



MEDIA RELEASE
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14 YEARS ON AND OUR KIDS STILL AREN'T HOME

On the 14th Anniversary of the National Apology to Indigenous Peoples, SNAICC–National Voice for our Children is calling on governments to honour the fundamental spirit and intent of that Apology by ensuring that injustices of the past never happen again.

“The Australian Government's commitment to the promises delivered in the Apology must be fulfilled through meaningful investment in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and services” said SNAICC Chairperson Muriel Bamblett.

“Today is an important day for our communities. It's important because the Apology represented a crucial moment in truth-telling about our history. But it's also important because it reminds us that the core promise of the Apology has failed to eventuate. More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kids are entering out-of-home-care than ever before” said Bamblett.

The Family Matters 2021 report found that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were 10 times more likely than non-Indigenous children to be in out-of-home care, an over-representation that has increased consistently over the last 10 years. New data released by the Productivity Commission in January shows that at 30 June 2021, numbers had grown again to reach a staggering 22,297 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children living away from their parents.

This year also marks the 25th anniversary of the *Bringing them Home* report which shone a light on the deep trauma and injustice of the Stolen Generations. More than two decades later, SNAICC is still trying to negotiate government action on the report's core recommendations, most of which remain unrealised.

“Today we call on all state and territory governments to review the 54 recommendations within the report and make their progress against those recommendations public. The report's strong recommendations for reforming the nation's child protection systems, and legislation to guide community self-determination must be delivered” said Bamblett.

“If we are to turn the tide on these figures, we need ambitious government investment to match our ambitious commitments. SNAICC has been encouraged by the progress of the new National Framework for the Protection of Children. Governments are working with us under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap to design actions that can make a difference for our children, however funding allocations for prevention activities must increase to achieve the Agreement's targets” said Bamblett.

Large scale reform efforts and investments in healing and strengthening families are needed to turn this around. A significantly bolstered Aboriginal community-controlled family services sector would provide families with culturally safe and responsive wrap-around supports.

“In 1968, W.E.H. Stanner famously wrote about the ‘Great Australian Silence’ and the collective forgetting

that happens in this country about the systemic discrimination of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. To commemorate the anniversary of the Apology without acknowledging that our kids continue to be removed from their families at record levels, is to perpetuate that silence still.”

“Today our thoughts are with all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples still hurting from the profound impacts of the Stolen Generations. We must learn from the experiences of that generation and ensure that all our work in child protection is deeply informed by the knowledge we now have about the importance of returning to Country and connection to family, kin and culture”

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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 40 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.

For more information, please visit www.snaicc.org.au and www.familymatters.org.au