



SNAICC
National Voice for our Children
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation
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4 August 2016

**NATIONAL ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CHILDREN'S DAY
CELEBRATES CULTURE, BELONGING AND ABORIGINAL VOICE**

Melbourne, Australia: Every one of our kids deserves to be celebrated, and National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day gives all of Australians a day to celebrate the strengths our kids and the important part they play in the make up of this country – now, and in our future.

In 2016 we are celebrating Children's Day with the theme ***My Country, Our Country – We All Belong.***

This theme recognises that while Australia is home to many, and everyone is welcome, our people are the Traditional Owners of this country, and our kids are the latest in that line of Traditional Owners. Australia is home to the oldest continuous cultures on the planet, which is something that every Australian should be proud of. All of us have a role to play in educating our children about the history, significance and importance of these cultures.

We teach our kids to be proud of who they are and where they come from, and to be able to proudly share who they are with whomever they meet, be they Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, or non-Indigenous.

"All of our children have a special belonging to this country," says Gerry Moore, SNAICC – National Voice for our Children CEO.

"Children's Day provides a space for everyone to come together to celebrate these kids and their achievements."

The very first Children's Day was held in 1988 against a background of protests.

"It showcases just how long we've been fighting for equality, and for our rights," says Mr Moore. "It's been a long fight."

"We created Children's Day to ensure that every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child, regardless of their circumstances, had a day where they could feel special, and included, and valued."

At the core of our theme for Children's Day this year are the messages that the strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services, organisations, and our cultures in general,

need to be recognised and valued, and that genuine partnerships between governments and our people are absolutely vital moving forward.

Children's Day is a celebration not only of our children, but also of the practice of passing on our cultural knowledge and traditions – a practice that has occurred for 60,000 years.

Better outcomes are achieved for our kids when we are empowered to address the problems facing our own communities. Now, more than ever, we need to be building meaningful partnerships, making sure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are consulted, and our voices heard and valued.

“So often what is overlooked is asking the people who have experienced these issues for their solutions,” says Mr Moore. “We can't continue to have our voices marginalised.”

Australia has been confronted with some atrocious and completely reprehensible news and vision in the past fortnight. We have all been disturbed by these images, which shock the very foundations of human dignity. These scenes are particularly devastating when our children and young people are at the epicentre.

“News like this makes celebrating Children's Day even more important – today is about positivity and positive stories,” says Mr Moore. “Let's honour these little ones, and make sure they have a great day running around having fun, and celebrating their culture.”

Olympian and NBA basketballer Patty Mills has come on board as an official Children's Day ambassador in 2016. Patty is in Rio at the moment, representing the country at the highest level, and has helped share our stories with new audiences, and developed knowledge, respect and understanding of our cultures and history.

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Hundreds of schools, services, and communities across the country have registered their local Children's Day event. *SNAICC – National Voice for our Children* is encouraging all schools and workplaces to find their own way to celebrate Children's Day in 2016.

For more information please visit <http://aboriginalchildrensday.com.au> or contact:
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About SNAICC – National Voice for our Children:

SNAICC– *National Voice for our Children* is the national non-government peak body 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.