



**Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care**

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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Statement by SNAICC Chairperson Sharron Williams

### **A time to recognise the diversity and strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families**

From 15 to 21 May, Australia will celebrate National Families Week to recognise the fundamental importance of families. This year's theme is *Families Working Together: Getting the Balance Right*.

National Families Week is a time to reflect on the importance of family unity in achieving a happy and healthy lifestyle. It is a time to reflect on the crucial role that families play in teaching, supporting and nurturing children as they develop into independent adults.

It is also a time to acknowledge and celebrate the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. This diversity is evident in their history, the dispersed settings in which they live across Australia and in their differing cultural values in caring for children, including the concepts of shared responsibility and extended family.

Yet today there are still so many negative stereotypes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families that continue to circulate and feed prejudice. It originates from a lack of understanding that our children and families continue to suffer systemic disadvantage in their most basic needs: housing, health and education.

We need to recognise and build on the strengths of Indigenous families and communities to support and nurture their children. This will require a greater focus on early intervention and prevention programs that will empower Indigenous families and communities to actively improve their own lives.

During National Families Week, it is worth remembering that much more needs to be done to improve the situation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.

We need to remember and honour the right that all Australian children, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, have to be connected with their family, their community and their culture.

SNAICC has produced a number of new resources to assist those working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families. These include:

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

- a revised edition of SNAICC's acclaimed ***Through Young Black Eyes*** kit, which provides practical information to help local communities run family violence and child abuse and neglect workshops, to help keep Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children safe
- the **Raising Our Little Ones** website which brings together both traditional and contemporary child rearing practices from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities all across the country.
- a **cultural needs flip-chart**, which works to enhance understanding about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander concepts of cultural identity and cultural connection
- an **out-of-home care standards poster**, which helps to interpret the National Standards for out-of-home care into a more culturally appropriate and meaningful explanation, and
- the ***Healing in Practice*** booklet, which showcases programs that improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families' capacity for healing.

For more information on these and other SNAICC resources, go to:  
[www.snaicc.org.au](http://www.snaicc.org.au)

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