



SNAICC  
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## **ROYAL COMMISSION REPORT RECOGNISES CULTURE AS A PROTECTIVE FACTOR FOR CHILDREN AND CALLS FOR HEALING FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER SURVIVORS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE**

**Melbourne, Australia:** SNAICC welcomes the release of the final report of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. We take this opportunity to acknowledge those who bravely shared their stories with the Royal Commission, and the barriers to disclosure that prevent many other survivors from coming forward.

The Royal Commission's final report confirms the lived pain of past and present effects of child removal. The Royal Commission heard from many survivors who had been forcibly removed from their families as children and then sexually abused in institutions that should have kept them safe.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander survivors who shared their stories with the Royal Commission spoke not only of sexual physical and emotional abuse, but also of racism and cultural abuse.

It is clear that child sexual abuse in institutions is not only a thing of the past; it is still a problem today. As Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are significantly over-represented in out-of-home care systems today, addressing vulnerabilities and implementing the Royal Commission's recommendations must be guaranteed as a matter of urgency.

The Royal Commission recognised the alarming over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home and called for reform of the contemporary system ensure children are safe from abuse in the future. It recognised that culture is an important protective factor for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

"Strong cultural identity, connections to family and community, and cultural care practices are non-negotiable factors in keeping our children safe," said Sharron Williams, SNAICC Chairperson.

The Royal Commission's final report recognises the importance of the full and proper implementation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle, and recommends partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and community representatives to ensure this is met. The Royal Commission also makes

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important recommendations to fund Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander healing approaches and improve support for kinship carers, including ensuring that financial support and training are equivalent to that provided to foster carers.

“It is imperative that, especially following such a thorough process, all of the recommendations from this report are accepted and implemented,” said Ms Williams.

“The pain and injustices of the past have been acknowledged, and must now be redressed. At the same time, we must tackle current challenges to ensure our children are kept safe in family and culture.”

The publication of the final report concludes an extensive and exhaustive process, spanning several years, thousands of private sessions with survivors, and close examination of traumatic personal experiences by six Commissioners, including Professor Helen Milroy, who has brought specific expertise and understanding to issues relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

SNAICC thanks the all those involved in the Royal Commission for their dedicated and sensitive approach to the examination of this national tragedy – one that has been unresolved for far too long.

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For more information please visit [www.snaicc.org.au](http://www.snaicc.org.au) or contact:

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