



Secretariat National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care

MEDIA RELEASE

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QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT BUDGET ANNOUNCES STRONG INVESTMENT IN ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER FAMILY SERVICES

The announcement that the Queensland State Government is allocating \$38.8 million over four years to secure the ongoing operations of 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Family Centres has been welcomed by the Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC).

Working to provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families' access to integrated early childhood education and care, family support, and health services and programs, the Queensland Children and Family Centres operations are an essential early learning service.

SNAICC Chairperson, Ms Sharron Williams comments, "This allocation of funding is a significant move towards stronger early intervention to address over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child protection system. The Queensland Government is leading the way with its commitment to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and family centres and we encourage other states and territories to follow suit.

"The extra investment of \$9.3 million to expand the Family and Child Connect program and \$24 million to continue and expand the Intensive Family Support and Domestic and Family Violence services would also be further strengthened through meaningful participation and leadership of Aboriginal and Torres Strait communities and organisations," continues Ms Williams.

SNAICC National Executive member and CEO of the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak (QATSICPP), Natalie Lewis comments, "Many previous investments in Queensland have failed our families precisely because they have not adequately built the role and capacity of our community-controlled organisations. These organisations are best placed to



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understand the needs of our communities, to engage families in environments where they feel culturally safe, and to provide quality supports.

“It is also critical that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations participate meaningfully in the design, not only the delivery of services for our children and families. The Queensland Government has begun a meaningful process of co-design for the development of integrated child and family services. This commitment needs to be sustained.”

Further investment has been confirmed under the Stronger Families Reforms including: \$3.2 million (increased from \$2.4 million in 2014-15) to support the expansion and integration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family support and child protection services; \$2.8 million (increased from \$1.5 million in 2015-16) for support services for families living in discrete Indigenous communities.

A further \$21 million (over three years) will be spent to address the longstanding historical issue of reparation for the wages stolen from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders by the Government of the time. \$28.6 million (over four years) has also been allocated to extend the welfare reform initiative focussed on individual responsibility to engage in socially responsible behaviours through enhanced services.

\$2 million has also been allocated to pilot the Social Benefit Bonds initiative, which aims to source funds from private investors and provide a return when agreed outcomes are met. Amongst other issues, the Social Benefit Bond initiative will target improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

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For more information or to arrange an interview, please contact Jessica Brennan, Communication Coordinator, Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (03) 9489 8099 / 0421334918 or jessica.brennan@snaicc.org.au



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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.

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.