



ELECTION PRIORITIES

FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CHILDREN

Progressing Early Childhood outcomes

Access to quality early learning services for children experiencing vulnerability is a critical predictor of a child's successful transition to school, and lifelong education and employment outcomes. Yet, while twice as likely to experience developmental vulnerability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are half as likely to access early learning as non-Indigenous kids

- THIS NEEDS TO CHANGE!

Early childhood education and care reforms currently underway must redress this issue as a priority to ensure affordable access for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

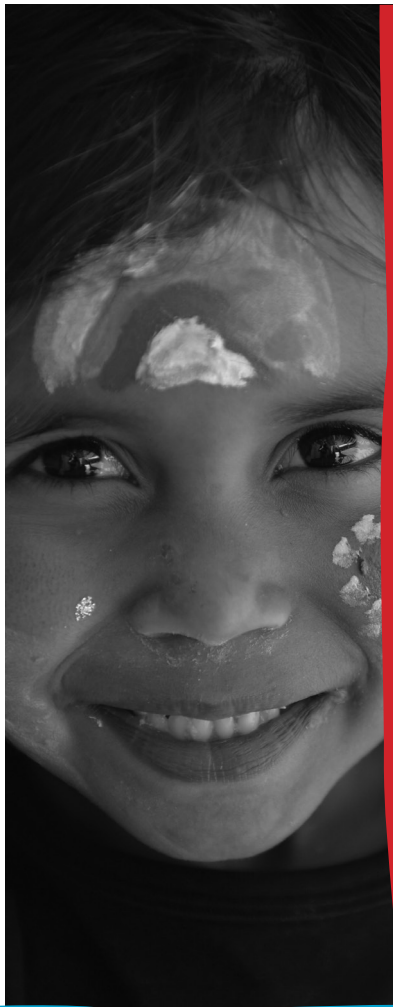
IN RELATION TO THE JOBS FOR FAMILIES CHILD CARE PACKAGE BILL, WE CALL FOR ALL PARTIES TO:

1. Commit to an adequately resourced federal Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early childhood education and care program to support our most vulnerable children.
2. Commit to at least two full days (20 hours) subsidised access to early childhood education and care for all children, regardless of their parents' circumstances.

MORE BROADLY, TO:

3. Make a long-term commitment to subsidise full-time access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children (0-6 years) so that all families, and particularly the most vulnerable, can afford 5 days of early childhood education.
4. Provide adequate investment for the launch of the Australian model of the First 1000 Days, an Indigenous-led, holistic initiative which seeks to provide a coordinated, comprehensive intervention to address the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families from (pre-) conception to two years of age.





Ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child safety, well-being and cultural identity

When the ground-breaking *Bringing Them Home* report into the Stolen Generations was released in 1997, nearly 20 years ago, mainstream Australia was shocked to learn that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children represented one in every five children living in out-of-home care.

Now, in 2016, they are one in every three, with the rate continuing to steadily grow.

This shocking reality is attributed to the widely recognised failure of our early intervention and child protection systems to embrace evidence-based holistic strategies, attuned to the needs of our families.

DRAWING FROM FAMILY MATTERS: *KIDS SAFE IN CULTURE NOT IN CARE*, WE CALL FOR ALL PARTIES TO:

5. Make a commitment to reduce over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care.
6. Commit to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations to develop a national strategy and target to reduce this over-representation.
7. Commit to increasing the priority of supporting families to care for children under the Indigenous Advancement Strategy, consistent with the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020.
8. Commit to maintain the current Family Tax Benefit payments

THIS IS A NATIONAL CRISIS THAT NEEDS ALL OF OUR URGENT ATTENTION

Commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voice and participation

Numerous reports and inquiries in Australia consistently confirm a lack of robust community governance and meaningful Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation as major contributors to past failures of Government policy. International and Australian evidence also shows us that genuine participation and ownership are central for positive outcomes for Indigenous children and families. This is because the best outcomes are achieved when people have control over their own lives and are empowered to respond to and address the problems facing their own communities.

Indigenous-led services overcome the many barriers of service access and offer unique culturally-centred services that respond to the needs of their communities. If Australia is serious about achieving equality for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the government must invest in Indigenous leadership and governance.

WE CALL ON ALL PARTIES TO:

9. Commit to grow the capacity and service delivery role for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations as a whole-of-government policy priority.
10. Fund representative, independent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voice and policy development, including the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples, SNAICC and other peak bodies across child and family support, health, education, women and disability sectors.

