**Draft template letter to your Member of Parliament or Senator**

Please find below a template letter you can use to send to your Federal Member of Parliament (MP) and Senator to urge them to support the establishment of a National Commissioner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

You can find out who your local MP is by using this handy tool on the Parliament House website <https://www.aph.gov.au/Senators_and_Members>.

Feel free to send the letter as it is. But if you’d like to, you can add some details of your own. Our decision-makers need to hear real stories from real people and from organisations and workers on the front line. They need to hear about Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander experiences with the child protection system, and our solutions and ideas to improve safety and support for our families.

<Date>

<Mr/Ms><Firstname><Lastname> MP

Member/Senator for <Electorate>

Parliament House

CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr/Ms

I’m writing to you today because now, more than ever, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children should be growing up safe, supported and connected to family, culture and community.

This is not happening.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children continue to be removed from their families at unacceptably increasing rates. In 2022 there were 22,328 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care in Australia, the highest number ever recorded. Child protections systems are failing children and families.

There are solutions. The national peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families, SNAICC, has produced the annual report Family Matters since 2016. This details the evidence-based solutions that will enable children to grow up safe, loved and protected. These have been developed and informed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities and organisations.

What is missing is the commitment of governments to implement these solutions. A cycle of periodic reviews and Royal Commissions produce extensive reports and recommendations but little in the way of positive action.

The 2023 Family Matters report continues the call for a National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children’s Commissioner, to protect children and give them a voice in systems that are meant to ensure they are safe and cared for, and champion their rights to grow up connected to culture and kin.

The National Commissioner will provide independent scrutiny over systems that intervene in the lives of children, providing independent oversight that can drive lasting change.

As a resident in your electorate, I ask you to commit to addressing the ongoing harm caused when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are separated from families by supporting the urgent establishment of a National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children’s Commissioner.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely

<Your name>

<Your suburb and phone number>