



SNAICC
National Voice for our Children
(Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation)
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SNAICC WELCOMES AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENTS' COMMITMENT TO QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CHILDREN

SNAICC – National Voice for our Children, welcomes the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration (the Declaration) by the Australian Governments for high quality education that values Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and identities, but emphasises that stronger commitments and resources are needed for it to be realised.

SNAICC also commends the broad commitment of education ministers to work in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and local communities in the delivery of education services that embrace Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, languages and identities.

While SNAICC supports the aspirations of the Declaration, it lacks detailed commitment to reforms that are vital to achieving its goals. The Declaration fails to respond specifically to SNAICC's calls for universal access to high quality early education for all 3 and 4 year olds, investment in community-controlled integrated early years services, and reform to the Child Care Subsidy activity test that limits access to early education for vulnerable children based on parental workforce participation. These recommendations are outlined in the joint early years position paper by SNAICC and Early Childhood Australia: [Working Together to Ensure Equality for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children in the Early Years](#)

Richard Weston SNAICC CEO says, "The risk with announcements such as the Mparntwe Declaration is that without any meaningful resource commitment to back the statement up, governments are seen to be merely giving lip service to the disadvantage faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families – it becomes another motherhood statement that does nothing to address the real challenges facing our kids getting access to a quality education."

The importance of education embracing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages is also outlined in the Declaration. However, SNAICC notes the lack of specified commitment to bi-lingual education and ensuring that children can be taught in their Indigenous languages from pre-school through to Year 12.

SNAICC acknowledges there is positive commitment by the Australian Governments to increasing the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' in the

education workforce at all a level. This will require significant investment in workforce development strategies and supports, including ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators have access to training and skills development programs that covers rural and remote areas.

“SNAICC knows that our families and communities want what other Australians want for their kids and that includes, amongst other things, a good education to equip them for a purposeful life in contemporary Australia, contributing to the economy and creating strong families and communities,” says Richard.

– Richard Weston SNAICC CEO

The Declaration significantly builds on the commitment of the Melbourne Declaration to increase the focus on creating culturally safe education services and workforces for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and children – but, SNAICC highlights that significant resources and supports will need to be provided to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations to realise its goals.

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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-government peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. It works for the fulfilment of the rights of children to ensure their safety, development and wellbeing.

Founded in 1981, SNAICC was called Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care until it was changed to SNAICC – National Voice for our Children. For over 30 years SNAICC has achieved key milestones in policy development at state, territory and federal levels and developed 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.