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## **SNAICC WELCOMES MINISTER'S COMMITMENT TO GREATER INVESTMENT IN COMMUNITY-DRIVEN SOLUTIONS IN ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES**

**Brisbane, Australia:** SNAICC has welcomed comments from Queensland Minister the Hon. Shannon Fentiman signalling a greater commitment to community control and investment in family support services as the way forward in reducing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander overrepresentation in out-of-home care and family and domestic violence.

Addressing leading policy makers, researchers, and frontline workers at the National Batiba Guwiyal Conference in Brisbane, Ms Fentiman (Minister for Communities, Women and Youth; Minister for Child Safety; Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) acknowledged the ongoing effects of colonisation and past policies, the strong leaders and programs within community that are currently paving the way forward, and the positive future we can achieve with the right approach.

Natalie Lewis, CEO of Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak (QATSICPP) and member of the SNAICC National Executive, agrees with the appraisal that the current overrepresentation in out-of-home care and family violence rates is a crisis, and should be treated as such:

“I commend Shannon’s courage in being so willing to acknowledge that the methods used to tackle these issues in the past haven’t worked, and her commitment to taking a very different approach in working with our communities and Elders and organisations to uncover these solutions together,” Ms Lewis said.

“Our people have an undisputable right to a future that is hopeful and self-determined. Our Governments, as leaders and decision makers in the space, have a responsibility to empower and resource our community-controlled organisations in order to change the story and create a better present and future for our children.”

Ms Fentiman recited findings from the recent Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry into these issues, citing multiple and complex factors such as higher rates of poverty; mental illness; alcohol and drug misuse; family violence; teenage parenthood.

“By acknowledging the wrongs of yesterday, we can better understand the problems of today, and begin to hope for a better tomorrow,” Ms Fentiman said.



In her speech Ms Fentiman examined the current state of affairs regarding the safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in Queensland, labelling the disproportionate representation of our kids in the child protection system a crisis.

“It is estimated that around half of Queensland’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are known to child safety services, and they are 8 times more likely to be in out-of-home care than non-Indigenous children.”

Looking at the Bryce Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland, Ms Fentiman also highlighted the deeply troubling reality that “Indigenous women are 35 times more likely to be hospitalised for assaults by their partner.”

Ms Fentiman paid tribute to the incredible strength she has witnessed in Queensland’s local Indigenous communities, and shared her understanding that with a greater investment in early intervention and prevention, together we can work towards effective solutions to these issues of family violence and child protection.

“I know that we need to completely rethink how we do child protection work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in Queensland,” Ms Fentiman said.

“Unless we have a radical shift, then we risk repeating the same mistakes again and again.

“We risk continuing the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child protection system. We risk continuing a cycle of family violence that is prevalent in some of our communities.

The Queensland Government has recently committed funding to support QATSICPP, shifting more investment into family support services and, domestic and family violence prevention services; engaging with families and working with community-controlled organisations to ultimately develop more integrated family support programs.

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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.