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## **SOLUTIONS ARE THERE TO FIX CHILD PROTECTION – WHAT’S MISSING IS THE WILL TO DO IT**

### **STATEMENT FROM SNAICC CEO CATHERINE LIDDLE**

No one with any experience or involvement in Australia’s child protection system should be surprised at the latest revelations of children being harmed in out-of-home care.

It’s easy to call this a broken system, but it goes much further than that. What it actually means is that the system does not protect our children – it causes further harm.

Recent ABC reports highlight the tragedy that our children continue to be removed from families at ever increasing rates into a system that too often inflicts damage.

The disgrace is that this is not new, the stories while horrifying and heartbreaking are no surprise.

The evidence has been there for many years. Governments know what the solutions are to keep children safe. But there seems to be no real will to implement them.

For the past few years SNAICC’s Family Matters campaign and report have laid out the case for urgent systemic reform.

The vast bulk of government funding is spent on intervention and out of home care. Only 16 per cent is targeted to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families with early intervention and prevention services.

Recent changes in child protection measures that have been framed as solutions – such as arbitrary short timeframes for reunification and streamlined pathways to permanent care orders – only entrench many of the problems our children and families face.

We continue to hear from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities who say their voices are marginalised.

As a key part of the Family Matters campaign, SNAICC has been calling for a National Commissioner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children with the power to investigate and report on issues that impact our children, advocate for their rights and needs and push the urgent need for policy, program and funding reform.

SNAICC has also called for investment in prevention and early support services for families through a new national program for ACCO-led integrated family support services.

We know that Aboriginal community-controlled organisations, who are working closely with our children and families in a culturally safe environment, providing wraparound support and giving families a voice in decision-making about their children, make a difference.

SNAICC urges all governments, State, Territory and Federal, to take urgent action on the evidence base we already have or risk causing further harm to generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

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