



SNAICC  
National Voice for our Children  
(Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation)  
Suite 8, First Floor,  
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4 August 2017

## **NATIONAL ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CHILDREN'S DAY RECOGNISES VALUE OF CULTURE AND CHILDREN'S RIGHTS**

**Melbourne, Australia:** In celebrating National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day on 4 August 2017 we are given an opportunity to recognise the strengths of our youngest First Peoples.

"I think SNAICC exists so that one day we can live in a society in which our children are genuinely valued, by all Australians, for their cultural identity and their connection to our lands and waters," said Sharron Williams, SNAICC Chairperson.

"One way in which we aim to achieve this is by fostering mature, respectful conversations. Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, non-Indigenous – we are all people. If we want to create a better world for our children we must do so by acknowledging and celebrating our differences.

"While SNAICC works for the fulfilment of the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children every day, Children's Day is a chance for every Australian to stand tall and demand that the basic rights of every child in this country mean something."

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day (Children's Day) was first held in 1988 against a backdrop of protest. 2017 marks the 29<sup>th</sup> occasion Children's Day has been celebrated. While the day now recognises an opportunity to reiterate to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children that they are special, included and valued, it continues to represent a time to reflect on the barriers our kids face in enjoying their childhood.

"The message on that first Children's Day in 1988, which has echoed through every Children's Day since, is the same message we have heard in recent weeks: are the lives of all children in this country treated equally?" said Ms Williams.

The theme for Children's Day in 2017 is ***Value Our Rights, Respect Our Culture, Bring Us Home***, recognising the 20-year anniversary of the *Bringing them Home* report.

As well as championing the many benefits children experience when they are raised with strong connections to family and culture, the theme examines child and family welfare systems 20 years on from the *Bringing them Home* report.

"While the *Bringing them Home* report has a very significant place in history, the reality is that

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things have not improved over the last 20 years,” said Ms Williams.

“More children are being removed from their families by child protection authorities than ever before. While the report came with many recommendations to address this issue only a handful have been fully implemented.

“Solutions lie within community. The Family Matters campaign is a roadmap to addressing the over-representation of our children in out-of-home care. With the support and faith of Government we can create a system that works for our children and families.”

Over 500 Children’s Day celebrations have been registered with SNAICC in 2017, with Shelley Ware – co-host of NITV’s ground-breaking Marngrook Footy Show, and one of the most respected and recognised female presenters of AFL football in the country – raising awareness of the day as the 2017 Children’s Day Ambassador.

This year’s official event will be held at Scienceworks in Melbourne on Monday 7 August, and will be launched by Victorian Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People Andrew Jackomos.

**ENDS/**

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***About SNAICC – National Voice for our Children:***

SNAICC – National Voice for our Children is the national non-governmental peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. We work for the fulfilment of the rights of our children, in particular to ensure their safety, development and well-being.

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 has 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 Board of Directors made up of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled children and family services.

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