



SNAICC
National Voice for our Children
(Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation)
Level 7, Melbourne Polytechnic (Collingwood)
20 Otter Street
Collingwood VIC 3066

12 June 2020

FOR BLACK LIVES TO MATTER, THE FUTURE OF OUR CHILDREN MUST BE A PRIORITY

Since the death of George Floyd, who was callously killed in the US on 25 May from the brutal force of a police officer, the call for an end to systemic racism that enables this brand of brutality against people of colour has reverberated around the world.

In Australia, with more than 430 deaths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in custody since 1991, the call for justice is loud and strong.

SNAICC joins the call against systemic racism that is embedded in government policies and decision making at all levels, disproportionately impacting on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, youth and adults alike.

SNAICC CEO Richard Weston said,

“The Uluru Statement talks about the ‘torment of our powerlessness’ when referring to the over-representation of our young people in detention, our children in out-of-home care and high rates of incarceration of adults. These issues are at the heart of the change we need to see in our nation now.”

While the majority of our children are living happy and healthy lives, there is a worrying trajectory towards youth justice, especially for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care.

In Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people are 17 times more likely to be in juvenile detention, and represent 49% of young people under supervision in the justice system on an average day (2017–18), despite only making up 5% of youth aged 10–17 years.

There is much work to be done to close the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and non-Indigenous children. Our children are 2.6 times more likely to be developmentally vulnerable than other children when they start school, and 10.6 times more likely to be in out-of-home care than non-Indigenous children.

“Supporting our children in their early years is crucial for them to grow up strong in their identity and culture,” said Mr Weston.

“The new Closing the Gap Agreement provides one opportunity to enable change, so that our children have the opportunity to realise their full potential.

“The Co-Design of a Voice to Parliament presents another. They are not the end game though. Both initiatives are critical steps towards Constitutional Recognition and ultimately to a settling of matters between First Nations people and all Australians – in other words a Treaty.

“The events of the last two weeks demonstrate that until we gain control over our own destiny we will never be free of the intergenerational impacts of Australia’s settler history.

“SNAICC continues to work closely with governments and communities to improve outcomes for our children, because they deserve a future that ensures their lives do matter!”

/ENDS

For more information please visit www.snaicc.org.au or contact:

Joanne Cackett, Communications
media@snaicc.org.au (03) 9419 1921 / 0474 727506

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. SNAICC works for the fulfilment of the rights of our children, in particular 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.

Over the past 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.

Phone 03 9419 1921
PO Box 1144, Collingwood VIC 3066
info@snaicc.org.au | www.snaicc.org.au
ABN 42 513 562 148