning model and focusing on the strengths that Indigenous children bring to school.”

ACER convened a team of Indigenous Education experts to develop a suite of *Little J & Big Cuz* educational resources mapped to the Early Years Learning Framework and the Australian Curriculum.

“The educational resources model a way for early years educators to bring Indigenous perspectives into the classroom as part of daily conversations – thereby creating classroom environments in which Indigenous children feel valued and have a sense of belonging,” Ms Jackson said.

“As Australia’s peak body representing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, SNAICC is incredibly proud to be part of this landmark project,” Mr Moore said.

Little J & Big Cuz is a joint project of the Australian Council for Educational Research, Ned Lander Media, NITV, Screen Australia, Film Victoria, Screen Tasmania, the Australian Children’s Television Foundation and SNAICC – National Voice for our Children.

Little J & Big Cuz will air on NITV at 7:30pm AEST on Fridays from 28 April, and at 4pm AEST weekdays from 1 May. Visit www.littlejandbigcuz.com.au to watch, play and learn.

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Media enquiries:

ACER: Steve Holden, 03 9277 5582 or 0419 340 058, communications@acer.edu.au

SNAICC: Jessica Brennan, 03 9489 8099 or 0421 334 918, jessica.brennan@snaicc.org.au