



SNAICC – National Voice for our Children
(Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation)
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NUMBER OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CHILDREN IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE IS A NATIONAL SHAME

SNAICC CEO Catherine Liddle described new figures revealing one in 18 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children is in out-of-home care as a “national shame”.

A new report by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare released today shows that 18,862 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were in out-of-home care at June 2020.

“This is 11 times the rate for non-Indigenous children. It is a disgrace,” Ms Liddle said.

“While we have the *National Agreement on Closing the Gap*, and we’re working with governments on a new national plan for child protection, the numbers of our children in out-of-home care keep rising.

“This report shows that our child protection systems are not investing in prevention and supporting families.

“Our kids cannot afford to wait. We need action and investment now to improve the lives of our young ones and families at risk.”

Only 16% of the \$6.9 billion investment in child protection systems is spent on supporting families.

SNAICC has undertaken a national consultation to inform the next 10-year Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child protection plan.

“The messages are consistent across the country – there aren’t enough supports for families and support services that are culturally safe.

“Families fear seeking help because instead of getting support they end up in a pipeline to permanent removal of their children.”

The report also shows that only 42.2% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care were living with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander carers.

“Our children are being separated from their cultures. This causes lifelong and intergenerational harm,” Ms Liddle said.

“People everywhere have told us that there’s a lack of opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to participate in decisions about the care and protection of children. Our families and communities know best how to keep our children safe and cared for in connection with their cultures, but best practice models like independent Aboriginal family-led decision-making aren’t being used in most cases.

“Governments have made landmark commitments under the *National Agreement on Closing the Gap* to partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care by 45% by 2031.

“But governments need to invest now in community-controlled organisations to support our families, prevent child protection intervention, and keep children safe in family, community and culture.

“It is past time for agreements to turn into action. Our kids can’t wait.”

– Catherine Liddle, SNAICC CEO

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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-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 wellbeing.

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.