



Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**25 February 2013**

### **SNAICC welcomes appointment of first National Children's Commissioner**

SNAICC welcomes the appointment of Megan Mitchell as the first National Children's Commissioner to promote the human rights, wellbeing and development of children and young people in Australia.

"We congratulate the Australian Government on its historic announcement and Megan Mitchell on her appointment," SNAICC Chairperson Sharron Williams said.

"This is a hugely positive step forward to protect and promote the rights of children and young people — including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children — and to give them a voice in the development of government policies and programs that impact them."

Ms Williams said the new commissioner has been given an enormous responsibility to advocate on the rights and needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.

"Last year SNAICC urged the Government to also create a national Deputy Children's Commissioner with a specific focus on our children and young people — the most vulnerable and disadvantaged Australians.

"We made the call for a deputy commissioner because we believe working on the needs and rights of our children — as citizens and as First Peoples — is a full-time job in itself," Ms Williams said.

She said Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children continued to experience systemic discrimination and disadvantage in health, education and housing.

Urgent action was also needed address the alarming overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Islander children and youth in child protection and juvenile justice systems across Australia.

"It is critical at the outset that the office develop an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander engagement strategy, be proactive in engaging our communities and set an ambitious agenda to redress some of the most pressing child rights issues impacting on our children and young people," Ms Williams said.

**SNAICC: The national peak body for Aboriginal and  
Torres Strait Islander children**

She said SNAICC was very pleased that, in her first comments as national commissioner, Ms Mitchell had promised to be proactive in meeting Australia's international obligations on children's rights.

"The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child recently [made a series of comprehensive recommendations](#) to advance the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.

"SNAICC believes that these provide a strong starting point for engagement with communities on priorities and how they can be effectively actioned," Ms Williams said.

She said SNAICC was keen to meet with Ms Mitchell, offer any support her office may require and looked forward to working with her over the coming years to see improved outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.

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