



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

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26 JANUARY – TO TRULY CLOSE THE GAP, WE MUST RECOGNISE THE TRAUMA OUR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES HAVE EXPERIENCED

For Australia's First Nations children and families, the arrival of the First Fleet on 26 January 1788 is not a day of national celebration as it was based on the lie that this great continent was *terra nullius* – 'nobody's land'.

"The *National Agreement on Closing the Gap* is an opportunity for us to make our institutions and governments accountable for the injustices our people have had to suffer for more than 200 years," says Sue-Anne Hunter, Acting CEO for SNAICC and Co-Chair for Family Matters.

"But we can only meet the targets of the Closing the Gap agreement if we are all prepared to acknowledge and recognise the trauma that Australia's First Nations peoples have experienced.

"Celebrating a date that marks the arrival of foreign invaders to a country that was clearly populated and rich in culture, community and diversity, is deeply hurtful to our peoples.

"Instead, all Australians should reflect on how we can right the wrongs of the past."

The impacts of colonisation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have been long and enduring, and this trauma has been passed down from generation to generation.

Many families continue to experience multiple forms of disadvantage that make our children vulnerable, and the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic accentuates this as we navigate these challenging times.

According to *The Family Matters Report 2020*, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are 9.7 times more likely to be removed from their birth parents, and this number is expected to double by 2029.

With nearly one in three (31.4%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living below the poverty line, First Nations families experience lower employment rates, lower levels of education and training and are 10 times more likely to live in social housing.

"Before we can truly celebrate this nation, it is integral that the Federal Government genuinely acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rights to self-determination, embraces our cultures and commits to closing the gap on inequalities that continue to impact our families and children. Now is the time to act."

- Sue-Anne Hunter, Acting CEO SNAICC and Family Matters Co-Chair
Wurundjeri and Ngurai illum wurrung

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For more information, please contact: Jo Cackett, Acting Communications Manager
media@snaicc.org.au; **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 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.

About Family Matters

Family Matters 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.

The Family Matters campaign aims to eliminate the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care by 2040.

The campaign is driven by a national Family Matters Leadership Group and supported by a Strategic Alliance.

Join us on social media and find out more at
www.snaicc.org.au and www.familymatters.org.au