



SNAICC
National Voice for our Children
(Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation)
Level 7, Melbourne Polytechnic (Collingwood)
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CASHLESS WELFARE CARD WILL NOT INCREASE SAFETY FOR ABORIGINAL CHILDREN IN THE NT

Aboriginal children will be worse off under the proposed Federal Government expansion of the cashless welfare card in the Northern Territory, according to the national peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

SNAICC – National Voice for our Children strongly opposes the Federal Government’s assertions in the announcement yesterday that that the proposed expansion will lead to more stability and safety for children in the Northern Territory. A system that clearly targets Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory, and that removes freedom and replaces it with government control, will have significant impacts on the wellbeing of our children.

[The government’s own studies](#) into the impacts of this very system have shown that income management in the Northern Territory is associated with substantial negative short-term outcomes. It has also not demonstrated any positive outcomes across a range of indicators, including child health, child neglect, school attendance or development outcomes.

“Fundamentally, this comes down to an issue of basic human rights,” said Dawn Ross, SNAICC Council Member. “What the card does is deny families the same level of access and freedom as everybody else.”

Through the current Closing the Gap refresh process and the seminal partnership agreement between Aboriginal leaders and all Australian Governments, the Federal Government has affirmed its commitment to self-determination and privileging the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to have a say in the decisions that affect us. The cashless welfare card model flies in the face of self-determination, restricts our freedom, and significantly challenges equality amongst Australians.

“The costs of administering an ineffective system like the cashless welfare card are extraordinary,” said Ms Ross. “That level of funding and energy should instead be put

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into addressing real issues like overcrowded housing, access to preschool, and health care – areas that we know actually lead to greater outcomes in child safety and wellbeing.”

A wealth of evidence confirms what we know works to empower our families in need of support: strengths-based early intervention, redressing basic needs and enabling people to be decision-makers in their own lives. Our communities hold incredible strengths, and when we are able to have a say in the way we live, our children grow up stronger, prouder, and safer.

ENDS/

For more information please visit www.snaicc.org.au or, to organise an interview SNAICC Council Member Dawn Ross, 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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