



**FAMILY
MATTERS**

Strong communities. Strong culture.
Stronger children.

FEDERAL ELECTION PRIORITIES

FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CHILDREN

The majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children grow up in supportive, loving and positive environments, connected to their families, communities and cultures. However, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families continue to experience significantly higher levels of disadvantage than non-Indigenous families.

**ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT
ISLANDER CHILDREN ARE**



more likely to be removed by child protection authorities and placed in out-of-home care than their non-Indigenous peers, and this rate is increasing each year.

**THE SCALE AND IMPACT OF THIS
ISSUE IS AT NATIONAL CRISIS
PROPORTIONS AND REQUIRES
ALL OF OUR URGENT ATTENTION.**

Family Matters - Strong communities. Strong culture. Stronger children. is Australia's national campaign to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people grow up safe and cared for in family, community and culture. Through this campaign, we aim to eliminate the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care within a generation (2040). Family Matters is led by SNAICC - National Voice for our Children, with a leadership group of eminent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders from around the country. It is supported by a strategic alliance of more than 150 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous organisations.

It is evident that current efforts are failing, and we need systematic reform to improve outcomes for our children. Solutions must be implemented across a complex structure spanning federal, state and territorial powers and multiple departmental responsibilities. We need to implement a coordinated and holistic national approach that is focused on prevention and early intervention, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in decision-making and a culturally capable system.

FEDERAL ELECTION PRIORITIES FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CHILDREN

WE CALL ON ALL PARTIES TO COMMIT TO:

1. **the development** of a comprehensive, resourced national **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Strategy**;
2. **the development of generational Closing the Gap targets** to eliminate over-representation of our children in out-of-home care, and address the causes of child removal, including by increasing investment in early intervention;
3. **the establishment** of a legislatively enshrined, independent, adequately resourced federal **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Commissioner with powers to conduct independent inquiries and report directly to Parliament**;
4. **a 50% increase in federal investment to family support and reunification services** for families at risk of or recently experiencing child removal, targeting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled services;
5. **the development of national standards** to ensure family support and child protection legislation, policy and practice comply with the **five elements of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle**;
6. the **development of a model Aboriginal community-controlled organisation investment, expansion and capacity development strategy** drawing on best practice;
7. **funding universal preschool access** for three and four-year-olds, including additional funding to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children have access to a minimum of three days per week of high-quality preschool; and
8. **investing in quality Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled integrated early years services, through a specific early education program**, with clear targets to increase coverage in areas with high Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations, and high levels of disadvantage.

The strategies required to address child development, wellbeing and safety concerns lie within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Family Matters invites all parties to work in partnership with us to achieve equality for our children.

For more information on the solutions, read the [Family Matters Report 2018](#).