



SNAICC
National Voice for our Children
(Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation)
Suite 8, First Floor,
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5 September 2018

UNDERPAYMENT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS UNDERScores NEED FOR WHOLE-OF-SYSTEM REFORM

Melbourne, Australia: SNAICC – National Voice for our Children unreservedly supports early childhood educators across the country today as they demand equal pay. Early childhood educators – including educators from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early years sector – will [walk off the job today](#), 5 September, in protest at pay rates that see them earn as little as \$21 an hour, half the average Australian wage.

“Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early years services rely on skilled and dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff who provide high-quality, culturally safe services in which our children develop skills for life. Current wages mean that they earn a measly amount to provide an essential service,” said Geraldine Atkinson, SNAICC Deputy Chair.

SNAICC is concerned that the new national childcare system, introduced on 2 July 2018, is further reducing access to early education and care services for children from low-income families, and has increased pressures on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early childhood services.

“The appallingly low rate of pay for early childhood educators is symptomatic of a government approach to early childhood education and care that is missing the mark to improve outcomes for the next generations, particularly those who are most vulnerable in our communities,” said Ms Atkinson.

“We know that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are twice as likely to be developmentally vulnerable early in life, and only half as likely to access early education as non-Indigenous children. Yet the recent changes reduce access to subsidised childcare for the most vulnerable families from 24 to 12 hours per week.

“These changes have increased the workloads and stress for many workers in our services, who are having to spend their time assisting families to apply for subsidised hours through this complex process.”

The reforms apply a complex activity test, which determines access to childcare subsidies based on the amount of time a parent spends doing work or study activities.

“Funding for the early childhood sector should start with making sure all children can get the

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education they need, with resources directed to helping children from the most vulnerable families,” said Ms Atkinson. “A funding system that has children missing out on learning at the very start of their journey isn’t good enough.”

The Federal Government must undertake a whole-of-system reform that places the rights of the child to quality education at the forefront. Doing this requires fair pay for early childhood educators and carers, and dedicated ongoing funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early childhood services.

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.

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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