



SNAICC
National Voice for our Children
(Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation)
Suite 8, First Floor,
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22 March 2017

SNAICC WELCOMES THE SPLIT OF THE OMNIBUS BILL, BUT REMAINS DEEPLY CONCERNED THAT OUR CHILDREN WILL NOT THRIVE UNDER CHILDCARE REFORMS

Canberra, Australia: SNAICC welcomes the split of child care reforms from the controversial Omnibus Bill, but continues to demand urgent amendments to the Jobs for Families Child Care package to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aren't left behind under the new system.

"While we are pleased that the child care reforms will no longer be linked to draconian welfare savings measures, SNAICC has received no firm or written assurance that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early years sector will be appropriately supported by these reforms," SNAICC CEO Gerry Moore said.

In a Senate Inquiry report into the Omnibus Bill released today, the Senate committee noted SNAICC's ongoing concerns that the current operation of the Child Care Safety Net, specifically the funding available under the Community Child Care Fund, does not provide adequate security that our families and children, especially those experiencing vulnerability, will have access to quality early years services.

"We believe that the Government has moved from their original position and have begun to recognise the unique role that our services play in closing the gap. The reforms continue to be silent on our sector and do not provide the necessary access hours required to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families."

The Senate Committee acknowledged the need for the Department of Education and Training to engage in ongoing consultation with stakeholders to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early years services can transition to the new system, however SNAICC CEO Gerry Moore noted that:

"There is certainly nothing in the reforms to suggest that the Government is committed to closing the placement gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Closing the gap means doing more, not maintaining the status quo.

"We need to not only survive the transition to the new child care system, we need to make sure our children thrive."

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SNAICC is continuing to ask for the following amendments to the Jobs for Families Child Care package:

1. An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific program within the Child Care Safety Net that adequately caters to the needs of services currently operating under the Budget Based Funding (BBF) program, as well as centres established under the ACFC initiative, and an attuned funding model for other rural and remote services.
2. Provision of at least two full days (22.5 hours) of subsidised quality early learning to all children to support their development, regardless of their parents' activities.
3. An amendment to the Bill to secure a recognition and commitment to the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.
4. The Australian Government guarantee that playgroups, mobiles and other unique services supported within the BBF program, such as youth programs, continue to be funded either through the Community Child Care Fund or another program.
5. A commitment to increase places for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children by 5,000 over the first three years of the package to redress the current 15,000 place early learning gap.

ENDS/

For more information please visit www.snaicc.org.au or contact:

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About SNAICC – National Voice for our Children:

SNAICC – National Voice for our Children is the national non-governmental peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. We work for the fulfilment of the rights of our children, in particular to ensure their safety, development and well-being.

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.

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Over the past 30 years SNAICC's efforts has 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 Board of Directors made up of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled children and family services.

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